



THE LEADING AUTHORITY ON TROPICAL TIMBER

SERVICE CONTRACT NOTICE

Analysis of the Chinese market for tropical timber

from mainly COMIFAC countries

Reference: TTT – F&P2

Programme title: 5200000312– Tropical Timber Trade Facility

1. Contract specifications

Nature of the contract

Fixed-price contract for services.

Description of the contract

The purpose of these specifications is to select the firm/consultants who will be responsible for analyzing perceptions of Chinese importers, Chinese sellers on the European and domestic markets and Chinese consumers on certified and legally verified tropical timber.

Maximum budget

Value including VAT: €30,000

2. Conditions for participation

To be eligible to participate in this tender, bidders must provide evidence, to the satisfaction of the contracting authority, that they meet the legal, technical and financial requirements and that they have the necessary resources to perform the contract effectively.

Number of bids

A natural or legal person may not submit more than one tender, regardless of the form of their participation (as an individual legal entity or as the leader or member of a consortium submitting a tender). If a natural or legal person submits more than one tender, all tenders in which that person participates will be rejected.

Grounds for exclusion

Tenderers appearing on the lists of persons, groups and entities subject to restrictive measures by the EU¹ and the United Nations at the time of the award decision may not be awarded the contract.

¹ Please note that the *Official Journal of the European Union* contains the official list of entities subject to restrictive measures and, in the event of a conflict, takes precedence over the list on the [EU Sanctions Map](#) website.



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INSTRUCTIONS TO TENDERERS

3. Timetable

	DATE	TIME
Deadline for submitting requests for clarification to the contracting authority	4 May 2026	5 p.m. (French time zone)
Deadline by which the contracting authority must respond to requests for clarification	7 May 2026	–
Deadline for submission of tenders	15 May 2026	4 p.m. (French time zone)
Bid opening session	15 May 2026	4:15 p.m. (French time zone)
Notification of award to successful bidder	22 May 2026	–
Signing of the contract	29 May 2026	–

4. Selection and award criteria

Selection criteria

An economic operator (i.e. a candidate or tenderer) may, where appropriate and for a specific contract, rely on the capacities of other entities, regardless of the legal nature of the links between itself and those entities. If the economic operator relies on other entities, it must prove to the contracting authority that it will have the necessary resources to perform the contract by producing a document in which those entities undertake to make those resources available to it. These entities, for example the economic operator's parent company, must comply with the same eligibility rules as the economic operator, in particular that of nationality, and meet the selection criteria for which the economic operator is calling on them. In addition, information relating to these third-party entities with regard to the applicable selection criteria must be included in a separate document, and not in the tender form. Proof of their capacity must also be provided at the request of the contracting authority.

With regard to technical and professional criteria, an economic operator may only rely on the capacities of other entities when the latter will perform the tasks for which those capacities are required.

With regard to economic and financial criteria, the entities whose capacities are used by the economic operator shall be jointly and severally liable for the performance of the contract.

The following selection criteria will be applied to tenderers. If a tender is submitted by a



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consortium, these selection criteria will apply to the consortium as a whole, unless otherwise specified. The selection criteria will not apply to natural persons and single-member companies when they participate as subcontractors.

The tenderer may not cite as a reference in relation to the selection criteria any previous experience that resulted in the termination of the contract and its cancellation by the contracting authority.

1) Administrative and regulatory capacity of the tenderer: The tenderer has a status that legally allows it to provide international and services (e.g. consultant status, registration number, etc.) and demonstrates that it complies with the regulations of its country of operation (e.g. tax returns).

2) Professional and technical capacity of the bidder: The reference period to be taken into consideration corresponds to **the last three financial years preceding the submission deadline.**

- **Criterion 1:** The bidder demonstrates its knowledge of Chinese timber market through relevant professional experiences
- **Criterion 2:** The bidder demonstrates proven experience in conducting qualitative research (semi-structured interviews in Mandarin) and delivering analytical outputs in English within a short timeframe.
- **Criterion 3:** The bidder must not have any professional conflict of interest that could compromise the impartial and objective implementation of the assignment. This will be assessed based on the sworn declaration and supporting documents provided.

