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Item 10 of the provisional agenda*

**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ITTO/CBD COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE
FOR TROPICAL FOREST BIODIVERSITY**

Note by the Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

1. The Executive Secretary is circulating herewith, for the information of participants in the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the report on the Implementation of the ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity.
2. This report was prepared by the International Tropical Timber Organization with inputs from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and was presented to the fifty-second session of the International Tropical Timber Council, held from 7 to 12 November 2016 in Yokohama, Japan.
3. This document is being circulated in the form and language in which it was submitted to the Secretariat.

* UNEP/CBD/COP/13/1.



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**Report on the Implementation of the
ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative for
Tropical Forest Biodiversity
(Provisional Agenda Item 16)**

ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity: Achievements to Date

1. Background

In the framework of the International Year of Biodiversity 2010 and the International Year of Forests 2011, the Secretariat of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 2 March 2010 with the aim of strengthening collaboration in pursuit of their common objectives of conserving and sustainably managing tropical forest biodiversity. The governing bodies of CBD and ITTO adopted decisions in October and December 2010 respectively, welcoming the collaboration between the two organizations [Decision X/36 and ITTC Decision 6 (XLVI)]. After the successful implementation in the initial four-year period, the MOU was renewed on 13 October 2014 on the occasion of the Twelfth Session of the Conference of the Parties to CBD (CBD COP12) with the extended period of 2015-2020.

The MOU is aimed at facilitating the implementation of joint activities linked to the conservation and sustainable use of tropical forest biodiversity within the framework of relevant strategies and plans of the organizations. These include: the ITTO Biennial Work Programme 2015-2016 and its subsequent work programmes, the ITTO Thematic Programmes, the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018 and its successor action plan, and the CBD Programme of Work on Forest Biodiversity in the context of the Strategic Plan on Biodiversity 2011-2020, including the forest-related Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

One of the most notable activities jointly taken by ITTO and the CBD Secretariat under this MOU is the development and implementation of the ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity. The Initiative provides a framework for the formulation and implementation of ITTO projects and other activities that support ITTO producer member countries in conserving and sustainably managing tropical forest biodiversity, thereby contributes, among others, to the implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Forest Biodiversity.

The programme document that provides a concrete basis for projects and other activities under the ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity is available in English, French and Spanish and can be downloaded from both the ITTO and the CBD websites.¹

2. Objectives and outputs

The overall objective of the ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity is to enhance conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in tropical forests with the direct participation of local stakeholders, addressing the main drivers of biodiversity loss in tropical forests. More specifically, the Initiative provides support to ITTO producer member countries in reducing loss of biodiversity through the implementation of ITTO projects focusing on the common objectives of the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018 and the CBD Programme of Work on Forest Biodiversity.

This Initiative aims to achieve the following four key outputs, with the assistance of donors and through the close collaboration with partners in producer member countries:

1. Enhanced local capacity for biodiversity conservation and use in tropical timber production forests and for the rehabilitation of degraded and secondary tropical forests;
2. Improved conservation and management of protected areas, especially in association with buffering protected areas, and transboundary conservation in the tropics;
3. Safeguarded tropical forest biodiversity in forestry interventions, including in REDD+ related projects; and
4. Improved livelihoods of local communities and indigenous peoples through the conservation and sustainable use of tropical forest biodiversity.

¹ ITTO: http://www.itto.int/files/user/biodiversity/ITTO_CBD_Initiative_2011.pdf
CBD: <http://www.cbd.int/forest/doc/cbd-itto-initiative-programme-document.en.pdf>

These expected outputs of the Initiative are achieved through: the promotion of sustainable tropical forest management, with particular emphasis on biodiversity protection; the implementation of forest monitoring and adaptive management to generate multiple benefits on a sustainable basis; the protection of tropical forest ecosystems against invasive species; and the enhancement of the value of natural tropical forests to avoid their conversion into other uses.

3. Focus on production and protection forests

The Initiative focuses both on protection and production forests. Scientists estimate that tropical forests host about two thirds of terrestrial biodiversity. The expansion of protected areas especially in forests of high conservation values, including transboundary conservation areas, is still required to meet the global target of protecting 17% of terrestrial areas under the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

Considering that only 13% of the world's forests are currently located within protected areas, it is also crucial to promote the conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity outside the protected areas. The conservation and sustainable management of tropical timber producing forests in general, buffer zones and surrounding areas of protected forests in particular, are necessary to improve livelihoods of local communities and the indigenous peoples and to avoid encroachment, poaching and other unsustainable activities in the core areas, thereby to advance conservation and sustainable use of tropical forest biodiversity. The consumption of major timber products (round wood, sawn timber, pulp and paper) is expected to increase over the next 30 years. The use of solid biofuels for electricity generation could be three times larger by 2030 than current level (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/13/3). Globally, the demand for industrial round wood, for instance, is expected to increase by 50-75% by 2050.

The ITTO/IUCN Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Tropical Timber Production Forests (2009) reflect the clear importance of conserving biodiversity outside protected areas by addressing the sustainable management and use of tropical forest resources particularly to secure livelihoods of forest-dependent local and indigenous communities. Also, *the ITTO Guidelines for the Restoration, Management and Rehabilitation of Degraded and Secondary Tropical Forests (2002)* provide reference for the recovery of biodiversity in degraded forests in the tropics. These ITTO guidelines contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of tropical forest biodiversity by providing guidance for the field implementation of the projects and other activities under the Initiative.

4. Operational procedures

ITTO leads the implementation of the Initiative in close consultation with the CBD Secretariat, donors and other partners, especially with the beneficiary countries. Interested ITTO producer member countries may submit a concept note to the ITTO Secretariat indicating their intention to develop a proposal for an ITTO project in the framework of this Initiative. The ITTO Secretariat will assess the pertinence of the request together with the CBD Secretariat and relevant stakeholders of the proposing country, as appropriate, and jointly support the formulation of a full project proposal and conduct fund raising, if required. Donors may allocate funds to finance specific project proposed under the Initiative or provide un-earmarked funds to finance the Initiative as a whole.

5. Implementation

The ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative had an estimated budget of US\$ 15 million for the initial period of four years. Under the renewed MOU, the Initiative is expected to mobilize US\$ 20-25 million in its six-year period. The implementation of the Initiative has been benefited from the experiences of ITTO accumulated through the implementation of over 1,000 projects, pre-projects and other activities, at a value of US\$ 400 million, in the last 30 years. The Initiative has also benefited from the experiences gained in ITTO Programmes, including the ITTO/CITES Programme and the ITTO Thematic Programmes.

6. Project applications

Government agencies of ITTO producer member countries may direct inquiries to rfm@itto.int. More information on ITTO projects and activities is available at <http://www.itto.int>.

7. Funded projects

To date, this Initiative have mobilized over US\$ 15 million, of which donor governments and organizations such as Japan, Switzerland, Belgium, USA, the Republic of Korea and the Japan Lumber Importers'

Association (JLIA) have contributed a total of US\$13.1 million. ITTO producer member countries also provided in-kind and monetary contribution for the implementation of projects. An outline and current status of the projects under implementation, as well as a list of other projects and pre-projects awaiting implementation agreement, and awaiting finance and those completed under the Initiative, are shown in Annex 1.

8. Conclusion

Overall, significant progress has been made in the ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity through the implementation of projects in 26 countries in all three tropical regions of ITTO. The collaboration between ITTO and the CBD Secretariat has already been visible in the progress towards the achievement of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, in particular, the forest-related Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as listed in Annex 2.

