

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST:

Commercial promotion of lesser-known species (LKTS)

Context and rationale

In the tropical forests of Central Africa, logging is mainly based on a limited number of commercial species. This concentration on a few iconic species, such as sapelli, okoumé and iroko, leads to both environmental and economic vulnerabilities. Ecologically, it puts significant pressure on certain species and weakens the balance of forest ecosystems. Economically, it exposes concessionaires to fluctuations in the prices of dominant species and limits their ability to diversify their income.

In this context, it seems necessary to develop the value of lesser-known tropical woods. Diversifying the species marketed allows the pressure to be spread over a larger number of species, thus contributing to more balanced and sustainable forestry. This diversification also opens up the possibility of accessing new commercial outlets by meeting specific needs in furniture, fine carpentry, construction and other specialised uses, and by attracting market segments that are sensitive to environmental criteria and innovation.

In short, species diversification and the promotion of lesser-known tropical woods are a strategic lever for strengthening the ecological sustainability of forests, increasing the economic resilience of concessions and opening up new commercial opportunities in the tropical forestry sector.

Purpose and objective

The purpose of this AMI is to select two volunteer concessionaires willing to engage in a pilot project for the commercial promotion of two distinct lesser-known timber species (LKTS) that are present in significant quantities in their concession and chosen by themselves. The purpose of this project is to support these concessionaires in the promotion and marketing of this species by providing them with structured scientific and marketing support, while contributing to the emergence of a dynamic of sustainable diversification in the tropical timber market.

Participating concessionaires benefit from scientific and marketing support to promote a species of their choice, as well as technical results to support its marketing. They gain visibility among industry players, can strengthen their commercial portfolio and position themselves as innovative and responsible players, while contributing to the sustainable diversification of the tropical timber market.

Operational objectives

The operational objectives of the project are as follows:

- Identify and characterise two priority LKTS species, chosen by the participating concessions, in order to build a knowledge base on their volumes, structure and potential uses.
- Strengthen scientific and technical knowledge on these species, particularly in terms of sustainability, mechanical properties and suitability for drying, in order to secure their position in the market.
- Test the commercial potential of these species and assess the real interest of buyers through market analyses and networking workshops with industry stakeholders.

Overall approach

This approach aims to establish a structured process for promoting little-known tropical timbers (LKTS) within voluntary concessions, combining scientific expertise, market analysis and direct involvement of concessionaires. The latter will be particularly active during the first stage, which focuses on identifying

and selecting species, and will then take on a more advisory role in the subsequent stages, supporting and validating scientific analyses and market tests.

Result 1: A lesser-known species, is identified and accurately characterised by concession holders in each of the two concessions.

Related activities:

- Identification and selection of a species per concession considered to be less demanded and present in significant volumes in each concession.
- Collection of available information, including available volumes, diameter structure and processing or usage tests carried out.

This phase aims to build an initial knowledge base, which will serve as the foundation for all subsequent stages of the project and will identify additional technical analysis needs.

Role of the concession holder:

The concession holder contributes its expertise to identify and characterize a lesser-known species, provide existing data (volumes, diameter structure, tests) and contribute to the creation of the project's knowledge base.

Result 2: The technical, scientific and usage characteristics of each species are documented and validated by researchers.

Related activities:

- Analysis of existing data to identify gaps and define additional analysis requirements.
- Conducting additional technical analyses (durability, mechanical properties, drying suitability) in collaboration with researchers.
- Development of standardized technical data sheets, including recommendations for processing and possible uses by researchers.
- Comparison of the data obtained with market standards and validation of the results with producers by researchers.

Role of the concessionaire: The concessionaire provides the samples needed for technical analyses and is informed of the results and recommendations developed by researchers.

Result 3: The commercial potential of the species is assessed and a reproducible valuation model is put in place.

Related activities:

- Market study to identify relevant segments and potential buyers.
- Organization of a market test via a sector workshop at the Carrefour International du Bois in Nantes in June 2026 to validate the attractiveness and adjust the value propositions.
- Capitalization and dissemination of best practices: summary of technical, scientific and commercial lessons learned and sharing with industry players to support sustainable market diversification.

Role of the concessionaire: The concessionaire provides the species and information necessary for commercial evaluation and attends the Carrefour International du Bois (CIB) to present its species, while being informed of the results and recommendations from the market study.

Eligibility criteria

To participate in the pilot program, concessionaires must meet the following conditions:

- **At least legally certified and voluntary concession:** Hold at least legally certified authorized forestry concession and be actively involved in the project.
- **Presence of LKTS species:** Have at least one little-known species present in significant volume to consider commercial exploitation.
- **Operational capacity:** Provide reliable data on the species.
- **Sustainable commitment:** Comply with sustainable harvesting practices and follow scientific and technical recommendations.
- **Willingness to collaborate and availability:** Work with scientific and marketing partners and participate in consultations.

Application requirements

Applications must provide the following information:

- **Letter of interest:** Expression of the organization's motivation for participating in the initiative and commitment to comply with the conditions of participation.
- **Presentation of the organization:** General information about the concession and the managing organization, including the human and logistical resources available.

Provisional schedule

Activities	Date
Result 1: Two lesser-known species are identified and accurately characterized.	December to January 2026
Result 2: The technical, scientific and usage characteristics of each species are documented and validated.	March to June 2026
Result 3: The commercial potential of the species is assessed and a reproducible valuation model is established.	May to August 2026 with CIB in June