



**INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL
TIMBER COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE ON
REFORESTATION AND FOREST MANAGEMENT**

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

Item 1 - Opening of the Session

The Fifty-ninth Session of the Committee on Reforestation and Forest Management (CRF) was opened on 29 October 2025 by Mr. Björn Merckell (Sweden), Chairperson of the CRF. The list of participants is presented in Document ITTC(LXI)/Info.2.

Item 2 - Adoption of Agenda and Organization of Work

The Provisional Agenda for the CRF, as contained in Document CRF(LIX)/1 Rev.1, was adopted by the Committee. In accordance with agreed past procedures directed by Council, Agenda items 4, 5, 7, and 10(A) were considered at the Joint Session of the Committees convened on 28 and 29 October 2025. The Chairperson of the CRF proposed to organize the Session in the following order: Agenda Item(s) 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10(B), 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19.

Item 3 - Admission of Observers

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

Item 4 - ITTO Annual Market Discussion - 2025

The Committees noted the summary of the ITTO Annual Market Discussion – 2025, held in the Joint Session of All Committees as part of the Trade and Markets Day on 28 October 2025, as contained in Appendix A to Document CEM-CFI(LIX)/4. The theme of the Market Discussion was “The Timber Industry Reimagined: Lessons from Market Struggles and Sustainability Efforts”. Ms. Ashley Amidon and Dr. Ivan Tomaselli (TAG Co-coordinators) moderated the Market Discussion.

The following feature presentations were made during the Market Discussion (available at <https://www.itto.int/ittc-61/presentations/>):

Ms. Emily Fripp Efeca (UK)	<i>Promoting Sustainable Tropical Timber Products Trade and Changing Consumer Perception: A New Phase</i>
Mr. Ngo Sy Hoai Vietnam Timber & Forest Products Association	<i>Learning from Viet Nam : How to Develop Value- added Tropical Timber Industry</i>
Mr. Jaime Sotela Montero Cámara Forestal Madera e Industria de Costa Rica	<i>The Future of the Tropical Timber Industry in the Central America Region – Towards a Comprehensive Agenda for Sustainability, Competitiveness and Legality</i>
Mr. João Baldasso CIPEM (Brazil)	<i>Forest Plantations in Latin America: Contributions to Ensure the Sustainable and Competitive Global Supply of Tropical Timber</i>
Ms. Tullia Baldassarri INTERHOLCO AG	<i>The Tropical Forest Industry in Africa: Efforts to Promote Integrated Social, Environmental and Economic Development</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(LIX)/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]

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 highlighted the training workshop on criteria and indicators (C&I) held in Trinidad and Tobago in 2024, noting that its report and presentations are available on the ITTO website. The Secretariat also pointed out that further funds were needed to organize two additional C&I workshops in Africa, one for African anglophone and another for African francophone members.

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

The Secretariat introduced the prototype of the Tropical Integrated Fire Management Toolkit. The Toolkit's primary goal is to establish an online clearinghouse of curated existing fire knowledge resources specifically focused on tropical forests. It will serve as a single, reliable access point for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers, structured around the internationally recognized 5Rs Fire Framework (Review and analysis, Risk reduction, Readiness, Response, and Recovery).

Three regional consultants have been engaged, resulting in the collection of over 400 resources currently undergoing validation. The Toolkit focuses on practical information such as guidelines, training manuals, legislative frameworks, and weblinks to significant decision-making tools. The prototype design emphasizes user-friendliness, scalability, and optimization for various devices.

A "Contribute knowledge resources" function allows users to submit materials; however, all submissions will require Secretariat's curation to maintain database integrity. The Secretariat anticipates the first version to be released publicly in the first quarter of 2026. The Secretariat expressed its gratitude to the governments of United States of America, Japan, and Canada for their contributions to this initiative, and noted that additional financial resources are needed for the Toolkit's long-term upkeep and optimized functionality.

The Secretariat explained that ITTO leads on a new CPF Joint Initiative on "Integrated Fire Management (IFM) in Tropical Forests," with partners including FAO, GFMC, RECOFTC, and UNFF. ITTO holds a specialized niche focusing on tropical IFM issues.

