



FOR SUSTAINABLY MANAGED TROPICAL FORESTS

A vibrant photograph of a tropical forest with tall trees and a river in the foreground. The text 'ACTIVITY REPORT' is overlaid in large white letters.

ACTIVITY REPORT

A close-up photograph of a wood grain texture, showing the natural patterns and colors of the wood.

2017





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EDITORIAL

ROBERT HUNINK - PRESIDENT

ATIBT's 2017 Activity Report serves to inform you once again of the organisation and its team, give you a summary of the main financial details, acknowledge our membership base, inform you of the various ongoing projects in the interest of responsible forest management, marketing initiatives and communication, and present to you many other topics that are very well worth reading about.

Over the past year ATIBT participated in many forums and workshops (a clear testimony that the organisation is perceived by Governments, donors and NGO's as an important partner when it comes to implementing sustainable forest management practices), launched new initiatives and remained a strong advocate of trade in legally produced tropical timber.

“ *Over the past year ATIBT participated in many forums and workshops, a clear testimony that the organisation is perceived by Governments, donors and NGO's as an important partner when it comes to implementing sustainable forest management practices.* ”

Without a doubt the biggest challenge for ATIBT in 2017 was the **discussion around**

IFL's - Intact Forest Landscapes and the key role the organisation played in having motion 34 accepted during the FSC General Assembly, held in Vancouver last year. You can read more about motion 34 and FSC's General Assembly in this Activity Report p.21.

Detailed information of all our existing projects can be found in this report. These projects would not be possible without the financial contribution of various donors and therefore, I would like to recognize in particular: **AFD (Agence Française de Développement), EU (European Community), FFEM (Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial), KfW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau - German Development Agency, through the PPECF program managed by COMIFAC and FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization) and IDH (Sustainable Trade Initiative).**

In June, in conjunction with the **Gabon WoodShow, ATIBT will be organising our Racewood event in Libreville, Gabon.** Given the increasing demand in Africa for semi-processed timber and/or finished products, this will be an excellent opportunity for our members to present their companies and to network with a large international audience. ATIBT will use the occasion to **promote our new brand «Fair&Precious» and draw the attention to the many advantages and applications of timber from sustainable produced sources.**





EDITORIAL

BENOÎT JOBBÉ-DUVAL - GENERAL MANAGER _____

At the turn of the 2017-2018 year, our trade is facing a **series of challenges** that we must address. They are linked to factors that are both internal and external to our sector, thereby elevating our future stakes to a slightly higher level.

Faced with questions regarding the **cost of our business model, logistics issues, the unfair competition of those who choose to ignore the law, the shifting of markets, and even the welcome emergence of new innovative players**, in particular in the Nkok Special Economic Industrial Zone (in Gabon), our strategy remains unchanged. **The main objectives remain the same ones that have guided us so far, but we must also remain vigilant in terms of fundamental issues - such as compliance with the law and the promotion of the sustainable management of tropical forests** - while openly accepting the changes that are necessary for forest certification to gain further ground.

“ **The private sector allows for the development of a forest economy that preserves the forests, thereby enabling them to avoid being converted into farmlands, livestock areas, or mining zones.** ”

Above all, we must not forget that ATIBT represents a private sector that contri-

butes to the economic value of tropical forests. This private sector allows for the development of a forest economy that preserves the forests, **thereby enabling them to avoid being converted into farmlands, livestock areas, or mining zones;** economic alternatives to such conversions must be proposed in order to prevent deforestation that is mainly related to slash-and-burn agriculture or agribusiness, while allowing for the economic and social development within the producing countries.

Tropical forests are an obvious and renewable asset that is appreciated by the hundreds of thousands of employees of the sector (second largest employer after the state in Cameroon, Gabon and the Republic of Congo), and that remains very important in the other countries, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast). It is important to make every effort to safeguard the tens of millions of hectares of tropical forests under sustainable management, particularly in the Congo Basin, where, as everyone knows, **deforestation has been partly contained during recent years, thanks to favourable new policies, and the efforts of NGOs and businesses who have understood the need for proper forest management.**

Within this context, forest management plans and strict compliance with regula-

tions throughout the value chain remain the foundation of proper forest management. Forest concessions' commitment to traceability and support of the VPA-FLEGT process is strong and must be maintained. Compliance with laws must remain the minimal and undisputed benchmark in the forest industry.

A long road likely lies ahead in terms of changing mentalities and ensuring that legal compliance considerations remain indisputable. Producer states - as well as consumers and importers - must be more determined in terms of their decisions. They need to carry out a strict, objective and direct control over the sector. Policymakers need to be more aware of this issue and not admit weaknesses in relation to forest governance and the timber trade.

The FLEGT (Forest Law for Enforcement, Governance and Trade) action plan, a European policy framework to tackle the problem of illegal logging and its associated trade, is an innovative yet highly complex process, but in the long run it allows for the enforcement of legality and the promotion of proper forest governance via the VPA-FLEGT (Voluntary Partnership Agreements). Downstream, the markets must retain their high standards, in relation to timber from Africa, but also from Asia, where it is often highly transformed. European states must apply the EUTR (European Union Timber Regulation, another flagship measure of the FLEGT action plan) more strictly.

Of course, Sustainable Management certification, as developed by the FSC and PEFC, still allows us to go even further, especially in terms of encouraging responsible purchasing policies; this is

why our association will continue its work to support existing certification systems, particularly via its Fair & Precious brand communication programme, which aims to promote certified tropical timber.

For the record, the legal and certified private sector contributes to the preservation of forest areas in the countries of Central Africa, the preservation of biodiversity and that of 90% of the carbon stock. Admittedly, certification schemes can nevertheless still be improved, notably by adopting measures which ATIBT initiated, such as **EFIR (RIL - Reduced Impact Logging) methods.**

Other areas of work will be addressed in 2018, including the **search for a more efficient way of logging concessions in order to reduce the pressure on traditionally marketed species.** It is worth reminding readers of the **great diversity of existing tropical forest species - which number in the thousands - in relation to the very low number of species that are sold, which only represent around 20 or 30 species.** In order to fully capitalise on the studies launched by ATIBT at the end of 2017 in Côte d'Ivoire and the Congo Basin countries, a working group will be set up to prepare ATIBT's participation in the **World Agroforestry Congress of 2019,** which will be held in Montpellier (France).

In conclusion, **efforts must continue and be carried out with all stakeholders - states, NGOs, donors, professionals and companies - so that the model that has been gradually implemented over the past 25 years remains up to date and reinforced. The companies may change, but the values that have been implemented must above all remain the same.**

2 PRESENTATION

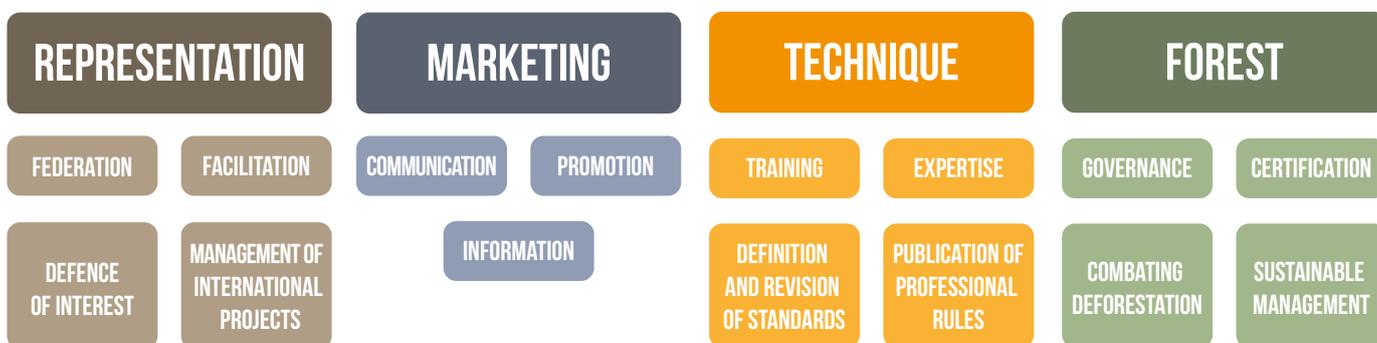
INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER TECHNICAL ASSOCIATION



ATIBT defines itself as :

- a leading technical and scientific authority in terms of tropical timber resources, a key partner for industry professionals and their representative when dealing with various stakeholders (governments, international organizations, NGOs, etc.),
- a manager of international programs in the sustainable management of tropical forests

The main working vectors of the ATIBT are :



ATIBT actively collaborates with countries, international organisations and research centres that are working towards the legality and sustainability of the sector

It promotes the sustainable, ethical and legal trade of tropical timber as a natural and renewable resource. This activity is key for the socio-economic development of producing countries, and for consuming countries it is a valuable source

of raw materials that are destined for various industrial uses.