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and associated targets. Goal 15 specifically addresses protection, restoration and promotion of sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainable management of forests and halting biodiversity loss. To achieve this Goal, 12 targets have been identified, as shown in Annex 3. All countries and stakeholders, including ITTO and the CBD Secretariat, are now expected to take bold and transformative actions toward the achievement of Goal 15 and its associated targets.

Building on the achievements to date, ITTO and the CBD Secretariat are strengthening their collaboration, and devising activities to advance implementation of the ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity. In this respect, ITTO member countries, Parties to CBD and other relevant public and private organizations are invited to provide further support to the Initiative, including through their financial contributions.

* * *

Annex 1: Outline and current status of ITTO projects under implementation, awaiting implementation agreement, awaiting finance and completed under the ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity

Fully financed projects under implementation

1. Capacity Building for Sustainable Management of Tropical Rainforests and Biodiversity Conservation in the ITTO Congo Basin Countries

ITTO Ref. No.: PD 456/07 Rev.4 (F)

ITTO Budget: USD 3,890,681.69

Beneficiary countries: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon and Republic of Congo

Executing Agency: Network of Central African Forestry and Environmental Training Institutions (*Réseau Régional des Institutions de Formation Forestière et Environnementale d'Afrique Centrale - RIFFEAC*)

Inception date: April 2012

Overall, this five-year project (April 2012 to April 2017) aims to contribute to building human resource capacity required to achieve sustainable forest ecosystem management in the Congo basin by reconciling socio-economic imperatives and the maintenance of ecological balances. More specifically, the project intends to build the capacity for environmental and forestry training institutions in Central Africa to ensure that they are capable to train personnel to implement sustainable forest management, thereby to ensure biodiversity conservation in the Congo Basin.

As there was no hope to get the outstanding balance of USD 517,875.31, from donors, it was suggested to the Executing Agency to revise the budget in order to get the expenses matching the ITTO funds already secured by the ITTO Secretariat, for the amount of US\$3,890,681.00 secured from donors (Belgium, Japan and Switzerland). The Addendum to the Agreement regulating the project implementation was duly signed by the Executing Agency (RIFFEAC Secretariat) on 21 July 2015 and the ITTO Secretariat on 29 July 2015 in order to formalize that ITTO budget revision.

Since the Forty-ninth Session of the Committee and in accordance with the project's most recent progress report, progress in project implementation can be summarized as follows:

- The Executing Agency (RIFFEAC Secretariat) continued the dissemination of twelve (12) reference training modules/programmes and associated teaching methodologies [six (6) at university level and six (6) at lower level], prepared and finalized by the University of Laval and CERFOR Technical Forestry Centre of Canada in consultation with RIFFEAC training institutions, to the seven RIFFEAC training institutions involved in the project implementation as well as to other RIFFEAC training institutions;
- Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) had been established for the follow-up of the operationalization/implementation of these twelve training modules/programme and associated teaching methodologies in all RIFFEAC training institutions, including those not directly supported by the project PD 456/07 Rev.4 (F). These TWGs had been interacting through Internet for the exchange of information on the gradual internalization of the reference training modules/programmes in each RIFFEAC training institution.
- The progress made in contracting capital goods by the Executing Agency (RIFFEAC Secretariat) for the benefit of seven RIFFEAC training institutions (CRESA-Yaounde in Cameroon, ENEF-Libreville in Gabon, ENEF-Mbalmayo in Cameroon, ERAIFT-Kinshasa in Democratic Republic of Congo, IDR-Brazzaville in Republic of Congo, ISDR-Mbaiki in Central African Republic and University of Dschang in Cameroon) directly involved in the project implementation is presented in the following table:

Training institution and Country	Nature of contract	Name of contractor	Duration of contract (month)	Total budget (US\$)	Paid amount (US\$)	Remaining amount (US\$)
CRESA-Yaoundé, Cameroon	V	Leroy Beaulieu	2	78,334	26,168	52,166
	E.I.	INTERFACE	2	18,115	18,115	0
	C/R	MGS	3	62,010	62,010	0
	E.F.	ITKE	2	61,007	61,007	0
ENEF-Mbalmayo, Cameroon	V	Leroy Beaulieu	2	78,333	26,166	52,167
	C/R	Trinity	10	92,800	48,300	45,500
FASA-Dschang Université, Cameroon	V	Leroy Beaulieu	2	78,333	26,166	52,167
	E.I.	INTERFACE	2	18,115	18,115	0
	C/R	SISERCO	6	176,510	55,000	121,510
	E.F.	ITKE	2	61,008	61,008	0
ISDR-Mbaïki, Central African Republic	E.I.	Yang	2	49,962	49,962	0
	C/R	Groupe SYLVA	6	129,731	47,000	82,731
	E.F.	Yang	2	88,892	88,892	0
ENSAF-Brazzaville (ex. IDR), Rep. of Congo	V	CFAO Congo	2	65,328	65,328	0
	E.I.	CGR	2	34,842	34,842	0
	C/R	Co-Maison	6	180,027	0	180,027
ERAIFT-Kinshasa, D. R. Congo	E.I.	IT-COM	2	79,857	17,974	61,974
	V	CFAO RDC	2	74,214	0	74,214
	E.F.	GEOSCIENCE	3	84,500	68,000	16,500
TOTAL				1,511,918	739,211	772,707

C/R: construction/rehabilitation of buildings; E.F.: forestry equipment; E.I.: computer and accessories; V: vehicle

2. Management of the Emerald Triangle Protected Forests Complex to Promote Cooperation for Transboundary Biodiversity Conservation between Thailand, Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR)

ITTO Ref. No.: PD 577/10 Rev.1 (F)

ITTO Budget: USD 2,051,039

Beneficiary countries: Cambodia & Thailand

Executing Agencies: The Forestry Administration of Cambodia and the Royal Forest Department of Thailand

Inception date: August 2012 (to be reported as completed at the 52nd ITTC Session)

Overall, this three-year project (2012-2015) envisages conserving forest biodiversity in the Emerald Triangle Protected Forests Complex situated between Thailand, Cambodia and Lao PDR, under the framework of a trans-boundary biodiversity conservation area (TBCA). The Emerald Triangle has some of the most extensive continuous natural forests in Southeast Asia containing large numbers of globally threatened species and is a last refuge for sixteen "Critically Endangered" and "Endangered" species from the IUCN Red List. Specifically, the project aims to strengthen the protection of trans-boundary habitats of the endangered wide-ranging wildlife species in the Emerald Triangle.

This project became operational in August 2012 and completed all project activities in accordance with the project document under the dedicated work of the two Executing Agencies in July 2016. The project has

contributed to strengthening ecosystem management by increasing the understanding of wildlife distribution patterns as a means of integrating transboundary biodiversity conservation efforts across the three participating countries. Numerous trainings and workshops have contributed to the improvement of local community livelihoods under the integrated conservation and development programs. Sharing research results was also institutionalized as the basis of the formulation of sustainable management strategies of the Emerald Triangle Protected Forests Complex. Since the ITTO Secretariat has received the project completion report, several technical reports, and financial audit reports, the project is considered to be completed at the 52nd Session of ITTC.

Project Achievements and Outputs

The main achievements of the project in relation to the three outputs include:

Output 1: Management plans incorporating research results on wide-ranging species and ecological processes, which are compatible between countries, are established and implemented

Cambodian component:

- Conducted analyses of land use and land cover changes in the Preah Vihear Protected Forest (PVPF) and estimated carbon stocks changes in the PVPF based on the analyses of the land use and land cover change;
- Gathered wildlife distribution information and conducted botanical studies in and around the PVPF and published technical papers on the results of research findings; and
- Organized "Regional Conference on Biodiversity Conservation in Tropical Forests of the Greater Mekong Sub-region" in Siem Reap, Cambodia, on 23-25 March 2016. There were 108 participants including officials from Greater Mekong Sub-region countries. The proceedings of the regional conference was published and disseminated to interested parties.