Colombia appreciated ITTO's collaboration with other organizations in the fire sphere and highlighted the upcoming Call of Action on Integrated Fire Management and Wildfire Resilience at CoP30 being led by the efforts of Brazil in collaboration with FAO.

The delegate of Canada expressed support for the IFM Toolkit, noting that wildfires remain a priority for many members. In this context, Canada and the G7 developed the Kananaskis Wildfire Charter to raise global awareness on the prevention, response, and recovery from wildfire. Regarding the long-term management of the tool, Canada requested clarification on the expected contributions for its upkeep and maintenance. Canada also suggested exploring the use of artificial intelligence (AI) for maintenance and updates. Finally, Canada sought clarification on the planned collaboration between the Secretariat and the FAO Global Fire Management Hub.

The Secretariat clarified that ITTO's Toolkit is the first of its kind, and if the Hub develops a global clearinghouse, it will hopefully reference ITTO's Toolkit as a component rather than duplicating the effort. Earlier this year, ITTO hosted a side event on Tropical Fire at the Global Fire Management Hub Plenary. The conclusion of the side event recommended to the GFMH that a Tropical Fire Working Group be established. The GFMH Secretariat responded that they would like to focus on the first three already identified Working Groups during this upcoming year, before additional Working Groups are added. The hope is if such a WG is established, that ITTO will take a leading role

The Secretariat also acknowledged the member's request to incorporate references that address the ecological role of fire and Indigenous Peoples' knowledge. It was noted that regional consultants were instructed to include communities in their stakeholder advisory groups, suggesting that some of this knowledge may have already been captured. The Secretariat also noted that the volume of resources "mined" using AI was significantly greater than without its use. However, the Secretariat stressed that AI is still evolving, and some level of human screening by experts remains necessary.

The delegation of Brazil introduced the Amazon Regional Observatory (ORA), which provides real time early warning information and fire training in the Amazon, and encouraged ITTO to seek ways to work with them. The Secretariat confirmed that a link to ORA's website will be included as a resource in the Tropical IFM Toolkit.

The delegate of India highlighted the recommendations from its Country Led Initiative (CLI) presented in 2024 at the UNFF and requested that these recommendations be taken into consideration by the Council and within the Toolkit. The Secretariat reaffirmed that the clearinghouse's purpose is not to duplicate the work of other organizations or innovations in fire management. Instead, the Toolkit is designed to be a one-stop for effective dissemination of available resources to practitioners, policymakers, and communities.

The representative of Satellites on Fire stressed the urgency and importance of ITTO's Toolkit. The company introduced its early warning fire detection system which is supported by AI and satellites. The Secretariat recognized the leaps in technological innovation to address fire management needs, including the increasing number of applications available for use.

Regarding other fire related activities, ITTO organized a side-event during the 2025 Global Fire Management Hub Plenary focusing on responding to changing fire dynamics and needs in the tropics; participated in the RECOFTC-hosted Southeast Asia Fire Dialogue in May 2025 and will be a partner in the Southeast Asia Fire Mechanism; and participated in the recent UNFF Country Led Initiative on Fire hosted by the Government of Türkiye in October 2025. ITTO continues to participate in the quarterly meetings of the Wildfire International Fire Liaison Committee.

(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 recalled the ITTO Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration developed in collaboration with several partners under the Joint Initiative of the Collaborative Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration which were published in 2020. The Secretariat informed that a series of virtual workshops were carried out between 2021 and 2023 to disseminate the guidelines in Asia and Latin America.

The Secretariat noted that for Africa, physical workshops have been identified as the most suitable vehicle for dissemination and that with the funds received in late 2025, there are plans for conducting the two workshops in 2026, one for anglophone and another for francophone members.

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

The Secretariat presented a video that showcases the activities and achievements of activities conducted under a previous phase in Togo. The Secretariat informed the Committee that two Biennial Work Programme based activities on forest landscape restoration led by women will be reported at CRF59, one in Togo to be declared as completed and another ongoing in Benin, both funded by Soka Gakkai. The Secretariat concluded by noting the potential of replication of the activity to empower other women groups in Africa.