This means that the service contract to which the tenderer refers may have been performed at any time during the period indicated, but does not necessarily have to have been completed during that period or have been performed throughout the entire reference period. Tenderers may refer either to service contracts that were completed during the reference period (even if they started before that period) or to projects that were partially implemented but not yet completed during the reference period. Only the part that was completed during the reference period will be taken into consideration. The successful completion of this part must be supported by supporting documents (approval of the report or deliverables, proof of payment, declaration or certificate of successful completion from the entity that awarded the contract), with an indication of the corresponding amount. If the project was implemented by the tenderer as part of a consortium, the supporting documents (approval of the report or deliverables, proof of payment, declaration or certificate from the entity that awarded the contract) must clearly indicate the share (in percentage terms) that the tenderer completed, with an indication of the corresponding amount. If the project was implemented by the candidate as part of a consortium, the supporting documents (consortium agreement, bank transfers between consortium members) must clearly indicate the share that the candidate completed, giving a description of the nature of the services provided.

Award criteria

Best value for money.

5. Validity period

Tenderers shall remain bound by their tenders for a period of 90 days from the deadline for submission of tenders.

In exceptional cases and before the expiry of the initial period of validity of the tender, the contracting authority may request in writing that tenderers extend this period by 40 days.

The successful tenderer shall remain bound by their tender for an additional period of 60 days. The additional period shall be added to the period of validity of the tender, regardless of the date of notification.

6. Language of the tender

Tenders, correspondence and documents associated with tenders exchanged between the tenderer and the contracting authority must be written in the language of the procedure, namely English.

When the documents are written in an official language of the European Union other than English, a translation should be provided.

7. Submission of tenders

Bids must be submitted digitally to the following address: **offres@atibt.org**

8. Contents of tenders

Bids must be submitted in two separate emails containing the following documents:

- One email entitled "technical bid" including:
 - o Submission form including the declaration of integrity, eligibility and environmental and social responsibility
 - o Technical proposal form
 - o Expert's CV (maximum 3 pages)
- An email entitled "financial bid" including:
 - o Financial proposal form

9. Additional information before the submission deadline

If the contracting authority, on its own initiative or in response to a request from a potential tenderer, provides additional information on the tender dossier, it must communicate this information in writing and simultaneously to all other potential tenderers.

Tenderers may send their questions in writing to the following email address no later than 8 days before the deadline for submission of tenders: **offres@atib.org**

Potential tenderers seeking to arrange individual meetings with the contracting authority during the tender period may be excluded from the tender procedure.



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10. *Modification or withdrawal of tenders*

Tenderers may modify or withdraw their tenders by giving written notice before the deadline for submission of tenders. No tender may be modified after this deadline.

No tender may be withdrawn between the deadline for submission of tenders and the expiry of the period of validity of tenders.

11. *Costs incurred in preparing tenders*

The costs incurred by the tenderer in preparing and submitting the tender are not refundable. All such costs shall be borne by the tenderer.

12. *Ownership of tenders*

The contracting authority retains ownership of all tenders received in connection with this call for tenders. Consequently, tenderers may not request that their tender be returned to them.

13. *Joint venture or consortium*

Where the bidder is a joint venture or consortium of two or more persons, the bid must be a single bid for the purpose of forming a single contract. Each of these persons must sign the tender and is jointly and severally liable for the tender and any contract that may result from it. These persons must designate from among themselves a leader authorized to commit the joint venture or consortium. The composition of the joint venture or consortium may not be changed without the prior written consent of the contracting authority.

The bid may only be signed by the representative of the joint venture or consortium if he or she has been expressly authorized to do so in writing by the members of the joint venture or consortium, and the notarized document or private deed conferring this authority must be submitted to the contracting authority in accordance with these instructions to bidders. All signatures at the bottom of the mandate must be certified in accordance with the national laws and regulations of each of the parties forming the joint venture or consortium, as must the written power of attorney establishing that the signatories of the bid are authorized to make commitments on behalf of the members of the joint venture or consortium.

14. *Opening of tenders*

The purpose of the opening session is to verify that tenders have been submitted in accordance with the formal requirements of the tender.

Any attempt by a tenderer to influence the evaluation committee during the examination, clarification, evaluation and comparison of tenders, with the aim of obtaining information on the conduct of the procedure or influencing the contracting authority's decision on the award of the contract, will result in the immediate rejection of their tender.



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The contracting authority shall retain all tenders received after the deadline for submission of tenders specified in the contract notice or in these instructions. The contracting authority cannot be held liable for any delay in the delivery of tenders. Tenders received after the deadline shall be rejected and will not be evaluated.

Once the contracting authority has opened the tenders, the documents become its property and are treated as confidential.