Working with ATIBT means sharing its mission: contributing to the sustainable development of a responsible tropical timber-forest sector, from the forests to the market, a mission that simultaneously ensures economic viability, social fairness and the preservation of forest ecosystems.

The ATIBT statutes are available online on the website www.atibt.org/en in the section: [about us/governance/statutes/](http://www.atibt.org/en/about-us/governance/statutes/)

The ATIBT interacts with wide-ranging stakeholders:



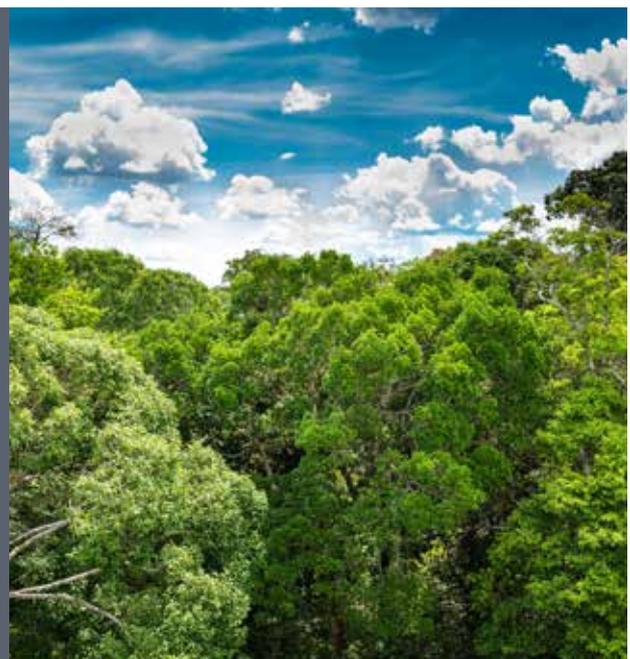
ATIBT ensures improved knowledge of the raw material - wood - in terms of its use, industrialisation, consumption and promotion. It supports national and international forest certification systems in order to enhance their transparency and credibility.

The association consists of approximately 130 members from around 20 countries that produce and consume tropical timber. It therefore represents the interests of several thousand individuals who are involved in the management, processing and trade of tropical timber. ATIBT intervenes in several areas: forest management, the timber industry, standards and uses. Created in 2017, the scientific and technical committee performs a dual role, that of advisor and ethical benchmark.

Thanks to its technical experts, ATIBT is able to develop and promote various standards and tools for the industry:

- *The Tropical Timber Atlas*
- *General classification of tropical timber*, which establishes international pilot names
- Internationally recognised rules of classification and measurement for tropical sawn-timber, round timber and timber trunks
- *The user guide for Eco-certified african timber in Europe*
- A practical guide aimed at public buyers: *Developing and implementing a responsible timber purchasing policy*

ATIBT actively participates in international dialogue and intervenes in both national and international forest policy decision-making, acting as a facilitator through practical collaboration with national ministries and international organisations such as the FAO, the European Union, the AFD, COMIFAC, the FFEM, the KFW, the OIBT, the UICN, the STTC, the WWF, the WCS, the FSC, the PPEFC and the PEFC/PAFC. This cooperation is vital in order to find realistic collective solutions to the problems and challenges that tropical timber and forests face.



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GOVERNANCE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Robert HUNINK
President of ATIBT
PRECIOUS WOODS - SWITZERLAND

Francis ROUGIER
Treasurer of ATIBT
ROUGIER - FRANCE

Paolo BRACCIANO
REGALIS
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Bernard CASSAGNE
FRM - FRANCE

Stefano CORA
CORÀ DOMENICO & FIGLI
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Jan Willem HUNINK
OLAM - SINGAPOUR

Alain KARSENTY
CIRAD - FRANCE

Dominik MOHR
CID - FRANCE

Michel ROUGERON
PALLISCO - CAMEROON

Robert SIMPSON (interim)
FAO - ITALY

Pierre TATY
STATE - REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Françoise VAN DE VEN
UFIGA - GABON

Maarten WIJMA
WIJMA - THE NETHERLANDS

Yves YALIBANDA
STATE - CAR

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Robert HUNINK
Francis ROUGIER
Benoît DEMARQUEZ

Françoise VAN DE VEN
Stefano CORA

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THE TEAM

Find the team on :
www.atibt.org/en/about-us/the-team/



Benoît JOBBÉ-DUVAL
 Managing director
benoit.jobbeduval@atibt.org



Christine LE PAIRE
 Communications manager & Marketing
 Programme coordinator
christine.lepaire@atibt.org



Patrick MARTIN
 Technical director
patrick.martin@atibt.org



Elise HÉRAL
 In charge of lesser known
 timber species (LKTS)
elise.herat@atibt.org



Régis GARNIER
 Financial and administrative
 manager (until March 2018)
regis.garnier@atibt.org



Jacqueline LARDIT-VAN DE POL
 FLEGT & REDD coordinator
jacqueline.vandepol@atibt.org



Caroline DUHESME
 Assistant Coordinator of the
 FLEGT-REDD projects
caroline.duhesme@atibt.org



Camille RENARD
 Projects coordinator
camille.renard@atibt.org

THE MEMBERS

In 2017, ATIBT registered about 20 additional memberships, bringing its total membership to 130. This continued growth of its members since 2016, coming from all backgrounds, activities and regions of the world, is a good indicator of dynamism. It is also proof that the role of the ATIBT and its various actions in favour of forest management, certification and promotion of tropical timber are truly esteemed by its members.

WHY THEY CHOSE TO JOIN US IN 2017



"The integration and respectively consideration of the African continent has become one of the major challenges for the international economy system. In this regard our company is anxious to contribute to this challenge on both, an economical and a social, level to fulfill our social responsibility within a global perspective. ATIBT will help us in this challenge."

GERMANY

www.bocs.de



"We are re-joining ATIBT as we do not see another organization that better represents our African partner sawmills in the industry. With legality and sustainability at the forefront of everything we do and stand for, it is now more important than ever for our knowledge of African timber production to be the very best and for our relationships with our suppliers as strong as possible, we believe ATIBT will be a great asset for accomplishing these goals."

UNITED STATES

www.baillie.com



"We decided to join ATIBT to keep informed with current business trends in Africa, meet suppliers and be updated with environmental issues and concerns."

UNITED STATES

www.hardwoods-inc.com



"Gabon Special Economic Zone (GSEZ) SA wanted to join ATIBT to share information about the tropical timber resources available in Gabon with stakeholders across the globe through various platforms of ATIBT to accelerate the development of timber processing industries in the country and entice foreign investment in this sector. GSEZ SA trust that :

- ATIBT resources will help in responsible forest management and sustainable development of timber industries in Gabon.
- ATIBT will provide firm platform to disseminate the information about the timber sector business opportunities in Gabon to all interested stakeholders."

REPUBLIC OF GABON

www.fr.gsez.com

**Nicolas
PERTHUISOT**

“Through this process of becoming member of ATIBT, I want to join a space for the exchange of experiences and skills to improve my knowledge and understanding of the tropical forest and the wood industry. My objective is also to bring the expertise acquired through my professional experience and to participate in the collective effort of communication and awareness about the sustainable management of these forests so fundamental for our humanity. Adhering to the ATIBT was ultimately obvious.”

FRANCE



“We decided to join ATIBT to showcase to tropical timber sawyers that Forézienne is a dynamic company that provides its clients with band saw blades and circular saw blades, as well as customised blade sharpening solutions. On the occasion of the upcoming Dubai forum in Dubai, we wish to promote our technical expertise as well as our new training offer.”

FRANCE

www.forezienne.com/fr



“In the framework of a continuous improvement approach, we have decided to join ATIBT to :

- *learn from their technical expertise*
- *Strengthen our capacity through training*
- *Develop international projects that preserve tropical forests*
- *Promote the tropical timber industry”*

IVORY COAST

www.tranchivoire.com



As we are naturally committed to sustainable development, we are mindful of the economic growth of our sector; the impact of global warming on the future of certain species is therefore one of our primary concerns. Indeed, after having accompanied the private forest sector in the decline of the pedunculate oak and the search for an alternative species, we will extend our studies to the international level thanks to ATIBT – by virtue of its strategy, its commitments and its international networks -”

FRANCE

www.efclab.fr



“We decided to join ATIBT since we realized that some companies are buying our machinery in Africa. They basically are leasing the African forest for very cheap, process the their wood into firewood and export it around the world making a very good profit. We want to put our machines into the African people so they can optimize the profitability.”

CANADA

www.cordking.ca



“There are many challenges in the processing, trade and promotion of African timber. EXOTT decided to join ATIBT because we believe that collaboration within a professional organisation is necessary for the whole timber industry. We hope to participate actively to the continuous dialogue between all stakeholders gathered in ATIBT.”