(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 that the *ITTO/IUCN guidelines for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in tropical timber production forests*, first published in 1993 and revised in 2009, are being updated to incorporate new knowledge and guidance. ITTO has engaged a consultant to assist in this process and held an expert meeting to get feedback on the first draft of the updated guidelines in Mexico in June 2025, with a second expert meeting expected to take place in Asia in the first quarter of 2026.

The Secretariat noted that under the current memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat, ITTO published a brochure highlighting how the Organization's projects contribute to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF); submitted a case study on traditional knowledge, innovations, practices and technology of Indigenous Peoples and local communities for the global report on collective progress in the implementation of the KMGBF; and provided inputs to the CBD's Strategic review and analysis on their current expanded programme of work on forest biodiversity in the context of the KMGBF. The Secretariat also participated in the CBD's Forest Ecosystem Restoration Initiative (FERI)'s 'Global Workshop on Forest Ecosystem Restoration Initiative' in Korea in August 2025.

To conclude, the Secretariat informed the Committee that ITTO is currently working with CBD Secretariat to renew the existing MoU which expires at the end of this year. The Secretariat further noted that under the current MoU, funding has predominantly come from ITTO funding for the projects implemented under the ITTO-CBD Collaborative Initiative. Thus far, the MOU has not strengthened the Organization's ability to access CBD financing mechanisms (GEF and Kunming Biodiversity Fund). The Secretariat expressed its gratitude to the governments of Canada, Australia, Japan, Korea, and the United States of America for the funding which allowed for the work conducted under this BWP.

Following the report by the Secretariat, the delegate of Colombia noted the collaboration between CBD and UNFF and informed that Colombia participated in a consultancy under this collaboration. The delegate stated that Colombia wishes to highlight ITTO's fundamental role in promoting biodiversity conservation in sustainably managed tropical forests.

The delegations of Canada and the European Union took the floor to express their appreciation for the Secretariat's report on this topic.

(v) Cooperation and consultation with the CPF, UNFF and others [Activity 10, ITTO BWP 2024-2025]

The Secretariat informed the Committee on its active engagement with the Collaborative Partnership on Forest (CPF) and other organizations, which allows a broader dissemination of the Organization's policy and field work and the recognition of the key role of tropical forest and tropical timber in international processes. The Secretariat highlighted the following activities undertaken in 2025:

- Active participation in UNFF country-led initiatives hosted by the governments of Morocco (Community Based Forest Management) and Türkiye (Fire)
- The development of a new ITTO-AFoCo Joint Programme on “Advancing Nature Based Solutions through Sustainable Based Community Based Timber and Forestry Based Enterprises”.
- Revitalization of ITTO’s engagement with ASEAN and participation in the ASEAN Working Group (WG) on Forest Management and ASEAN WG on Forest Products Development.

Following the report by the Secretariat, the delegate of Indonesia took the floor to express the importance of ITTO’s collaborative work within the CPF.

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

The Secretariat informed the Committee that despite the lack of recent funding pledged for this activity, ITTO was able to participate in the Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) Advisory Group; Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire; and the FRA Task Force in further refining the definition of “forest degradation”, utilizing remaining funds received in prior funding years. The Secretariat encouraged additional contributions to continue the work in the next biennium.

Item 6 - Biennial Work Programme of the Committees for 2026-2027

The Chairperson noted that the Committee was satisfied with the draft Biennial Work Programme 2026-2027.

Item 7 - Report of the Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals
[Document ITTC/EP-60]

The Joint Session of All Committees considered the report of the Sixtieth Virtual Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals. With the absence of the panel members attending the Council Session, Dr. Gerhard Bruelmann from the Secretariat presented the report, as contained in document ITTC/EP-60 (presentation available at <https://www.itto.int/ittc-61/presentations/>).

The Sixtieth Panel appraised eleven (11) proposals. The Panel noted that:

- Eight (8) Project Proposals (73 percent of the total) were commended to the Committee for final appraisal with minor modifications required (category 1); and
- Three (3) Project Proposal (27 percent of the total) will be sent back to proponent for essential revision, rated as category 2.