Thai component:

- Collected wildlife distribution data in the Emerald Triangle Forest Complex (ETFC); wildlife trainings/workshops were organized with participation of Champasack University, Lao PDR;
- Strengthened the capacity for Cambodian and Laotian officials on GIS for modeling land-use and species distribution through engagement of a GIS consultant from Kasetsart University, Thailand;
- Conducted a joint research by the three countries on wide-ranging species distribution in the Emerald Triangle with support of a wildlife consultant from Kasetsart University; and
- A paper on consequences of land-use change on wide-ranging species distributions was sent to a journal.

Output 2: Capacity of multi-stakeholders in biodiversity conservation and monitoring is strengthened.

Cambodian component:

- Conducted regular law enforcement patrols in the PVPF to reduce incidences of illegal forest activities in target sites in cooperation with military police; confiscated 1,385 kg of wild meat and 135 m³ of sawnwood of rosewood (*Dalbergia cochinchinensis*), and other species in the project sites (O Chuh, Ksant, Robonh and Sen Teches villages); provided monitoring equipment including six motorcycles, two 4WD pick-up trucks, four laptop computers, and three GPS units;
- Coordinated quarterly meetings and workshops with relevant stakeholders on trans-boundary biodiversity conservation; conducted a training course on "Using Drone-GIS technology integrated with mobile devices" to determine locations of forestland encroachment and forest crimes; organized "National Conference on Forest Biodiversity and the Conservation of Carbon Stocks in the Permanent Forest Estate" in Phnom Penh on 16-18 December 2015;
- Organized training programs on forest conservation, forest climate change mitigation, REDD+, and law enforcement for relevant stakeholders and organized workshops to disseminate information on law enforcement and international conventions related to biodiversity conservation, such as CITES and the Convention on Biological Diversity; and
- Organized training on domestication of wild flora and fauna for local communities by identifying 15 species of orchids, 22 species of edible plants, including rattan shoots, mushrooms, and herbs, as well as 4 species of amphibians, and 46 medicinal plants for local markets.

Thai component:

- Conducted forest law enforcement workshops/trainings in November 2013 and February 2014 in collaboration with forest protection units and local NGOs to prevent wildlife poaching, illegal logging,

illegal trading and the collection of wild plants; provided necessary equipment and facilities to protection units for effective patrolling and protection; meetings were organized to follow up the patrolling once a month during the field visit of the project staff; and

- Organized a training workshop on buffer zone management in May 2014 in cooperation with universities and NGOs. The communities in the buffer zone increased their knowledge of the buffer zone management for protection of natural resource in the long run. It was attended by 42 participants including local community leaders.

Output 3: Local communities are empowered to implement activities linking livelihoods improvement to reduced dependence on resources of protected areas.

Cambodian component:

- Conducted an assessment for sustainable livelihoods and potential ecotourism development in the five targeted local communities; organized pilot sustainable agriculture and agroforestry practices and community-based ecotourism in the buffer zones of the PVPF;
- Maintained the existing integrated conservation development projects (ICDP) established under Phase II and provided additional funding for domesticated wild flora and fauna pilot programs. Around 91,850 native commercial trees and fruit trees were delivered to local communities;
- Scaled up local community fora and networks to facilitate biodiversity conservation in the PVPF through two exchange visits, one for 20 commune council members and village chiefs and the other for 20 farmers from local communities. These include 19 females; and
- A total of 59 training and awareness raising meetings organized with participation of 3,185 participants, including representatives of local communities and military families; built a small school building for the O Chhunh primary school with desks and chairs.

Thai component:

- Strengthened local community fora and networks for biodiversity conservation through a series of workshops and trainings on community development as well as meetings between local people and NGOs for selection of new integrated conservation development projects (ICDP);
- Monitored the operation of the existing 6-ICDPs (two home-stay and eco-tourism, one agro forestry-food bank, one handicrafts from bamboo and two wild orchid tissue culture projects) established under Phase II;
- Organized fund raising meetings with potential donors and NGOs to sustain ICDP activities to promote potential activities and best practices; and
- Conducted outreach programs to local schools and local communities to raise awareness on conservation benefits associated with TBCA. A total of 17 biodiversity conservation drawing contests in elementary schools in the project sites were organized.

Several technical reports resulting from the project were uploaded on the ITTO website at http://www.ito.int/project_search/detail/?proid=PD577%2F10+Rev.1+%28F%29. These include:

- Land use change and wildlife distribution modeling in the Emerald Triangle Forest Complex;
- Wildlife resources in the Emerald Triangle Protected Forest Complex between Thailand and Lao PDR;
- Integrating forest biodiversity resource management and sustainable community livelihood development in the Preah Vihear protected forest; and
- Management Plan for 2016-2020 for Preah Vihear protected forest for plant and wildlife genetic resource conservation.

Outcomes and Impacts

The project has resulted in the increased information and knowledge, and partnerships for trans-boundary biodiversity conservation in the Emerald Triangle landscape between the three countries. The main outcomes and impacts of the project include:

- Information on wildlife distribution patterns in the Emerald Triangle landscape between the three countries has been crucial for the conservation and sustainable management planning and monitoring. The collaboration between the three countries was successful at the technical level;
- Maps indicating the habitats of wide-ranging, and landmark wildlife species in the Emerald Triangle landscape are now used for coordinating activities to conserve trans-boundary biodiversity in the Emerald Triangle;

- The FLEG capacities of project staff, rangers, border patrol police, and local communities were strengthened with equipment and training;
- The results of research conducted among the three countries were incorporated into revised and updated management plans such as 2016-2020 Preah Vihear Protected Forest in Cambodia and the Pha Taem National Park in Thailand;
- Local communities increased their understanding of alternative income generating opportunities and were able to actively participate in resource management programs; significant improvements in the livelihoods of local communities along with reduced encroachment of protected areas;
- Resource managers who received refined and expanded forest resources and wildlife databases, more reliable information, and advanced GIS research techniques were able to increase their contributions in decision-making processes; and
- Park and protected area rangers increased their understanding of conservation management planning and were able to increase their patrolling performances.

The collective efforts of the Cambodia and Thailand Project Components and representatives of Champasack University in Lao PDR include the development of a common vision for long-term management of the Emerald Triangle Protected Forests Complex in order to strengthen the protection of the trans-boundary habitats of wide ranging wildlife species and increase its land use and climate changes adaptation capability. It is expected that this common vision will contribute to transforming the Emerald Triangle Protected Forests Complex into an international symbol of trans-boundary biodiversity conservation.

Lessons Learnt and sustainability

There have been several lessons learned from the implementation of the project. Key lessons include the following:

- The political support of every participating country is essential to the ultimate success of trans-boundary conservation. Support from higher levels of the Forestry Administration of Cambodia and the Royal Forest Department of Thailand has been crucial to the design and implementation of the project;
- Technical cooperation, particularly in the early stages of activities, directed collective efforts between the participating countries. The JICA in Cambodia, and Kasetsart University in Thailand have assumed critical roles in expanding technical cooperation. The participation of the Champasack University in Lao PDR in the trans-boundary biodiversity cooperation has been instrumental amid the difficulty of engaging relevant Lao government departments;
- Regular meetings of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and joint technical meetings contributed to the efficient planning and monitoring of the project;
- The effective participation of stakeholders, in particular, local communities, is a necessary component for ensuring the longevity of on-going activities;
- The capacities and capabilities of stakeholders, especially government authorities and local communities, should be well-understood prior to developing training programs and organizing workshops. Efforts to raise their awareness of the importance of conservation in trans-boundary conservation initiatives should be an on-going process; and
- The engagement of the CBD Secretariat in PSC meetings and the regional workshop under the ITTO/CBD Joint Initiative on Tropical Forest Biodiversity has substantially contributed to the visibility of the project in international conservation communities.

