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**Synthesis Report on Ex-Post Evaluations of ITTO Biodiversity Conservation Projects in Indonesia,  
Malaysia, Peru, Bolivia and Panama**

**PROJECTS**

**PD 14/00 Rev.5 (F)**

**Integrated Plan for the Consolidation of the Bagre Highlands Biological Corridor, Province of Darien  
(Panama)**

**PD 17/00 Rev.3 (F)**

**Conservation and Development in the Natural Protected Areas System of Tambopata (Peru) – Madidi  
(Bolivia)**

**PD 44/00 Rev.3 (F)**

**The Implementation of a Community-based Transboundary Management Plan for the Betung Kerihun  
National Park, West Kalimantan, Indonesia, Phase II**

**PD 224/03 Rev.1 (F)**

**Transboundary Biodiversity Conservation: The Pulong Tau National Park, Sarawak State, Malaysia,  
Phase I**

**Prepared for the ITTO by**

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**13 September 2010**



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**Abbreviations**

<b>ANAM</b>	National Authority of the Environment (Panama)
<b>ANCON</b>	National Association for Conservation of Nature (Panama)
<b>BANP</b>	Batang Ai National Park
<b>BKNP</b>	Betung Kerihun National Park
<b>BHBC</b>	Bagre Highlands Biological Corridor
<b>CI-Peru</b>	Conservation International – Peru
<b>DANIDA</b>	Danish International Development Assistance
<b>ITTA</b>	International Tropical Timber Agreement
<b>ITTO</b>	International Tropical Timber Organization
<b>INRENA</b>	National Institute of Renewable Natural Resources (Peru)
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for Conservation of Nature
<b>JTF</b>	Joint Task Force
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>HoB</b>	Heart of Borneo
<b>KMNP</b>	Kayan Mentarang National Park
<b>LEWS</b>	Lanjak Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary
<b>NGO (NGOs)</b>	Non-Governmental Organization (s)
<b>PA (PAs)</b>	Protected Area (Protected Areas)
<b>PMU</b>	Project Management Unit
<b>PTNP</b>	Pulong Tau National Park
<b>SFD</b>	Sarawak Forest Department
<b>SFM</b>	Sustainable Forest Management
<b>TBCA</b>	Transboundary Conservation Area
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nation Organization for Education, Science and Culture
<b>WCPA</b>	World Commission on Protected Areas (IUCN)
<b>WCS</b>	Wildlife Conservation Society
<b>WWF-I</b>	World Wildlife Fund - Indonesia

## Executive Summary

*Ex-post evaluations were carried out on four ITTO biodiversity conservation projects in Malaysia, Indonesia, one between Peru and Bolivia and one in Panama. The review emphasized the transboundary nature and implications of each of the projects although the evaluation only dealt with the national components. The projects were national projects on one side of the international borders but were aimed at promoting transboundary collaboration. Views on the effectiveness of these projects were sought not only in the areas where they operated but also at a national level. Views on the general issue of ITTO involvement in transboundary activities were sought in interviews with a variety of persons and organizations involved in international forest conservation and management.*

*Overall the projects were found to have been successful and there was broad agreement that ITTO has a strong comparative advantage in operating biodiversity projects in transboundary situations because of its unique ability to make links between international policy processes and practical field realities. ITTO also has a unique capacity to convene a wide range of interest groups representing industry, governments and non-governmental organizations.*

*All of the projects made efforts to involve local communities in their activities – this was important given that many of the people living in remote frontier areas are poor, marginalized and often from ethnic minorities. ITTO's attention to the needs of these populations was one of the strong points of these projects.*

*Detailed reports were prepared on each of the projects and these are available on request from the ITTO secretariat. The present report synthesizes the main findings of these reports and presents conclusion and recommendations for future ITTO activity in the transboundary conservation and SFM work.*

## 1. Context

### 1.1 Background

ITTO's mandate is to promote international cooperation in the achievement of sustainable forest management. The definitions of sustainability adopted by ITTO – and many others – include the maintenance of forest biodiversity as an essential element of sustainability. ITTO has consistently sought to promote biodiversity conservation both in forests managed for timber production and in protected areas. It has promoted spatial allocation of forests to achieve both production and protection functions.