15. *Evaluation of tenders*

The evaluation procedure is entirely confidential, subject to the contracting authority's legislation on access to documents. The decisions of the evaluation committee are collegial and its deliberations are held in camera. The members of the evaluation committee are bound by secrecy. Evaluation reports and written minutes, in particular, are for internal use only and may not be disclosed to tenderers or any other party (other than the donor).

Examination of the administrative compliance of tenders

The purpose of this phase is to verify whether the tenders comply with the essential requirements of the tender dossier. A tender is compliant when it meets all the conditions, terms and specifications contained in the tender dossier, without deviating significantly from them or imposing substantial restrictions.

Substantial restrictions or deviations are those that affect the subject matter, quality or performance of the contract, differ significantly from the terms of the tender dossier, limit the rights of the contracting authority or the obligations of the tenderer under the contract, or distort competition in relation to tenderers who have submitted compliant tenders. Any decision to declare a tender administratively non-compliant must be duly justified in the evaluation report.

If a tender does not comply with the tender dossier, it shall be rejected immediately and may not subsequently be made compliant by corrections or by removing discrepancies or restrictions.

Technical evaluation

The quality of each technical bid will be evaluated in accordance with the award criteria and the corresponding weighting shown in the evaluation grid. No other award criteria will be used. The award criteria will be examined in accordance with the requirements set out in the terms of reference.

In the interests of transparency and equal treatment, and in order to facilitate the examination and evaluation of tenders, the evaluation committee may request clarification from each tenderer on their tender, including the breakdown of prices, within a reasonable time limit to be set by the evaluation committee. The request for clarification and the response must be in writing, but no change in the price or content of the tender may be requested, proposed or authorised, unless it is necessary to confirm the correction of arithmetic errors discovered during the evaluation of tenders.

No request for clarification may distort competition. Any decision to declare that a tender does not comply with the technical requirements must be duly justified in the evaluation report.



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Financial evaluation

Once the technical evaluation has been completed, the envelopes containing the financial bids of those bids that have not been eliminated during the technical evaluation (i.e. those that have obtained an average score of 75 points or more) shall be opened. Bids that exceed the maximum budget allocated to the contract shall not be accepted and shall therefore not be evaluated.

Preliminary conclusions of the evaluation committee

The best value for money is determined by applying a weighting to technical quality and price according to a ratio of 80/20.

16. *Notification of award*

The contracting authority informs the successful tenderer and, at the same time, also informs the unsuccessful tenderers that their tenders have not been accepted.

Tenderers will be informed in writing of the outcome of this tender procedure by email.

Tenderers are informed that, in the event that the successful tenderer is unable to sign the contract, the contracting authority may review the award decision and award the contract to the tenderer whose tender was ranked second.

17. *Signing of the contract*

Within 7 days of receiving the signed contract, the other party must sign and date the contract before returning it.

If it is not possible to sign the contract as provided for in the award decision, or if the successful tenderer does not sign the contract as requested, the contracting authority reserves the right to review its decision and, where appropriate, award the contract to another tenderer or even cancel the procedure .

18. *Ethics, values and code of conduct*

Absence of conflicts of interest and conflicting professional interests

The tenderer must not have any conflicting professional interests, conflicts of interest or specific equivalent links with other tenderers or other parties to the project. Any undue influence or attempt to unduly influence the evaluation committee or the contracting authority during the process of examining, clarifying, evaluating and comparing tenders any attempt to obtain confidential information or to enter into illegal agreements with competitors will result in the rejection of their tender and may result in their exclusion from future award procedures and/or financial penalties in accordance with the Financial Regulation in force.

Respect for human rights and the values of the European Union, environmental legislation and fundamental labour standards

The tenderer must comply with environmental legislation and core labour standards: participants who are awarded the contract must comply with environmental legislation,



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including multilateral environmental agreements, and the applicable core labour standards defined in the relevant conventions of the International Labour Organisation (in particular the conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining; the abolition of forced and compulsory labour; and the abolition of child labour).

The tenderer and its staff must commit to respecting the fundamental values of the EU and ensure that they uphold this commitment; the tenderer and its staff must respect the fundamental values of the EU, such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of minorities. The tenderer and its staff must comply with the applicable data protection rules and environmental legislation. In particular, successful tenderers must also comply with multilateral environmental agreements and the applicable core labour standards set out in the relevant International Labour Organisation conventions (in particular the conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining; the abolition of forced and compulsory labour; and the abolition of child labour).

The tenderer and its staff must respect EU values, such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of minorities.

Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment

ATIBT applies a zero-tolerance policy with regard to all misconduct that affects the professional credibility of the tenderer.