BELGIUM

www.exott.com



"I studied forest engineering in Portugal (UTAD) and I have known the ATIBT for a long time. I then studied INPA in Manaus and have worked in Brazil since 2000 in the trade of tropical timber and in tropical forest industry. Even if the majority of our clientele is based in France and Belgium, as the manager of a Brazilian company importing tropical timber, I must try to change the mentality of the buyers of tropical timber in the Iberian Peninsula. ATIBT is our best representative, although it is less active in Brazil than in Africa."

PORTUGAL

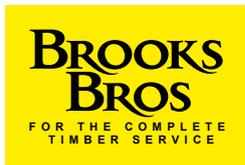
www.lumber.pt



"Fedustria joined ATIBT for its expertise on tropical timber and the importance of these species for Belgian timber importers."

BELGIUM

www.fedustria.be



ATIBT is a key forum to network with responsible businesses operating in the region and to engage and support an initiative that will promote products from this region, which is becoming increasingly challenging in today's market."

UNITED KINGDOM

www.brookstimber.com



"As an individual, I am very attached to the ATIBT, which gave me a chance when I had just graduated and was a great school for me. Thanks to ATIBT, I had the courage to start TFM. On a professional level, the ATIBT is the only structure that brings Africa and Europe together on topical issues for the African forest sector, including legality, sustainable management, vocational training and plantations; themes that interest me and which I work on. Becoming a member of the ATIBT family was obvious to me."

FRANCE

B er enice CASTADOT



"The discovery three years ago of a sector totally destabilized in economic and media terms, confronted with unjustified amalgams, compared to other materials in an unfair way and unable to promote the benefits of responsible logging represented a professional challenge that I do not regret at all.

This teamwork has allowed me to meet exciting people who serve an extraordinary material, whose commitment to the environment and economic development in the production areas is the opposite of the prejudices we are fighting with method and determination."

FRANCE

www.stratemark.com



" We have known ATIBT for several years. We have seen the efforts made by the association and we know the difficulties that exist to promote the development of the tropical timber industry. Today, ATIBT is THE reference in our business. Being a member and participating in its work, means supporting the responsible and sustainable management of tropical forests while popularizing information about our activities to the consumer."

BELGIUM

www.denderwood.com

"Following the significant growth of our production in recent years, we hope to support and encourage ATIBT's efforts to promote tropical hardwoods."



"Bureau Veritas is committed to the ongoing development of innovative solutions that address the concerns of forestry companies to reduce risks, improve performance and promote sustainable development. ATIBT is a professional organization and a platform that will offer to our company not only the opportunity to communicate on its activities in the forestry and environment sector, but also the opportunity to participate rightly in the debates on major current issues on environment and sustainable development. Bureau Veritas also intends to take advantage of the great experience of ATIBT and the diversity of its members to move forward with confidence, and especially to provide services that are in line with the concerns of the forestry sector."

WHY THEY CHOSE TO JOIN US IN 2018



"Joining ATIBT is a necessity for ENSTIB, which has the authority to form students to develop towards the wood industry, which include tropical woods. This way, the school can benefit from an exceptional network of knowledge workers, from the tertiary (wood) raw material to the final consumer. It also enables them to develop new knowledge on the implementation of international projects dedicated to the responsible management of rain forests."



"Training is at the heart of human resource management and is now a powerful lever for skills development. Addressed by different pedagogical methods and multidisciplinary fields, it is the cornerstone of our interventions. Strategic analysis is the focus of our understanding of how organizations work. For more than twenty years, we have been helping professionals in the sector and training actors to strengthen their capacities, so that training is a tool for managing human resources, managing jobs and skills, developing the sector, which must be at the forefront of the skills required in the employment pools. We are happy to partner with ATIBT to carry out this mission."



hupkes
houthandel
dieren bv

"ATIBT is the platform where we find a large part of our suppliers. The sustainable management of the material we are working for is very important to us. This year, Hupkes will exist for 100 years and good resource management ensures that our future is secure. Hupkes Houthandel Dieren BV"

LIST OF ATIBT MEMBERS

DONORS

AFD

Christophe DU CASTEL
COMMISSION EUROPÉENNE
François BUSSON

FAO

Robert SIMPSON
OIBT/ITTO
Gerhard DIETERLE

STATES

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Pierre TATY

REPUBLIC OF IVORY COAST

Claude SORO DOPLÉ

CENTRAL

AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Yves YALIBANDA

PRODUCERS

SUPPLIERS

TRADE

ALPICAM S.A.R.L.

Giorgio GIORGETTI

BAILLIE LUMBER

Jesper BACH

ANDRIGHETTI LEGNAMI

Ada ANDRIGHETTI

BASSO LEGNAMI

Giovanni BASSO

BOIS ET MATERIAUX /

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CABD

Jean-Jacques BOUTROT

CEMA BOIS DE L'ATLAS

Abdelmajid EL JAI

CHANZY BOIS

Jean-Marie FENART

CIB

Christian SCHWARZ

CID

Dominik MOHR

CORÀ WOOD GABON

Jean François CAMI

CORÀ DOMENICO

& FIGLI SPA

Stefano CORA

DESIGN PARQUET

Joseph et Yves PANAGET

DMBP DISPANO - POINT P

Serge CHEVALIER

DENDERWOOD

Filip D'HAESELEER

ETS. PIERRE HENRY & FILS

Patrick FAURE

EXOTT

Tim Van CAUWENBERGHE

FIBRES INDUSTRIES BOIS

Jean-Lorrain HUET

GIESELMANN

GMBH & CO KG

Matthias GIESELMANN

HARDWOODS

Thomas HERGA

HOTIM BV

Jan Maurits KEMPS

HUPKES HOUTHANDEL

Hans VAN HEERDEN

IMPEXO International GmbH

Bertrand ECKLE

INTERHOLCO AG

Ulrich GRAUERT

JAF GROUP

Katharina SCHABASSER

JAMMES

Francis JAMMES

LATHAMS

Nick LATHAM

LONZA

Peter FILIUS

LUMBER UNIPESOAAL LDA.

Gabriel COSTA

MINH CUONG

Trinh CUONG

NHG TIMBER

Guy GOODWIN

OLAM INTERNATIONAL LTD

Darshan RAIYANI

PALLISCO CIFM

Michel ROUGERON

PASQUET MENUISERIE

Vincent PASQUET

PELTIER BOIS

Pascal FAIRIER

THE PENROD COMPANY

Tim HEIDT

PRECIOUS WOODS

Markus BRUETSCH

RAIL EUROPE

Aurélie LAMBERT

REGALIS

Paolo Lorenzo BRACCIANO

ROUGIER SYLVACO

PANNEAUX

Romain ROUGIER

ROUGIER AFRIQUE

INTERNATIONAL

Francis ROUGIER

SFID (GROUPE ROUGIER)

MOKABI SA (GROUPE

ROUGIER)

ROUGIER GABON

SCBT

Michel ROUGERON

SFM

Jean-François YVON

SNC IPE BOUARD

Brahim BOUARD

SOMIVAB

Andrea RIGONI

TIMTRADE SRL

Eugenio COLAO

TRADELINK WOOD

PRODUCTS LTD

Connie SCHEY

TRANCHIVOIRE

Domenico GIOSTRA

TROPICA BOIS

Jean-Claude BILLAUD

VASTO LEGNO S.P.A.

