



**INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL  
TIMBER COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE ON  
REFORESTATION AND FOREST MANAGEMENT**

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**REPORT TO THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER COUNCIL FROM  
THE FIFTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON  
REFORESTATION AND FOREST MANAGEMENT**



## **Item 1 - Opening of the Session**

The Fifty-eighth Session of the Committee on Reforestation and Forest Management (CRF) was opened on 4 December 2024 by Mr. Jorge Mario Rodríguez (Costa Rica), Chairperson of the CRF, assisted by Mr. Björn Merrell (Sweden), Vice-Chairperson of CRF. The list of participants is presented in Document ITTC(LX)/Info.2.

## **Item 2 - Adoption of Agenda and Organization of Work**

The Provisional Agenda for the CRF, as contained in Document CRF(LVIII)/1 Rev.1, was adopted by the Committee. In accordance with agreed past procedures directed by Council, Agenda items 4, 6, and 9 were considered at the Joint Session of the Committees convened on 3 December 2024. The Chairperson of the CRF proposed to organize the Session in the following order: Item 3, Item 5, Item 7, Item 8, Item 10, Item 11, Item 12, Item 13, Item 14, Item 15, Item 16 and Item 17.

## **Item 3 - Admission of Observers**

The Committee admitted the observers listed in Document ITTC(LX)/Info.3 Rev.1 as approved by the Council.

## **Item 4 - ITTO Annual Market Discussion - 2024**

The Committees noted the summary of the ITTO Annual Market Discussion – 2024, held in the Joint Session of All Committees as part of the Trade and Markets Day on 3 December 2024, as contained in Appendix A to Document CEM-CFI(LVIII)/4. The theme of the Market Discussion was “Production and Trade - Rising Costs and Weakening Demand”. Mr. Barney Chan (TAG Coordinator) moderated the Market Discussion.

The following feature presentations were made during the Market Discussion (available at <https://www.ito.int/itc-60/presentations/>):

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Dr. Ivan Tomaselli<br>Brazilian Mechanically Processed Wood Industry<br>Association (ABIMCI)                 | <i>Past and Future of Tropical Timber</i>  |
| Mr. Jean Marie Ntoutoume<br>Union des Forestiers et Industriels du Bois du<br>Gabon                          | <i>Production et Commerce du Bois – Cas du Gabon</i>                                       |
| Mr. Alfonso Hernández Ángel<br>National Association of Importers and Exporters of<br>Forest Products, Mexico | <i>Mexico Tropical Timber Overview</i>   |
| Mr. Ngo Sy Hoai<br>Vietnam Timber & Forest Product Association   | <i>Vietnam Forestry and Wood Industry amid Global<br/>Economic and Trade Uncertainties</i> |
| Mr. Braden Jenkin<br>Sylva Systems Pty Ltd (Australia)   | <i>Using natural forest and plantation grown trees;<br/>different but complementary</i>    |
| Dr. Luo Xinjian<br>Global Green Supply Chains Initiative (GGSC)  | <i>Global Green Supply Chain &amp; GLSTF – An<br/>Introduction</i>                         |

The Committees further noted the statement of the Trade Advisory Group (TAG) presented during the Market Discussion as contained in Appendix B to Document CEM-CFI(LVIII)/4.

## **Item 5 - Policy Work**

The Committee considered the progress in the implementation of the following policy-related matters:

- (i) **Monitor Progress in the Application of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management**  
**[Activity 5, ITTO BWP 2024-2025]**

**a) Adapting the 2006 ITTO Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management to African context / Dissemination and information sharing in ITTO member countries in Africa [Activity 5, ITTO BWP 2024-2025]**

The Secretariat reported progress as follows:

- The final version of the ITTO Criteria and Indicators (C&I) for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) adapted to African context was posted on the ITTO website for comments by ITTO Members, and by the deadline of 1 November 2022 no comments were received. The approved document, ITTO Policy Series Document PS-26, is available in English and French on ITTO's website and as hardcopies.
- Additional funds are needed for this BWP item to hold two in-person regional workshops for the dissemination of the set of ITTO Criteria and Indicators (C&I) for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) revised and adapted to the African context.

The Committee reiterated the importance of this new set of ITTO C&I adapted to African context which will be subject to dissemination in African ITTO member countries, in 2025 and beyond, depending on the availability of funds.

**(ii) Revision of the ITTO Guidelines on Fire Management in Tropical Forests [Activity 7, ITTO BWP 2024-2025]**

The Secretariat informed the Committee of the progress as follows:

- ITTO is currently a member of the Global Wildland Advisory Group of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) and International Liaison Committee (ILC) of International Wildland Fire Conferences. ITTO's involvement in these International Fire Conferences and other fire initiatives has been instrumental in facilitating the exchange of knowledge and expertise on wildland fire policies, research, and management.
- PP-A/56-340-1 (Indonesia) and PP-A/56-340-2 (Peru) underwent ex-post evaluation(s), as agreed at the 57th Session of the Committee on Reforestation and Forest Management (CRF). The evaluation of these fire projects will be used as input for informing ITTO's future fire work.
- In 2024, ITTO continued to promote awareness and the growing importance of fire including proposing a CPF joint initiative on fire, hosting a UNFF side event on fire, and collaborating on other initiatives including participation in the FAO hosted Global Fire Hub, AFoCO's regional fire workshop, and the International Wildland Fire Liaison Committee.
- While undertaking the process to update the ITTO Fire Management for Tropical Forests guidelines (originally developed in 1997), it became evident from multiple experts' feedback that the updating of policy level guidelines was not the greatest need. Experts pointed to the proliferation of fire policy guidelines since the original ITTO policy guidelines were developed, including the FAO fire guidelines and the Integrated Fire Management Framework developed during the last international wildfire conference in Portugal. Several experts indicated that instead there is a great need for a more field oriented tool/guidelines that concretely address integrated fire management issues in the tropics, taking into consideration fire management capabilities in the tropics and emerging fire behavior science in different tropical fire ecosystems. The Secretariat indicated that, if funding was made available, that the focus in the coming year would shift toward developing such a tool/guideline, instead of updating the 1997 policy guidelines.

