INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER COUNCIL

COMMITTEE ON REFORESTATION AND FOREST MANAGEMENT

Distr.
GENERAL

CRF(LX)/4a
8 October 2026

Original: ENGLISH

SIXTIETH SESSION
9-12 November 2026
Yokohama, Japan

PROGRESS ON THE
DRAFT UPDATED *ITTO/IUCN GUIDELINES FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIODIVERSITY IN TROPICAL TIMBER PRODUCTION FORESTS*

1. The first ITTO guidelines on Biodiversity in Tropical Timber Production Forests were published in 1993 and then updated in collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in 2009. Since its publication, the science, tools, policy frameworks, and dialogue on biodiversity conservation have evolved over the past 17 years, including establishment of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Recognizing the need to incorporate these new elements, as well other new ITTO and IUCN guidance regarding gender equality, participatory processes, and restoration, work started in first quarter of 2025 to update the guidelines.

2. ITTO contracted Dr. Cesar Sabogal to be the lead author to update the guidelines. A multi-stage, iterative and consultative process was undertaken to ensure scientific rigor, practical relevance, and policy alignment. The process began with targeted consultations and interviews of a group of international experts, who provided inputs on priority themes, emerging challenges, and gaps in the previous version of the Guidelines. These contributions were reviewed and synthesized to define the initial scope, structure, and thematic priorities of the revision.

3. Subsequently, draft versions of the Guidelines were developed and refined through successive rounds of expert review and validation**,** including two international validation meetings held in Mérida, Mexico (May 2025) and Bangkok, Thailand (March 2026)**.** These consultations enabled the integration of diverse ecological, institutional, and socio-economic perspectives from Latin America, Africa, and Asia, and helped ensure the applicability of the Guidelines across different tropical production forest landscapes. In total, the two validation meetings involved over 35 expert representatives drawn from forestry/environment government agencies, academia, private sector, certification bodies, international and regional forestry-related organizations, non-governmental organizations, and community-based organizations. In addition, additional experts not able to attend in person provided feedback in writing.

4. Attention was given to strengthening the conceptual coherence (Principles), operational guidance (Guidelines and priority actions), and alignment with international frameworks**.** In addition, these Guidelines move beyond forest management unit level and emphasize the conservation, restoration and monitoring of biodiversity attributes, species and genetic diversity, ecological functionality and landscape integrity within tropical production forest landscapes. The outcome reflects a balanced integration of scientific knowledge, field-based experience, and evolving global policy commitments**,** resulting in a set of Guidelines that are both technically sound and implementation-oriented.

5. The process of updating the guidelines is in its final stages. The vast amount of information gathered by the consultant and provided by the participating experts resulted in a very lengthy document. Currently, ITTO/IUCN are undertaking a process to streamline the document to make it more digestible and user friendly through the aid of a technical and graphic editor.

6. During ITTC62, the Secretariat will provide a quick overview of the major changes / construct of the update latest version of the guidelines to date. In addition, the latest version is available for member's review, behind the member portal [CRF(LX)/4b]. As this is a joint product of both ITTO/IUCN and until approval is received from both governing bodies of each entity for publication, members are requested to keep a close hold on the draft document and not distribute it further, aside for the use for their review.

7. Members are requested to provide feedback to the ITTO Secretariat (carrillo@itto.int) on the latest version of the draft updated guidelines **no later than 29 January 2027**. As the guidelines have undergone multiple expert reviews, and will be further streamlined for usability, ITTO/IUCN kindly request members to focus their comments on major substantive issues.

8. Due to budgetary constraints, and for the sole purpose of revision and feedback from ITTO members, the Spanish and French translation of the latest version of the draft updated Guidelines has been AI generated. In case of questions, please refer to the original English document. Once the Guidelines are formally adopted, official translation will be carried out.

9. It is anticipated that the finalization of guidelines will take place by early March, **at which point members will be provided the final document for approval through a time bound no-objection process.** IUCN will simultaneously be undergoing approval through its own process.

10. As was by voiced by the experts who participated in the validation meetings, there is a great need for these updated guidelines, and many are waiting in anticipation for its publication. The aim is to publish the guidelines and make them publicly available to practitioners early to mid second quarter of 2027, barring any unforeseen delays.

* * *