Roberto / Ennio DAJELLI

VANDECASTEELE

HOUTIMPORT

Geneviève STANDAERT

WIJMA CAMEROUN

M.G. WIJMA

WIJMA CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Michel BIHOREAU

WIJMA TRADING SARL

Jean-Pierre MARI

SERVICES PROVIDERS

BOLLORE AFRICA LOGISTICS

Stanislas de SAINT LOUVENT

BOCS

Ilse FLIEGE

BUREAU VERITAS

Philippe DREAN

CORD KING

Stephan MAISONNEUVE

DUBAI WOOD SHOW

Walid FARGHAL

FOREZIEENNE MFLS

Sébastien VALOIS

FORM INTERNATIONAL

Rik SOOLS

FRM INGENIERIE

Bernard CASSAGNE

GSEZ

Nitin MISRA

OREADE BRECHE

Stéphane RIVAIN

ONF INTERNATIONAL

Charles HULLLOT

RAINFORREST ALLIANCE

Sandra RAZANAMANDRANTO

SNCF Réseau

Patrizia GREGORI

STIHL

Johannes WETZEL

STRATEMARK

Bertrand FAUCON

TEREA

Benoît DEMARQUEZ

TERMOLEGNO

Ilaria FORNASIER

ASSOCIATIONS AND FEDERATIONS

ETTF

André DE BOER

FEDERLEGNOARREDO

FEDECOMLEGNO

Massimo FIORINI

FEDUSTRIA

Filip DE JAEGER

FIB

Gabriel MOLA MOTYA

FSC INTERNATIONAL

Mathieu AUGER-SCHWARZ

TZENBERG

GD HOLZ

Thomas GOEBEL

GFBC

Blandine L'OR OUOGOUIA

LCB

Eric BOILLEY

Arnaud HETROIT

(from June)

NATURE +

Charles BRACKE

PEFC COUNCIL

Benjamin GUNNEBERG

SENBCI

Serge Guetty SOUMARO

SPIB

Boubacar Ben SALAH

UFIGA

Françoise VAN DE VEN

NGOS

FONDATION PRINCE

ALBERT II

Leslie BUS

UICN

Gretchen WALTERS

WCS

Emma J STOKES

WRI

Marie VALLÉE

WWF

Jean BAKOUMA

RESEARCH

CIRAD

Alain KARSENTY

ERAIFT

Michel BAUDOUIN

ENSTIB

Laurent BLÉRON

UNIV LIEGE - GEMBLoux

Jean-Louis DOUCET

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Frédéric ANQUETIL

Isidoro BIANCHI

Jacqueline BERGERON

(Cabinet PFIT)

Béatrice CASTADOT

(TFM-Consulting)

Antoine DE LA ROCHE-

FORDIERE

Olivier DEVILLARD

Richard FAYS

(FAYSWOOD)

Régis GARNIER

Saloua GHAZIL

(EFC LAB BOIS)

Edoardo GIVONE

Benoit GOMMET

(FRANCE TIMBER)

Emmanuel GROUDEL

(WALE)

Nicolas JAMET

(ABARCO)

Pierre-Yves LE FLECHER

Alain LEMAIGRE

(ALCEBOIS)

Olivier MEGARD

Christian MORASSO

NICOLAS PERTHUISOT

HONORARY MEMBERS

EX-PRESIDENTS OF ATIBT

Franck CRETI

(INDUSTREE)

Willy DELVINGT

Jean-Jacques LANDROT

(CONSULTLAND)

Henri MONTCERISIER

Olman SERRANO

Hinrich STOLL

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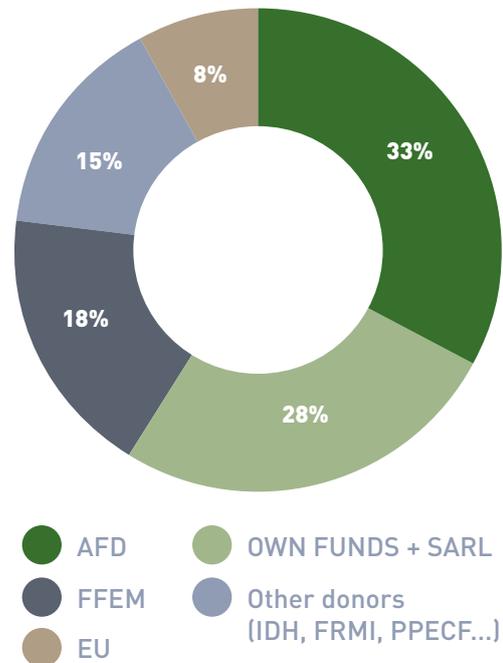
KEY FIGURES FOR 2017 AND OUTLOOK FOR 2018

ORIGIN OF ATIBT'S RESOURCES

In 2017, ATIBT diversified its sources of funding.

- The share of dues stands at 16% compared with 13% in 2016, due to an increase in the number of members (+20), which has resulted in a €30,000 increase in dues.
- ATIBT has established a partnership with SNCF which specifically supports ATIBT's research and promotion of *Lesser Known Timber Species (LKTS)*.
- ATIBT has also rallied some of its members and obtained specific backing from the PPECF in support of the association's work for FSC's General Meeting in Vancouver.

In 2016, ATIBT had exceptional revenues of €81K that were not generated this year.



ATIBT EMPLOYMENT AND RESOURCES IN 2016 AND IN 2017

Resources in K€	2017 provisional	2016	Variation	Variation %
Contributions and private partnerships	224	187	37	20%
Grants	1 091	1 079	12	1%
Various and exceptional**	115	229	- 114	-50%
TOTAL	1430	1495	- 64.9	-4%
Employment	2017	2016	Variation K€	Variation %
Implementation of projects and consultancy	780	622	158	25%
Missions for the implementation of projects	120	98	22	22%
Salary costs	397	368	29	8%
Operating expenses / Miscellaneous**	129	355	- 226	-64%
TOTAL	1426	1443	-17	-1%
Net income	4.1	52		

* in 2016, restatement carried out: these amounts contain the dues that FSC members paid and the corresponding expenses.

** in 2016, ATIBT benefited from €81K in exceptional income.

ATIBT continues its action by implementing the projects that are currently signed. The year 2018 will be marked by the end of AFD's support for the marketing programme. KFW, via the PPECF, is expected to support a number of projects that ATIBT presented at the end of 2017, through the establishment of focal points in support of third-party verified legal certification and support of the FLEGT process, through the deployment of the Fair&Precious brand, and finally through work on the LKTS (*Lesser Known Timber Species*).

7 THE COMMISSIONS AND THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

In order to remain in tune with the realities of the field and the challenges of the sector, ATIBT has surrounded itself with several thematic working groups. These working groups consist of a scientific council and five thematic commissions. Several commissions are already active (marketing, training, certification, timber material); in 2017, ATIBT wished to provide new momentum to the other commissions and to set up ATIBT's Scientific Council.

THE COMMISSIONS

The commissions bring together members of the association who wish to contribute to consideration on the sector's main themes, sometimes with external speakers. They are coordinated by a member of ATIBT's team and chaired, if appropriate, by an ATIBT member.

THE MARKETING COMMISSION

Coordination: Christine Le Paire

ATIBT's Marketing Committee consists of active ATIBT members whose objective is to support its marketing programme, with a project that aims to develop the «African tropical timber» sector in a sustainable and responsible manner through the promotion and the commercial development of legally sourced timber. It focuses on products that are certified as legal or certified as sustainable (according to benchmark specifications for responsible forest management certification standards such as FSC, PEFC/PAFC, OLB, FLV, etc.) on the import markets.

The general topics of consideration mainly include the following:

- the deployment of the «Fair&Precious» brand
- the «African timber, more than timber» campaign
- the enhancement of forestry companies' image in producing countries
- the promotion in Europe of the values and qualities of eco-certified tropical timber
- ATIBT's participation in the Racewood and Forum meetings

THE CERTIFICATION COMMISSION

Co-Présidents: Sophie Dirou (TEREA) and Nicolas Perthuisot
Coordination: Caroline Duhesme

ATIBT's certification commission was formed in 2017 and has dedicated its efforts to the year's hot topics. In 2018, it will be restructured, in particular to establish a list of members and to adopt a more formal way of operating.

It aims to:

- promote and support certification efforts and initiatives (development of FSC/PAFC certification in Central Africa, recognition of certification in the FLEGT process and greater consideration in the EUTR, etc.)
- gather information on new certification requirements (and getting involved in the consultation and decision-making processes for new standards) as well as new certification opportunities (REDD+, legality certification, etc.)
- participate in certification initiatives and debates (IFL, CLIP, PPECF, etc.)
- inform and encourage markets in order to improve access to certified tropical timber products.

As such, this commission was particularly active in 2016 and 2017 to prepare for the FSC General Assembly meeting in Vancouver and to promote the development of national PAFCs, including the issuance of the first PAFC Gabon certificates.

THE TRAINING COMMISSION

President: Patrick Charpentier (ENSTIB)
Coordination: Patrick Martin

ATIBT's training commission brings together active ATIBT members with the aim to:

- create a network facilitating discussions on the supply and demand of training

- meet the training needs of industrial players in the short and long term related to the industry in general (production, processing, certification, forest management, sustainable management, markets, technical training such as felling, sharpening, etc.)
- explore solutions for the establishment or strengthening of education systems in Africa that will meet the needs of the timber sector (forest and processing).
- centralise information related to training (training bodies, training schedules related to the sector, knowledge of training related projects)
- organise training sessions provided by ATIBT (classification, forest management, etc.)



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THE TIMBER MATERIAL & NORMALISATION COMMISSION

President: Guillaume de la Peschardière (ROUGIER RSP)
Coordination: Patrick Martin

ATIBT's materials and normalisation commission consists of active ATIBT members with the aim to:

- create a network of experts to discuss developments and techniques in the wood industry
- develop industrial products, while highlighting the role of tropical timber, which is often up against competing materials such as aluminium and PVC

- establish collective strategies
- undertake normative initiatives
- intervene in both consumer and producer countries.

