International Tropical Timber Organization

Lessons for working well together in African Forests

A review of recent ITTO projects implemented in West and Central Africa relevant to collaboration with TICAD
Summary of the Ex-post review and recommendations

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Purpose and Focus of the Review

- Decision at ITTC 57 in 2021 to-carry out an ex-post evaluation of ITTO projects in Africa

- Aim: determining the main findings and to help inform the future forest-related actions for possible funding from donors, including TICAD (Tokyo International Conference on African Development)

- Two outputs were requested:

  - Output 1: An Ex-post Evaluation Report with the findings and outcomes of the assessment of the completion reports of the projects implemented in Africa under the ITTO Strategic Plan 2013-2021 (desk review and selected country visits)

  - Output 2: A Policy Brief summarizing the major benefits and outcomes of ITTO projects in Africa under the ITTO Strategic Plan and TICAD's strategy, and key findings and recommendations of the ex-post evaluation
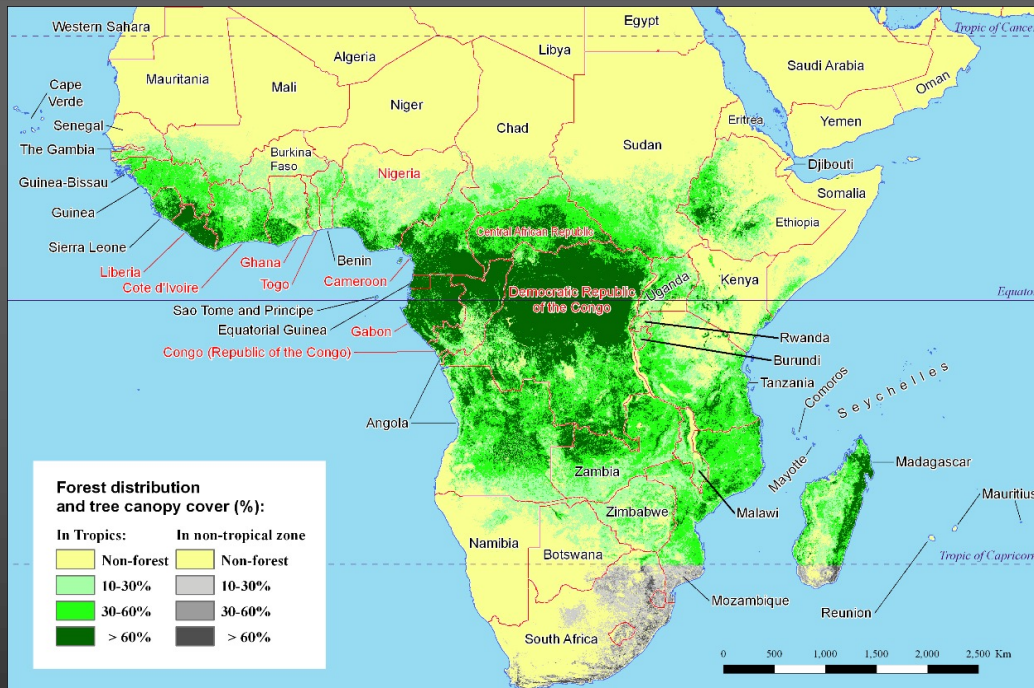
Methods of work

- ➲ Work-sharing by two consultants
    - ▪ one to address the overall role of the projects for policy development and sustainability
    - ▪ and one to assess the implementation of the projects on the ground
- ➲ Use of general OECD criteria for assessment, adapted to the review of multiple projects
- ➲ Assessment focused on projects' objectives and planned outputs vs. their achievements, their policy implications, social issues, improvements for conservation of biodiversity, and the likelihood of long-term sustainability
- ➲ The major results summarized in the full report in two detailed tables:
    - ▪ Table 2: Summary of projects' outputs, policy effects, social outcomes and sustainability
    - ▪ Table 5: Summary of lessons learned from each of the ten projects

10 projects analyzed

- 10 projects completed in West and Central Africa between 2010 and 2020

- Designed and implemented under the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013–2021

- Six of the projects in West Africa (three in Côte d'Ivoire, two in Benin and one in Ghana) and four projects spanned over several countries mainly in the Congo Basin

- Projects <u>are not linked programmatically</u> but are relevant to the strategic framework

- All countries in which the projects were implemented are experiencing declines in forest area and biodiversity and an increase in forest degradation

- Large numbers of people depend for their livelihoods on forest products and the use of forest soils (often in shortened shifting cultivation rotations).