Item 8 - Projects and Pre-projects newly approved by EP
[Document ITTC/EP-60]

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-60, following the recommendations of the Expert Panel at its 60th Meeting as follows:

Sixtieth Expert Panel

Category 1:

PD/PPD NUMBER	TITLE	SUBMITTING COUNTRY
PD 930/22 Rev.2 (F)	Ecological Restoration and Sustainable Management of the Sitatunga Valley Natural Community Park in Benin	Benin
PD 939/24 Rev.2 (F)	Generation of Fundamental Information for the Second Cutting Cycle in the Amazon Rainforest	Brazil
PD 942/25 Rev.2 (F)	Developing Silvicultural Management Models for Forest Restoration Based on the Use of Seed Trees for the Establishment of Natural and Artificial Regeneration in the Province of Tahuamanu, Peru	Peru
PD 949/25 Rev.1 (F)	Strengthening Governance Systems and Local Regulatory Frameworks for the Resilience and Sustainability of Municipal and Community Forests in Western Guatemala	Guatemala
PD 950/25 Rev.1 (F)	Support to Local Communities for the Restoration and Sustainable Management of Mountain Forests in the Sub-Northern Region of Togo	Togo
PPD 206/25 Rev.1 (F)	Restoration and Sustainable Management of Gallery Forests in the Mono Delta Biosphere Reserve in Benin	Benin
PPD 208/25 Rev.1 (F)	Study for the Restoration and Sustainable Management of Forest Resources in the Mô Plain, Togo	Togo

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

Item 9 - Report on Completed Projects, Pre-projects, and BWP Project-based Activities

[Document CRF(LIX)/2]

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

9.1 Completed Pre-project(s)

None.

9.2 Completed Project(s)

- 1) **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 this project was initiated in October 2021 with funding from the Republic of Korea, the United States of America and Japan, and expressed sincere appreciation to all donors.

The total implementation period of this project was 39 months, including a three-month no-cost extension. The project was successfully completed at the end of December 2024. Project activities aimed to strengthen the capacity of local communities in supporting Cambodia's community forestry-based sustainable forest management (SFM) program. Community-level guidelines on SFM were developed, approved by government, disseminated, and utilized in training programs.

One of the notable outcomes was the successful community-based microcredit and agroforestry initiatives developed and implemented in collaboration with the Community Forestry Management Committees.

The delegate of Korea expressed its sincere gratitude for the Secretariat's efforts and the Cambodia Forestry Administration's support in the successful completion of the project, and expectation that this project will continue to sustain the enhancement of local communities and strengthen the community-based forest management program.

The delegate of Japan expressed its sincere appreciation to all stakeholders of this project, including the Forestry Administration of Cambodia, acknowledged that this project, through the use of microfinance, has contributed to improving local livelihoods and conserving community forests, serving as a model for sustainable forest management, and that Japan looks forward to its continued positive impacts on the sustainable development of community forestry and the well-being of local communities in Cambodia.

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 836/17 Rev.2 (F) as completed.

2) 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 reported on the satisfactory completion of this project funded by the Government of Japan, noting that expected outputs were achieved. The Secretariat highlighted the demarcation of the gazetted forest as a first step in addressing land conflicts and that outputs were in line with several sectoral policies and national programmes. The Secretariat informed the Committee that completion report and technical reports are available from the project search function of the ITTO website.

The delegate of Japan expressed its appreciation to the stakeholders involved in the project, the executive agency and the Secretariat noting that the project has implemented a wide range of activities relevant to land-use for sustainable forest management and forest conservation, including the development of a silvicultural manual and valued-added products.

The Committee therefore decided to consider the project PD 905/19 Rev.3 (F) as completed, subject to the submission of a satisfactory final annual report.

3) 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 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/56-341B as completed.

4) 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 that this BWP Project-based Activity, funded by the Government of Japan, achieved its expected outputs as outlined in the project document. The project significantly raised public and institutional awareness regarding sustainable restoration of a 15-hectares of mangrove forest in Fiji's Rewa Delta. It actively involved local communities, including women's groups, through training workshops on

mangrove management, sustainable harvesting, alternative livelihoods, and biogas used to reduce the pressure on mangrove fuelwood resources.

The delegate of Japan extended its congratulations on the completion of the project, noting that the project implemented a wide range of activities and expressed hope that it will continue contributing to local development in the future.

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 PP-A/59-351 as completed.