Since many of the interventions in Phase II, as well as in Phase III were consisted of capacity building, training, and awareness raising, several post-Phase III project activities will be sustainable through extended work of concerned institutions including research work. In line with the common vision for long-term management of the Emerald Triangle Protected Forests Complex, joint activities will be generated. In particular, the initiation of efforts to institutionalize cross-border relationships through periodic 'bilateral' meetings between Cambodia and Thailand will support sustainable joint management of the Emerald Triangle Protected Forests Complex, especially with regard to increasing cooperation on trans-boundary wildlife law enforcement activities. It is expected that an ITTO Technical Series outlining main results of the project will be published in December 2016.

3. Building Capacities of ACTO Member Countries in Ecologically Responsible Forest Management and Biodiversity Conservation in Managed Forests of the Amazon

ITTO Ref. No.:	PP-A/47-266
ITTO Budget:	USD 1,320,224
Beneficiary countries:	Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela
Executing Agency:	Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO)
Inception date:	July 2013

This three-year project aims to enhance biodiversity conservation and strengthen environmental guidelines in managed forests across the Amazon Region. Specifically, the project aims at establishing an interdisciplinary process for building and delivering the technical capacity necessary for implementing ecologically responsible forest management in public and private production forests of the Amazon region, favouring the sustainable use and conservation of forest biodiversity.

The main project outcomes expected to be achieved upon project completion are: 1) Detailed national assessments taking into account the ITTO/IUCN Guidelines for Conservation of Biodiversity in Tropical Timber Production Forests as well as national and regional forest management standards, to report on (a) the extent to which public and private production forests of ACTO nations currently consider and implement biodiversity concerns and guidelines; and (b) the national-level capacity for training and knowledge exchange in ecologically responsible forest management; 2) At least three existing forest management centres are strengthened to become coordinating centres of excellence for training in ecologically responsible forest management for the Amazon region, supported by newly developed training materials and a strengthened network of professional trainers; and 3) A regional Knowledge Exchange Platform (KEP) on ecologically responsible forest management is established under the coordination of ACTO's wider regional cooperation platform to facilitate sharing of information and experiences regarding the opportunities and challenges for incorporating biodiversity conservation concerns into the management of public and private forests.

The Government of Japan, in November 2011, provided an amount of USD 1,320,224, to fund this Activity. The Memorandum of Understanding, which governs the implementation of this Activity, was signed by ACTO and ITTO in February 2013. The first installment of funds was transferred in August 2013 and the second in October 2015.

Since the Forty-ninth session of the Committee and in accordance with the project's most recent progress reports submitted in February and August 2016, and the third Project Steering Committee meeting held in May 2016, progress in project implementation can be summarized by major outputs as follows:

Output 1: Detailed national evaluations of sustainable forest governance and biodiversity conservation in the Amazon

- The 2nd coordination meeting with National Coordinators from the 8 ACTO countries was held on 25 January 2016 in order to review the Yearly Plan of Operations and to take urgent actions to start the execution of project activities. The main outcomes were the adjustment of the activities schedule, and the recommendation to make modifications to the budget to achieve the objectives within the remaining time of the execution period.
- The Regional Coordination Unit of the project prepared the ToR to execute an assessment to determine each country's competences and needs to implement sustainable forest governance and biodiversity conservation in the Amazon forest, and to evaluate all the training centers of the respective countries that are considered Centers of Excellence and aspire to provide capacity-building in ecologically responsible forest governance and biodiversity conservation in the Amazon. All countries except Brazil hired a Consultant for a two month period to carry out the aforementioned assessment. To date three country assessments have been completed, namely those for Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru.

Output 2: Development of capacity-building modules with the purpose of improving sustainable forest governance and biodiversity conservation in the Amazon region

- The Senior Consultant who will lead the execution of the activities related to the development of capacity-building modules was selected in June 2016 but has not been hired yet due to temporary internal financial arrangements of ITTO.
- The Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) provided technical as well as financial support to the National Coordinators to guide the work of national consultants and also to organize the National workshops. Thus, several meetings were held with National Coordinators and Consultants to guide them on the organization of the workshops.

Output 3: Establishment of a Regional Knowledge Exchange Platform to facilitate exchange of experience and information about opportunities and challenges posed by sustainable forest governance and biodiversity conservation in the Amazon region

- An Evaluation Criteria and Quantification Matrix was developed to help National Coordinators to guide the work of National Consultants to identify from the existing Training Centers the ones that could have their current capacity strengthened to become Excellence Training Centers.

In March 2014 delegates from the eight ACTO member countries gathered at the project's first Steering Committee meeting held at Puyo, Ecuador, and redefined the details of the project's activities and further finalized the project document. The project's first Yearly Plan of Operations was also developed and approved based on the final project document. The second Steering Committee meeting of this project was organized with the collaboration of the Secretariat of the Environment of the State of Acre (SEMA), in Rio Branco, Acre, Brazil May 10th to 12th, 2016. At this meeting the Steering Committee reviewed the activities of the project and noted that ACTO had already initiated some of the project's core activities, although with some delays. Based on the aforementioned, ACTO requested for an extension in time with budgetary modifications until June 2018 in order to successfully complete the project and this was approved by the Secretariat in June 2016.

4. Promoting Biodiversity Conservation in Betung Kerihun National Park (BKNP) as the Trans-boundary Ecosystem between Indonesia and State of Sarawak Malaysia - Phase III

ITTO Ref. No.: PD 617/11 Rev.4 (F)

ITTO Budget: USD 941,559

Beneficiary country: Indonesia

Executing Agency: Betung Kerihun National (BKNP), Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (PHKA), Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Inception date: October 2013

Overall, this 4-year project (2013-2017) aims to promote sustainable conservation management of the Betung Kerihun National Park (BKNP) established in 1992 covering around 800,000 ha, as a transboundary ecosystem between Indonesia and Malaysia (Sarawak). The project will focus on strengthening transboundary cooperation with Sarawak so as to enhance commonly shared ecosystems and other conservation concerns.

The project's transboundary conservation cooperation is focused on the Lanjak Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary (LEWS) and the Batang Ai National Park (BANP) in Sarawak sites which are adjacent to BKNP in Indonesia. The project will be implemented by BKNP in collaboration with many stakeholders including WWF-Indonesia in order to ensure the conservation of the integrity of BKNP's biodiversity values. The project activities include establishing a joint task force for the efficient implementation of the transboundary conservation area (TBCA) with the participation of representatives from LEWS and BANP. The expected outputs of the project are: (1) cooperation between Indonesia and Malaysia for the conservation of transboundary ecosystem between BKNP and BANP/LEWS; (2) formulation of an operational work plan

on biodiversity conservation for the transboundary ecosystems; and (3) Improving the sustainable livelihoods of the local communities within and surrounding BKNP.