Many of the remaining tropical forests in ITTO's producer member countries are located in remote areas and often in areas close to or abutting on national frontiers. These remote forests are often allocated to protection status and in many cases they adjoin protected forests in the remote areas of the adjoining countries. Many of these remote frontier areas are amongst the world's most valuable reserves for biological diversity and other environmental values of forests. Since the mid – 1990s ITTO has supported activities to enhance the collaboration between its members in these remote trans-boundary forest areas.

ITTO has supported sustainable forest management and conservation in frontier areas in the Congo Basin in Central Africa, in various Amazon countries and in the island of Borneo. One of its most celebrated trans-boundary initiatives was the Borneo Biodiversity Expedition of 1997. This brought together scientists from different disciplines, forest and protected area managers and decision makers and initiated trans-boundary cooperation that continues today. Two of the projects evaluated in this report were in the Malaysia – Indonesia trans-boundary area (PD44/00 and PD224/03) and their origins can be traced back to the 1997 expedition.

In South America, ITTO has supported initiatives in the Amazon Basin notably the forests of Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil and Peru. It has also supported conservation activities in the strategic Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, with special attention to the critical point of connection between Central and South

America, in the region of the Darien, Panama. The Peru-Bolivia (PD17/00) and the Darien projects (PD 14/00) are evaluated in this report.

## 1.2 Terms of reference

The full terms of reference are given in annex 1. ITTO Guidelines for project evaluation were followed and formed part of the terms of reference.

The evaluation only covers four of ITTO's projects that aimed to support trans-boundary cooperation but it aims to give general advice to ITTO on the value and potential impact of operating across national boundaries. The two consultants charged with the evaluation have therefore drawn on their personal experience of other trans-boundary initiatives and have interviewed people who have been concerned with them. Our report therefore focuses on the four projects that we were specifically mandated to evaluate but attempts to draw on experience from other similar initiatives.

The detailed evaluations of the individual projects are the subject of separate reports which are available on request from the ITTO secretariat. This report provides a more general overview of the biodiversity work, draws some lessons from it and makes recommendations for future work in this area.

## 1.3 Methodology

Each of the consultants reviewed the extensive documentation of the projects, interviewed project executives and representatives of the different stakeholder groups impacted by the projects and spent one week in the field in the two projects assigned to them in the company of the staff members of the organizations responsible for project implementation.

The primary purpose of the evaluation was to provide a concise diagnosis of the four projects related to biodiversity conservation so as to identify the successful and unsuccessful outcomes, the reasons for successes and failures, and the contribution of the projects towards ITTO's Objective 2000 and the ITTO Yokohama Action Plan. The evaluation sought to learn lessons to determine whether ITTO should continue to invest in similar projects and if so to identify characteristics of the projects that can be used to improve similar projects in the future.

A questionnaire was used to solicit feedback from project stakeholders on the impact of the projects and particularly the impact of ITTO activities on forest policies in the host countries and how ITTO was perceived in relation to other organisations supporting sustainable forest management and conservation.

## 1.4 Brief description of the projects

**Betung Kerihun National Park (PD 44/00 Rev 3 (F)):** The project was a follow-up to the ITTO sponsored Project PD 26/93 Rev.1 (F) "Development of Bentuang Karimun Nature Reserve as a National Park – Phase I". The first objective of this project was to lay down the groundwork for establishing a community-based conservation and development program that will maintain the long-term integrity of Betung-Kerihun National Park (BKNP) while the second one was to develop an effective model for managing a trans-boundary national park with the Lanjak Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary (LEWS).

Elements of the strategy adopted in the implementation of the project included: a) outcome oriented, b) incremental development, c) self sustaining or financing in the short and long terms, directly or indirectly, d) effective use of local potential including the tradition and culture, e) strengthening the marketing skills of local communities was of high priority, and f) decentralization was promoted through active involvement of the local government in project implementation. The forty-six planned activities were implemented by the WWF Indonesia in collaboration with the Park Management Unit of the Ministry of Forestry (PMU), local government, local communities and national experts.

**Pulong Tau (PD 224/00 Rev 1 (F)):** The Pulong Tau National Park (PTNP) is located in Sarawak's northern highlands, and was gazetted in March 2005 with an area of about 60,000 ha. This was

enlarged to 164,000 ha. The project reflects Sarawak's continuing support to ITTO in promoting Transboundary Biodiversity Conservation (TBC) among its member countries.