Generally speaking, the topics for consideration are classification and usage standards, treatment products and the use of biocides, and regulations.



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THE FOREST & INDUSTRY COMMISSION

President: Bernard Cassagne (FRM)
Coordination: Jacqueline Lardit-van de Pol

The Forest – Industry Commission was set up in 2017 and will likely be very active in 2018. The general topics for consideration will be sustainable forest management, the CITES, local timber processing and forest production trade.



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THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

President: Jean-Louis Doucet (University of Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech)
Secretary: Benoît Jobbé-Duval

The Scientific Council maintains a critical and independent view of things, while benefiting from ATIBT's framework. It can be called on by ATIBT or it can alert the Association in order to provide it with an opinion regarding a scientific issue in a specific topic that is considered a priority by ATIBT. The presence of outside scientists from various backgrounds enables a neutral and independent diagnosis to be made.

Composed of the sector's leading scientific figures (whether or not they are members of ATIBT), the Scientific Council has a triple objective:

- advise, guide and support the decision-making of ATIBT's General Management and Board of Directors
- contribute to scientific rigor in ATIBT's approaches and scientific projects
- provide research results to ATIBT members using understandable wording.

As ATIBT's activities primarily involve African forest countries, a good balance between organisations in the North and the South is desirable. The Scientific Council must be able to provide facts and elements to support the work carried out by the Commissions. To this end, it feeds their work with the most relevant scientific publications possible. It will also publish the results of research (using easily understandable wording) that has implications on forest management, in the form of brief notes, in particular for the ATIBT website.

8 HIGHLIGHTS OF 2017

MARCH - Dubai (United Arab Emirates)

Forum ATIBT from 4-6 March 2017

For the first time since its launch in Rome in 1982, the ATIBT International Forum, which brings together experts from the forest-tropical forest sector every two years in cities around the world, was held in the Middle East, in Dubai. The general theme, «*Tropical forest : timber and so much more*» resonating with the objective of the marketing program currently implemented by ATIBT, aimed at valorizing, in its different aspects, a resource that is too little known, tropical timber, as well as the global approach of the profession of forest manager, who is committed to a three-fold stake of economic profitability, preservation of the resource and respect for local populations. The Forum brought together industry experts from the public and private sectors, academia and research, as well as civil society and NGOs from both the producing countries (mainly the Congo Basin) and consuming countries, to intervene in five sessions: The two days of discussions were organized around five themes :

1. The future of the tropical forest and its population - **2.** Training in the timber professions - **3.** Legality, certification, global warming and the responsible purchase of timber - **4.** Logistics, challenges and opportunities - **5.** African timber market in the world and in particular in the Middle East.

One issue was central during the Forum: the legality of tropical timber trade at the global scale. As they are anxious for the UAE to commit in this direction, the authorities of the host country wanted this theme to be explored in depth. In the presence of the Ministry of Economy of the United Arab Emirates and of Mrs. Estelle Ondo, Minister of Forest Economy, Fisheries and Environment in Gabon, 135 participants from civil society, public administrations and the private sector participated in the exchanges. They came from the Congo Basin (Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Republic of Congo - with a strong presence of syndicates representing

forestry companies), but also Nigeria, Vietnam, United Arab Emirates, Greece, Germany, United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland.



ATIBT collective booth at the Dubai WoodShow from 7-9 March

As part of its partnership with the Dubai WoodShow, which helped us to organize our Forum, ATIBT had a 36 m² stand at the 12th edition of this major exhibition of the wood industry in the Middle -East. An ATIBT islet has been built, housing Precious Woods, Rougier, Olam, CORA Wood, Henry Timber, the Ministry of Water and Forests of Cameroon, the African Model Forest Network (RAFM), and the Community Forest Cooperative CAFT. The activity was continuous, with visitors from Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, India, China, Turkey, Australia, Brazil... and curious about the activities of the ATIBT and tropical wood. Some of them have since joined ATIBT as members.



OCTOBER - Vancouver (Canada)

Adoption of Motion 34 during FSC's General Assembly

Replicating every 3 years, this General Assembly brought together more than 700 members and

1500 participants from different forest regions of the world. The previous one was held in Seville in 2014, where motion 65 on IFLs (Intact Forest Landscapes) was passed. Its implementation could have endangered the FSC certified companies in the Congo Basin. ATIBT therefore tabled 3 motions and conducted a communication action (through leaflets and videos to present the motions, and a video on the RILs (reduced impact logging) prior to the event. It went to Vancouver with a delegation of certified member forest companies, operating mainly in the Congo Basin, and exemplary in sustainable forest management, to discuss the subject with the various chambers (social, economic, environmental) and different stakeholders, including representatives of environmental NGOs such as Greenpeace and WWF and the various forest basins (Canada, Indonesia, Russia and Latin America in particular). These discussions resulted, on the last day, in the adoption of motion 34 which will enable regional assessments to be carried out on the short and long-term impacts of the forest management and protection measures associated with the implementation of Motion 65/2014 in terms of the IFLs (Intact Forest Landscapes) and the IGI's (International Generic Indicators). These assessments will need to compare different implementation scenarios, while taking into account environmental, social and economic components, with a focus on the impacts on the indigenous peoples and local communities who depend on the forest.



OCTOBER - Douala (Cameroon)
17th CBFP partnership meeting

The Congo Basin Forests Partnership gathered 500 participants, COMIFAC-area stakeholders, on the topic of the Congo Basin forests. As a representative of the private sector within the CBFP Council, ATIBT defended the sector's positions on topics such as forest monitoring, independent monitoring, private sector anti-poaching efforts, the OFAC database and the B2B approach.



Final Communiqué of the 17th Meeting of CBFP Parties - October 27, 2017, Douala

**NOVEMBER - Jardin d'Agronomie
Tropicale de Paris (France)**

The new Fair&Precious collective brand

The new Fair&Precious collective brand, which aims to promote the various benefits of certified tropical timber (economic, social, technical and environmental) was launched on the 8 November in Paris with the presence of 70 participants (NGO's, journalists, members and partners of ATIBT). This event resulted in a great deal of media coverage (articles and interviews in broadcasts). It also represented the first step in an international deployment, which continued with a presentation of the brand in December at the International Hardwood Conference in Venice, and will go on throughout 2018, at various events and with the support of press relations.



NOVEMBER - Yaoundé (Cameroon)
Launch of the P3FAC project

Backed by the FFEM, the P3FAC project will ensure the continuity of the DynAffFor project. Over a 5-year period, it will consolidate new scientific data on forest dynamics and will rally public and private sector stakeholders around the results of this research in favour of more sustainable forest policies.

9 ATIBT'S 4 WEBSITES

ATIBT

FAIR&PRECIOUS

TIMBER TRADE PORTAL

MYTROPICALTIMBER

atibt.org

ATIBT'S INSTITUTIONAL WEBSITE



Launched in October 2016, the new version of ATIBT's institutional website has renewed access to our content, making it more attractive thanks to a new design that truly highlights pictures, and a reorganisation of the information into 3 tabs: «About us», «Tropical timber industry» and «Scientific and technical work». News is now highlighted via 3 main homepage frames: news (which the newsletters refer to), projects and diary. Below these frames are Forum, Commissions and Racewood sections.



The site is intended for a wider audience, as a duplicate English version now exists. A Spanish version will soon be available.

Lastly, our new social networks (YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter and, more recently, Facebook) have been integrated. Our publications can be found in the media section.



fair-and-precious.org

A WEBSITE THAT PROMOTES CERTIFIED TROPICAL TIMBER



Aware that tropical timber is still relatively unknown, as are the benefits related to the certification of this timber, ATIBT, along with its certified logging company members, has decided to launch a collective brand, Fair&Precious, intended to highlight the various aspects (technical, economic, social and environmental) of certified tropical timber, which is needed to maintain the value of tropical forests. A dedicated website was developed in late 2017 to support the promotion of this brand. This initiative is part of the marketing programme that ATIBT launched 3 years ago and which is supported financially by the AFD (Agence Française de Développement - French Development Agency) and Germany's KfW cooperation agency. The website presents the Fair&Precious

Manifesto (which carries the values of Fair&Precious companies), the brand's 10 commitments and the benefits linked with the purchase of certified tropical timber, grouped into four stakes: «social and economic development», «protection of the preservation of the resource», «protection of plants and wildlife» and «an exceptional material».



The site is trilingual: English, French, and more recently Spanish. A Fair&Precious Facebook account has just been created to expand the brand's visibility and expose the subject of sustainable tropical forest management to a wider audience.

timbertradeportal.com

THE SINGLE PLATFORM FOR EUTR INFORMATION



ATIBT and the ETTF (European Timber Trade Federation) have signed an agreement in January 2017, and a financial agreement in July 2017, to merge together their respective websites, which provide the information that is needed to conduct due diligence in the context of the application of the EUTR (European Union Timber Regulation).