The Canadian Delegation encouraged the Secretariat to consider the role of traditional knowledge in the use of forest fire as tool for land preparation by local and indigenous communities in any future revised/ updated ITTO guidelines on forest fire in the tropics.

The US Delegation thanked the Secretariat for sharing information on ITTO's work regarding integrated fire management in tropical forests and informed the Committee about the support provided to ITTO by sending US experts on forest fire to the verification meeting held on the sidelines of FAO COFO27 meeting in Rome, Italy in July 2024. The US encouraged ITTO to maintain close collaboration with new global initiatives on forest fire, especially the global fire management hub hosted by FAO. The USA requested information on the next steps for revising and updating the ITTO guidelines on fire management in tropical forests.

The Secretariat thanked Canada and the United States for their comments which will be considered in the process of developing new ITTO field level guidelines on fire management in tropical forests. It is hoped that a draft version will be available for review and a validation workshop held by mid-2025, if possible and financing

made available. ITTO will also continue to work on developing the CPF Joint Initiative on Fire in close collaboration with FAO and other partners of the Global Fire Management Hub.

The Committee recognized the long standing ITTO work on tropical forests fires. This BWP Activity will continue to be implemented in 2025 and contribute to deliberations on forest fires in the coming years.

**(iii) Developing and Operationalizing ITTO's Policy Guidelines to Members  
[Activity 8, ITTO BWP 2024-2025]**

**a) Dissemination of the ITTO Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics  
[Activity 8 (b), ITTO BWP 2024-2025]**

The Secretariat informed the Committee about the progress as follows:

- ITTO Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics were developed in 2020 with the invaluable support of many members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), including CIFOR, FAO, IUCN and IUFRO.
- After organizing the virtual dissemination workshops for ITTO member countries in Asia-Pacific and Latin America, there were not enough funds for holding in-person dissemination workshops for ITTO member countries in Africa (one for French-speaking countries and one for English-speaking countries) in 2024.

The Committee took note of the above information in relation to the need for promoting the ITTO Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics in Africa. The CRF chair emphasized the guidelines as an important tool for supporting the achievement of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030.

**b) Support for Women's Groups with Gender Empowerment and Forest Landscape Restoration in Togo [Activity 8 (c), ITTO BWP 2024-2025]**

The Secretariat informed the Committee about the progress as follows:

- PP-A/56-341B Phase III (Support for women's groups with gender empowerment and forest landscape restoration in Togo), is reported in detail in Document CRF(LVIII)/3 under CRF agenda item 10.2 dealing with BWP project-based Activities.
- PP-A/56-341C-Benin (Support for women's groups with the restoration of forest landscapes in the Departments of Oueme and Zou, in Benin) is in early stages of implementation with the first instalment disbursed in September 2024.

**(iv) Joint ITTO–CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity / Programme document 2024–2025 in relation to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework  
[Activity 9, ITTO BWP 2024-2025]**

The Secretariat informed the Committee of progress as follows:

- ITTO and CBD Secretariat renewed their MoU for another five years until 2025. This extension reflects the two organizations' joint commitment to supporting ITTO producer member countries and CBD Parties in the tropics in their efforts to conserve biodiversity, implement sustainable forest management, restore degraded forest landscapes, and promote the sustainable use of forest resources.
- During 2024, ITTO and CBD Secretariat(s) collaborated on a draft checklist for future projects identified under the ITTO and CBD Collaborative Initiative to ensure they are in line with and contributing to the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF).
- A brochure was also developed showcasing the connection between some of the projects implemented under the ITTO-CBD Collaborative Initiative and specific targets under the KMGBF. This brochure was displayed during CBD CoP16 in Cali, Colombia during the Sustainable Forest Based Economy Day at the SDG Pavilion, which was co-led by ITTO and FAO.
- In coming months, with funding from Canada, the ITTO/IUCN Guidelines on Biodiversity in Tropical Production Forests will undergo updating to incorporate recent developments in international biodiversity dialogue and policy frameworks, as well as integrate elements from the new ITTO guidelines on gender equality and the updated ITTO restoration guidelines.
- The Secretariat informed the Committee that this Activity is expected to continue into 2025 and beyond.

The Brazilian Delegation recognized the role of ITTO and its leadership on promoting biodiversity conservation in tropical forests and encouraged ITTO to collaborate with relevant international institutions during the process of revising and updating the current ITTO/IUCN Guidelines on Biodiversity in Tropical Production Forests.

Supporting the comments made Brazilian Delegation, the Canadian Delegation thanked the Secretariat for sharing information on the ITTO work regarding biodiversity conservation in tropical forests and informed the Committee that Canada provided funds needed to launch the process of revising and updating the current ITTO/IUCN Guidelines on Biodiversity in Tropical Production Forests. They encouraged ITTO to continue its good work and to take measures not to duplicate existing work being done by other organizations.

The Indonesian Delegation informed the Committee about their new regulations on preservation zones in their forests in Indonesia which mandates collaboration between different stakeholders and land uses to ensure conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services across different land uses and ownerships.

The Secretariat thanked Brazil, Canada and Indonesia for their comments which will be considered in the process of revising and updating the current ITTO/IUCN Guidelines on Biodiversity in Tropical Production Forests to be carried out in collaboration with IUCN, CBD Secretariat and other relevant international partners.

**(v) Collaboration on Criteria and Indicators for sustainable forest management (SFM)**  
**[Activity 11, ITTO BWP 2024-2025]**

The Secretariat reported to the Committee on the progress as follows:

- ITTO pioneered the development of criteria and indicators (C&I) for the sustainable management of natural tropical forests in the early 1990s and has continued to provide leadership in their review, improvement and implementation. C&I is a technical tool aimed at providing forest managers with insights on monitoring, assessing and reporting on tropical forests to ensure their sustainable management.
- In 2024, ITTO organized and sponsored a national training workshop on criteria and indicators for sustainable tropical forest management in Trinidad and Tobago which was attended by nearly 30 participants. It was held from 27 February to 1 March 2024 in Port of Spain.