The project aimed to contribute to conservation of natural ecosystems in the Kelabit Highlands of the State of Sarawak and to sustainable development of the local communities through the implementation of activities of biodiversity conservation and support to local socio-economic development initiatives. Its specific objectives were: i) to initiate a process of sustainable conservation management of the Pulong Tau National Park (PTNP); and ii) to improve cooperation between Sarawak and Indonesia for the conservation of trans-boundary ecosystem of Pulong Tau and Kayan Mentarang National Parks (KMNP).

**Tambopata – Madidi:** The project PD 17/00 Rev.3 (F) : Conservation and Development in the Natural Protected Areas System of Tambopata (Peru) and Madidi (Bolivia), targets the system of protected natural areas of the Tambopata Reserve Zone and Bahuaja National Park in Peru and the Madidi National Park in Bolivia. It covers an area of 2.85 million hectares in the middle region of the border between the two countries. The first phase of the project was designed to last 24 months and the start date was 1st July 2003. However the project was extended and was finally completed after 32 months on March 31, 2006.

**Bagre Highlands Corridor, Panama (PD 14/00 Rev 5 (F)):**

The project PD 14/00 Rev. 5 (F) Integrated Plan for the Consolidation of the Bagre Highlands Biological Corridor, Province of Darien (Panama), implemented by the National Association for the Conservation Nature, AC (ANCON) with funding from ITTO, developed during the period October 2002 to December 2007, in order to ensure as permanent forest, ecosystems and biodiversity of the BCBS and the consolidation and integration a regional system of protected areas in the Darien area, through conservation, protection, development and sustainable use of natural resources, which also contributes to current and future socioeconomic development. The BCBS has an area of 31.586 hectares and is part of a strategic set of ANP in the junction of Central America to South America. This strategic set of ANP was added to the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, which is characterized as one of the most biologically diverse places on earth. As well as this important biodiversity diverse ethnic groups are settled in the area notably the Embera and Wounaan, as well as Afro-colonials or Afrodarienitas and settlers from other provinces of the country and from Colombia. The most important results of the project are the high degree of participation, communication and socialization with the communities of the province of Darien, who have embraced the process of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. The delimitation of BCBS has been done on the basis of a participatory process and this process has provided support for the preparation of a management program, which contribute significantly to the conservation of forest biodiversity.

## **2. Review of the results of the four selected projects**

### **2.1 Overall attainment of objectives and effectiveness**

**Betung Kerihun (PD 44/00):** The project attained its major objectives. Communities were successfully engaged in the conservation programme, facilities were improved and a park headquarters constructed. The project management unit is now effective. Some progress has been made on data and information management. Ecotourism programmes have been initiated but the remoteness of the area means that visitor numbers are low. There has been major progress in raising awareness of conservation issues amongst local people and in the administration. Work on small buffer zone projects has been initiated with modest levels of uptake. Transboundary collaboration with Malaysia has been successfully engaged.

**Pulong Tau (PD 224/03):** The project enabled the collection of a wide range of baseline data covering the fields of geology, soils, forest ecology, flora and fauna, socio-economy and cultures for the first time for use in PTNP's conservation management planning and community development activities. A park management plan has been prepared and approved but little progress has been made in implementing it. Excellent socio-economic and cultural surveys have been conducted. A number of cross-border activities had been implemented. A Joint Task Force (JTF) between PTNP and KMNP was formed to establish contacts between the two sides. Members of the JTF include representatives from relevant ministries, departments and agencies in Malaysia and Indonesia. The

JTF has made modest progress in coordinating activities such as joint law enforcement, cross-border visits, joint research, information exchange and training.

The project accumulated valuable scientific information on biodiversity, cultural and watershed values. Mt. Murud emerges as a site of major conservation and cultural importance. The Penan issues have been addressed and these people are now allowed to collect produce from certain areas in the park for domestic use. The results of the project have been published in 15 technical reports for dissemination.

