

Development of Human Resources in Sustainable Forest Management and Reduced Impact Logging in the Brazilian Amazon

Final report

PD 206/03 Rev.1 (F)

I. Introduction

The International Tropical Timber Council at its Thirty-fourth Session approved the project in May 2003 in Panama and the Governments of Switzerland, Japan and USA pledged full financing at the same Session. The Agreement regulating the implementation of the project was signed on 1 September 2003 and the first disbursement of funds was made on 12 September 2003.

II. Project Objective

The project aims at increasing the adoption of forest management and reduced impact logging (FM-RIL) practices by timber producers in Amazonian production forests through practical training, and at promoting and disseminating good forest management practices amongst stakeholders in the Brazilian Amazon through extension work.

III. Project Strategy and Activities

In order to meet the above mentioned objective, the project developed a strategy around three major components:

- (i) the first component aimed at providing practical training courses targeting forestry professional at all levels and tailored to their diverse needs and interests. In this connection the project planned to conduct 38 training courses aiming at training 410 people;
- (ii) the second component aimed at promoting interest in FM-RIL, and raise awareness about its importance and benefits. In this connection the project planned to conduct lectures, seminars and workshops with the aim to reach 400 people; and
- (iii) the third component aimed at building a longer-term, and sustainable program of training in FM-RIL with the involvement of other donors. In this connection, a local institution, IFT was established with the support of the Brazilian Government and succeeded the Executing Agency (FFT) in providing training on FM-RIL, with the view to developing this longer-term and sustainable program.

IV. Project Achievements and Outputs

The project achieved 8 outputs toward Specific Objective 1 (Increase the adoption of FM-RIL practices by timber producers in Amazonian production forests through training and capacity building at all levels) and 3 outputs toward Specific Objective 2 (De-mystify the concept and promote the practice of FM-RIL amongst stakeholders in the Brazilian Amazon through extension work). In most cases achievements exceeded the planned targets. The achievements can be summarized as follows:

- 75 courses on FM-RIL (vs a target of 38) were conducted and 737 people were trained (vs a target of 410) throughout the duration of the project;
- 2,672 ha(1,262 for demonstration and 1,410 for harvest) were established by the project (vs a target of 1,000ha);
- 16 workshops were conducted to train the FFT's trainers in various aspects for forest management and reduced impact logging, including improving skills in administrative practices. The training targeted all instructors, including foresters, technicians and operators;
- FM-RIL operational manual, flip charts and related documents were developed, including trainer lesson plans;
- 892 ha were logged during training courses using RIL techniques (vs a target of 800 ha);
- A monitoring system, to monitor the impact of the training courses on FM-RIL was developed and tested, with the financial support of counterpart funding; and
- Annual schedules of extension activities in order to promote FM-RIL were established and implemented. In this connection, 19 extension events were organized, attended by more than 1,800 people (vs a target of 16 events targeting 400 people). During the events, lectures were made and supporting materials, in particular the FM-RIL manual, a video (The future of the forest) and booklets supplied by partner companies were used.

V. Target Beneficiaries Involvement

The project offered FM-RIL training to a broad spectrum of forest sector stakeholders, including local communities, Government, industry, technical schools and other training institutions. Forest practitioners participating in the courses were mainly from the Brazilian Amazon, but several were also from other ITTO member countries in the region, in particular Surinam and Guyana. Three technical forestry schools participated in the training and incorporated the FM-RIL training course in their curricula. Brazilian Government agencies also benefited from the project through the training of their staff, as well as by incorporating FM-RIL guidelines in their laws and regulations. Community forestry projects and forest-based communities also benefited of the training, allowing them to be more competitive in the market and less dependent to large operators or timber companies. As a whole, the project contributed to increasing awareness of the importance and benefits of FM-RIL across the Amazon.