- www.timbertradeportal.com, developed by Form International for the ETTF, thanks to funding from the ITTO and the STTC programme
- www.legal-timber.info, developed by Folcomedia for ATIBT, thanks to funding from the FFEM and France's Ministry of Agriculture

The unique platform, accessible on the Timber Trade Portal, integrates the information available on ATIBT's website and provides access to accurate, factual and reliable information on the legal trade of timber in each producing country. The website offers country sheets (23 to date, covering areas in Africa, Asia, the Ameri-

cas and Eastern Europe), and provides general information and data on each country's legal framework and governance situation.

The site will be reviewed in 2018 in order to: present the information more concisely, include information and data on the timber market and on certification and explain the institutional mechanisms in place to combat illegal timber, such as the EUTR, the Lacey Act (US) and the Australian Illegal Logging Prohibition Regulation (AILPR).

i Currently in English, the website will be available soon in French. An update of the information will also be carried out. The maintenance of the website, as well as its updates and the monitoring of the information quality, is made possible thanks to ATIBT's FLEGT projects, which are funded by the European Union and the FFEM. It is entrusted to the Form International firm.

mytropica.ltiber.org

A global (European) tool, with a local (national) version to facilitate access to the tropical timber market and prescribe the right timber for the right use.



This website, supported by IDH (Sustainable Trade Initiative) through STTC (Sustainable Timber Trade Coalition) and implemented by ATIBT, was developed in 2017 with the help of national European federations, and LCB in particular. It was launched at the beginning of 2018. The website integrates the technical presentation of species and usage categories, supported by the technical data of the CIRAD's Tropix database.

Translated into 7 languages (English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Dutch and Danish), this tool somewhat matches the multiplication of the «Boistropicaux.org» website developed by France's LCB federation. It is intended for professionals who are seeking information on the uses of tropical timber (for the more than 100 species presented), or who simply want to find a supplier of tropical timber in one of the represented European countries.

Each national context is taken into account, since the distributors are listed at the national level and the timber industry news is presented by country. The page of each supplier can be enriched with various illustrations and the national federations will manage their own pages independently.

The aim is to broaden the areas of use of tropical timber by increasing the market and professionals' trust in the use of timber in more areas and for more ambitious projects. The objectives are also to strengthen working relations among all of the European associations, to promote the use of sustainable tropical timber and to encourage the use of lesser known species.



This project remains open to all European timber federations that wish to join us.

10 THE SOCIAL NETWORKS

ATIBT IS NOW PRESENT ON THE TWITTER, LINKEDIN, YOUTUBE AND FACEBOOK SOCIAL NETWORKS

These communication channels, which are now integrated into its websites, enable ATIBT to disseminate information on its activities and on the tropical forest-timber sector, and they also allow one to keep abreast of the latest news on ATIBT's members and partners, and to exchange with them in another manner... If you haven't already done so, join us!



Twitter

@ATIBT_Aссо

Created in April 2016

356 subscribers

862 tweets - the Twitter news feed is displayed on the ATIBT website



LinkedIn

Created at the end of 2017

270 people connected (including many of you)

Many articles and videos are integrated



Facebook Fair&Precious

Our latest offspring! With the launch of this Facebook account, we want to change the general public's perception of tropical timber, while generating awareness among current and future stakeholders regarding the environmental issues related to the preservation of tropical forests.



Youtube

The YouTube channel existed prior to ATIBT's new team; during the last two years, it has allowed us to broadcast the FFEM ATIBT film entitled «How to preserve tropical forests» (in French, English and Spanish), the clip on RIL practices and the video on motion 34 that was shown at FSC's General Assembly in Vancouver. In 2018, we will be able to integrate, among other things, the Fair&Precious video clips.

ATIBT IN THE MEDIA

Following the launch of its Fair&Precious collective brand on 8 November, ATIBT has been the subject of numerous topics in print media (25 instances of coverage) and among its partners, as well as on a few TV shows:

- The «*C'est pas du vent*» (This isn't Hot Air) show hosted by Anne-Cécile Bras on RFI, focusing on the F&P brand and certification, with Benoît Jobbé-Duval and Alain Karsenty (CIRAD)
- Interview of the ATIBT team and Mathieu Schwartzberg (FSC) for the 90-minute «*Regard extérieur*» (Outside View) show on the sustainable management of tropical forests in the Congo Basin, for Canal 2, a private channel, to be aired in 2018.

ATIBT's collaboration with SNCF (French railway company) has also resulted in a few articles in newspapers such as Bois Mag (Timber Mag) and Usine Nouvelle (New Factory).

11 REPORT

THE FORESTRY SECTOR IN THE CONGO BASIN COUNTRIES AND IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE AS SEEN BY ITS REPRESENTATIVES

INTRODUCTION

The Congo Basin is now **the world's second largest tropical forest basin, containing around 250 million hectares of forest**, including 171 million hectares of dense rainforest. As such, it is considered **«the Earth's second green lung»**.

This huge territory, which hosts the ecosystems and biodiversity that are essential for our future, is the subject of many struggles, most of which have a common objective: **to curb deforestation**. With an **average annual rate of 0.15%**, deforestation in the Congo Basin is considered half as low as in the Amazon or in Indonesia. However, disparities exist between the countries, and they are especially correlated with the evolution of their populations.

ATIBT promotes sustainable forest management that aims to «provide value to the forest», so that policymakers and economic players see a genuine benefit in preserving it. At present, in terms of forest valuation and according to OFAC figures for Central Africa, we can identify around **50 million hectares within concessions** (stable figure since 2006), 371 concessions (an average surface area of 133,000 hectares per concession), **24 million hectares with a management plan** in 2016 (i.e. half of the acreage

under concession) and **8.8 million certified hectares**, including 5.2 million FSC-certified hectares at the end of 2017.

Meanwhile, in the Congo Basin, the number of people employed by the sector is in the hundreds of thousands, making it the **second employer after the state**. The same can be said of the Côte d'Ivoire.

For our 2017 ATIBT Activity Report, we sought testimonials from representatives of Central Africa and Côte d'Ivoire's professional forest sector - heads of professional organisations that bring together the most significant players - in order to highlight their recent achievements and current issues.

Most of this document was produced with the contributions of the heads of the various production syndicates of Côte d'Ivoire (SPIB, Mr. Boubacar Ben Salah), Cameroon (GFBC, Mrs. Blandine L'Or Ouoguia), Gabon (UFIGA, Mrs. Françoise van de Ven), Democratic Republic of Congo -DRC- (FIB, Mr. Gabriel Mola Motya and Mr. Eric Gitadi Gilungu), Congo (UNIBOIS, Mr. Martial Fouty and Pierre Ngoma and UNICONGO, Mr. Jean-Jacques Samba) and Central African Republic -CAR- (Mr. Rubens Nambaï and Mr. Yves Yalibanda). Mrs. Bérénice Castadot (TFM Consulting) coordinated it.

THE FORESTRY SECTOR AND ITS FEDERATIONS IN THE CONGO BASIN COUNTRIES AND IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

SPIB - Syndicat des Producteurs Industriels du Bois (Industrial Timber Producers Syndicate)

- Date of creation: 1943
- Number of members: 23
- Significance on the country's timber exports: Approximately 70% of the country's exports
- Employees of the sector: 30,000 direct jobs *

GFBC - Groupement de la Filière Bois du Cameroun (Cameroun Timber Industry Group)

- Date of creation: October 1998
- Number of members: 14 Groups and companies or 25 Companies
- Surface area represented: 4,380,327ha out of 6,598,509ha allocated, or 66%
- Significance on the country's timber exports: 60% of logs and 75% of sliced logs come from GFBC members
- Employees of the sector: 21,000 direct jobs

In Cameroon, only companies that are members of the Group are certified:

- 33% of FSC surface areas
- 49% of OLB surface areas
- 15% of surface areas are currently undergoing certification
- 3% are non-certified

Or 130%, because some surfaces have double OLB/FSC certification

UNICONGO - Union patronale et interprofessionnelle du Congo

UNIBOIS - Union patronale des entreprises privées de la filière bois du Congo (Employers' Union of Private Timber Sector Companies of Congo)

- Date of creation: decades of existence, restructuring in 2014
- Number of members: 15 members from the timber industry and 4 associate members
- Surface area represented: 1,100,000 ha
- Significance on the country's timber exports: 5 to 10% of the country's log exports
- Estimation : 15,000 direct jobs.