The US Delegation thanked the Secretariat for sharing information on the ITTO work on Criteria and Indicators for sustainable forest management (SFM) and encouraged ITTO to collaborate with other international initiatives on Criteria and Indicators.

Supporting the comments of the US Delegate, the Canadian Delegation also encouraged the Secretariat to collaborate with other international initiatives on Criteria and Indicators, such as the Montreal Process C&I dealing with temperate and boreal forests.

The Committee thanked the USA and Canada and recognized the importance of ITTO Criteria and Indicators as a technical tool for promoting SFM good practices. The implementation of this BWP-related Activity will continue in 2025 and beyond, if funds are made available.

**Item 6 - Report of the Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals**  
**[Document ITTC/EP-59]**

The Joint Session considered the report of the Fifty-ninth Virtual Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals presented by Mr. Gerhard Breulmann, Director of the Division of Operations in the ITTO Secretariat, as contained in document ITTC/EP-59.

The Fifty-ninth Panel appraised five (5) proposals under the Division of Reforestation and Forest Management. The Panel noted that:

- Four (4) project proposals (80 percent of the total) were commended to the Committee for final appraisal with minor modifications required (category 1); and
- One (1) project proposal (20 percent of the total) will be sent back to the proponent for essential revisions, rated as category 2.

Mr. Breulmann noted the downward trend of the number of proposals submitted by ITTO members, from 30 proposals submitted in 2019 covering all three technical divisions of the ITTO Secretariat to 5 proposals

under one technical division (Division of Reforestation and Forest Management). Due to the low number of proposals, the expert panel was convened virtually instead of in-person.

The US Delegation thanked the presenter for summarizing the work of the 59th Expert Panel for technical appraisal of proposals and encouraged the Expert Panel to meet virtually and on ad-hoc basis, as needed.

The Brazilian Delegation thanked the 59th Expert Panel and briefly presented to the Committee the objectives and expected outputs of the project proposal PD 938/24 Rev.1 (F), which has been approved as Category 1 by the 59th Expert Panel, emphasizing its strong community component.

The Indonesian Delegation also thanked the 59th Expert Panel and briefly presented to the Committee the objectives and expected outputs of the project proposal PD 940/24 Rev.1 (F), noting the project's focus on community involvement and customary rights as a high priority for implementing forest management in the project target area.

#### **Item 7 - New Projects and Pre-projects**

[Document ITTC/EP-59]

The Committee noted the following projects and pre-projects were approved under the time-bound electronic no objection procedures and circulated to member countries pursuant to Decision 6(XLIII), as contained in Annex to Document ITTC/EP-59, following the recommendations of the Expert Panel at its 59<sup>th</sup> Meeting as follows:

#### **Fifty-ninth Expert Panel**

Category 1:

| PD/PPD NUMBER       | TITLE  | SUBMITTING COUNTRY |
|---------------------|--|--------------------|
| PD 936/24 Rev.1 (F) | Protection and Restoration of Forest Lands for Water Catchment, Regulation and Recharge in the Upper Salinas River Watershed, Guatemala, as a Climate Change Adaptation Measure to Ensure Water Supply for the Guatemalan Population | Guatemala          |
| PD 938/24 Rev.1 (F) | Sustainable Management of Production Forests Driven by Traditional Communities in the Brazilian Amazon   | Brazil             |
| PD 940/24 Rev.1 (F) | Strengthening Effective Forest Area Designation and Customary Rights in East Nusa Tenggara Province as a Precondition of Achieving Sustainable Forest Management   | Indonesia          |
| PD 941/24 Rev.1 (F) | Capacity Building for Private and Community Tree Farmers in Relation with the Sustainable Management of Forest Plantations in Southern Benin   | Benin              |

The Committee recommended that the Category 1 proposals be recommended to the Council for funding by ITTO donors.

#### **Item 8 - Report on Completed Projects and Pre-projects and Biennial Work Programme-based Activities**

[Document CRF(LVIII)/2]

The Committee considered the completed projects contained in Document CRF(LVIII)/2 and noted that no pre-project and two projects were to be declared complete by the Council.

##### **8.1 Completed Pre-project(s)**

None.

##### **8.2 Completed Project(s)**

**1) PD 452/07 Rev.5 (F) Sustainable Management of Production Forests at the Commercial Scale in the Brazilian Amazon – Phase II (Brazil)**

The Secretariat noted that the implementation of this project, which was funded by the Government of Japan, contributed to strengthening the adoption of good forest management practices by medium and large-scale timber enterprises in the Brazilian Amazon. The Secretariat informed the Committee that the project Completion Report and Final Financial Audit Report have been satisfactorily received by the Secretariat.

The Brazilian Delegation thanked the Government of Japan for funding the project and ITTO for the technical supervision. While presenting the main project outcomes, as summarized in the Committee Document CRF(LVIII)/2, Brazil recalled that this project was built on the outcomes of an earlier ITTO project, PD 57/99 Rev.2 (F) "Sustainable Management of Production Forests at the Commercial Scale in the Brazilian Amazon – Phase I". The presentation is available on the ITTO website.

The Japanese Delegation congratulated the presenter for summarizing the main project outcomes which had been achieved despite restrictions and delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic that impacted the project implementation.

The Committee noted that all requirements for the completion of this project have been met in accordance with the rules and procedures of ITTO. The Committee therefore decided to consider the project PD 452/07 Rev.5 (F) as completed.

**2) PP-A/59-353 Enhancing the Value of Secondary Natural Forests through their Sustainable Use, Generating Rural Employment in a Post-Covid Context (Costa Rica)**

The Secretariat noted that the implementation of this project, which was funded by the Government of Japan, contributed the conservation of secondary forests and their ecosystem services, and its specific objective was to establish tools to increase the value of secondary forests for their conservation and development.