Any form of physical violence or punishment, as well as threats of physical violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, harassment and verbal abuse, or any other form of intimidation are prohibited.

Anti-corruption

The tenderer must comply with all applicable laws, regulations and codes relating to the fight against corruption. **GIZ** reserves the right to suspend or cancel project funding if corrupt practices of any kind are discovered at any stage of the procurement process or during the execution of a contract and if the contracting authority does not take all appropriate measures to remedy the situation. For the purposes of this provision, "corrupt practices" means offering any person an illicit payment, gift, gratuity or commission as an inducement or reward for performing or refraining from performing acts relating to the award of a contract or the execution of a contract already concluded with the contracting authority.

Extraordinary commercial expenses

Any tender shall be rejected or any contract cancelled if it transpires that the award of the contract or its performance has given rise to extraordinary commercial costs. Extraordinary commercial costs are commissions that are not mentioned in the main contract or that do not result from a contract entered into in due form with reference to the main contract, commissions that are not paid in exchange for a legitimate service actually rendered, commissions paid in a tax haven, commissions paid to a beneficiary who is not clearly identified or to a company that has all the characteristics of a shell company.

Contractors found to have paid extraordinary commercial fees on projects financed by the



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Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) may, depending on the seriousness of the facts established, be subject to termination of the contract or exclusion from future award procedures.

Breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud

The contracting authority reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure if it transpires that the contract award procedure has been marred by a breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud. If a breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud are discovered after the contract has been awarded, the contracting authority may refrain from concluding the contract.

19. *Cancellation of the tender*

In the event of cancellation of a tender, tenderers shall be informed of this cancellation by the contracting authority.

The contracting authority shall in no event be liable for damages of any kind, including, without limitation, compensation for loss of profit, in any way related to the cancellation of a tender, even if it has been informed of the possibility of such damage. The publication of a contract notice does not commit the contracting authority to implement the announced programme or project.

20. *Appeals*

Tenderers who consider themselves aggrieved by an error or irregularity in the award procedure may lodge a complaint at the tender email address.

21. *Data protection*

The processing of personal data related to this tender by the contracting authority is carried out in accordance with the national legislation of the contracting authority's country and in accordance with the provisions of the relevant financing agreement.



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TERMS OF REFERENCE

Analysis of the Chinese market for tropical timber

from mainly COMIFAC countries

Presentation of the TTT project

The Tropical Timber Trade Facility (TTT) is a project funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, in partnership with COMIFAC and its member states. Its main objective is to reduce illegal deforestation in the Congo Basin by promoting the legal and sustainable trade in tropical timber and its derivatives. Within this framework, ATIBT is conducting a strategic study on market opportunities for tropical timber, with a primary focus on China, the world's leading market for these products.

Context and justification

China is by far the world's leading importer of tropical timber, with imports estimated at over 6 million m³ in 2023 (ITTO, 2024). It is the main destination for timber exports from the Congo Basin countries, accounting for 70 to 85% of exports from several Central African countries.

This dominance should not obscure the profound structural changes that are reshaping the Chinese domestic market:

- **Property market crisis:** The slowdown in the property sector since 2021 has reduced demand for interior decoration (parquet flooring, staircases, mouldings, furniture), directly affecting tropical timber products.
- **Changing generational preferences:** Younger generations in China are turning to temperate species (oak, ash, beech), at the expense of the red tropical species that traditionally dominated the market.
- **Dominant criterion:** In the domestic market, supply volume and continuity take precedence over all other criteria — a disruption leads to workers immediately leaving for competitors.
- **Empirical assessment:** Buyers assess products using sensory criteria (visual, olfactory, tactile), without referring to technical data sheets or certifications.
- **Low value placed on sustainability:** The domestic market does not value certification or verified legality, unlike the re-export segment to Europe or North America.

These findings from ATIBT's initial discussions raise specific operational questions: How should African tropical timber be positioned considering these developments? Which species and, for which uses and which buyer segments? What is the role of intermediaries (translators, marketers) between European producers and Chinese importers?

This consultancy constitutes Component 2 of a comprehensive study conducted by ATIBT, with

Components 1 and 3 being carried out in-house. Indeed, ATIBT conducts internal discussions with producers regarding their practices in the Chinese market. However, it is seeking to engage an external service provider to conduct discussions with importers in China.

