

Enhancement of the Forest Statistics Information and Management System (STATFOR) through the Integration of Two Computer Modules: Compilation of Management Inventory Data and Management of Export Log Lumberyard (Gabon)

Final report

PD 56/00 Rev.3 (M)

The aim of this project was to develop two computer modules to be integrated into an existing Forest Statistics Information and Management System (STATFOR) developed in 1994 under ITTO Project PD 36/92 (M) "Collection and Computer Processing of Forest Statistics with a View to Improving the Management of the Forest Resources of Gabon". The first module developed under this project allows digital data input and processing for the compilation of management inventory data, while the second module facilitates digital data input and processing for the management of export log lumberyards, making use of bar codes on logs and hand-held computers.

The outputs achieved and activities implemented by the project are as follows:

Output 1.1 A computer system for inputting inventory data via palmtop computer

Activity 1.1.1 Establishment of work team

All project staff were retained by early 2003. The concessions in which data entry was tested were contacted and agreed to participate. Several high level meetings presenting work from earlier project phases were convened in order to build government support.

Activity 1.1.2 Training

A 3 month training course in relevant statistics and computer skills was conducted for project staff at the National Forestry School in 2003.

Activity 1.1.3 Acquisition of computer hardware

Four handheld and three desktop computers were all purchased by competitive bidding in mid-2003. Some delays were experienced due to difficulties in obtaining duty free exemption which should be granted to equipment imported for ITTO projects.

Activity 1.1.4 Choice of pilot sites

The following sites were chosen:

Company	FMU	Area (ha)
Compagnie Industrielle de Placages (CIPLAC)	Moyabi-Léké	199,256
Compagnie des Bois du Gabon (CBG)	Rabi-Mnadji	213,250
Forestière des Bois d’Azingo (FBA)	Estuaire	215,959

Activities 1.1.5 and 1.1.6 Design and preliminary testing of handheld computers

The software packages INVFOR and MEMO and a 40 page user manual were developed in early 2003. The software was tested in Haut Ogooué province immediately after development.

Activity 1.1.7 Development of data transfer (handheld desktop) module

This module was developed in mid-2003 after the development of MEMO.

Activity 1.1.8 Field testing of system in operational FMU

The system was tested for entering and transferring inventory data in the FMUs listed under Activity 1.1.4 above in mid-2003.

Output 1.2 A computer system for data compilation on a desktop PC

Activity 1.2.1 Development of software

The desktop PC software was developed in mid-2003.

Output 1.3 Improving STATFOR (Gabon's forest statistics system)

Activity 1.3.1 Addition of inventory module to STATFOR

The software developed under Outputs 1.1 and 1.2 was incorporated into STATFOR following the field tests in the second half of 2003.

Activity 1.3.2 Production of stock and stand tables

The system was used to generate stock and stand tables for the pilot FMUs, including geographic details, number of parcels, GPS points, diameter and quality classes as well as information on regeneration, non-wood forest products and forest fauna. This work was completed in late 2003.

Output 2.1 A handheld computer system for log yard data input

Activities 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 Development of handheld computer software

The software was developed by the end of 2002 to capture data on logs at all transport and storage stages (primary transport, log yard, mill, port). A 94 page user manual for this software (known as COMFOR) was also produced. This software provides key log tracking assistance and is now being implemented more widely by SNBG (the state log export body).

Activity 2.1.3 Development of data transfer (handheld desktop) module

This module was developed in mid-2003 after the development of COMFOR.

Activity 2.1.4 Testing of COMFOR in a log yard

COMFOR was tested in several SNBG export log yards during mid-2003. Several modifications were made to the program to allow entry of log details at various points between the forest and the log yard.

Output 2.2 A computer system for data compilation on a desktop PC

Activity 2.2.1 Development of software

The desktop PC software was developed in mid-2003.

Output 2.3 Improving STATFOR

Activities 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 Addition of a log handling/export module to STATFOR and production of related reports

The following reports can now be generated by STATFOR after incorporation of the COMFOR module:

- List and description of logs cut from given blocks within FMUs
- List of logs in transport and transport modality
- List of deliveries to SNBG (export)
- List of deliveries to mills
- List of deliveries of rejected logs
- List of logs held in stocks (and locations)
- Monthly summaries of log movements.

Output 2.4 Dissemination of project outputs

Activity 2.4.1 Drafting of final report

The final report was submitted to ITTO in early 2005.

Activity 2.4.2 National workshop

A national workshop took place in April 2004, presenting project outputs to all stakeholders, including the Ministry of Finance, which has expressed interest in the project as a potential tool in fighting tax avoidance in the sector. The project outputs are also being utilized by a large World Bank project developing a Management Information System for Water and Forests (SIGEF) currently being implemented in Gabon.

This project was a further step in the development of Gabon's forest information system, a process which started with the above-mentioned PD 36/92 (M) and continued under ITTO project PD 15/98 Rev. 2 (M) "Development and Installation of a Computer Management System for the Control of Forest Production in Gabon", which developed a module for forest production management into the STATFOR Information System. The final step in this process will be the implementation of Project PD 182/03 Rev.2 (M) "Enhancement of the Forest Statistics Information and Management System (STATFOR) Through the Integration of a Computer Module for Processed Log Management" which will create a last module for STATFOR called TRANSFOR that will extend the bar-code monitoring system already developed for logs to processed products like sawnwood and veneer. This will assist the government in monitoring logs from felling to final product, thereby improving tax revenues and laying a foundation for eventual certification of exported timber products. The ITTO Expert Panel for the Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals at its Twenty-eighth meeting called for an ex-post evaluation of PD 56/00 Rev.3 (M) prior to the implementation of PD 182/03 Rev.2 (M) This ex-post evaluation is scheduled to take place in June 2005 and will be reported to the Committees at the Thirty-seventh Session.

Apart from the delay in sourcing the computer hardware for the project from Canada, there were no implementation problems encountered. The executing agency submitted the final report in accordance with the Project Agreement signed with ITTO. This report is available on request from the Secretariat (French only). The executing agency has not yet submitted the audited financial statements on the use of project funds. The Committee may wish to declare this project complete subject to receipt of the audited financial statements.