Item 10 - Ex-post Evaluations

(A) Ex-post Evaluation Report

[Document CRF(LIX)/4 and CRF(LIX)/5]

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: PD 741/13 Rev.3 (F) implemented in Peru and PP-A/53-323 implemented in the Congo Basin.

The primary purpose was to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the implementation of both completed capacity building 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.

The consultant, Maria Soledad Jaime Arteaga made a presentation before the Committee on PD 741/13 Rev.3 (F), "Capacity building for the sustainable management of tropical dry forests on the north coast of Peru" reporting that while the project was an operational success, it did not bring the expected behavioral changes due to an economic disconnect between sustainable use of natural resources versus survival needs and lack of institutional continuity. The consultant pointed out that improvements could be made to project design by stressing that projects should not be designed for implementation but rather for a transformational change. The consultant concluded that the project was not a failure but a learning laboratory, as it laid out a crucial foundation and provided a clear roadmap for future initiatives.

The consultant, Jean Marcial Bell, presented the ex-post evaluation of the BWP based-activity PP-A/53-323 "Capacity building for the implementation of legal and sustainable supply chains in the Congo Basin countries". The consultant noted that unfortunately outputs were not sustained after project completion, limiting the positive impacts of the project. The consultant suggested the creation of a post-project mechanism for follow up for future similar projects. The consultant concluded by stating that capacity building in legal and sustainable supply chains is urgently needed in the Congo Basin and suggested a remobilization and update of the training manual produced under the project.

Following the presentation by the two consultants, the delegate of Panama asked Ms Arteaga for a brief reflection on how to face the challenges mentioned in the project implemented in Peru. The consultant replied that projects need to be designed for long-term sustainability and not only for accountability. This requires a deep understanding of political realities and scenarios for adequate planning into the future and ensuring that outcomes are assumed and continued by the project beneficiaries.

The delegate of Peru noted that project PD 741/13 Rev.3 (F) was implemented between 2017 and 2019, which was followed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and inquired if that influenced the lack of project sustainability. The consultant informed that impacts of the pandemic were considered for the ex-post evaluation assessment and that the lack of appropriation of project outcomes by stakeholders was

independent of the pandemic. For example, there was no posting of project publications on SERFOR's webpage nor of the good practices documented by the project for future replication.

The delegate of the European Union thanked the consultants for their presentation, noted the value of independent evaluations and inquired how the Secretariat incorporates lessons learned into project manuals and guidelines. The Secretariat replied that recommendations from ex-post help members to improve project design (a bottom-up approach that differs to other organizations), thus contributing to building in-country capacity on project formulation. The Secretariat stressed that when project manuals or guidelines are developed or updated, lessons learned from project implementation and recommendations from ex-post evaluations are considered.

The delegate of Colombia, noted that executive agencies in implementing countries are normally smaller agencies not comparable to GEF or GFC implementers, reason for which is important for national governments to create links with its implementors and strengthen governance, as Colombia is doing with the University of Tolima, which has help in crafting relevant policy.

The Secretariat highlighted the necessity of national governments' commitment to sustain project outcomes. One of the consultants suggested the use of mid-term evaluations to ensure sound project design and sustainability of project outcomes.

(B) Selection of Projects for Ex-post Evaluations in 2026

[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 3 thematic groups:

Community Participation in SFM (2 completed projects)

Forest Rehabilitation / Landscape Restoration / Secondary Forest Management (6 completed projects)

Mangroves (1 completed project)

Specifically, the delegate of Colombia noted that an ex-post evaluation on mangroves would be useful, especially to explore the potential of this ecosystem for designing further initiatives for the Green Climate Fund.

The Committee selected PD 696/12 Rev.2 (F) "Community Based Restoration and Sustainable Management of Vulnerable Forests of the Rewa Delta, Viti Levu, Fiji", for ex-post evaluation for 2026.

Item 11 - Review of Projects, Pre-projects, and BWP Project-based Activities in Implementation

[Document CRF(LIXI)/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.

11.1 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(LIX)/3, categorized as:

11.1 projects and pre-projects in implementation (seventeen projects).

11.2 BWP project-based activities in implementation (two projects).

Interventions were made on the following 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 was divided into two phases to match available funding. The project started in April 2023 with financial support from the Republic of Korea.

