

SUMMARY OF THE COMPLETION REPORT

PD 392/06 Rev.2 (F) Phase I: Regional Project to Promote Reduced Impact Logging in the Congo Basin (Gabon)

I. Introduction

The project was approved by the ITTC at its Fortieth Session in Merida, Mexico, in June 2006, and the financing was not allocated at the same Session. After the reduction of the ITTO budget, the full financing for its implementation was pledged during the Forty-second Council Session in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, in May 2007. The Agreement regulating the implementation of the project was signed on 13 November 2007. The first installment of the ITTO funds was released in March 2008. As an acceptable version of the project completion report was received on 19 July 2010, the duration of the project implementation had lasted 28 months instead of 24 initially designed by TFF.

II. Project Objective

The project aimed at promoting and achieving sustainable forest management among the logging in companies in Gabon and the Central African Region by implementing Reduced Impact Logging (RIL) practices incorporating fauna conservation concerns. The two project specific objectives were: (1) raising the awareness to and promotion of RIL in the region through, inter alia, demonstrating the opportunities and feasibilities of RIL under different conditions; and (2) the provision and improvement of the complete range of RIL courses in the Region and the creation of training capacities including through building those of existing vocational training institutes.

III. Project Achievements and Outputs

The implementation of this project has led to the main achievements and outputs summarized as follows:

Output 1.1: Completion of a demonstration area (50 to 100 ha) to demonstrate the differences between CE (Conventional Logging) and RIL in the forest devoted for training which covered around 12,000 ha in 2005 (approved logging permit).

- The operations in the demonstration blocks using both techniques: conventional exploitation (CE) and reduced impact logging (RIL) were completed;
- Studies and demonstration on the various differences of impact between the two methods (effects on vegetation, fauna, soil and river network) were conducted;
- The various perceptible differences between RIL and CE, using sign posts, tapes, etc. to signal the effects of the two respective techniques were marked on the ground in the project site;
- The reporting on differences with comments on their environmental and commercial aspects, based on trainers' experiences and the studies conducted, was prepared by the executing agency; and
- The acquisition of an adjacent forest area representing the types of forests requested and appropriate for long-running RIL training courses was not achieved, as most of timber companies were reluctant to send their workers to such training center and expressed the preference to get trainers coming to their forest concessions for the training of their workers.

Output 1.2: A study of the level of dependence to governmental financial support for the viability of a self-sufficient training centre after completion of phases 1 & 2

- The level of interest demonstrated and attendance recorded during the various courses (number of participants by discipline) in both national and international institutions (Logging

companies, forestry schools, civil servants, NGOs, etc) was assessed after the first year of the project implementation;

- The costs «completed» by the project under operation were analyzed (Costs and amortizing of equipment, construction and materials, Cost of consumables, Human resource costs, Transports, accommodation and food & beverage for participants, Possible income sources, such as the sale of logs produced or financial or material support;
- Interviews, survey of former, present and potential future sponsors were conducted; and
- A cost-benefit analysis of the RIL Training infrastructure and human resource capacity after project completion was developed.

Output 1.3: Completion of the RIL Feasibility study (costs & revenue) in SBL Concession (RILSIM software)

- The RILSIM software of different capacities, whether or not applying RIL techniques in the different regions, was introduced to logging companies concerned in order to obtain a wide range of RILSIM data and results; and
- The study and analysis of the RILSIM were conducted at the level of the pilot company (SBL). A detailed report and a cost-benefits analysis were prepared.

Output 1.4: Information on RIL «pros and cons» provided to target groups

- A Power Point and hard-copy presentation of the RIL Training Project was compiled with following themes: RIL Definition and basic principles, Brief but extensively illustrated summary of all courses, List of course participants during the past years (Government staff, employees and managers, vocational schools and NGOs); and
- Survey of opinions of all relevant persons and partner institutions was conducted on RIL implementation in their institutions;

Output 2.1: RIL Training Centre near the training forest: demonstration area

- The RIL Training with many personnel from logging companies, trainers and teachers from ENEF and other organizations (university of Libreville) in all disciplines, was conducted; and
- Facilities were not established in the training centre, as it was not to be operational due to the attitude of timber companies to avoid sending their workers there for training.

Output 2.2: Personnel trained in Gabon in partnership with schools and tertiary education institutes at all levels: 5-10 civil servants; 10-20 trainers and assistant; 30-50 company executives and staff; 50-100 students schools/forest institutions

Courses were conducted for participants from timber companies, University of Libreville and National Forestry School of Libreville on two training modules (RIL concept and Controlled felling).

Output 2.3: Introductory course for specialists and supervisors from neighbouring countries

- A RIL workshop was organized in December 2009, in Libreville (Gabon), to share the findings of the project with all interested parties; and

- The participation in the RaceWood exhibition in March 2010, in Douala (Cameroon), was an opportunity to present the main findings of the projects and explain the advantage of using RIL techniques.

Output 2.4: Vocational training institute for RIL Training in a third country

The project has contacted different institutions dealing with RIL training in the Congo Basin (FRM and ONF-International both based in France, but have representation offices in the central African subregion), for the harmonization of the training modules et more synergy in their actions in the field.

Output 2.5: Project proposal for a continued extension in the Region: Phase 2

- A project proposal was submitted to the ITTO Secretariat for the second phase of this project; and
- Other institutions (FAO, USAID, and French Cooperation) were contacted to get funds for the project maintenance during the transitional period between phase-I and phase-II of this project.
- The abovementioned main achievements and outcomes described here above are detailed in the website created for that purpose: <http://tffgabon.toile-libre.org>

IV. Outcomes and Impacts

The outcomes and impacts of this project are questionable, as neither the training center nor the demonstration forest adjacent to that center had been established and made operational under the implementation of this phase-I project. It was no longer relevant to establish them due to the preference of timber companies to get their workers trained within their own forest concessions instead of sending them to that training center. With this complete change of the strategic approach of this phase-I project, it is recommended to conduct an ex-post evaluation of its implementation in order to draw lessons for the preparation of a phase-II project.

V. Lessons Learnt and sustainability

As main lesson learned from the implementation of this phase-I project is that the lack of a good problem analysis and stakeholder analysis, prior to the project formulation, has led to total change of the project strategic approach during its implementation. Therefore, the project sustainability could not be ensured during its implementation.

VI. Concluding Remarks

In view of the need to further strengthen and sustain the main findings and achievements of the project, the Executing Agency formulated a follow-up project titled *PD 579/10 (F): "Promoting Reduced Impact Logging Techniques in Gabon and the Congo Basin"*. This new project proposal was assessed by the Expert Panel in August 2010. As the ITTO Secretariat has received the Project Completion Report, many technical reports and publications, as well as the Final Financial Audit Report, the project PD 392/06 Rev.2 (F) is completed.