UFIGA - Union des Forestiers Industriels du Gabon et Aménagistes (Union Of Foresters And Managers Of Gabon)

- Date of creation: 24 March 2003
- Number of members: 12 including
 - 9 companies with forest areas, all under sustainable management and with transformation units (sawmill, rotary cutting plants, plywood mill)
 - 3 companies that are industrial entities (rotary cutting plants) that don't have any forest areas
- Surface area represented: 3,922,638 ha out of the 15,900,000 million hectares allocated, or 25%
- Significance on the country's timber exports: Approximately 40% of exports are made by UFIGA members
- In Gabon, only UFIGA members are certified:
 - 37% of FSC surface areas, including 596,800 ha with double FSC/PAFC certification
 - 6% of TLV surface areas
- Employees of the sector: 12,500 direct jobs

FIB - Fédération des industriels du Bois (RDC) Industrial Timber Federation - DRC

- Date of creation: 24 March 2006
- Number of members: 9 members
- Surface area represented: 6,420,920 ha out of 10,706,293 ha, or 60%. This represents 31 out of 57 forest concessions in the country.
- Significance on the country's timber exports: Approximately 85% of log exports with a growing share of the Asian market (over 60%) and a decrease in the European market (less than 40%).
- Approximately 20 species are harvested but 40% of production is concentrated on 3 species (Wengé, Afrormosia and Sapelli).
- Employees of the sector: 6,000 direct jobs

*one shall consider that one direct job translates into 5 to 6 indirect jobs

THE DRC, A KEY CONTRIBUTOR TO THE « EARTH'S SECOND GREEN LUNG »

FIB (Fédération des Industriels du Bois - Industrial Timber Federation)

Gabriel Mola Motya and Eric Gitadi Gilungu



Gabriel Mola Motya



Eric Gitadi Gilungu

The forest of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) covers over 60% of the Congo Basin's dense forest areas (nearly 150 million hectares). At the national level, this forest cover is present on 70% of the territory. It is home to a large population, even in the remote forest areas, which results in high demographic pressure on the forest. Despite significant potential, the forest sector remains marginal in the economy, accounting for only 1% of national GDP. The annual domestic production of logs by the formal sector is stagnating at around 300,000 m³ and represents only 5% of the Congo Basin subregion's total production. This stagnation of the formal sector can partly be explained by the many constraints it faces: non-existent infrastructures, difficult export conditions, weak governance, heavy taxation, a negative image of logging in the DRC (due to negative communication campaigns conducted by certain non-governmental organisations) and reduced forest productivity. Moreover, there are significant operational constraints (numerous swamps, port distances, etc.) as well

as unfair competition from the informal sector which largely operates in an illegal manner - free from the technical, fiscal and social constraints that are imposed on the formal sector. This competition manifests itself on several levels, mainly in the domestic market (over 80% of domestic consumption is covered by the informal sector), but also internationally, through the export of certain illegal logs, resulting in the deteriorating perception of logging, which leads to suspicion in the markets regarding the legality of all production originating in the DRC.

The local lumber market, which is highly dynamic, could be a boon to this formal forest sector, but artisanal miners, who are typically illegal, often operate without complying with any sustainable forest management measures while offering unbeatable prices. As a result, nearly 73% of production from forest concessions under forest management is exported.

Logging companies working under development plans in the DRC - all of them members of the FIB - are fully expected to respect currently applicable legal obligations in terms of planning, environmental management and taxation, and to comply with logging standards. Particular emphasis is placed on compliance with social obligations via the implementation of social clauses that are signed with the local communities. Lastly, supporting dialogue with civil society in terms of forest and environmental issues is a priority for the FIB and its members.





CÔTE D'IVOIRE, AN AGRICULTURAL COUNTRY

SPIB (Syndicat des Producteurs Industriels de Bois - Industrial Timber Producers Syndicate)
Boubacar Ben Salah



Boubacar Ben Salah

African forest ecosystems in general, and those of Côte d'Ivoire in particular, are subject to both climatic and anthropogenic degradations, the latter being by far the harshest. In fact, in a country like Côte d'Ivoire where the economy is essentially based on agriculture, uncontrolled logging and high population growth have lead to the most visible consequence: the sometimes spectacular degradation of the forest cover in many places. However, forests represent excellent reservoirs

of biodiversity and their preservation has become a prime concern for Côte d'Ivoire, and therefore for the SPIB.

Nevertheless, before agriculture took on the role it occupies today, Côte d'Ivoire's economy had long relied on logging.

Today, with the thinning out of the plant cover, this sector - which experienced spectacular growth in both the 70s and the 80s - is having a hard time supplying raw material. In addition, the measures implemented in order to promote sustainable forest development, including the logging reform of 1 July 1994, positively compel existing firms and new companies to shift towards higher levels of processing that generate added value, especially in terms of sawing, rotary cutting and slicing. Improved timber processing contributes to sustainable forest management because it helps eliminate the waste of the raw material. As such, the timber industry in Côte d'Ivoire is constantly improving, but it is still confronted with the timber access issue, given the availability of the resource. Several possible solutions exist, which the SPIB and other organisations will support, notably the creation of a collaboration and partnership framework

between Côte d'Ivoire and neighbouring forest countries, and the backed stimulation of the creation of industrial plantations and support of industrial players who would like to commit to further transformation levels.

In addition, Côte d'Ivoire, an agricultural country par excellence, intends to pursue its agricultural policy in full agreement with sustainable forest management methods. To meet this requirement, it is committed to a «Zero Deforestation Agriculture» policy. Several initiatives have been taken to support this vision: the REDD+ strategy is already underway and validated, and the FLEGT VPA is under negotiation. Indeed, Côte d'Ivoire has affirmed its firm commitment to commit itself to the FLEGT process with the European Union, with its signature on 13 June 2013 of a joint declaration. In addition, as part of its aim to improve forest governance, the country signed a partnership agreement with ATIBT in April 2013, thereby equipping itself with another instrument of good governance. Indeed, the «ATIBT-CI» convention allows a forest country to strengthen the multi-stakeholder partnership for responsible tropical forestry, for the preservation of forests and for the competitiveness of tropical timber on the markets. All of these initiatives demonstrate that the forest issue has always been - and still remains - a major concern for this country.

The major forestry challenges that Côte d'Ivoire will have to urgently address, and which the SPIB and its members will be fully involved in, are:

- the revision of the forest code in order to incorporate the relevant provisions needed to meet agroforestry requirements, as well as the adoption of decrees for the application of the revised forest code;
- the timely signature of the FLEGT VPA negotiations and the implementation of

the National REDD+ strategy, thanks to binding measures;

Also related to the forestry sector, the issue of energy timber must be dealt with quickly in Côte d'Ivoire. Facilitating measures must be introduced in order to support all initiatives that are headed in this direction, since for African countries, charcoal still occupies an important role, and it isn't going to disappear within the next 10 years - nor even within the next 20 years.

A few words on the SPIB «FLEGT» project

The SPIB was awarded a project funded by the European Delegation in Abidjan entitled «*Capacity building for the professional associations of the Ivorian private forest sector in order to foster improved integration of the latter in the FLEGT Action Plan in general, and in the VPA negotiations of their country, in particular*». It was implemented with ATIBT's technical support. The project, signed on 19 December 2013 and initially planned for a period spanning 3 years, was extended for one year in 2016 and ended on 13 December 2017 with the closing workshop held in Abidjan. The implementation of this project truly highlighted the excellent professional partnership relations between the SPIB and ATIBT, with the affirmed and ongoing presence of the Association throughout the project, demonstrating ATIBT's strong involvement with SPIB.

GABON AND PAFC CERTIFICATION

UFIGA (Union des Forestiers Industriels du Gabon et Aménagistes - Union of Foresters and Managers of Gabon)
Françoise Van de Ven



Françoise Van de Ven

Gabon is the first Congo Basin country in which a UFIGA member company has obtained a PAFC/PEFC (Pan African Forest Certification/Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) certificate. While FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) sustainable management certification had always held a monopoly in Central Africa, the arrival of the PAFC may represent a welcome and/or complementary alternative. Indeed, an oligopoly situation is much more stable for the business climate and the complementarity offered by the PAFC can open up new market opportunities for producing companies.

The strength of PAFC-Gabon lies in the fact that the certification scheme has been developed at the national level and is therefore adapted to Gabon's natural tropical forests. PAFC-Gabon is based on the following principles (broken down into indicators, sub-indicators and verifiers):

- a)** Management of the Forest Management Unit (FMU) must comply with legal requirements;
- b)** The Forest Management Unit - no matter its vocation - is managed sustainably for the supply of goods and services;

- c)** The forest's primary ecological functions are maintained;
- d)** Depending on the size and intensity of the logging operations, the Forest Management Unit's manager and concessionaire must contribute to improving the economic and social well-being of the workers present on the FMU as well as the local and indigenous Pygmy populations.