**Tambopata – Madidi (PD 17/00):** The main results achieved during the first phase of the project were the development of participatory management planning capabilities, development of a Management Plan and a monitoring and surveillance system, support for a training, extension and outreach program; development of a work plan for Phase II of the project, identification of the natural supply and identification of alternative processing options for non-timber forest products and services. A technical coordination mechanisms linking the partners in Peru and Bolivia and the development of transboundary conservation strategy for Tambopata and Madidi protected areas.

During the planning exercise for the development of the project, experts identified the following vision: “In the year 2009, the Tambopata Madidi complex will be a consolidated core of a biodiversity corridor in the southwest Amazon and a successful model of integration of biodiversity conservation with socio-economic development contributing to improvement of the quality of life of local populations.

**Bagre Highlands Corridor, Panama (PD14/00):** The Project was completed in February 2008. Activities carried out during the project’s lifespan and can be summarized by major outputs and achievements as follows:

- The project’s objectives were disseminated, promoted and validated throughout the indigenous and rural communities located within the project’s area of influence;
- Coordination meetings to create inter-institutional cooperation and synergies were held with other institutions and projects working in the area, such as ANAM, CIDA VOCA, the Darien Sustainable Development Program, and several community organizations.
- A rapid ecological assessment of the biological corridor and the buffer zone, including six thematic maps, was carried out;
- Participatory socio-economic and cultural diagnostic studies of the local communities, including five thematic maps, were completed;
- A diagnostic forest inventory of the Chepigana Forest Reserve was developed with a view to redefining its boundaries in order for it to act a buffer zone to the corridor;
- Constant consultations were carried out with the Embera-Wounaan Indigenous communities and other collective territories that border with the corridor, with a view to achieving overall consensus on the corridor’s final demarcation. A new proposal re-establishing the boundaries of the Bagre Highlands Biological Corridor based on the new findings was presented to ANAM;
- The environmental authority in Panama, ANAM, approved all of the above mentioned final documents which form an integral part of the integrated management plan to be developed, i.e.:
  - The diagnostic forest inventory of the Chepigana Forest;
  - The rapid ecological assessment of the biological corridor and the buffer zone;
  - The land-use zoning proposed; and
  - The geo-referenced boundaries of the biological corridor;
- Based on these studies, a draft integrated management plan for the biological corridor was elaborated and further subjected to a process of public consultation in the nine towns and communities of the Embera-Wounaan Indigenous tribes and other collective territories that border with the corridor, with a view to receiving inputs and recommendations for improvement and achieving overall consensus on the plan, prior to submission to ANAM for its final approval;
- 77 km of the boundaries of the 31,586 ha biological corridor were physically demarcated in a joint operation with the Embera-Wounaan indigenous communities and ANAM;



- A 5-day workshop was organized to train and equip 25 Voluntary Park Rangers from the communities settled within the buffer zone of the corridor; and the final integrated management plan was submitted to the environmental authority ANAM, which in turn approved it and authorized its implementation via official resolution AG-0520-2008 on June 20<sup>th</sup> 2008.
- 95 indigenous peoples were trained in community organization, in the establishment and management of tree nurseries and in the rehabilitation of degraded lands;
- Tree nurseries were established in four indigenous communities and a total of 30,185 tree seedlings of native species produced and planted on degraded lands belonging to these communities;
- A central log and timber yard was established in Puerto Indio, Sambu, within the Embera-Wounaan indigenous territories adjoining the corridor's buffer zone;
- 5 training workshops on the use of portable sawmills were held for sawmillers at the sites of 5 small-scale sawmills established in the buffer zone; and
- Trained park rangers confiscated illegally logged timber and the culprits' expelled from the area.

The results of the project were disseminated widely through the following channels:

- Intensive collaboration with the local and indigenous communities in the region and the authorities of other relevant institutions in Panama;
- The national distribution of a publication entitled "Consolidation of the Management Plan for the Bagre Highlands Biological Corridor as an Integral Part of the Chepigana Forest Reserve";
- The dissemination of the "Integrated Management Plan for the Bagre Highlands Biological Corridor" at the national level; and
- Via articles in several national radio stations and newspaper and international journals such as La Voz de Darien, NotiAncon, En Ambiente, the Tropical Forest Update, etc.