Project activities commenced in October 2013. Since the Forty-ninth Session of the Committee and in accordance with the project's most recent progress reports, progress in project implementation can be summarized as follows:

- Implemented two internship programs in Sarawak on 5 - 9 November 2015 based on the Letter of Intent (LOI) signed by BKNP and FDS Authorities on 5 October 2015. This LOI aims to carry out training on Semah fish raising, and to assist local communities in the production of quality gaharu commodity. The first program was devoted to Indonesian participants while the second one was devoted primarily for Sarawakian local communities interested in gaharu commodity development;
- Developed a concept note for the organization of a regional workshop on TBCA involving ASEAN countries on 8-12 August 2016; posted the first announcement of the regional workshop on ITTO website. However, this workshop was postponed due to unavailability of the necessary funds due to ITTO suspension of payments to all projects since June 2016;
- Continued to facilitate dialogues and communication between BKNP and head of local communities (Tumenggung) in development and implementation of Action Plan. Tumenggung of five villages have signed an agreement with BKNP to work together in conservation;
- Conducted training on the production of biogas energy using readily available local raw materials with the engagement of Sri Wahyuni from Woman Innovation Foundation (Yayasan Perempuan Inovasi Mandiri);
- Promoting village ecotourism is under way by holding intensive dialogues with villagers, village officials and District Government of Kapuas Hulu. Intensive learning and consultations are on-going with ADB, TFCA Kalimantan, GIZ/KFW For-Clime, HOB Secretariat and Kapuas Hulu government for collaboration opportunities;
- Involvement of women in ecotourism development is under way. A group of women has been trained on cloth weaving and colouring of traditional in surrounded buffer villages;
- Reviewed the conduct of a feasibility study on community-based carbon and biodiversity conservation REDD+ project; and
- Organized two community patrol trainings in western and eastern parts of BKNP with the development of a training module by the Center for Forestry Education and Training. A training of biodiversity monitoring and Agarwood inoculation in Bungan and Lokang Villages, buffer zone of BKNP was also organized for promotion of NTFP.

5. Buffer Zone Management for Pulong Tau National Park with Involvement of Local Communities in Management, Sarawak, Malaysia

ITTO Ref. No.:	PD 635/12 Rev.2 (F)
ITTO Budget:	USD 517,450
Beneficiary country:	Malaysia
Executing Agency:	Forest Department of Sarawak (FDS)
Inception date:	August 2014

When the Pulong Tau National Park was created in 2005, the indigenous communities were not granted privileges to use the resources in the Park for their subsistence. The forests outside the Park, on the other hand, had already licensed for logging long before the creation of the Park. Many of the indigenous communities living around the Park, particularly Penan communities, are still forest-dependent and require access to forests for their survival. The need for protecting the rich biodiversity in the Totally Protected Areas from anthropogenic activities and safeguarding the livelihood of indigenous communities were becoming increasing necessary.

This two-year project aims to contribute to the integrated development of buffer zones for the environmental conservation and the uplifting livelihoods of indigenous communities in Sarawak. Its specific objective is to secure the buffer zone forests for the indigenous communities' use and to strengthen conservation management for Pulong Tau National Park. These objectives are achieved through: establishing a 6,000 hectare buffer zone and its integrated management; securing its forest resource base to meet the needs of Penan communities; and providing the Penan communities with trainings to improve their livelihoods, with

the active involvement of stakeholders. The project is being carried out by the Forest Department Sarawak (FDS) through its Community Service Initiative Unit (CSIU).

This project was approved under Autumn 2012 Project Cycle and financed at the Forty-eighth Session of the ITTC held in November 2012. The draft project agreement was sent to the Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities of Malaysia in January 2013. The project agreement was duly signed in August 2014. The Executing Agency submitted the Inception Report with a yearly plan of operation (YPO) for the first year and started the implementation of project activities in August 2014.

Since the Forty-ninth Session of the Committee, the project has been making progress mainly in the following areas according to the latest progress reports as well as the monthly highlights submitted through the on-line monitoring system (OLMS):

- Based on the results of the ecological and flora survey conducted in the first year, technical report has been drafted. The information gained from this survey has been used to identify the areas of communal forests to be established for Penan communities (Activity 2.1);
- Based on the results of the faunal survey on ground mammals, birds and insects also conducted in the first year, technical report has been drafted and edited. The gained information has also been used to identify communal forests (Activity 2.2);
- The areas of three communal forests have been identified for the four Penan villages located adjacent to the park boundary. Some portions of the proposed communal forests are located within the Totally Protected Area of the park (Activity 2.4);
- On-the-job trainings on buffer zone management, farming practices and handicraft development have been continued. The need for continued interaction was recognized through the trainings to improve knowledge base and to advance mutual understanding (Activity 3.1);
- Training on non-timber forest products (NTFPs) has been conducted focussing on the plantation and maintenance of fruit trees and sago palm, based on the results of the previous ITTO project (Activity 3.2); and
- One of the Penan communities agreed to introduce *tagang* fisheries and has started its practice in a nearby stream. Other Penan communities are still hesitant about this innovative method of freshwater resource management (Activity 3.3).

At the second meeting of the Project Steering Committee held in April 2016, the following two additional activities were approved, in response to the request from the Penan communities, and subsequently carried out:

- Trainings on carpentry and electrical wiring work; and
- Health care, including dental care, general health screening, family planning and hygiene.

This project has been making good progress with the exceptional efforts of the Executing Agency with the allocation of significant resources and through the close consultation with the Penan communities and other stakeholders. The only exception was the withdrawal of the activity to construct field centre cum rangers' station (Activity 1.2) due to the unexpected land claim by indigenous families.

The Project Steering Committee also endorsed a six month extension without additional funds at its second meeting in April 2016, and the requested extension was subsequently granted to allow the project enough time to complete the following work:

- Consultation with the logging companies for the establishment of communal forests (Activity 2.4);
- Collection of field information for the development of buffer zone guidelines (Activity 1.3); and
- Publication of technical reports (Activity 2.3).

6. Integrated Management of Natural Resources and Biodiversity in the Tacaná Volcano and its Range of Influence in Mexico and Guatemala

ITTO Ref. No.:	PD 668/12 Rev.1 (F)
ITTO Budget:	USD 641,639
Beneficiary country:	Guatemala and Mexico
Executing Agency:	HELVETAS SWISS INTERCOOPERATION (HSI)

Inception date: July 2014

Guatemala and Mexico share the Tacaná Volcano border area that straddles the Department of San Marcos and the State of Chiapas. While the Mesoamerican Biodiversity Corridor is featured by biological richness and ecotourism potential, the area is affected by poverty and unsustainable natural resource use. This project was developed with the aim of sustainably managing the protected areas of the Tacaná Volcano border area through the coordinated actions by the regional governments, institutions, civil society and other stakeholders.

The objective of this two-year project is to contribute to the improvement of the livelihoods of 28,000 people living in both countries, through the conservation and sustainable use of local natural resources. More specifically a participatory process is launched for the conservation, sustainable management and use of natural resources and biodiversity in the Tacaná Volcano and its surrounding areas stretching between Guatemala and Mexico.

Expected outputs are: i) pilot areas established for the restoration and conservation of Tacaná Volcano border area in a participatory manner; ii) local production and economic initiatives identified and established for the enhancement of livelihoods of local communities; iii) technical and legal framework updated for the integrated management in Tacaná Volcano and iv) local communities, municipal councils and public agencies actively involved in the Guatemala- Mexico Bilateral Cooperation.

The agreement for the implementation of this project was signed in December 2013. The Inception Report with the first Yearly Plan of Operation was approved in July 2014 and the project activities commenced immediately after the disbursement of the first installment of funds. The first meeting of the Project Steering Committee meeting was held in San Marcos, Guatemala in September 2014, and the second meeting was held in Tapachula, Mexico. Both meetings counted with the full participation of both Mexican and Guatemalan stakeholders, including CONAFOR, CONANP, CONAP, INAB, local governments and community representatives. The second installment of funds was released in November 2015.