The 10 projects analyzed overview table

Project identifier	Short title	Country/ countries	Dura-tion	ITTO budget (USD)
Forest management, conservation, community participation, forest landscape restoration				
PD 456/07	Capacity building for sustainable management of tropical rainforests and biodiversity conservation in the ITTO Congo Basin countries	Cameroon, CAR, Congo, DRC, Congo, Gabon	2012–2019	3 890 681
PD 754/14	Rehabilitation and sustainable management of sacred forests on Ramsar sites 1017 and 1028 in Benin	Benin	2017–2020	541 031
PD 725/13	Rehabilitation of degraded forest land in the Ahua forest reserve by the women members of association MALEBI in compensation for the forest resources removed to meet the need for fuelwood (charcoal and firewood)	Côte d'Ivoire	2016–2018	149 408
PD 419/06 (TICAD-5)	Forest seeds management and conservation: rehabilitation and restoration of degraded forests with the involvement of local communities (refugees, internally displaced people and local populations)	Côte d'Ivoire	2013–2018	1 800 000
PD 530/08	Management of forests established through rehabilitation of degraded forests by local communities in Ghana	Ghana	2012–2018	569 665
National information systems, statistics, timber trade, timber tracking				
PD 692/13	Implementation and operationalization of a national information system for the sustainable management of forest resources	Côte d'Ivoire	2015–2019	290 541
PD 124/01	Promotion of sustainable management of African forests (implemented by the ITTO Secretariat)– Phase III – Stages 1 and 2	Congo Basin	2011–2016	1 100 000
PD 678/12	Establishment of a national forest statistics information management system	Benin	2013–2016	398 704
PD 700/13	Development of intra-African trade and further processing in tropical timber and timber products – Phase 1, Stage 1	Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC	2015–2016	1 399 989
PD 620/11	Development and implementation of a species identification and timber tracking system in Africa with DNA fingerprints and stable isotopes	Cameroon, CAR, Congo, DRC, Gabon, Ghana	2012–2016	2 046 092

Glimpse* on a regional project PD 456/07:
RIFFEAC – advancing forest education in the Congo Basin

- An ITTO study conducted in 2006 in the Congo Basin concluded that there was a shortage of personnel with the qualifications needed to ensure SFM

- Annual deficit was estimated at 180 engineers and 440 senior forestry technicians for activities associated with SFM and biodiversity conservation.

- The study led to project PD 456/07 implemented by RIFFEAC under COMIFAC and encompassed seven training institutions across five countries.

Glimpse on a locally- based project PD 754/14: Conserving biodiversity in Benin's sacred forests

- Benin has more than 2900 sacred forests covering an area of 18 400 ha. Many degraded by uncontrolled exploitation, conversion to agriculture, urban pressures, demand for woodfuel, rural poverty and the loss of religious beliefs.

- Under ITTO project, 42 major sacred forests were legally recognized and demarcated, and simple forest management plans developed.

- More than 150 ha of sacred forests were enriched with valuable tree species

- Creation of income-generating ventures such as agroforestry, beekeeping, animal husbandry, fish farming, and production and trade of NTFPs.

PART I
Outcome and Sustainability Assessment

Overall assessment: all projects completed
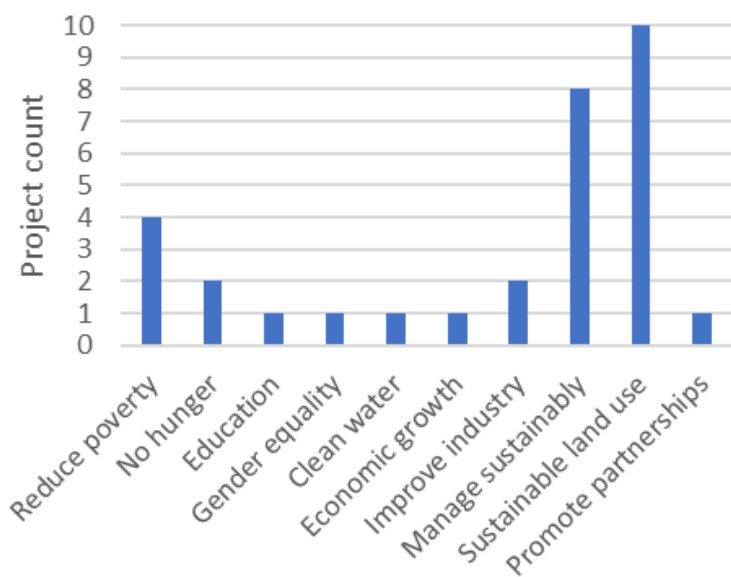
- The projects had important positive impacts on forests, forest management and local communities in the countries

