

ITTO-CITES Programme for Implementing CITES Listings of Tropical Tree Species

In 2006, the Secretariats of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) entered into a partnership to ensure that international trade in CITES-listed tropical tree species is consistent with their sustainable management and conservation. This partnership was made possible through multi-donor grants to ITTO. Phase I of this programme is nearing completion, while Phase II commenced in 2012.



Photo credit: J. Grogan

The ITTO-CITES programme is the first collaborative effort to provide support for implementing CITES for tropical tree species at the national and international level. The Programme's main objectives are to assist countries to:

- Improve management and regulation of trade in products from tropical tree species (including timber and products such as bark and oils);
- Improve forest management to ensure survival of the species and sustainable incomes for local communities and others involved in the trade in timber and related products;
- Increase regional cooperation in research, silviculture and CITES compliance; and
- Integrate knowledge on sustainable forest management and species conservation to provide a coherent policy framework

Phase I

In 2012, the CITES and ITTO secretariats concluded a four-year programme aimed at Ensuring that international trade in CITES-listed timber species is consistent with their sustainable management and conservation, with a budget of over 3 million Euros primarily provided by the European Union through the European Commission. The remaining funding was provided by donations from Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, the United States of America, and, the private sector (Solvay Pharma, Indena and EuroMed).

Phase I of the programme included the implementation of 34 activities in three regions to assist in building coherent policy frameworks that benefit the timber industry, local communities that depend on tropical forests, and the biodiversity-rich forests themselves. It focused on the internationally most traded tropical timber species currently listed in CITES Appendix II: afrormosia, bigleaf mahogany and ramin.

Photo credit: S. Johnson

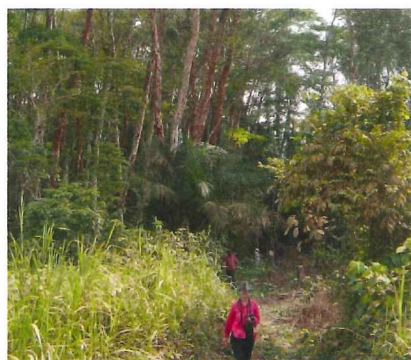


Photo credit: J. Grogan

Africa

Afrormosia (*Pericopsis elata*) is native to the equatorial forests of west and central Africa. It is classified as 'Endangered' by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and has been hard hit by logging. The programme supported the efforts of Cameroon, the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to enforce existing legislation and to strengthen the quality of non-detriment findings (see below).

Latin America

Bigleaf mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) thrives in dry tropical forests from southern Mexico to the Amazon basin. Many populations are seriously threatened and their genetic variation has been depleted. The support given to the main exporting countries of bigleaf mahogany (Bolivia, Brazil and Peru) reflects the international interest in this resource. The programme strengthened the range States' capacities to comply with the implementation of CITES for this and other timber

species, such as the West Indian cedar (*Cedrela odorata*), which is found in the range of distribution.



Photo credit: Dr. Khali Aziz Hamzah

States of Malaysia and Indonesia participated in the project, which also seeks to engage with major importers like Singapore and coordinate their efforts as the three members of the 'Ramin Tri-national Task Force'.

Phase II

Phase II of the project CITES Implementation for Tree Species and Trade/Market Transparency (TMT) is expected to take four years to implement. It is made possible through generous donations (to date) from the European Union through the European Commission, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United States of America, and from the private sector (Abbott-Solvay, Indena, EuroMed, and Plavuma).

The objectives of Phase II are to ensure that international trade in CITES-listed tree species is consistent with their sustainable management and conservation, and to increase the quality of forest trade information to improve policy making.

Expected outputs of Phase II include: improved population inventories or inventory designs for CITES-listed tree species in participating range States; the installment and use of national systems for tracking or monitoring harvest of and trade in CITES-listed tree species; a decreased number of Standing Committee recommendations to suspend trade with range States of CITES-listed tree species covered by the Programme; and an increased capacity of Parties to undertake non-detriment findings for these species.

Phase II continues the focus on the Phase I species afrormosia, bigleaf mahogany and ramin, but will extend its scope to other tree species listed in Appendix II such as *Prunus africana* (the African Cherry tree), *Aquilaria* spp. and *Gyrinops* spp. (both agarwood producing-taxa).



Photo credit: Renato Iguera

Africa

African Cherry (*Prunus Africana*) is an evergreen tree favored for the medicinal qualities of pygeum, an extract prepared from its bark. Found in sub-Saharan Africa and the island of Madagascar, it is classified as vulnerable due to the shift in bark harvest from subsistence use to large-scale commercial use for international trade. A CITES Appendix II in 1995 requires range States to create a management plan prior to allowing exports of the species. The programme will support the efforts of range states to inventory their African cherry populations to create management plans and comply with the implementation of CITES.