Since the Forty-ninth Session of the Committee and in accordance with the project's most recent progress report submitted in February 2016, progress in project implementation can be summarized by major outputs as follows:

Output 1: Pilot areas established for the restoration and conservation of Tacaná Volcano border area in a participatory manner.

- Mapping of restoration/conservation areas and environmental services has been completed for the Tacaná Volcano and its surrounding areas on the Guatemalan and Mexican sides;
- Seven priority areas for restoration and conservation have been selected;
- Several consultative workshops have been organized for the restoration and conservation plans;
- Twelve forest nurseries have been established to produce 42 thousand tree seedlings of native tree species for the restoration work, and
- Several community forest restoration models have been developed with the involvement of the local stakeholders.

Output 2: Local production and economic initiatives identified and established for the enhancement of livelihoods of local communities.

- Twelve proposals submitted by the communities, for the enhancement of their livelihoods were assessed by roundtables. Eight proposals were selected for implementation prior to the development of specific investment plans. These include investments in ecotourism and others;
- A consultation was carried out for the improvement of four tourist routes of the Trans-border Hiking Path. The result of the consultation includes i) diagnosis of a range of opportunities for visitors of protected areas, ii) infrastructure development proposal and design, iii) infrastructure maintenance proposal; and iv) budget estimation and investment requirements; and
- A meeting of tour operators was convened to exchange experiences in volcanoes on the Guatemalan side.

Output 3: Technical and legal framework updated for the integrated management in Tacaná Volcano

- A technical study has been completed to reclassify the Tacaná Volcano area in Guatemala in

close coordination with CONAP. However, this study will have to be revised to incorporate the land use framework newly approved by CONAP; and

- Several workshops were organized focusing on the technical and normative aspects of the conservation and management of natural resources in protected areas.

Output 4: Local communities, municipal councils and public agencies actively involved in the Guatemala- Mexico Bilateral Cooperation.

- Training of rangers on better control and monitoring of the area has been conducted;
- Two baseline and biological monitoring surveys have been completed; and
- Bilateral and international cooperation activities were carried out to share knowledge and expertise among stakeholders.

7. Strengthening Mangrove Ecosystem Conservation in the Biosphere Reserve of Northwestern Peru

ITTO Ref. No.: PD 601/11 Rev.3 (F)

ITTO Budget: USD 496,290

Beneficiary country: Peru

Executing Agency: MDA

Inception date: August 2014

Mangrove forests constitute one of the most vulnerable ecosystems to climate change, while at the same time being an ecosystem that can sequester and store amongst the highest volumes of carbon. The National System for Natural Protected Areas (SINANPE) has contributed to the sustainability of mangrove ecosystems by establishing the National Sanctuary of Tumbes Mangroves (Santuario Nacional de los Manglares de Tumbes – SNLMT). However, there are insufficient participatory mechanisms for the overall conservation of mangrove forest ecosystems in the Piura and Tumbes regions. This in turn leads to low living standards for the communities living in degraded mangrove ecosystem areas, and the resultant loss of biodiversity.

To address this situation, this proposal envisages improving the standard of living of the population in mangrove ecosystem areas in the regions of Tumbes and Piura. More specifically, it will increase the number of participatory mechanisms for mangrove forest protection, conservation and rehabilitation in the regions of Tumbes and Piura through: (1) Adequate use of legal powers by regional and local governments for the conservation of mangrove forests; (2) Improving the level of forest administration and management so as to preserve mangrove ecosystems; and (3) Developing and implementing financial sustainability strategies for mangrove forests.

The main project outcomes that are expected to be achieved upon project completion are: (i) Strengthening the management capacity for the conservation of mangrove forests in two regional governments and two municipalities ; (ii) Establishing three protected areas: the Mangrove /Dry Forest Biological Corridor, the San Pedro de Vice Mangrove Forest and the New Vichayal Mangrove Forest; (iii) Improving the management efficiency of the National Sanctuary of Tumbes Mangroves (SNLMT); (iv) Promoting through the implementation of 10 sub-projects for sustainable economic activities the appropriate use of resources (forest and hydrobiological resources) in mangrove forests; and (v) Promoting financial mechanisms to contribute to the sustainability of mangrove forests.

This project was approved under the Spring 2012 Project Cycle and was fully financed at the Forty-ninth Session in November 2013 at Libreville, Gabon. The final agreement regulating the implementation of the project was duly signed in September 2014. The first instalment of funds was transferred in November 2014, after the submission, by the Executing Agency, of the first Yearly Plan of Operations, a request for the no-objection of the project's key personnel and a notification that implementation is about to begin, and the approval of the aforementioned by the Secretariat. The second disbursement of funds was transferred in December 2015.

Since the Forty-ninth session of the Committee and in accordance with the project's most recent progress reports submitted in February and August 2016, progress in project implementation can be summarized by major outputs as follows:

Output 1: Adequate use of legal powers by regional and local governments for the conservation of mangrove forests

- Several inter-institutional meetings have been held between the regional and local governments, universities, SERNANP, PRONANP and MDA to discuss the training need of regional and local government officers in environmental standards and regulations.
- Based on the aforementioned meetings, the National University of Tumbes organized a post-graduate diploma in "Participatory Environmental Management for the Conservation of Mangroves and Dry Forests". 35 students obtained their diploma during the project's first year and a similar number is expected to graduate in the second year;
- Many meetings have been organized and technical assistance has further been provided to regional, municipal and local governments as regards their environmental management instruments and others;
- The project participated in the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves held at Lima, Peru in March 2016, where project staff actively participated and negotiated the extension of the Noroeste Amotapes – Manglares Biosphere Reserve so as to include the Tumbes Mangrove National Reserve, which was approved at this congress. This biosphere reserve, off the northern coast of Peru was designated in 1977 under the name of Noroeste Biosphere Reserve. It now includes the Cerros de Amotape National Park, Coto El Angolo and Tumbes Mangroves Protected Area. The extension covers a surface area of 1,115,947ha. The project also presented several posters and distributed several brochures; and
- Coordination continues with competent authorities for the legal recognition of 3 new protected areas in mangrove ecosystems: the Tumbes Mangrove Ecosystem – Dry Forest Biological Corridor, and the San Pedro de Vice Mangrove Forest and Mangrove Forest of Vichayal in the Department of Piura.

Output 2: Improved level of forest administration and management so as to preserve mangrove ecosystems

- The master plan for the management of the National Sanctuary of Tumbes Mangroves has been updated in a participatory manner via workshops with all stakeholders involved and a regional forum was planned for the world environment day;
- Coordination meetings with the local governments of Corrales, Zarumilla and Aguas Verdes in Tumbes and Vice in Piura continue for the implementation of participatory management mechanisms in the new protected mangrove areas to be created; and
- A work plan has been developed to train local communities in sustainable management and utilization techniques for the natural resources of mangrove ecosystems.

Output 3: Financial sustainability strategies for mangrove forests developed and under implementation

- Assistance has been provided to the local communities in developing revenue-raising mechanisms to contribute to mangrove forest sustainability via small business plans. 6 project profiles have already been developed to date.