The Costa Rican Delegation thanked the Government of Japan for funding the BWP Project-based Activity PP-A/59-353 and ITTO for the technical supervision. Costa Rica presented the project outcomes, as summarized in the Committee Document CRF(LVIII)/2, and emphasized the need to replicate the project in other regions of Costa Rica. The presentation is available on the ITTO website.

The Brazilian Delegation congratulated the presenter on the project outcomes and asked about the types of incentives used for motivating forest smallholders in Costa Rica in their work on the conservation of secondary forests and their ecosystem services.

The Korean Delegation thanked the presenter for the presentation and took the opportunity to share the new techniques being developed by Korea for the identification of timber species using DNA markers in relation to the implementation of legal and sustainable supply chains for forest governance.

The Togolese Delegation congratulated Costa Rica on the project outcomes and expressed interest in information-sharing so that Togo could learn lessons from Costa Rica and Korea.

The Japanese Delegation thanked the presenter and informed the Committee that the implementing agency had been regularly interacting with the Embassy of Japan in Costa Rica and sharing relevant information and reports during the project implementation.

In response to the question asked by Brazil, the Costa Rican Delegation informed the Committee that the Government of Costa Rica established a payment mechanism funded by taxes on fossil fuels which were then used to provide financial incentives to forest smallholders in Costa Rica. He also noted that Costa Rica is ready to share information with any interested partners on the project.

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the Completion Report, Technical Reports and the Final Financial Audit Report had been delivered by the Executing Agency in accordance with the Project Agreement.

The Committee noted that all requirements for the completion of this BWP Project-based Activity have been met in accordance with the rules and procedures of ITTO. The Committee therefore decided to consider the BWP Project-based Activity PP-A/59-353 as completed.



## **Item 9 - Ex-post Evaluations**

### **(A) Ex-post Evaluation Reports** [Document CRF(LVIII)/4]

The Joint Session of Committees took note of the report of the assessment of the forest fire thematic group ex-post evaluation on two following completed projects: PP-A/56-340-1 implemented in Indonesia and PP-A/56-340-2 implemented in Peru. The ex-post evaluation was carried out in Indonesia by Professor Dr. Bambang Hero Saharjo and in Peru by Professor Dr. María Isabel Manta Nolasco, under the supervision of the international consultant Professor Dr. Johann Georg Goldammer.

The primary purpose was to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the implementation of both completed forest fire projects to determine the successful and unsuccessful outcomes, the reasons of successes and failures, while highlighting the contribution of both projects towards the achievement of sustainable forest management good practices in Indonesia and Peru.

The consultant Dr. Lucy Amissah made a presentation on the outcomes of the assessment of both ex-post evaluations at the Joint Session of the Committees. She highlighted that both completed projects contributed to the following major aspects: promotion of approaches for land preparation without using fire as a tool, the utilization of innovative technology for fire suppression and detection including the smart patrol information system on forest fire, and satellite monitoring for early warnings, and community involvement in the implementation of fire management strategies.

Following the presentation, the US Delegation thanked the presenter for sharing the results of the analysis and lessons learned which could be considered for revising and updating the ITTO guidelines on fire management in tropical forests and for future ITTO project proposals related to wildfire management. The USA proposed to include in the revised ITTO guidelines some references to professional qualification required for fire management personnel, the importance of considering local traditions, and the creation of standardized training techniques. The USA noted the inclusion in the ex-post evaluation report of national and regional Centers of excellence in forest fire management. Based on their experience with interagency fire coordination, the USA suggested that these specific regional centers should have clearly defined mandates and closely coordinate with emergency operations centers and have direct linkages to other forest fire national and local policy and protocols and efforts. Lastly, the USA encouraged ITTO to take into account developments of the Global Fire Management Hub in ITTO's future fire work.

Supporting the US comments, the Canadian Delegation also congratulated the presenter and emphasized the importance of the work that the ITTO is doing on guidelines in relation to the fire management in tropical forests. Canada encouraged ITTO to be in connection and seek synergies with the Global Fire Management Hub (GFMH) and the International Forest Model Network. They emphasized the importance of integrated fire management as well as early warning systems.

The Secretariat thanked Canada and the United States for their comments and informed the Committee that ITTO is an active member of the Global Wildland Advisory Group of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, as well as of the International Liaison Committee for the Wildfire Committee and Global Fire Management Hub. ITTO was also directed recently by the United Nations Forum on Forests to develop a collaborative initiative on fire on a broader scale than just tropical forests. Therefore, ITTO will be working very closely with FAO and other CPF members to develop that joint initiative in the coming year.

The Secretariat also informed the Committee that approaches piloted under the ITTO Indonesia project were submitted to the International Climate Competition of Green Eurasia 2024. It received first place in the category of sustainable land use, forestry and water management for the work that Indonesia is doing on zero burning practices and alternative developments for land preparation without fire. These innovations were presented at a side event at the UNFCCC COP29 held in Baku, Azerbaijan in November 2024.

### **(B) Selection of Projects for Ex-post Evaluations 2024** [Document CRF(LVIII)/5]

The Secretariat suggested potential thematic groupings of ex-post evaluations for 2025-2026 for Committee's consideration. The short list included the following 4 thematic groups:

Forest Management / Inventory (2 completed projects)

Community Participation in SFM (2 completed projects)  
Forest Rehabilitation / Landscape Restoration / Secondary Forest Management (6 completed projects)  
Mangroves (1 completed project).

The Committee selected the thematic grouping of Forest Management / Inventory for ex-post evaluation for 2025-2026.

**Item 10 – Review of Projects, Pre-projects, and BWP Project-based Activities in Implementation**  
[Document CRF(LVIII)/3]

To expedite proceedings, in accordance with the Section VI of Annex A to Decision 4(XXV), the Committee was informed that Committee discussions and Secretariat updates were limited to the following projects, pre-projects and activities:

- Had implementation problems.
- Key recent developments.
- Requesting additional funds.
- Requesting extension of more than six months beyond the original duration; or
- Requesting essential major modifications of the work plan and budget.

**10.1 Projects and Pre-projects in Implementation**

The Committee took note of the status of projects and pre-projects that had been approved by the Council, as contained in Document CRF(LVIII)/3, categorized as:

- 10.1 projects and pre-projects in implementation (nineteen projects).
- 10.2 BWP project-based activities in implementation (three projects).