## **2.2 Overall impact and relevance of the results in terms of biodiversity conservation**

It is extremely difficult to monitor changes in forest biodiversity in the field over short time spans. We are not therefore able to state with any confidence that biodiversity has benefitted directly from the activities of the four countries. However the fate of biodiversity is closely linked to the state of the forest and in all four project areas the serious threats to the forests that existed at the time that the projects were initiated have been countered. Illegal activities and forest loss have in all four locations been brought under better control in the project areas.

## **2.3 Overall impact and relevance of the results in terms of community participation in biodiversity conservation**

There is a lot of rhetoric amongst conservation organizations about the involvement of local people in conservation programmes. Often this rhetoric is not matched by practical action on the ground. In the case of the four projects reviewed in this report significant progress was made in securing the effective participation of local people in protected areas management and all of the projects promoted alternative, forest-based, revenue generating activities for local people. The Betung Kerihun and Tambopata – Madidi projects were especially innovative in promoting the "domestication" of valuable tree species in agroforestry systems around communities close to the protected areas. Eco-tourism activities have been promoted in Betung Kerihun, Tambopata – Madidi and Pulong Tau and have high potential in BHBC, Panama.

The small-scale agroforestry and eco-tourism projects have not radically transformed the lives of the people living in the project areas. The project documents – as with many internationally supported integrated conservation and development projects – greatly over-estimated the potential for small-scale enterprises to bring significant economic gains to remote rural populations. However these small-scale activities do have significant value in providing an "interface" between those promoting conservation and local people. The term "boundary" has been used to describe objects, programs or institutions that serve to facilitate interactions amongst interest groups that might not otherwise have

much contact. Small-scale projects supported by ITTO or by its local government and NGO partners are serving as boundary activities and as such have a great value in improving the prospects for sustainable forest management and conservation in the project areas.

#### **2.4 Relevance of the project results for authorities, executing agencies, the forest conservation sector and the countries concerned**

Our questionnaire survey suggested that the ITTO supported projects were viewed by most stakeholders as having had a positive impact in influencing forest policy, engaging local people in conservation programs and in fostering inter-governmental collaboration. In Betun Kerihun and in Tambopata – Madidi there was direct evidence of increased capacity amongst staff members of government protected area agencies. In Pulong Tau a significant number of Sarawak institutions had been mobilized to support the project although the Sarawak Forest Department had a rather low profile in the project area. In both the Borneo locations the project had an influence on the policies and practices of the commercial timber companies operating in the area. In the case of Madidi – Tambopata, the planning of the PA Management Program, is considerate as a model for other regions in Bolivia and Peru. In all four locations the application of forestry and conservation laws improved during the projects.

#### **2.5 Relevance of project results in relation to ITTO policies, plans and strategies**

All four projects are fully consistent with and made effective contributions to ITTO's overall mandate and to its Yokohama Action Plan. All four contributed to the principles and guidelines in ITTO Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management and for Conservation of Biodiversity in Tropical Timber Production Forests. However the Biodiversity Guidelines were not well known to the project implementation teams in any of the field sites although they had some influence in Betun Kerihun and have been extensively used in trans-boundary situations in the Congo Basin.

All four projects were effective in bridging the gap between international conservation commitments and local action. This is perhaps the “unique selling point” of ITTO. Its field projects are well linked to its policy discourse. The plans and strategies that are discussed by the ITTC are field tested by the projects and knowledge flows quickly from the field to the conference table and vice versa. ITTO makes this policy-practice link better than other organizations.

In the Asian and South America projects locations there was a burst of trans-boundary activity around the time of the initiation for the projects but once the projects terminated the intensity of this activity declined. Part of the explanation for this is that 90% of the day to day work of running protected areas is “place-based” and does not require or benefit from trans-boundary collaboration. The original project documents perhaps over-estimated the need for and potential impact of trans-boundary activities. A certain level of information exchange and consistency in approaches is valuable but it is just a part of the picture – it does not replace or diminish the need for sound practical programs on the ground in the national sectors. Perhaps there is still room for some increase in the level of trans-boundary collaboration in Asian and South America locations but there is also a need for greater capacity for place-based practical management. In the case of Panama, the project is not strictly a trans-boundary initiative, but it targets an area which has been widely recognized as being a valuable part of the long term plan to achieve a Mesoamerican Biological Corridor and would be one link in this corridor which would eventually provide continuity between the forests of all Central and South American countries.