Asia

Aquilaria spp. and *Gyrinops* spp. are agarwood producing species native to Southeast Asia. The popularity of agarwood, a resin from mold infected wood valued for its distinctive odor, led to the Appendix II listing of *Aquilaria malaccensis* in 1995 and in 2004 for the remainder of *Aquilaria* and *Gyrinops* species were listed in Appendix II. The programme will support the efforts of range States to inventory their *Aquilaria* spp. and *Gyrinops* spp. populations to create management plans and comply with the implementation of CITES.

Asia

Ramin (*Gonystylus* spp.) has long been one of Southeast Asia's major export timbers. Native to swamp forests, many ramin species are now considered to be overexploited and vulnerable owing to heavy logging (often illegal) and habitat destruction. The inclusion of ramin in CITES Appendix II requires in many cases that exporting countries put in place a different system to manage this genus. The range

Timber Tracking

The ITTO-CITES Programme has supported the work of countries to generate biological information on tropical timber species in international trade. However, creating management plans and setting sustainable logging quotas is just a first step, beyond which putting in place an effective chain of custody becomes a challenge for many countries. It is at this point that tracking technologies become a key tool in ensuring that countries are trading in timber of sustainable and legal origin.

Since the early years of its establishment, ITTO has assisted countries to improve statistical systems to monitor timber and forest products flows as an essential component of sustainable forest management (SFM), initially through paper-based systems and moving more recently to advanced physical (e.g. RFID tags and bar-coding) and chemical (e.g. isotope and DNA analysis) tracking technologies. The ITTO and the CITES Secretariats have now jointly produced a compendium on timber marking and tracking technologies. Effective marking and tracking systems for monitoring trade in CITES listed tree species are essential for the effective implementation of the Convention.

Tracking technologies are a key tool to strengthen the quality of the CITES non-detriment findings required to export Appendix II listed species. As the scope of forest products in international trade continues to increase in parallel with the complexity of global supply chains, timber and forest product tracking technologies will play an increasing role in ensuring sustainable and legal supplies of these essential products

Non-detriment findings

The number of tree species included in the CITES Appendices has grown from 18 in 1975 to more than 350 today, with close to 200 of these used and traded for timber. Specimens of species included in CITES Appendix II may only be traded if the exporting country has established that their export will not be detrimental to the survival of the species. These so-called 'non-detriment findings' (NDF) outlined in Article IV of CITES.

Accurate and reliable NDFs are essential to ensure sustainability of trade in species in CITES Appendix II. However, many countries face problems in carrying out NDFs tropical timber species. As a result, many activities of the ITTO-CITES Programme focus on strengthening this capacity and on collecting and analyzing the information necessary for making NDFs.

Some achievements of the programme to date include:

- Peru strengthened its capacity to make NDFs for trade in bigleaf mahogany, and provided relevant information to the Plants Committee at its 17th meeting, causing the Committee to determine that it was not necessary to include the country in the Review of Significant Trade for this species (which is a mechanism to identify potential problems with the making of NDFs and can lead to trade suspensions);
- Cameroon strengthened its capacity to make NDFs for afrormosia and thereafter provided a report on the management plan that it was implementing for this species to the 19th meeting of the Plants Committee, causing the Committee to determine that it was not necessary to include the country in a Review of Significant Trade for this species;
- Cameroon established a voluntary zero export quota for the African cherry tree in 2009. Under the ITTO-CITES programme, Cameroon has since then established a scientifically-sound NDF that allowed it to reopen a management area for producing dry bark of this species in a sustainable manner;
- At the 63rd meeting of the CITES Standing Committee in July 2012, Democratic Republic of the Congo provided information which demonstrated that support under the ITTO-CITES Programme had enabled it to strengthen its capacity to make NDFs for exports of dry bark of the African cherry tree; and
- Both Malaysia and Indonesia continue to make progress in ensuring the conservation, management and sustainable use of ramin species and they have been able to set annual harvest and export quotas for these species in accordance with the provisions of Article IV of the Convention.

Conclusion

With the ongoing support of the EU and other generous donors, the CITES and the ITTO Secretariats will continue working to strengthen the partnership between the two organizations and the support they provide to countries with regard to the responsible and sustainable management of tropical tree species and forests worldwide.

Photo credit: Mashur Bin Mohammadi Alias



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