  - The local-based FLR type of projects in Côte d'Ivoire (Ahua Forest Reserve; Duékoué/Scio forests); Ghana (community-based FLR) and Benin (valuation sacred forests) showed significant achievements in improving local livelihoods, forest management and forest landscape restoration

  - Two flagship projects of ITTO (PD 456/07 on forest educational training (RIFFEAC) and PD 124/01 on P, C&I of SFM) made major contributions to improving sustainable forest management in the Congo Basin

- Projects were successful and have proven to be effective

  - This in spite of the fact that in 2015, due to some unfortunate internal accounting issues, the ITTO budgets allocated to the projects needed to be adjusted and activities reduced.

  - Nonetheless, all projects assessed achieved most of their objectives in spite the needed revisions of budgets.
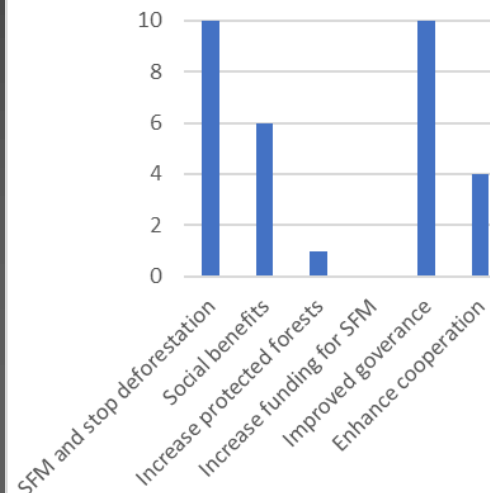
Projects' link to broader development goals

- All projects were fully in line with ITTO's strategic objectives and contributed to global forest-related processes, including SDGs and Global Forest Goals.

- Projects served as catalysts for testing new approaches and tools in forest-based development
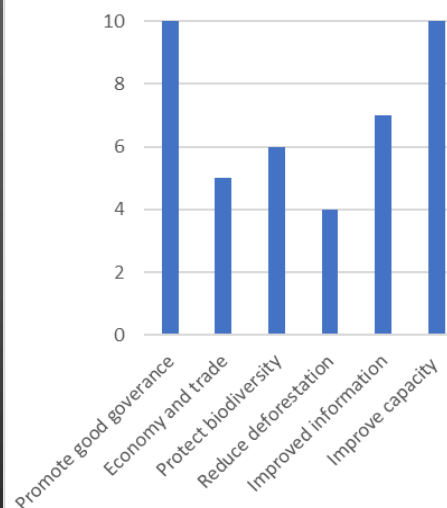

Number of projects contributing to GFGs
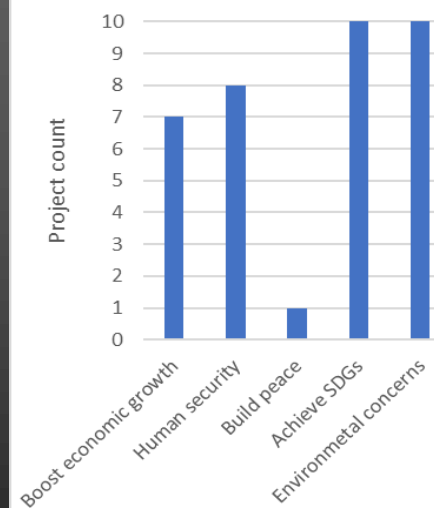

Number of projects contributing to SDGs

Number of projects addressing each ITTO Strategic Objective

Number of projects addressing TICAD focal areas

Relevance and Achievements

- All projects successfully designed to work towards reducing high rate of forest cover loss, restoring forests and improving enabling conditions
  - Four projects dealt directly with forest recovery & management (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana)
  - Two projects were designed to improve sustainable management systems at regional level
  - Three projects improved forest staff capacity, in SFM, forest statistics and information technology
  - One project assisted several countries to bolster forest product value and regional trade
  - One project was designed to assist with timber tracking to improve enforcement capacity and fight against illegal logging and trade in forest products.