#### **2.6 Appropriateness of the design and implementation approaches**

In Tambopata – Madidi and Betun Kerihun the projects catalyzed collaboration between the national conservation agencies and the international conservation NGOs Conservation International (CI) and World Wildlife fund (WWF). This formula for bringing together influential international conservation groups with government agencies was successful. Although not covered in this evaluation it is worth noting that ITTO has supported similar cooperation between the Wildlife Conservation Society and WWF and both government conservation agencies and commercial logging companies in the Congo Basin with very positive results. In Panama, the NGO who served as executor of the project

(ANCON), made significant progress in developing mechanisms for coordination and liaison with all concerned agencies within Panama, and is recognized as having strong operational capacities.

## **2.7 Overall effectiveness of the four projects, appropriateness of the costs and cost structure and use of the resources**

All four projects provided impacts that exceeded what one might have expected from the level of resources provided. They have achieved this because they attracted major support from the host governments and from international conservation organizations. The fact that they were implemented relatively slowly over a long period of time also worked in their favor. Many protected area projects supported by other donors have short time horizons and seek to provide simple technical solutions quickly. All four of these ITTO projects were had modest budgets compared to similar projects supported by bilateral and multi-lateral donors. The ITTO projects were much less dependent upon international technical experts than many similar projects. This may be part of the reason that they progressed slowly but built solid foundations and contributed successfully to local capacity enhancement needs.

## **2.8 Sustainability issues**

The projects have in general built significant local capacity and have a high potential to be sustained when ITTO support comes to an end. However, all of the projects would benefit from continued modest levels of ITTO support to ensure ITTO's continued involvement with the policy discourses in the countries concerned.

# **3. Discussion**

## **3.1 The needs for and the objectives of similar projects in the future**

ITTO has a special role to play in strengthening cooperation amongst its members; in achieving integration between sustainable forest management and conservation this role is unique to ITTO. Transboundary initiatives have the special value that they translate the policy level cooperation into practical operational collaboration on the ground. These projects have an especially strong role in contributing to capacity building – they allow for the exchange of experience amongst all levels of forest management and conservation institutions from the field to the ministries. These projects also allow for the testing of some of the assumptions that underpin the policy debate. They enable learning and the accumulation of evidence on what works and what does not work. Similar learning can occur in projects that are purely national but they heightened profile of transboundary projects ensures that the learning penetrates further into the policy arena.

Transboundary initiatives have an additional significance in that many of the world's most important remaining tropical forests are found in remote frontier areas. Conserving and sustainably managing these forests is one of the major global environmental challenges. The presence of ITTO and its partners in these locations shines a spotlight onto them and increases the political attention that they receive. It also greatly increases the motivation of the people working in these remote forest areas who in other cases may feel abandoned. The Darien area in Panama is a notable example. Ensuring continuity of forests in this vital link in the Meso-American Biological Corridor is a global conservation priority. This link will only be maintained if there is an appropriate balance of conservation, community stewardship and strict protected areas. ITTO's work on the ground is just one contribution to this ambitious programme but ITTO contributes the international political impetus together with the conceptual framework of the integration of production forests, protected areas and communities.

Overall transboundary initiatives in forest areas that are critical for biodiversity conservation should remain a significant part of ITTO's portfolio of activities. There are opportunities in several parts of the world – some where ITTO is already present and others where this is not the case. The Island of Borneo should continue to be an area of focus. The transfrontier areas between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea on the island of New Guinea could benefit from similar initiatives. Other possibilities are numerous in the Congo and Amazon Basins, Central America, West Africa (Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote D'Ivoire), continental SE Asia (Lao, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia and Burma, Thailand and China).

### **3.2 Innovative approaches/designs for projects aiming at community participation in biodiversity conservation**

ITTO has clearly demonstrated that its members are concerned that conservation and sustainable management of forests should, above all, benefit the communities who live in and around the forests. It is therefore very positive that ITTO has supported measures for the early and continuous involvement of local people in all of the projects that we have evaluated. Multi-stakeholder forums have been established and micro-projects have been initiated to provide direct benefits to local communities. This is all very positive and sends strong political signals to both governments and the conservation organizations that are involved in these projects.