**1) PD 712/13 Rev.3 (F) Enhancing the Implementation of Landscape Management of Giam Siak Kecil-Bukit Batu Biosphere Reserve (GSK-BR) in Riau Province of Sumatra Island, Sumatra - Phase I (Indonesia)**

The Secretariat reported that this project, initially approved in the 2014 Project Cycle, received extensions and phased implementation beginning in April 2023 in Riau, Indonesia, with partial funding secured from the Republic of Korea during ITTC 54 and ITTC 55. Since April 2023, the project is being implemented in Riau province of Indonesia.

The project aims to strengthen the framework for sustainable management and conservation of the Giam Siak Kecil – Biosphere Reserve by developing an integrated strategic management plan, strengthening institutional capacity and enhancing community participation and coordination. Key achievements include updated bio-physical and socio-economic data, 15-village FGDs on the benefits of GSK-BR, development of an Integrated Management Plan, and a multi-dimensional data integration website, with ongoing efforts to enhance the capacities of local communities and governments for effective implementation.

The effective establishment and functioning of the Management Coordinating Board for GSK-BB is crucial to achieving the project's ultimate goals. However, according to the latest progress report, the mandate of the current Management Coordinating Board has expired and is pending renewal approval by the regional authority.

The delegation of Indonesia highlighted recent changes in national leadership and the recent governor election, which have contributed to structural shifts in governance. These changes have resulted in delays in forming the new Management Coordinating Board for GSK-BB. They noted they will investigate further progress with the regional government on renewing the current Management Coordinating Board's mandate.

The United States delegation expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Secretariat and the Executing Agency in navigating these challenges, and acknowledged the complexities introduced by the recent separation of Indonesia's Ministry of Environment and Forestry into two distinct entities: the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Forestry. In addition, the US delegate requested an update on the progress of the project from the Secretariat and that they be invited to future PSC meetings on this project.

**2) PD 764/14 Rev.3 (F) Enabling Customary Landowners to Participate Effectively in Community Forest Management Schemes Within 6 Pilot Areas of PNG (PNG)**

The Secretariat informed the Committee that all project activities have been completed and a satisfactory completion report received by the Secretariat in May 2024. However, despite regular reminders to the Secretariat the Executing Agency, a final financial audit had not been submitted nor any indication of when it can be expected.

The Delegation of Papua New Guinea expressed its appreciation to the Government of Japan as donor country for this project and recalled the importance of the project outcomes in contributing to forest management in PNG. The PNG informed the Committee that the delay in submitting the final financial audit report is due to the long period of the illness of the project financial officer who has not been able to produce the financial statements required by the financial auditor, while assuring that the final financial audit report will be submitted to ITTO, as soon as possible.

The Japanese Delegation encouraged PNG to make efforts for the submission of the final financial audit report, as soon as possible, to avoid further delay in the declaring this project as completed by the Committee.

The Committee took note of the comments of the delegation of PNG and asked PNG to submit final financial audit report, in due time, so that the project could be reported as fully completed at the 59th Session of the committee on Reforestation and Forest Management, in 2025.

**3) PD 808/16 Rev.5 (F) Conservation of African Barwood (*Pterocarpus Erinaceus* Poir) in the Gazetted Forests of La Palee and Boundiali in Northern Côte d'Ivoire with the Participation of Local Communities - Phase I (Côte d'Ivoire)**

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the project was partially financed with an amount of US\$320,000 thanks to the generous contribution of Japan during the inter-session period between ITTC 58 and ITTC 59. As the project was partially funded, it was revised into a phased project, which was approved in March 2023, with the Phase 1 to be implemented with the abovementioned amount. The implementation of the Project started with the disbursement of the first installment of ITTO funds in December 2023.

The Delegation of Côte d'Ivoire thanked the Japan as donor country and presented the main project outcomes, as summarized in the Committee Document CRF(LVIII)/3 through a presentation and short video, which are available on the ITTO website. Côte d'Ivoire appealed to donors about the need to have the second phase funded by end of 2025, so there will be no gap between both phases.

The Togolese Delegation congratulated Côte d'Ivoire on the project outcomes and expressed interest in information-sharing on this timber species, which is common to both countries, so that Togo could learn lessons from Côte d'Ivoire.

The Ghanaian Delegation thanked Côte d'Ivoire for the project outcomes and asked a question about how the project encouraged gender mainstreaming and avoided child labor in the restoration of degraded forests (in nurseries, during silviculture treatments, harvesting, etc.). Côte d'Ivoire says that it takes the issue of child labor seriously and endeavors not to engage child labor in its projects.

Côte d'Ivoire also noted that they are happy to share any information in relation to the questions asked by the Delegations of neighboring countries in West Africa (Ghana and Togo).

The Committee thanked the Delegation of Côte d'Ivoire for the presentation and short video on the main project outcomes and took note of the appeal launched for the funding of the second phase of the project PD 808/16 Rev.5 (F).

**4) PD 836/17 Rev.2 (F) Enhancing Capacity of Local Communities and Forest Administration to Effectively Implement Community Forestry Programme (CFP) in Kratie and Mondulkiri Provinces of Cambodia (Cambodia)**

The Secretariat reported that the Cambodia Forestry Administration has been implementing a project since October 2021 to promote sustainable forestry practices and enhance local livelihoods. The project, originally planned for 36 months, was granted a no-cost extension and is now set to conclude in December

2024. The project focuses on advancing the community forestry program (CFP) in the Kratie and Monduliri provinces by strengthening the capacities of local communities and the Forest Administration.

Key achievements include the publication and dissemination of guidelines for community forest management, the development of a standard operating procedure for forest patrolling and distribution of 250 copies to stakeholders, and the introduction of small seed fund system and agroforestry initiatives to support economic sustainability. These activities have enabled communities to integrate sustainable practices into their daily lives while contributing to the conservation of forest ecosystems. The Secretariat also presented a short video highlighting the microcredit system with local communities, one of the project's key outcomes.