The Secretariat noted that the new Riau Provincial Governor signed the establishment of the new Management Coordination Board of GSK-BR as a key governance mechanism and the project's phase I activities were completed successfully by September 2025.

The delegate of the Republic of Korea expressed its sincere appreciation to the executing agency and the Secretariat for the successful implementation of this project and acknowledged the importance of GSK-BR and of its newly established governance mechanism in Riau province.

The Indonesian delegation expressed its sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Korea and the ITTO for its continued assistance and noted that this project was designed to contribute to the realization of GSK-BR's management objective and basic functions. The Indonesia delegation expressed that this project would make a significant contribution to the development of forestry in Indonesia and hoped to receive the latest information on the funding for phase II.

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 reported on the satisfactory technical completion of the project, the lack of compliance by the executive agency on financial reporting and the unsatisfactory review of the financial audit report for the period of 1 January 2021 to 19 April 2024 submitted in August 2025. Based on violation of article 5.03 of the project agreement, the Secretariat recommended the termination of the project.

The delegate of Japan thanked the Secretariat for its recommendation and recognized Secretariat's efforts to address financial reporting, stating that the Government of Japan plays great importance on accountability to its taxpayers and requested the Secretariat continue encouraging the executing agency to resubmit an audit report that fully complies with ITTO standards rather than proceed with termination.

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

The Project Coordinator, Diego Camacho, made a presentation before the Committee on the implementation of the project highlighting the outputs achieved so far, including a financing scheme that combines payment for ecosystem services with a soft loan; a silvicultural package that published silvicultural manuals for selected species along with flyers on pests control; genetic silvicultural trials; and development of value-added timber products prototypes which could be sold domestically for uptake by the forest industry.

The presentation of the Project Coordinator was followed up by a video showcasing some aspects of project implementation and its outputs.

The delegate of Costa Rica expressed its gratitude to ITTO, the Governments of Japan and the United States of America, highlighting that the project has contributed to the development of national policies on timber production and marketing to support small-scale producers. The financial scheme mentioned in the Project Coordinator's presentation has been well received by stakeholders. It aims to increase women participation in rural activities, with a favorable interest rate for applicant women. More project proposals have been crafted to build on the project outputs.

The delegate of the European Union thanked the Project Coordinator for his presentation and asked about integration of biodiversity concerns within the project. The Project Coordinator replied that emphasis was given to native species in the promotion of forest plantations, thus ensuring conservation of the species. He noted that there is a positive interaction with birds and wildlife in forest plantations which has been documented but not yet published.

The delegate of Guatemala congratulated the Project Coordinator and noted that INAB has a strong collaboration with the executive agency to strengthen a monitoring system for forest plantations and demonstrate the profitability of forest plantations, he expressed interest in having access to project outputs. The Project Coordinator indicated that outputs will be posted on the ITTO website for further dissemination.

4) 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 representative of the Executive Agency, Omar de Melo, made a presentation before the Committees on the implementation of the project, highlighting outputs achieved so far including the established of demonstration restoration plots of 35 hectares with 28,000 trees of native species; training of 50 teachers and 40 forest producers (66% of which are women) on forest landscape restoration, along with silvicultural research. The Project Coordinator stressed the active engagement of the community, who determined the species to be used in the restoration plots. A significant impact is empowering community organization with two organized groups who actively participated in the production of seedlings and the establishment of demonstration plots; and an organized group of women who have become leaders managing their own initiatives.

The Project Coordinator expressed its gratitude to ITTO, the Government of Japan and Colombia's Ministry of Environment for its support towards the project. The presentation was followed by a video showcasing project implementation.

The delegate of Colombia expressed its gratitude for the financial support of the donors for this project and to the Executive Agency for working with Afro-descendant communities to build a better future for the country. He noted that the project is supporting government policy on green economy and invited members to visit Bajo Calima.

5) PD 927/22 Rev.2 (F) Development of an Information System on the Potential of Wood and Carbon to Support Sustainable Forest Management in South Kalimantan, Indonesia (Indonesia)

The Indonesian Delegate informed the Committee that there are currently some administrative matters being addressed to facilitate the project's implementation. Following an internal coordination meeting within the Ministry of Forestry, two key actions were recommended:

- i) To prepare a strategy for the upcoming Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting, which will be convened shortly; and
- ii) To hold a coordination meeting with the Directorate General of Treasury at the Ministry of Finance to obtain further administrative and financial guidance.