VI. Lessons Learnt

a) Development Lessons

- The experience gained by FFT over the past years of FM-RIL training has greatly contributed to the success of the project;
- The support of collaborators, although heavily dependent on personal relationships, also contributed to the success of the project as well as the recognition of the importance of FM-RIL training to SFM by both the public and the private sector;
- Relationships among partners should be formalized; and
- The sustainability of the training will depend upon the will and capacity of stakeholders to continue to invest in training and capacity building and increasing awareness of the importance and benefits of SFM, including social benefits.

b) Operational Lessons

- The size of the Executing Agency (FFT) was not commensurate to its high level ambitions and this resulted in obtaining project results at the expense of its personnel well-being and the organization's limited financial resources;
- Careful and well maintained financial documentation is essential, especially with projects involving multiple donors;
- The Project Steering Committee (PSC) gave invaluable guidance for the successful implementation of the project. For some projects such as this one, the PSC should meet more than once a year;
- The importance of a detailed planning (activities and the various inputs, including food supply and contingency plans in case of health problems) should be underscored, as well as a close day-to-day monitoring, in particular with projects of this nature, implemented in remote areas and involving accommodation for the trainees;
- Planning for financial variations was difficult and the project had to contend with continually worsening currency exchange and inflations rates, which prompted the Executing Agency to take two drastic cost reduction programs, fortunately offset by the additional counterpart support;
- When the project was approved, the budget was drastically reduced (25%), without any reduction in project activities and targets. This, in addition to the continuing deterioration of the exchange rates, created serious financial problems to the project; and
- Several activities, which should have been financed from the ITTO contribution, were completed only because of the additional counterpart funding.

VII. Dissemination of Results

The results of the project have been disseminated during the extension events organized and various meetings held with Government officials. The project continues to attract interest among stakeholders in general, and the Brazilian Government in particular. The completion report and technical documents produced by the project, in particular the manual on training in FM-RIL (Manual do Instructor, in Portuguese) and the manual for monitoring the impact of the training courses (Manual de Monitoramento, in Portuguese) are available from the Executing and the Secretariat upon request.

VIII. Recommendations Related to Future Work

a) Practical suggestions for projects that emphasize on hands-on field training and capacity building

- Adequate infrastructure should be a pre-requisite for conducting field courses;
- Careful preparation of each course is essential, including making sure that all materials are in place;
- The linkages between various aspects of the training implies that the Instructors should preferably have the capability to conduct training on more than one or two topics;
- Course planners should recognize and take into account the motives, needs and capacities of different training audiences;
- The importance of support personnel (cooks, drivers, etc,) should not be overlooked;
- The number of participants should be limited to 12 to 20, depending of the type of the course;
- A good blend of participants with different background and experience produce more richer debates and discussions;
- Field camp food should be sufficient and of good quality;
- Field camp rules should be established;
- Between courses, Instructors should evaluate themselves and the courses in order to improve teaching techniques and the effectiveness of the course, and an evaluation system should be established for the trainees; and
- Field courses should include and take advantage of evening programs, including lectures and visual demonstration and practical exercises.

b) Recommendations for future projects to advance better forest management in the Amazon

- Taking into account the fact the demand for training in FM-RIL will drastically increase (at least 1000/year) as a result of changes in the new Brazilian forest policy, a longer-term, sustainable training and capacity building program is needed to meet the demand. IFT needs to become a permanent program with a longer-term funding;
- Funding of FM-RIL should be, to a greater extent, gradually transferred from bilateral/multilateral donor community to relevant local and regional public and private sector;
- The idea of a permanent FM-RIL regional reference training center that would service the Amazon Basin should be considered, developed, funded and implemented; and
- Regional training centers, like the one established in Guyana, should also be established and coordinated with the regional reference training center.

IX. Concluding Remarks

On all accounts, the project was successfully implemented: all outputs were obtained and in most cases the approved targets were exceeded. Development and specific objectives were achieved and the results of the projects are being incorporated in the country's forest policies and regulations. The project also contributed to raise awareness on the importance of sustainable forest management in the Amazon and the benefits that could be derived from. Another important result is the incorporation of FL-RIL training in the curricula of some technical schools, thus building a solid foundation for the future promotion of FM-RIL in the Brazilian Amazon.