Scope	Definition of scope
Geographical	The Chinese domestic market only. Re-export flows to Europe or North America are excluded.
Products	Processed tropical timber products used in interior furniture, sourced from natural forests or plantations.
Target stakeholders	Approved importers operating in the domestic market and professional end buyers (interior designers, decorators, property developers and others).
Approach	Exclusively qualitative (semi-structured interviews + literature review). No large-scale questionnaire or market flow analysis planned.

Objective of the service

To analyse the perceptions, purchasing criteria and barriers faced by Chinese importers and professional end buyers (architects, interior designers, property developers) regarding processed tropical timber products **(with a focus on interior furniture)** in the Chinese domestic market, to generate strategic recommendations for producers.

Expected results, activities and deliverables

SO1: Analyse the Chinese regulatory framework governing the import and marketing of processed tropical timber products: traceability requirements, incentives for legality and impact on purchasing behaviour.

The analysis is not intended to be an exhaustive legal audit. Rather, it serves commercial objectives. The aim is to understand how Chinese regulations influence import and purchasing behaviour

SO2: Document the perceptions of importers and professional buyers: preferences and selection criteria (wood species, quality, volume, delivery times, price, finish, etc.), distinguishing between general barriers (image, competitiveness) and specific barriers relating to certification and legality verification.

R1: The relevant Chinese regulatory framework for processed tropical timber products is mapped out and put into context with its actual impact on operators' purchasing behaviour and strategies.

Activities :

- Targeted literature review of customs regulations (import duties, etc.) and current traceability and legality verification requirements.
- Literature review on prospects for regulatory change (convergence or divergence with EUDR requirements and similar standards).
- Import statistics by species, product and country of origin.



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- Comparative positioning with plantation timber.

Deliverables :

- **Summary of the literature review:** market trends, regulatory environment and impact on behaviour.

R2: The perceptions, purchasing criteria and barriers of Chinese importers and professional buyers regarding processed tropical timber products are documented, analysed and prioritised.

Activities:

A series of 14 to 18 semi-structured interviews will be conducted with two categories of players in the Chinese domestic market (importers and professional buyers). All interviews will be conducted in Mandarin by the consultant, using an interview guide tailored to each category. The list and target profiles of interviewees will be reviewed and refined in consultation with ATIBT at the inception of the assignment.

Category A: Importers or Industrials (target: 10 to 12 interviews)

Target profile: Importers specialising in processed tropical timber products sourced from natural forests or plantation forests, operating in specialist timber markets (Shanghai, Guangzhou and equivalent).

Main topics: supplier selection criteria; volumes handled and preferred timber species for furniture; organisation of the supply chain s (storage, financing); information channels used (trade fairs, WeChat, agents, professional networks); logistical and regulatory constraints; perception of certification and barriers to its adoption; downstream relationship with professional buyers.

Note: The aim is to have a balanced sample of both processed tropical timber products from natural forests and plantation forests.

Category B: End-user professional buyers (architects, property developers, etc.). (target: 6 to 8 interviews)

Target profile: Interior designers, high-end specialist decorators, property developers

Main themes: Aesthetic preferences and specification criteria; knowledge and image of African tropical timber vs competitors; purchasing practices; information channels used (trade fairs, WeChat, agents, professional networks); expectations regarding traceability and certification.

Deliverables:

- Finalised interview protocol for both categories of stakeholders: questions, analytical variables, analysis grid.
- List of identified target organisations and contacts with a justified sampling plan.
- Summary of the qualitative analysis on decision-making processes, convergences and divergences, including operational recommendations for African exporters and for ATIBT (wood species, channels, messages, priority partnerships).



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Timeline

Activity	Estimated days
Literature review	3 days
Preparation of interview guides	3 days
Identification of interviewees (making contact)	3 days
Semi-structured interviews (importers and professional buyers)	18 days
Transcription and thematic analysis	3 days
Drafting of the final report and deliverables	5 days
Coordination with the ATIBT team	2 days
Total	37 days

The deliverables should be provided by the end of August 2026.

Budget

The estimated workload for this consultancy is a minimum of **37 working days**, starting from the date the contract is signed. The man.day rate may **not exceed €800**.

Required profile

- Master's degree or equivalent in economics, marketing, international trade, social sciences or related disciplines.
- At least 5 years' experience in market analysis, preferably in the timber/forest products sector.
- Demonstrated knowledge of the Chinese processed timber market (parquet flooring, furniture) and, more specifically, the domestic market.
- Understanding of how the timber value chain operates in China.
- Native fluency in Mandarin (essential for conducting interviews).
- Full professional proficiency in English for deliverables and communication with ATIBT.