However, there is need for some caution in raising expectations that these relatively small scale projects can bring rapid or significant improvements to the lives of people living in remote forest areas. This will rarely be the case. The livelihoods of these people are most likely to be improved by investments in infrastructure and in industrial development and often this will lead to the clearance of forest land. There is thus a slight contradiction between the small-scale community based approaches promoted by the ITTO and the reality that significant poverty alleviation comes from larger scale transformational changes in forest landscapes. The issue is particularly important in remote transboundary areas as these are often the last to receive outside investments and the people living in these areas are often amongst the poorest of the poor.

Field projects in such areas must continue to embrace local communities as they do now but they must also recognize that they will often achieve little more than ensuring that conservation and sustainable forestry activities “do no harm”. The social capital built through the ITTO interventions and the sensitivity to local needs and aspirations that comes from working with the communities does help to ensure that both conservation organizations and governments will be more sensitive to local peoples’ needs in dealing with the transformational changes that will inevitably come to such border areas. The work of WWF to mitigate the potential negative impacts of oil palm expansion on local people in the Betung Kerihun area is a good example.

### **3.3 Appropriate target groups**

In the four projects evaluated the appropriate target groups were addressed. One of the strengths of the projects was that they were inclusive. They worked with forestry companies, protected area agencies, forestry departments, international conservation organizations and local people in ways that made all groups feel involved and that contributed to strengthening the trust and understanding between them. The Pulong Tau project was of particular importance in bringing the marginal Penan nomadic hunter-gatherer groups more into the mainstream of debate about the future of their forest homes. This project greatly diminished the polarization that had occurred between many different agencies working in the Kelabit Highlands around the Penan “issue”.

### **3.4 The organizational arrangements for the projects**

In general these were satisfactory. The bringing together of potentially opposed interest groups in all areas was a positive feature of the projects. The active presence of conservation organizations was helpful. The involvement of Conservation International in Tambopata-Madidi, WWF in Betun Kerihun and a number of civil society organizations in the Bagre Highlands all added to the value of the projects. International conservation organizations are less active in Sarawak and were not involved in the Pulong Tau project and there were no strong local civil society organizations present in the area to ensure that the links between people’s interests and the forest were addressed. This resulted in the work on communities and forests being conducted in a more “scientific” and less participatory manner.

### **3.5 Follow up and evaluation practices**

These were adequate in all of the projects. The practice of having ITTO donors attending project steering committees was a positive element of the projects. This allowed for good communication not only on implementation of the projects but also on sharing understanding of the learning that was occurring in the projects. It also ensured that the lessons were communicated to policy levels and to ITTO itself. It was noticeable that when international observers attended these meetings the national

participants were from a more senior level. The minutes of the meetings also suggested a stronger tendency to discuss sensitive issues when the donor and ITTO secretariat staff was present at the meetings. The steering committee meetings were de facto evaluations of the projects and since they were held annually they provided for frequent feed-back and adjustment of project activities. In some cases the need for changes that they identified in the projects lead to formal modifications of the project budgets and objectives by the ITTO – for instance no-cost extensions. It was of particular value to conduct the final ex-post evaluation after a period of several years – this enabled us to see the projects in the context of long term trends and changes in the landscapes and to assess the role of ITTO in having a positive impact on these longer-term processes.

### **3.6 Supplemental, alternative activities, processes, procedures and/or follow up programs in the field of community participation in biodiversity conservation**

It will be important to maintain many of the activities that have been initiated by these projects, especially those that involve local people. In the case of the two Borneo projects this appears likely to happen through both the activities of the national forestry and conservation agencies (PHKA and SFD) through the Heart of Borneo Initiative. It will be important for the ITTO to stay involved and it is proposed that the ITTO join the HoB process. ITTO could restrict itself to seeking to influence policies through participation in HoB committees etc. However the HoB itself suffers from not being very well linked to the on-the-ground issues and activities. The provision of modest funds to allow the ITTO to support some local-level activities through its local partners (WWF and SFD) is encouraged.

The situation in Tambopata-Madidi and Darien is still quite fluid and some continued support from ITTO to its partners on the ground is also encouraged. Both of these areas are likely to experience significant pressures for change in the near future as pressure for infrastructure expansion and in the case of Peru and Bolivia for agro-industrial development and these pressures could have negative impacts on forest biodiversity and sustainable forest management. At least a modest level of continued ITTO support will help to mediate the potential negative impacts of these emerging pressures.