- Projects addressed at least two of the ITTO Strategic Objectives and several of the global goals, indicating highly relevant work benefitting both the countries and the global efforts to reduce deforestation and forest degradation

- Quantitative data difficult to extract from the projects' documentation.
  - Achievements include 2384 ha of forest regenerated;
  - More than 1300 people benefitting from advanced training;
  - National forest databases developed in two countries (Côte d'Ivoire and Benin).
  - Income improved for several forest communities benefiting building-up income-relevant activities

Relevance & Achievements: Projects' examples

- **PD 456/07 (RIFFEAC),** supporting an educational network among 7 training institutions in the Congo Basin. RIFFEAC is today a leading network for implementing Priority Area 1 of COMIFAC's revised Convergence Plan

- Under **PD 124/01, principles, criteria and indicators** were developed for various forest types (natural, plantation) and at various levels (FMU, national) in 5 countries:
  - Significant advance in the implementation of SFM for the countries
  - Project helped to **improve policy processes and international cooperation**

- **PD 700/13** incorporated an analysis of **trade barriers among countries** and **studies of how wood is processed in Africa.**
  - One of the findings of the project was that **artisanal timber producers and traders** produce a very large volume of wood products but remain unregistered
  - Need for **reviewed policies and legal frameworks** that incorporate their activities in the larger forest product sector is recognized

Efficiency and Effectiveness

- Most of the projects have shown good results, including in cases where some activities could not be completed.

  - Given the funding levels with which these 10 projects worked, there is a high degree of success in completing projects and the impacts achieved.

  - Results from the smaller projects in West Africa indicate that local communities are willing to work to improve their livelihoods, build capacity and sustain biodiversity

  - High efficiency was due to careful project selection process, proper project design, strong on-site project management by the implementing agencies and effective monitoring by ITTO.

  - Project duration remains however an issue, all projects needed more time for implementation as planned.

- Implementation of the 10 projects was overall effective based on technical achievements.

- All projects produced technical reports that provide significant contribution to understanding local forests, their use and biodiversity.

Impacts on policy, social, SFM and biodiversity

- **Policy impact is considerable in several projects**

  - A central policy outcome of the four projects dealing with forest landscape restoration was to create trust among the various stakeholders involved

  - With respect to trade policies, Project PD 700/13 began important discussions among several countries about mechanisms and barriers to forest products trade

- **Social impact was instrumental in most of the projects**

  - Some of the projects clearly strengthened attitudes and behavioral aspects in respect to gender, e.g., PD 725/13 in Côte d'Ivoire

  - Community consultation on practical issues were important, such as locations for restoration, tree species of use to the communities, crop species and training needs. All helped to create community pride and ownership of forest resources. However, patience is needed as not all stakeholders share the same concerns (PD 419/06 CdI)

- **Biodiversity impact not directly measured**

  - None of the projects was focused directly on biodiversity with respect to planned outcomes. Nevertheless, the four projects dealing with communities and FLR provided also benefits for biodiversity

Sustainability

⮑ Good overall prospect on sustainability of most of the projects

- At the community level, the projects can be anticipated to have long-term sustainability especially where <u>follow-up benefits</u> have already begun to accrue (Projects PD 530/08 Ghana, PD 419/06 Côte d'Ivoire, PD 754/14 Benin).

- The regional projects should have long-term sustainability because of the <u>training</u> provided to stakeholders and forest staff: PD 456/07 (RIFFEAC), PB 124/01 (P, C&I for SFM) and PD 620/11 (Timber tracking/DNA analysis).

- PD 700/13 specifically designed to assist industry through training and government through the analysis of policies. Governments now <u>improve policies</u> to for a better understanding of value-added of forest products, including local transformation

- One project PD 692/13, Côte d'Ivoire needs follow-up work because it could not complete the installation of a national forest information system

A glimpse on the effects of project work in mid-2022

⮑ Some concrete outcomes are still pursued after project end…

PD	Short name of project	Project End*	Situation September 2022
465/07	RIFFEAC	2019	RIFFEAC's activities continue after end of the project
754/14	Benin sacred forests	2020	Continuous work after end of the project
725/13	Côte d'Ivoire, Ahua forest	2018	Some difficulties to maintain activities, project area embedded in a possible new project (FIP)
419/06	Côte d'Ivoire restoration SODEFOR	2018	Taungya work continued but with some difficulties. Project infrastructure still in use
530/08	Ghana restoration FORIG	2018	Access to the taungya plots more and more difficult but land-use system is still applied
692/13	CdI National forest information system	2019	Difficulties in the application of the IT system
124/01	P, C&I and SFM ITTO Sec	2016	Continuous engagement of ITTO in the Congo Basin
678/12	Benin, statistics, information system	2016	System partially in place, improvement needed
700/13	Intra-African trade of timber	2016	Gabon with an active policy in wood transformation
620/11	Timber tracking, DNA fingerprints	2016	Data collection continues in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire

*approval of the complition document

PART 2:
Key Lessons learned and conclusions

Key Lessons learned (i)

Forest Management, Conservation, Community Participation and FLR (17)

⮕ From RIFFEAC as the prime project in financial terms (USD 3.9 m)

- Upgrading forest-sector education and training in Africa is essential for ensuring SFM, efficient domestic processing and sustainable supply chains.