Indonesia remains committed to resolving these matters promptly to ensure the smooth commencement and effective delivery of the project's objectives.

6) 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 delegate of Peru expressed its gratitude to ITTO and the government of the Republic of Korea.

7) PD 945/25 (F) Emergency Actions to Secure Forest Conservation and Livelihoods of Traditional Communities in the Brazilian Federal Conservation Unit Verde Para Sempre (Brazil)

The delegate of Brazil expressed its gratitude to ITTO and the Government of Japan for its financial support which shows Japan's commitment to the sustainable development of the Amazon. She announced that Embrapa (the executive agency) recently received an award from FAO for its contributions to sustainable forest management, work was carried out under previous ITTO projects.

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

The delegate of Malaysia expressed its deep appreciation to ITTO and the Government of Japan for its financial support. She confirmed that the project completion report has been submitted to the Secretariat, which will be followed by the final audit report once completed.

9) PP-A/60-367 Critical Upliftment of Local Livelihoods: Urgent Actions for Community-Based Conservation and Development in Upper Baram, Sarawak, Malaysia (Malaysia)

The delegate of Malaysia expressed its appreciation to ITTO and the Government of Japan for funding this project. She confirmed the reception of the second instalment and stated that the project will be completed on time.

10) PP-A/60-368 Strengthening the Resilience of Indigenous Mayan Communities in Tropical Forests of the Yucatan Peninsula through the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Context of the Maya Train Project (Mexico)

A video on project implementation was presented before the Committee, followed by a brief report from the Secretariat which highlighted that the aim of the project is to raise awareness of traditional knowledge—in particular of Mayan communities—for the sustainable management and use- of biodiversity while promoting local livelihoods.

11.2 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 Delegate of India took the floor to clarify that the usual teak plantation rotation practiced previously in India was very high at 60-70 year rotation in forest, but now in the agroforestry sector, India is promoting short rotation teak plantations with 15 or 20 years of rotation due to improved breeding techniques that produce fast growing and high-yielding seedlings that are available for farmers to plant and receive faster financial returns on their investment.

Item 12 - Projects, Pre-projects, and BWP Project-based Activities Awaiting Implementation Agreement

[Document CRF(LIX)/3]

1) PD 944/25 (F) Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment of Potential Investment Areas (PIAs) within Forest Land in the Philippines (Philippines)

The Secretariat shared the status of this project, which was approved in December 2024 during ITTC60 and was fully funded by the Government of Japan. The review of draft project agreement was initiated in February 2025, with a progress discussion held on virtually on 4 April 2025.

According to the Philippines government's legislative process, the project agreement needs to be approved by government authorities, including the Office of the President - process which could take around 10 months. The ITTO Secretariat maintains monthly communications with the project proponent; the project agreement was endorsed by the DENR-Foreign-Assisted office in June 2025 and is currently under review by DENR Undersecretaries as of September 2025.

The delegate of the Philippines expressed its sincerest gratitude to the Government of Japan for funding this project. The delegation conveyed that the approval of the Special Presidential Authority (SPA), which authorizes the Philippines' Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources to sign the implementation agreement for this project, is still pending. In this context, the Philippines delegation requested an extension of the project duration considering the delays incurred from the internal approval process of the government of the Philippines.

The delegate of Japan noted that the contribution to this project comes from Japan's emergency response budget, thus requiring prompt implementation. He noted that a request of extension will require further consultations within the Japanese Government and asked the executing agency to submit a formal request of extension to Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs through ITTO Secretariat for consideration by the Government of Japan.

Item 13 - Projects and Pre-projects Awaiting Financing

[Document CRF(LIX)/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 59th and 60th CRF Sessions.

The Chairperson emphasized the importance of ITTO projects to the conservation and sustainable forest management of tropical forest and local communities. He informed the Committee that 13 projects are awaiting financing and encouraged the members and other donors to finance these projects. [All the projects awaiting finance are listed on pages 7-8 of CRF(LIX)/1 Rev.1].