## **4. Conclusions**

Detailed conclusions and recommendations for each of the four projects are included in the four ex-post evaluation reports for the individual projects which are available on request from the ITTO secretariat. The following are conclusions of a more general nature regarding the involvement of ITTO in transboundary biodiversity conservation projects.

The overall evaluation of the four projects is positive. Significant improvements in sustainable forestry and conservation programmes have occurred in the period since the projects were initiated. ITTO cannot claim sole responsibility for these positive impacts but it has certainly been a major contributor. In each case it appears probable that the level of activity of the other external and national organizations operating in these areas would have been significantly less had ITTO not been present.

The positive impacts came from the convening power of ITTO and from its influence on the policy discourse in the countries concerned. The practical interventions on the ground did not in themselves bring about radical changes but they gave ITTO the legitimacy that it needed to have a policy influence. These activities helped engage local people in the discussions about the areas and to ensure that their interests were taken into account. ITTO could not be accused of the Indonesian term NATO (no action – talk only) which is used in a derogatory way to apply to much work of external advisers. ITTO engaged with the problems and justified its place at the negotiating table.

The fact that a succession of ITTO interventions remained active for over a decade in each case meant that ITTO had a continuous influence on processes that by their nature always evolve slowly. If the ITTO projects had been implemented strictly according to their original operational plans and had been completed in 24 or 36 months they would have produced visible short-term outputs but probably less long-term impacts. This is a strong lesson from each of the projects. ITTO can best contribute by providing low level support over the medium term rather than a heavy dose of support at one time. By engaging for the medium term it becomes possible for the speed of change of the practical realities on the ground to come closer to the speed of change of the political realities. This is especially true for transboundary projects where the political processes are international and will inevitably take longer than purely national processes.

## 5. Recommendations

Specific recommendations for each of the four projects evaluated are included in the individual ex-post reports which are available from the ITTO secretariat on demand. Recommendations addressed to partner organizations are included in these project specific evaluations.

Our overall recommendations are as follows:

- ITTO has a clear comparative advantage in working on inter-governmental issues and should continue to support transboundary initiatives both in the field of pure biodiversity conservation but also in broader issues of sustainable forest management of which biodiversity conservation is only one part.
- ITTO should pursue its promotion of the engagement of local people in all its field projects but this is especially necessary in transboundary projects as by definition they occur in remote forest areas which are often the home of marginal groups, ethnic minorities and populations that are amongst the world's poorest and most forest dependent.
- ITTO should continue to seek the involvement of conservation NGOs and other civil society organizations in biodiversity field projects as they bring new skills, perspectives and often funds to these projects and some of them are good at ensuring that adequate attention is given to local peoples' concerns.
- Low levels of support over long periods are often more effective than heavier financial support delivered over short time-frames. Project preparation, negotiation, implementation and evaluation all contribute to the progress in biodiversity projects – and represent important aspects of ITTO's long-term commitment to the conservation and development of the areas.
- ITTO and its members should explore options for further biodiversity conservation projects and especially focus on those in transboundary areas. Opportunities across other borders include but are not restricted to:
  - Indonesian Papua and Papua New Guinea
  - Continuing work across borders of Laos, Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia
  - Myanmar and Thailand
  - Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cote D'Ivoire
  - Several Congo Basin transboundary areas
  - Several Amazonian transboundary areas
  - Meso-America
- ITTO should engage with the Congo Basin Forest Partnership to promote biodiversity conservation in production forests especially in transboundary areas.
- ITTO should become a member of the Heart of Borneo initiative and encourage more attention being paid to biodiversity in production forests.
- ITTO should consider further work to promote international legal instruments and political commitment to address transboundary conservation and SFM programmes. Where possible and appropriate these should include financing mechanisms for cooperation and trans boundary protected area management

- ITTO should continue to convene diverse stakeholders in support of biodiversity initiatives notably academic and educational institutions. There is still a need to generate more knowledge about conservation of forest biodiversity and to ensure that this is incorporated into national and regional educational systems.
- ITTO members should submit proposals for projects for biodiversity conservation especially in the context of sustainable forest management and in transboundary situations.

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