8. Community Based Restoration and Sustainable Management of Vulnerable Forests of the Rewa Delta, Viti Levu

ITTO Ref. No.: PD 696/13 Rev.2 (F)

ITTO Budget: USD 310,576 .00

Beneficiary country: Fiji

Executing Agency: Department of Forest, Ministry of Fisheries and Forest, Republic of Fiji

Inception date: October 2015

The coastal and mangrove wetlands in the Rewa Delta (35,238 ha) of Fiji are undoubtedly a source of important marine and terrestrial resource for local communities in the area, but more importantly, these forests safeguard the entire coastal ecosystem that supports riparian flat lands. However, the wetlands have been affected by social and economic pressures, and policy is not aligned to a single Government Agency. Resource extraction has resulted in reduction in vegetated areas and habitat loss as well as declining quality in livelihood opportunities.

The development objective of the project is to contribute to the sustainable management of coastal and mangrove wetlands in the Rewa Delta, while improving the livelihoods of local communities. Specifically, the project proposes: restoration and management of at least 3,381 hectares as demonstration site; training of 17 communities involved in raising awareness on the importance of wetlands; and the development of alternative livelihood options to reduce overdependence on the coastal and mangrove wetland vegetation. The target community lies within the Tikina of Bau, Tailevu, a densely populated area in the Rewa Delta.

Expected outputs of the project include the collation of key issues on coastal and mangrove wetlands and the formulation of relevant policy framework. In addition, it is expected that communities will adopt alternative livelihoods that will reduce pressure from over-utilization of coastal and mangrove wetland resources; and by the end of the project, at least 500 ha of the degraded area in the selected demonstration site would be rehabilitated with appropriate coastal tree species to support ecosystem services and human wellbeing in the long term.

The project was approved under Autumn 2013 Project Cycle and its financing was made at ITTC 49 in November 2013. The project agreement regulating project implementation was finalized in June 2015. After the completion of all administrative arrangements including detailed yearly plans of operation, the project became operational in October 2015.

Since the commencement of the project in October 2015, the key activities implemented by the Executing Agency include the following:

- Conducted community workshops on the importance of coastal and mangrove wetland and identification of alternate livelihood options for 4 villages in Tailevu province namely; Waicoka, Natila, Nasilai and Naivakacau under component 1 of the project. The training focused on its activities in four main areas: (1) raise awareness to improve understanding of ecosystem services, mangrove system and coastal ecosystems; (2) need to implement an applied management action plan for conservation of mangrove land and sustainable agricultural practices on sloping terrain; (3) capacity building exercise to strengthen natural resource base for villages; and (4) promotion of alternative sustainable livelihoods through collaboration and technical support from partner agencies and organizations;
- Completed a land-use mapping exercise and identified the area and species that need to be planted for restoring degraded coastal and mangrove wetlands for each village. The participants were awarded with a certificate of participation after the completion a five-day training course in each village; and
- Started with the implementation phase to identify the species that needs to be planted for restoring degraded coastal and mangrove wetlands. Nasilai village has been chosen as a pilot site.

Since February 2016 when Cyclone Winston, the most powerful storm made landfall in the southern hemisphere of Fiji, the implementation of the project activities had been slow but the project implementation is now on track.

9. Promoting Conservation of Selected High-value Indigenous Species of Sumatra

ITTO Ref. No.: PD 710/13 Rev.1 (F)

ITTO Budget: USD 479,976.00

Beneficiary country: Indonesia

Executing Agency: Forest Research Institute, Forestry Research and Development Agency (FORDA)

Inception date: January 2015

Sumatra is the largest island in Indonesia and has abundant biological diversity, including many indigenous plant species. Some of the high-value indigenous species are Sumatran yew (*Taxus sumatrana*), Sumatran merbau (*Intsia palembanica*), and lesser-known non-timber forest products (NTFPs) producing species. However, over-exploitation, encroachment, and illegal activities have made many of the high-value species threatened with extinction. High commercially valuable timber species such as Sumatran merbau, kulim, andalás, and giam have been excessively and illegally logged for the past several decades. Lesser-known NTFPs producing species have also been illegally collected, whereas, endemic and relatively limited distribution and small population size, *T. sumatrana* has been threatened by habitat encroachment, population disruption and illegal logging.

The overall objective of this project is to contribute to the sustainable management of selected high-value indigenous plant species of Sumatra. The specific objective of the project is to enhance the achievement of conservation goals through revitalization of the existing conservation program, harvest control systems, and regeneration. The expected outputs are: (1) accelerated conservation of selected high-value indigenous species; (2) promotion of harvest control of those species; and (3) improving the regeneration capacity of those species. Primary beneficiaries of the project are local communities, local governments, Directorate of Biodiversity Conservation (MoF), Ministry of Environment, BAPPENAS, and Indonesian Institute of Science (LIPI). The benefits of the project range from updated data and information on distribution, conservation status and protection, and the regeneration of selected high-value indigenous species. This proposed project will also contribute to the socioeconomic improvement of the forest-dependent community.

The project was approved under Autumn 2013 Project Cycle and was financed at ITTC 49 in November 2013. The project agreement for regulating project implementation was finalized in July 2014. After completing administrative arrangements for the implementation of the project including the detailed yearly plans of operation, the project commenced in January 2015.

Since the Forty-ninth Session of the Committee in November 2015, key project activities implemented by the Executing Agency can be summarized as follows:

- Published in Indonesian language the workshop proceedings on “Improving Awareness on Conservation of High Value Indigenous Wood Species of Sumatra” held on 27 April 2015. The proceedings has been distributed to various stakeholders;
- Continued the collection and updating of data and information on distribution, population and conservation status of the seven selected high-value indigenous species. Tree’s biological and ecological data and information cover a number of target trees (population potency), stand structure, tree’s size, species association, regeneration condition, micro climate, soil type and pH, etc.;
- Carried out an analysis for economic and utilization potential and chemical substances of *Taxus sumatrana* which were collected from the forest in Mount Kerinci National Park and Tapanuli, south Sumatra; and
- Built a simple nursey facility (6 x 20 m) to provide shading for seedling. Collected seeds, wildings and other vegetative materials. The team also collected fruit of andalás from Tanah Datar and the seeds were already sown at the nursery.

10. Building the Capacity for Biodiversity Conservation in Trans-boundary Conservation Areas (TBCAs) in the Congo Basin Countries through Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Practices and the Use of Satellite and Radar Imagery (Phase 1)

ITTO Ref. No.: PP-A/50-296

ITTO Budget: USD 1,280,619 for Phase 1 (out of a total amount of USD 5,539,162)

Beneficiary country: Angola, **Cameroon**, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, Equatorial Guinea, **Gabon**, **Republic of Congo & Rwanda** [ITTO members in bold]

Executing Agency: Network of Protected Areas in Central Africa (*Réseau des Aires Protégées d’Afrique Centrale - RAPAC*)

Inception date: March 2015 (12 months for Phase 1).

Approved revised date

Special Activity Completion: Extension until July 2016

I. Introduction

The Government of Japan, in March 2014, has provided an amount of USD 1,280,619, to fund the first phase of this Special Activity. The Memorandum of Understanding governing the implementation of this Special Activity was fully signed on 12 February 2015 by all parties: Secretariat of COMIFAC (Commission of Central African Forests) on behalf of Congo Basin countries, Secretariat of RAPAC (Network of Protected Areas in Central Africa) as the executing agency, and ITTO Secretariat. The first installment of ITTO funds was disbursed in order to allow the executing agency (RAPAC) to prepare the inception regional workshop.