Following the video presentation, the delegation of Panama requested additional information on the sustainability of the village-level microcredit system. The Secretariat clarified that all community forests in Cambodia are first registered with the government, and for the microcredit program, the Forestry Administration regularly monitors activity records. In addition to paying for forest patrols, profits made from interest on loans from the micro-credit system are reinvested into the microcredit system to increase the capital made available to the community,

The US delegation appreciated that involvement of women project as shown in the video and inquired about whether the project was collecting gender specific data to determine progress on ITTO's guidelines on gender equality. The Secretariat noted that currently we do not collect this information, but we will find a way to collect gender specific data on this project and others going forward.

**5) PD 849/17 Rev.2 (F) Increasing Commercial Reforestation Competitiveness in Costa Rica (Costa Rica)**

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the project intends to increase the competitiveness of commercial reforestation by developing effective financing schemes for forest plantations, increase their productivity, and develop value-added timber products, which in turn will improve forest producers' income. The second project technical committee (PTC) was convened in October 2024 with participation of representatives of both donors. During the PTC it was noted that project activities are being implemented on schedule and that the project is on track to be completed in 2025.

**6) PD 902/19 Rev.3 (F) Management of Upper Baram Forest Area for Conservation and Sustainable Development with Involvement of Local Communities, Upper Baram, Sarawak, Malaysia (Malaysia)**

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the second project steering committee (PSC), with participation of some of the donors, took place after a field visit to the Upper Baram Forest Area (UBFA) by ITTO and Forest Department Sarawak officials in October 2024. During the PSC meeting the Government of Sarawak requested the termination of the project, as per quote from Datu Haji Hamden, Director of Forests, "the changing and differing aspirations of some stakeholders, particularly NGOs, have created insurmountable challenges. Consequently, through the Forest Department, the Sarawak government has regrettably requested the termination of the UBFA project under Article XI Section 11.01 c of the project agreement, citing that its continued approval and funding no longer serve the project's objectives."

The Malaysian Delegation thanked the project donors (Government of Japan, The City of Basel, Switzerland and The Bruno Manser Funds). However, Malaysia confirmed to the Committee its request for the termination of the project PD 902/19 Rev.3 (F).

The Japanese Delegation took note of the request of Malaysia for the termination of the project PD 902/19 Rev.3 (F) and asked the Secretariat to properly implement the project termination process.

The Committee acknowledged the termination of the project PD 902/19 Rev.3 (F) to be finalized by the Secretariat in compliance with the rules and procedures applying to ITTO projects.

**7) PD 905/19 Rev.3 (F) Providing Support for the Sustainable Management of the Fosse-aux-Lions Gazetted Forest in the Savanna Region in Togo – Phase I (Togo)**

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the project was partially financed with an amount of US\$200,000 thanks to the generous contribution of Japan during the inter-session period between ITTC 58 and ITTC 59. As the project was partially funded, it was revised into a phased project, which was approved in

March 2023, with the Phase 1 to be implemented with the abovementioned amount. The Project implementation started with the disbursement of the first installment of ITTO funds in August 2023.

The Togolese Delegation thanked the Japan as the donor country and presented the main project outcomes, as summarized in the Committee Document CRF(LVIII)/3. The presentation and short video, which are available on the ITTO website, was an opportunity for Togo to launch an appeal to donors about the need to have the second phase funded by the 60th Session of the International tropical timber Council, as the first phase will be completed by end of February 2025.

The Committee thanked the Togolese Delegation for the presentation and short video on the main project outcomes and took note of the appeal launched for the funding of the second phase of the project PD 905/19 Rev.3 (F).

**8) PD 916/21 Rev.2 (F) Pilot Sustainable Management Systems for Secondary Natural Forests in the Collective Afro-descendant Community Territory of the Bajo Calima Community Council, Municipality of Buenaventura, Colombia (Colombia)**

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the start of this project encountered significant delays due to internal bureaucratic approvals within Colombia. Upon request, the Japan government (main donor to the project's phase I) granted an extension to end of 2024. The first project steering committee took place in October 2024, and the first installment of funds was done in early November 2024 following the approval of the first yearly plan of operations. Upon request of the Japanese Embassy in Colombia, the Government of Colombia sent a progress report in mid-November along with a formal request for a non-cost extension until the end of April 2025 to fully complete phase one.

The Colombian Delegation thanked the project donors (Government of Japan and the Government of USA) and explained that the delay in finalizing the signing process by Colombian project signatory parties was due the long process internal review by these parties. Colombia reiterated their request for a further extension during Committee, but this time until the end of June 2025 after internal consultation and with the Japanese delegation at ITTC60.

The Delegation of Japan requested formal correspondence from Government of Colombia, through ITTO Secretariat, fully explaining the reasons for this second request for extension and what caused its unforeseen delay since the last extension request. Upon receiving this letter, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan will consult and convey its final decision regarding the non-cost extension request.

The US Delegation thanked Japan for providing funds in addition to those already provided by USA, so that the project could start its implementation. The USA encouraged Colombia to initiate the project implementation with funds already made available by ITTO.

The Committee took note of Colombia's no-cost extension request and the next steps requested by the Japanese government in order to decide on the approval of the extension request.

**9) PD 931/23 (F) Promoting SFM and Local Wood Consumption through Capacity Building and Improving Regulation in the North Zone, Costa Rica (Costa Rica)**

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the project's specific objective is the promotion of sustainable forest management through capacity development of forests owner, regulation and procedure improvement, and increased demand for local wood. The first project technical committee (PTC) meeting took place in October 2024. The Committee noted that project activities are on track. Progress has been ahead of schedule on several activities.

The Committee took note of the above information shared on the current progress of project PD 931/23 (F).

**10) PD 932/23 (F)                      Assessment and Dissemination of Knowledge and Experience for Ex-Situ Conservation and Plantation of Caoba in Northern Coastal Area, Peru (Peru)**

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the project's objective was to promote the conservation and sustainable use of endangered Caoba in the Northern coastal area of Peru while specifically conducting a comprehensive analysis of successful experiences and valuable lessons learned from ex-situ conservation and plantations of Caoba in the northern coastal area of Peru.