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 II (Indonesia) [\$248,154.00]

- 2) 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]
- 3) PD 930/22 Rev.2 (F) Ecological Restoration and Sustainable Management of the Sitatunga Valley Natural Community Park in Benin (Benin) [\$453,376.00]
- 4) 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]
- 5) PD 938/24 Rev.1 (F)* Sustainable Management of Production Forests Driven by Traditional Communities in the Brazilian Amazon (Brazil) [\$678,531.00]
- 6) PD 939/24 Rev.2 (F) Generation of Fundamental Information for the Second Cutting Cycle in the Amazon Rainforest (Brazil) [\$498,400.00]
- 7) 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]
- 8) 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]
- 9) PD 942/25 Rev.2 (F) Developing Silvicultural Management Models for Forest Restoration Based on the Use of Seed Trees for the Establishment of Natural and Artificial Regeneration in the Province of Tahuamanu, Peru (Peru) [\$1,061,040.00]
- 10) PD 949/25 Rev.1 (F) Strengthening Governance Systems and Local Regulatory Frameworks for the Resilience and Sustainability of Municipal and Community Forests in Western Guatemala (Guatemala) [\$459,086.96]
- 11) PD 950/25 Rev.1 (F) Support to Local Communities for the Restoration and Sustainable Management of Mountain Forests in the Sub-Northern Region of Togo (Togo) [\$505,008.00]
- 12) PPD 206/25 Rev.1 (F) Restoration and Sustainable Management of Gallery Forests in the Mono Delta Biosphere Reserve in Benin (Benin) [\$92,640.00]
- 13) PPD 208/25 Rev.1 (F) Study for the Restoration and Sustainable Management of Forest Resources in the Mô Plain, Togo (Togo) [\$98,000.00]

The delegate of Indonesia expressed its appreciation to the Government of Australia for providing funding for phase II of project PD 712/13 Rev.3 (F), which has made substantial progress. Phase II intends to build on the outputs of phase I and requested an update on financing of the second phase.

The delegate of Brazil noted the importance of project PD 938/24 Rev.1 (F) for food security and bioeconomy and expressed its hope for the financing of the project.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that five 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/

Item 14 - Concept Notes Awaiting Expression of Interest by Potential Donors

- 1) CN-24034 Building Resilience Capacity for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation by Promoting Community Forest Landscape Restoration in Kratie and Mondulkiri Provinces in Cambodia (Cambodia)
- 2) CN-25035 Apoyo para la realización del “IX Congreso Forestal Latinoamericano – John Leigh Vetter”, Lima – Perú (Peru)
- 3) CN-25037 Enhancing Sustainable Community-Based Forestry Enterprises for Climate Resilience in the Northern Mountainous Region of Vietnam (Vietnam)
- 4) CN-25038 Promoting Climate-Smart Agroforestry to Enhance Sustainable Community-based Forestry Enterprises in Sumbawa Island, Indonesia (Indonesia)
- 5) CN-25039 Structural study and carbon sequestration for sustainable management and biodiversity conservation in sub-deciduous tropical forest ecosystems in the northern coastal region of Nayarit, Mexico (Mexico)

The delegate of Costa requested clarification of two concept notes submitted to ITTO which seem not to be reflected in the report. The Secretariat responded that CN-25041 is being considered by the Committee on Forest Industry, while the proponent of CN-3647 is yet to send a revised version addressing the comments of the screening process of the concept note.

Item 15 - Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for 2026

Ms. Chritiane Epse Anzan (Côte d’Ivoire) was elected as the Chairperson of the CRF for 2026. The Vice-Chairperson of the Committee for 2026 will be announced by the Consumer Caucus at a later date.

Item 16 - Dates and Venues of the Sixtieth and Sixty-first Sessions of the Committee

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

The Sixty-first Session of the Committee will be held in conjunction with the Sixty-third Session of the International Tropical Timber Council in 2027.

Item 17 - Other Business No comments from the floor were received under this Agenda Item

Item 18 - 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, Indigenous People and local communities and recommends to Council the projects and CNs pending financing.

Item 19 - Report of the Session

[Document CRF(LIX)/6]

The Committee accepted this Report for submission to the Council.

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