

# Firefight Initiative: Prevention rather than Cure World

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## Final Report

PPD 44/02 (F)

### **I. Introduction**

The pre-project was approved by the Council during its Thirty-second Session in May 2002 and full financing was pledged at the same Session. The Agreement regulating the implementation of the project was signed on 23 January 2003 and the first disbursement of funds was made on 27 January 2003. A Pre-project extension was granted until June 2004, without additional funds, based on an official request including proper justification, a workplan and a budget.

### **II. Pre-project Objective**

This pre-project derives from the ongoing work on forest fires by IUCN – The World Conservation Union and WWF – The Worldwide Fund for Nature. The development objective was to eliminate the harmful environmental, social and economic impact of forest fires in ITTO member countries. Specifically, the pre-project aimed at developing a complete project proposal document actively supported by one or two ITTO producer country governments from each of the following regions: Asia Pacific, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean.

### **III. Pre-project Strategy and Activities**

Strategy of the ITTO Pre-project Firefight was to identify stakeholders and their fire use and management practices. It assisted key stakeholders in overcoming obstacles to improved fire management. This has been implemented primarily through a targeted communications and advocacy strategy. This approach has facilitated the engagement of local communities, NGOs and the private sector in policy dialogue, resulting in improved fire management. The scoping activities of the Pre-project addressed both national and local governments. This is because an increasing number of natural resource management responsibilities have been transferred from central to local levels of government, often with little investment in building the necessary capacity and generating the resource flows to make this effective.

The strategy of the pre-project has been slightly modified to allow for several national/regional workshops to be held instead of one global workshop, in order to promote a sense of ownership and active involvement by key stakeholders. As a consequence, three project proposals are to be developed, one for each region.

## **IV. Pre-project Achievements and Outputs**

The ITTO Pre-project Firefight aimed at developing three national/regional follow-up project proposals for Latin America, West Africa, and South-East Asia. The achievement of the outputs can be summarized as follows for each ITTO producing region:

1. South America: National consultations with key actors and stakeholders were held in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia and a draft diagnosis on Forest Fire Management was developed for each country. In April 2003, a three-country workshop was held in Quito, Ecuador, the output of which was a project proposal submitted by Ecuador in May 2003 titled "Firefight Initiative: Prevention rather than Cure" [PD 250/03 (F)]. The 26th Expert Panel decided that a reformulation of the proposal was necessary.
2. West Africa: Initially, the pre-project intended to cover Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, but the latter country had to be excluded because of political instability. Preparatory consultations with key stakeholders at national level and a review on forest management activities were carried out in Ghana, the latter being published in April 2003. A national workshop was held in Kumasi in May 2003 and a project proposal was developed and submitted by Ghana in May 2003 titled "Fire-management and post-fire restoration with local community collaboration in Ghana" [PD 284/03 (F)]. The 28th Expert Panel concluded that, with the incorporation of the amendments noted, the project proposal could be commended to the Committee for final appraisal.
3. South East Asia: A project proposal has been developed and its submission to ITTO is expected in for the next Project cycle leading to the 38th ITTC Session.

## **V. Target Beneficiaries Involvement**

The primary target beneficiaries of the Pre-project Firefight were ITTO member country governments in Latin America, West Africa, and South-East Asia. Their participation in the implementation of the Pre-project was essential to ensure their active involvement in the subsequent project. The Pre-project Firefight concentrated thus on the identification of key stakeholders concerned by fire use and fire management issues. This approach facilitated the commitment of local communities, NGOs and the private sector in the formulation of the regional project proposals.

## **VI. Lessons Learnt**

### **a) Development Lessons**

Many forest fire policies, and most of the related spending, focus on suppression rather than on prevention of fires, response to them - and if necessary - subsequent restoration. Dealing with the symptoms without addressing the underlying causes is unlikely to lead to lasting reductions in forest fires. Increasingly, assessments of forest fire problems in different parts of the world point to the need for preventive activity.

### **b) Operational Lessons**

The overall implementation of the ITTO Pre-project Firefight can be considered as satisfying. The change from a comprehensive project to three national/regional proposals certainly has represented

the major challenge encountered in the implementation of the Pre-Project. In this respect, the coordination of the programme implementation in the three regions and the adequate allocation and use of the project's financial resources were in the centre of project management activities.

## **VII. Dissemination of Results**

Pre-project results were disseminated through transnational workshops conducted in Latin America, South East Asia and West Africa. The results were also disseminated through consultation with stakeholders in these three ITTO producing regions.

## **VIII. Recommendations Related to Future Work**

The framework for project formulation defines ITTO's main practice and expectation concerning identification and submission of project proposals. These elements have to be taken in consideration notwithstanding nature and specificity of the project proposal. The challenge in project formulation is to identify and design a project proposal which will be relevant to:

- the objectives and priorities of the ITTO - i.e. potential donors - related to the problem at hand;
- the interests and priorities of the proposing member country to solve the problem at hand;
- the demands and interests of the stakeholders concerned by the problem at hand; and
- the expectation of the implementing agency (i.e. IUCN).

When formulating a proposal it is therefore important to present the project in a way that shows the relevance of the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the key partners (e.g. ITTO, proposing country, implementation agency, potential financing institutions, local population, etc.).

The beneficiaries are the member countries of ITTO. The expected results are as follows:

- Consensus on a strategy for the project, and an implementation plan;
- Partnership agreement between IUCN and producer members of ITTO who will be involved in the project;
- Identification of stakeholders and local communities who would be interested in participating in the project;
- An overall view on classical and new strategies of firefight, and of categories of underlying causes in target countries.

The Council approved the pre-project during its Thirty-second Session in May 2002 and full financing was pledged at the same Session.