A Special Activity extension was granted until July 2016, without additional ITTO funds, by the ITTO Secretariat, based on an official request including proper justification with appropriate detailed work plan and budget. However, as an acceptable version of the completion report was submitted in August 2016, the Special Activity operation period had lasted 17 months instead of 12 initially designed by the executing agency (RAPAC)

However, the executing agency had adjusted some actions of the Special Activity as the last installment of ITTO funds was not disbursed because of the financial impairment issue. This was in accordance with the recommendation of the ITTO Secretariat asking the executing agency (EA) to make every effort to achieve the objectives of this project using the funds that had already been disbursed to the EA (letter L.16-0065 of 09 June 2016), due to the financial impairment issue under investigation. The ITTO budget was modified in May 2016 to take into account the reduction for an amount of US\$225,940 in light of the foreseen suspension of the disbursement of the last installment of ITTO funds (NOLF.16-0109).

II. Special Activity

This 12-month Special Activity, as the Phase 1 of a 3-year Special Activity, intended to contribute to the management of threats to biodiversity in trans-boundary protected areas (TBCAs) in the countries of the Congo Basin. Specifically, the project intended to build the capacity and expertise in the use of satellite imagery data for the management of TBCAs in the Congo Basin countries, with a special focus on the Democratic Republic of Congo during the execution of this Phase 1.

III. Special Activity Achievements, Outputs and Lessons learned

This Special Activity was in compliance with the sustainable forest management policy promoted in Central Africa by COMIFAC (Commission for Central African Forests), as recommended in the Plan of Convergence approved by COMIFAC member states. In the implementation of political commitments and various agreements, many trans-boundary protected areas (TBCAs) had been created in Central Africa. TBCAs had been theoretically considered to be effective tools for biodiversity conservation because they could implement integrated strategies at landscape scale and foster cooperation between COMIFAC member states. These TBCAs had been facing problems and threats due to anthropic activities (slash-and-burn agriculture, poaching, illegal logging, etc.). This Special Activity had been implemented in consideration of the need to enhance the implementation of the CBD Work Programme on Forest Biodiversity, in the ITTO Member Countries in Congo Basin.

That's why this Special Activity was prepared and implemented, in collaboration with the countries of the Congo Basin, as a contribution to the biodiversity conservation through the capacity building of team members in charge of TBCAs on the use of satellite imagery and radar. The achievements, outputs and lessons learned can be summarized as follows:

- Two regional inception workshops (inception and end of the Special Activity) were held in Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo), for the inception of the Special Activity, and in Libreville (Gabon), for its closing. These workshops were the opportunity to gather experts from 10 transboundary protected areas operational in the Congo Basin countries, for the exchange of the challenges, experience and findings from these 10 transboundary conservation areas;
- Six Technical workshops were carried out for capacity building sessions on the utilization of satellites and radar imagery for the biodiversity conservation in TBCAs, as tools with the following goals:
 - Providing technical support for the control of illegal practices, including poaching and illegal logging;
 - Monitoring spatial and temporal changes in habitats and ecosystems;
 - Forest zoning;

- Improving the mapping of ecosystems and habitats, as well as biological corridors; and
 - Supporting the development of integrated decision-support systems in the management of TBCAs.
- This Special Activity contributed to raise awareness levels among policy makers and senior officers of TBCAs to the benefits of increased use of satellite imagery. It also contributed to increasing the level of expertise and capacity to use satellite data services within the Government administration and institutions in charge of the management of TBCAs. The high level of awareness could facilitate the implementation of a second phase of this Special Activity, which is supposed to cover other ITTO member countries in the Congo Basin.

IV. Concluding Remarks

The ITTO Secretariat received the Completion Report of the Special Activity, but the Final Financial Audit Report was pending at the time of the preparation of this report. Upon receipt of an acceptable Final Financial Audit Report, this Special Activity PP-A/50-296 Rev.1 Phase 1 could be documented for the completion and closure procedures.

Four African member countries (Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Republic of Congo) had written to the ITTO Secretariat expressing their desire that this Special Activity continue to receive ITTO support for the implementation of its second phase.

Projects awaiting implementation agreement

The following three projects are also categorized under the ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity, which have been financed and waiting for implementation agreement.

“Capacity Building for Sustainable Management of Tropical Dry Forests on the North Coast of Peru” submitted by the Government of Peru with an ITTO budget of US\$437,630 [ITTO Ref. No.: PD741/14 Rev.3 (F)]

“Rehabilitation and Sustainable Management of Sacred Forests on Ramsar Sites 1017 and 1018 in Benin” submitted by the Government of Benin with an ITTO budget of US\$541,218 [ITTO Ref. No.: PD 754/14 Rev.3 (F)]

“Accelerating the Restoration of Cibodas Biosphere Reserve (CBR) Functions through Proper Management of Landscapes Involving Local Stakeholders” submitted by the Government of Indonesia with an ITTO budget of US\$ 564,491 [ITTO Ref. No.: PD 777/15 Rev.2 (F)]

Projects awaiting financing

The following six projects are also categorized under the ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity, which are awaiting financing:

“Enhancing the Implementation of Landscape Management of Giam Siak Kecil-Bukit Batu Biosphere Reserve (GSK-BR) in Riau Province of Sumatra Island, Indonesia (Indonesia)” submitted by the Government of Indonesia with an ITTO budget of US\$498,154 [ITTO Ref. No.: PD 712/13 Rev.2 (F)]

“Capacity Building for Strengthening Transboundary Biodiversity Conservation of the Taninthayi Range in Myanmar” submitted by the Government of Myanmar with an ITTO budget of US\$599,962 of Phase I and US\$1,339,083 of Phase II [ITTO Ref. No.: PD 723/13 Rev.2 (F)], partially funded by Korea with US\$40,000.

“Initiating the Conservation of Eboni Species (Diospyros Celebica Bakh) Involving Local Stakeholders in Sulawesi (Indonesia)” submitted by the Government of Indonesia with an ITTO budget of US\$402,550 [ITTO Ref. No.: PD 739/14 Rev.1 (F)]

“Developing and Implementing Improved Management Practices that Maintain and Enhance Forests and Biodiversity Protection, to Support SFM within the Context of Multiple Use in Guyana’s Forest

Dependent Communities” submitted by the Government of Guyana with an ITTO budget of US\$601,552 [ITTO Ref. No.: PD 762/14 Rev.2 (F)]

“Development of a Forest Landscape Restoration Program for Guatemala Based on ITTO Guidelines” submitted by the Government of Guatemala with an ITTO budget of US\$601,944 [ITTO Ref. No.: PD 765/14 Rev.2 (F)], partially funded by CBD with US\$100,000.

“Sustainable Forest Management, Conservation of Biological Diversity and Promotion of Landscapes for Socio-Ecologic Production in Indigenous Territories of the Uwalcox Micro-Watershed in Guatemala’s Western Altiplano” submitted by the Government of Guatemala with an ITTO budget of US\$699,581 [ITTO Ref. No.: PD 778/15 Rev.1 (F)]

Completed pre-Project

“Study for the Rehabilitation and Sustainable Management of Sacred Forests on Ramsar Sites 1017 and 1018 in Benin” submitted by the Government of Benin with an ITTO budget of US\$79380, [ITTO Ref. No.: PPD 165/12 Rev.1 (F)], reported as completed at the 50th ITTC Session.

Annex 2: Forest-related Aichi Biodiversity Targets

Target 5: By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced;

Target 7: By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity;

Target 11: By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes; and

Target 14: By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.

Target 15: By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.

Annex 3: Sustainable Development Goal 15 and its associated targets²

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements

15.2 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally

15.3 by 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, increasing land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world

15.4 By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development

15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species

15.6 Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed

15.7 Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products

15.8 By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species

15.9 By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts

15.a Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems

15.b Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation

15.c enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities

² <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg15>