The Peruvian delegation provided a recorded virtual presentation on main project outcomes and thanked the Korea as the donor country. The recorded virtual presentation, which is available on the ITTO website, was also an opportunity to present the outline of the future project which will sustain the achievements of the project PD 932/23 (F).

The Delegation of Panama underscored the importance of proper field phytosanitary measures in regard to plantation Coaba mahogany.

The Committee thanked the Peruvian Delegation for the recorded virtual presentation and asked the Secretariat to forward Panama's question to the implementing agency of the project PD 932/23 (F).

**11) PP-A/56-342A                      Strengthening SFM Standards and Timber Legality Framework in Myanmar (Myanmar)**

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the project intends to address the challenges Myanmar faces with market access for timber and on the continued improvement of Myanmar Forest Certification System (MFCS), and Myanmar Timber Legality Assurance System (MTLAS). According to the executing agency's completion report submitted in July 2024, key accomplishments included the launch of forest management certification and chain of custody (CoC) training programmes, focusing on PEFC standards, due diligence systems, CoC methods, and multi-site certification; MFCC, in collaboration with Green Gold Industry, developed and implementation of the Digitalization of Timber Tracking System (DTTS), which included establishing a training of trainers programme; comprehensive revisions to MTLAS and MFCS; several knowledge-sharing and awareness raising events, and regular updates were provided through the MFCC website, newsletters, and social media platforms. MFCC also organized study tours to Viet Nam and Malaysia in March and June 2024, respectively, to gain further insights. The completion report states that the project made significant contributions to MFCC by enabling the reorganization of various aspects of the institution, systems, and stakeholder engagement.

The Delegation of Myanmar thanked Japan as donor country and presented the main project outcomes, as summarized in the Committee Document CRF(LVIII)/3. The presentation is available on the ITTO website. The executing agency also requested to utilize unspent funds in the amount of USD 25,216 minus the cost of the final audit (which is ongoing by ITTO appointed auditor) to develop a sustainability plan, to ensure the sustainability of project outcomes.

The Committee thanked the Myanmar and Japan for their comments on the project's implementation and took note of Japan's no-objection to the Myanmar's request to utilize the unspent funds in the amount of USD 25,216 minus the cost of the final audit (which is ongoing by an ITTO appointed auditor) to develop a sustainability plan for the outcomes of PP-A/56-342A, and asked the Secretariat to take appropriate action to formalize the abovementioned no-objection.

**12) PP-A/59-351                      Community-Based Restoration of Cyclone-Affected Vulnerable Mangrove Forests through the Empowerment of Coastal Communities and Women in the Rewa Delta, Fiji (Fiji)**

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the funds were made available by the Government of Japan for the project implementation period from April 2023 to March 2024. The project agreement was signed in June 2023 by ITTO and the Ministry of Fisheries and Forestry of Fiji, and the disbursement of the first installment of ITTO funds was made in January 2024 after a 6-month process for selecting and hiring of the project coordinator by the Forest Department of Fiji. An extension of project implementation was approved by Japan until December 2024.

The Delegation of Fiji thanked Japan as donor country and presented the main project outcomes, as summarized in the Committee Document CRF(LVIII)/3. The presentation is available on the ITTO website. Due

to several unforeseen factors, including a new governmental financial information system (FMIS) and delays in supply of domestic timber for some activities of the project, Fiji requested a further 6-month extension of the project until the end of June 2025.

Like the process explained under PD 916/21, the Delegation of Japan is requesting formal correspondence clearly explaining the reasons behind the delay in completing the implementation of this project so that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan can formally decide on the extension.

PNG, as a fellow small island developing state, recognized the importance of the project activities to the communities and the mangrove environment of Fiji.

The Committee took note of Fiji's no-cost extension request and the next steps requested by the Japanese government to decide on the approval of the extension request.

**13) PP-A/59-352                      Community Empowerment in Forest Management and Forest Landscape Restoration in Upper Baram, Sarawak, Malaysia (Malaysia)**

The Malaysian delegation noted that during the latest PSC meeting, due to unforeseen circumstances they requested an extension of the project until June 2025.

**14) PP-A/60-370                      Integrated Project to Strengthen Sustainable Management Systems and Monitoring the Miombo Forest against Degradation Processes for Food Security, Rural Employment, and Climate Mitigation Action (Angola)**

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the funds were made available by the Government of Japan for the project implementation period from April 2024 to March 2025. The project agreement was signed in September 2024 by all project parties, after a 6-month process for the review of the Agreement by Angola's signatory parties. The disbursement of the first installment of ITTO funds, needed for the commencement of the project implementation, is pending until reception by the ITTO Secretariat of an acceptable Inception Report and its associated Detailed Work Plan.

The Committee took note that there was no Angolan Delegation attending the CRF58 Session to provide updated information and asked the Secretariat to interact with Angola to further progress on project implementation.

## **10.2 BWP Project-based Activities in Implementation**

**1) PP-A/54-331A                      Promoting Quality Timber Production in Smallholders and Community-based Teak and Other Valuable Species Plantations in the Tropics (BWP Activity 3)**

The Regional Project Coordinator, Prof. Yongyut Trisurat of the Kasetsart University, Thailand made a presentation before the Committee on the one-year progress of the project implementation, followed by a video presentation on the project activity in Cambodia.

The delegate of Cote d'Ivoire took the floor to congratulate the good progress of the project implementation. She looked forward to receiving more information on the results to be disseminated to authorities for reconsidering the lifting of the export band of teak wood and to encourage smallholders and growers to establish teak plantations. She expressed her wishes for the extension of the project's scope to cover activities in her country. The Secretariat took note the concerns of the Cote d'Ivoire delegate and will bring them into the attention of donor country, the Government of Germany.

The delegate of India told the Committee that the project is very important to get information on improving the teak supply chain and producing high quality plantation teak timber domestically in India by smallholders. The delegate informed that the MOU between the Indian Government and ITTO for the project has been signed and that the project activities in India have been initiated.