- Effectiveness of the multistakeholder platforms is enhanced when leading institutions champion the identified priority actions and ensure the flow of information

- Thematic working groups play a crucial role in the implementation of the training modules and in promulgating associated teaching methods

- Need to assess the compatibility of computer systems and background information and to conduct needs assessments before embarking on projects to revamp or create databases at national/regional level

Forest Management, Conservation, Community Participation and FLR (17)

➦ From the 4 projects that broadly promote FLR/local development

- Long-term forest and land-use planning is required for the successful implementation of projects dealing with SMF and forest landscape restoration

- ITTO projects should be viewed as catalysts for testing new approaches and tools for scaling up by countries and their development partners

- Collaboration among stakeholders contributes to the success of forest restoration. This requires commitment and building relationships and trust

- Community forestry as a mechanism through which local communities can gain formal rights to access, manage and restore forests, which in turn, can improve livelihoods

- Effective participation of local stakeholders, including specifically involvement of rural women is needed and guarantee fair benefits; communities need strong rights and secured tenure based on customary practices

- Opportunity costs for not converting degraded forest areas into agricultural lands need to be compensated (payments for ecosystem services and/or alternative livelihoods)

- Carefully assess government procedures and systems before introducing new systems that will either replace or supplement existing ones

Key Lessons learned

(ii) National information systems, statistics, timber trade & tracking

➲ **From the projects with regional focus (PD 124/01; PD 700/13)**

- In projects and activities related to trade and industry <u>involve regional economic communities</u> in implementation

- The establishment of a <u>regional coordination team</u> will help ensure adequate oversight of project implementation across countries

- Ensuring that all participating countries reach a <u>common understanding</u> of project objectives, scope and targets

- With wood consumption increasing in Africa, there is a need and opportunity to <u>develop the intra-African trade of wood and wood products</u>

➲ **From the special project on timber tracking/DNA fingerprints (PD 620/11)**

- Sufficient training on the implementation of quality control for the collection of reference samples is needed

- Need for <u>wider use of genetic identification tools</u> for forest law enforcement and management in African countries. Such tools will increase access to markets for African forest products

Conclusion

➲ **Fostering change for the future**

- Future project and policy work to promote sustainable forestry in Africa will be undertaken in a rapidly changing global political environment

- This includes concerns about climate change, food security, human safety, conflicts, and emerging zoonotic diseases

- But there are opportunities for the forest sector in Africa to help in "building back better", increasing resilience and economic output, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

➲ **Policy guidance for ITTO and TICAD**

- Collaboration between ITTO and TICAD has the potential to attract interests from other donors in promoting SFM in Africa.

- Explore co-funding options by associating ITTO/TICAD projects with broader initiatives and programmes, e.g., those of the GEF, GCF, the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) and Afr100, to name a few

ITTO's new strategic priorities

Lessons learned from the 10 projects can be taken into account in ITTO's strategic priorities 2022-26

- ⮑ <u>Expectations must be realistic</u> on what can be done in the timeframe and limited budget of an ITTO stand-alone project. Alignment of ITTO projects with larger programmes can allow upscaling of project results at a broader level

- ⮑ Being <u>complementary to broader forest development work</u> in Africa is important. Clearly express in which fields ITTO has <u>a comparative advantage in joining partnerships</u>

- ⮑ Reconfirm <u>ITTO's particular niche</u> that is well-established with its focus on SFM, and trade and further valuation of forest products derived from sustainably managed forests

- ⮑ <u>Landscape approach</u> in projects' establishment can enhance dialogue among stakeholders using the same natural resources

- ⮑ ITTO has an <u>effective and functional project implementation facility</u> for small to medium size grant projects

  - ▪ Designed for short-to-midterm implementation (1-4 years) and well focused

  - ▪ Emphasis on developing best practices, creating capacity and permitting replication and upscaling is key

Thank you for your attention