The Indonesian delegation informed the session about the delay of the signing MOU of the project because of the changes in the structure under the newly established government.

**2) PP-A/56-341B Support for Women's Groups with the Restoration of Forest Landscapes in the Prefectures of Blitta and Lacs, Togo – Phase III (Togo) (BWP Activity 8c)**

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the funds were made available by Soka Gakkai of Japan for the 12-month project implementation period which started in October 2023. The extension of the implementation period until 31 December 2024, without additional ITTO funds, was recommended by the project monitoring committee meeting held in September 2024.

The Delegation of Togo thanked Soka Gakai as donor institution and ITTO for the technical supervision of the project implementation. It made a presentation associated with a short video at the Joint Session of the Committees on the main project outcomes, as summarized in the Committee Document CRF(LVIII)/3. The presentation and short video, which are available on the ITTO website, were also an opportunity to launch an appeal to donors for more financial support to women groups involved in the restoration of degraded forest landscapes in Togo with REFACOF.

The Committee thanked the Delegation of Togo for sharing the main project outcomes at the Joint Session of the Committees and took note of the appeal launched for financial support to women groups involved in the restoration of degraded forest landscapes in Togo with REFACOF.

**Item 11 - Projects, Pre-projects, and BWP Project-based Activities Awaiting Implementation Agreement**

[Document CRF(LVIII)/3]

None.

**Item 12 – Projects and Pre-projects Awaiting Financing**

[Document CRF(LVIII)/3]

In accordance with ITTC Decision 2(X), Council approved projects which have not been funded within a validity period of 20 months may be revised and resubmitted to the (Committee) Council. Failing resubmission, the Project will lose its status as an approved Project and fall under the sunset provision.

Projects with an asterisk (\*) will become sunset between the 58<sup>th</sup> and 59<sup>th</sup> CRF Sessions.

The Chairperson emphasized the importance of ITTO projects to the conservation and sustainable forest management of tropical forest and local communities. He and informed the Committee that 9 projects are awaiting financing and encouraged the members- and other donors to finance these projects. [All the projects awaiting finance are listed on pages 6 of CRF(LVIII)/1 Rev.1].

- 1) PPD 203/23 Rev.1 (F)\* Support for the Promotion and Sustainable Management of Community Forests in the Oti Plain, Togo (Togo) [\$117,712.00]
- 2) PD 712/13 Rev.3 (F) Enhancing the Implementation of Landscape Management of Giam Siak Kecil-Bukit Batu Biosphere Reserve (GSK-BR) in Riau Province of Sumatra Island, Sumatra - Phase II (Indonesia) [\$248,154.00]
- 3) PD 808/16 Rev.5 (F) Conservation of African Barwood (Pterocarpus Erinaceus Poir) in the Gazetted Forests of La Palee and Boundiali in Northern Côte d'Ivoire with the Participation of Local Communities – Phase II (Côte d'Ivoire) [\$246,488.00]
- 4) PD 905/19 Rev.3 (F) Providing Support for the Sustainable Management of the Fosse-aux-Lions Gazetted Forest in the Savanna Region in Togo - Phase II (Togo) [\$282,624.16]
- 5) PD 925/22 Rev.2 (F)\* Support to the Local Communities of the Mono Plain for the Promotion and Sustainable Management of Community Forests in Togo (Togo) [\$591,808.00]
- 6) PD 936/24 Rev.1 (F) Protection and Restoration of Forest Lands for Water Catchment, Regulation and Recharge in the Upper Salinas River Watershed, Guatemala, as a



Climate Change Adaptation Measure to Ensure Water Supply for the Guatemalan Population (Guatemala) [\$496,959.10]

- 7) PD 938/24 Rev.1 (F) Sustainable Management of Production Forests Driven by Traditional Communities in the Brazilian Amazon (Brazil) [\$678,531.00]
- 8) PD 940/24 Rev.1 (F) Strengthening Effective Forest Area Designation and Customary Rights in East Nusa Tenggara Province as a Precondition of Achieving Sustainable Forest Management (Indonesia) [\$599,555.00]
- 9) PD 941/24 Rev.1 (F) Capacity Building for Private and Community Tree Farmers in Relation with the Sustainable Management of Forest Plantations in Southern Benin (Benin) [\$537,712.00]

The Chairperson informed the Committee that six concept notes relating to CRF are awaiting the expression of interest and encourages the members and other donors to have a look at these concept notes and consider them for financing and full proposal development. They are available on ITTO website through the following link: [https://www.itto.int/council\\_committees/projects/](https://www.itto.int/council_committees/projects/)

#### **Item 13 - Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for 2025**

Mr. Björn Merckell (Sweden) was elected as the Chairperson of the CRF for 2025. The Vice-Chairperson of the Committee for 2025 will be announced by the Producer Caucus at a later date.

#### **Item 14 - Dates and Venues of the Fifty-ninth and Sixtieth Sessions of the Committee**

The Fifty-ninth Session of the Committee will be held in conjunction with the Sixty-first Session of the International Tropical Timber Council in 2025.

The Sixtieth Session of the Committee will be held in conjunction with the Sixty-second Session of the International Tropical Timber Council in 2026.

#### **Item 15 - Other Business**

The Secretariat informed the Committee of the new ITTO-AFoCO Joint Programme currently being developed. It is anticipated that a call for CNs to target countries will be launched in the first or second quarter of 2025. This Joint Programme has four main pillars for project qualification: a focus on Community Based Forestry Enterprises, the advancement of tropical timber production and trade, clear indicators that outputs contribute as Nature Based Solutions for climate change, and blended financing from both private and public sectors.

#### **Item 16 - Recommendations to the International Tropical Timber Council**

The Committee emphasized the importance of ITTO projects to the conservation and sustainable forest management of tropical forest and local communities and recommends to Council the projects and CNs pending financing.

#### **Item 17 - Report of the Session**

[Document CRF(LVIII)/6]

The Committee accepted this Report for submission to the Council.

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