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A company seeking to obtain PAFC/PEFC certification must set up a certification management tool that includes:

- a clear definition of missions and responsibilities,
- the drafting of a procedure manual,
- the implementation of a monitoring tool,
- the establishment of a training plan,
- the implementation of an information management and recording tool,
- the creation of conflict management systems,
- and the development and implementation of a wildlife management plan.

It should be noted that thanks to the PPECF II certification support programme, several companies have submitted a request for coaching in order to obtain legality certification (OLB or FLV) or sustainable production certification (PAFC Gabon or FSC).

Moreover, the Gabonese forestry industry (logging and processing) represents, as in the other Congo Basin countries, a very sizeable source of employment (around 25% of all jobs, often representing the leading source of employment

after the administration) and it also represents a significant contribution to GDP. In their activities, logging companies are confronted with issues linked to the continuous qualification of their workforce, and are equally concerned by emerging obstacles that are challenging the sector, in particular:

- proper forest management efforts undertaken consensually through the adoption of planning and certification policies;
- the setting up of increasingly complex industrial activities, affecting 1st, 2nd and 3rd transformation levels,
- the viability of equipment investments that have been made.



In the timber trades, technical skills are often lacking. Companies must therefore provide training themselves by calling on specialised consultants, or by directly placing recruits in their own job roles, ensuring that they receive «on the job» training with the backing of more or less experienced company staff. These training efforts are generally made in order to satisfy urgent internal needs or market requirements, but do not achieve the level of quality needed in terms of training engineering or educational engineering regarding the sustainable skills that are part of sustainable development training objectives.

CONGO, A LAND OF CONTRASTS

UNICONGO

Jean-Jacques Samba



Jean-Jacques Samba

Congo's forest-timber sector

In the Republic of Congo, the allocation and the development of forest areas is part of the forest policy (based on sustainable forest management) that was adopted in 2000. This policy ensures the sustained exploitation of forest resources while ensuring the preservation of ecosystems, including biodiversity. As a result of an inventory of forest resources, as well as ecological and socio-economic studies, sustainable forest management forms the basis of this policy. In order to properly implement this policy, a forest concession management programme was launched in 2001, based on a partnership between the forestry administration and the logging companies.

With the support of development partners, the development programme extended itself from 2009 on in South-Congo, and was characterised by small and medium-sized concessions. The surface area of managed forest concessions covers approximately 5.5 million hectares, or 54% of the total area under development, estimated at 10.2 million hectares. The implementation of management plans

has led to the certification of several forest concessions, under Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification (representing an area of 2.5 million hectares, or 50% of the areas certified in the Congo Basin).

Congo's ambition is for all forest concessions to be overseen by management plans by 2020. For this to happen, forest certification will be mandatory within the new forestry law (pending promulgation), and the objective is the improved implementation of laws and regulations by virtuous companies.

The role and contributions of the logging sector

The logging sector is the second largest provider of jobs in the country (second only to government jobs). Timber harvesting and processing activities generate approximately 7,424 direct jobs and 14,848 indirect jobs. Beyond the forestry taxes paid by companies as part of their logging activities, these logging and transformation activities have significant secondary effects on the conceded areas, although they have not yet been the subject of an evaluation at this time. In fact, the timber evacuation routes are used by populations for the evacuation of agricultural products, which contributes to the opening up of these zones. Similarly, basic social structures are established in the living areas and the bordering villages: schools, health centres, boreholes for drinking water, electricity, as well as support for the development of the populations' income-generating activities, thereby creating the basis for local economies within these communities. Forestry income that contributes to the national GDP consists of forest taxes, customs duties and taxes on forest products that are exported.

UNIBOIS

Martial Fouty et Pierre Ngoma

The southern part of the country: the logging operations conducted by national players

UNIBOIS was founded many years ago. After a period of latency, UNIBOIS decided, under the leadership of its President, Mr. Martial Fouty, to give a new impetus to this institution, which represents a large number of players in southern Congo's timber sector. As such, in 2014 UNIBOIS adopted new statutes and a set of internal rules. The governance structures have been reviewed and are now structured as follows:

- one General Assembly (held once a year);
- one General Committee, consisting a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary General, a General Treasurer and a Rapporteur;
- an Auditorship, consisting of a President, a Secretary and a Rapporteur.

Such a structure needed to be strengthened in order to enable its members to face the sector's new challenges, especially as it represents companies listed on the national stock market: *«The Republic of Congo is our country and it is our responsibility to carry out our activities in a sustainable manner so that our forests always benefit our children, our grandchildren and our great grandsons and daughters».*

As for the stakes, they are abundant. It is not just about the implementation of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) signed by the country as part of its implementation of the FLEGT action plan, it's also about new legislative requirements, market changes, the significant increase in the sizes of the populations that are highly concentrated in the South as well as the new job roles that accompany them. Indeed, the VPA represents an important part of UNIBOIS' activities. In order for its members to continue their activities, they must meet the agreement's requirements,

which isn't always easy given the sector's current environment. Nevertheless, UNIBOIS was able to benefit from ATIBT's invaluable help - it is in this context that the two structures got to know each other and began their collaboration - in order to better understand the VPA and define priorities in terms of actions, depending on various specificities. In addition, as the industrial transformation agreements are becoming - according to the future forest code - planning and transformation agreements, UNIBOIS must help its members adapt to their new forest management role.

To continue, as the markets are increasingly Asian, they require our industry to review how it operates, since their product requirements are different from UNIBOIS' usual Western markets. Lastly, the demographic transition and the risks it entails must be anticipated by UNIBOIS' members right now, by reflecting on methods that can be used to enhance the degraded lands that are common in its concessions (firewood and lumber plantations).

Although they have traditionally been loggers, UNIBOIS' members must learn to transition into forest managers, international brokers, growers and - above all - protectors of their forests. In order to face all of these challenges and as has already been stated, they can count on the help of ATIBT, which has an overall vision of the issues that the African logging sector must face and which can support them in their efforts to obtain funding, to draft and monitor projects, etc., as it has already demonstrated in the past.

Nevertheless, and in conclusion, today more than ever all of these issues must be handled in an intelligent manner with the government administrations and civil society. It is with this in mind that

UNIBOIS representatives often travel to Brazzaville to participate in discussions that are important to their members. For UNIBOIS, the ATIBT convention ratified by the country and whose authorities wish to «*strengthen the multi-stakeholder partnership for responsible tropical forestry, for the preservation of the forests and for the competitiveness of tropical timber on the markets*» is a tool that is increasingly important to use wisely.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE LOGGING SECTOR

Ministry in charge of the Forests
Rubens Nambaï and Yves Yalibanda



Rubens Nambaï

The Central African Republic (CAR) does not have a professional association for the logging sector. Industrial players in this sector are therefore represented by the GICA (Groupement Interprofessionnel de Centrafrique - Interprofessional Group of Central Africa). Nevertheless, the CAR and ATIBT are very close, if only by the CAR's ratification of the ATIBT convention. It is thus within this framework that the representatives of CAR's government present their country's logging sector in these following lines.

Logging in the Central African forest is carried out by means of PEAs (*Permis d'Exploitation et d'Aménagement* - Logging

and Development Permits), which are allocated via a Notice of Invitation to Tender in accordance with applicable laws. As such, 14 PEAs are currently allocated. They cover 3,777,938 hectares of national forests. Of these, five were issued recently (in 2014 and 2015), right after the period of unrest that the country experienced. This is a clear demonstration of CAR's political will to rely on the recovery and expansion of its logging sector in order to face future challenges. In this regard, the sector's outlook will be marked, on the one hand, by the continuation of structural reforms in the framework of the implementation of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between CAR and the European Union which should be fully operational in 2018, and, on the other hand, by strategies to revive the sector's activities (normal resumption of activities of the PEAs that were not used during the politico-military crises and shift into full production in 2018 of the five new licenses that were allocated in 2014 and 2015).

20%, declining from 32,428 m³ to 25,937 m³ during this same period. On a similar note, log exports have increased by 48%, while sawn timber exports have decreased by 33% over this same period.



As for production figures, the country's log production increased by 28%, from 418,250 m³ in 2016 to 536,713 m³ in 2017. However, sawn timber production has dropped by



Skidding in CAR

In conclusion, the logging sector occupies a significant role within the Central African economy due to its contribution to national wealth and its creation of jobs which help reduce poverty. Ideally, in-depth and concerted consideration should be given to funding and self-funding mechanisms, and to the choice of the best tools to mobilise both internal and external resources for the improved use of the sector's abundant resources.

CAMEROON OR «MINIATURE AFRICA»? _____

GFBC (Groupement de la Filière Bois du Cameroun - Cameroon Timber Industry Group),

Blandine L'Or Ouoguia



Blandine L'Or Ouoguia

Cameroon's natural environments are highly diverse and seem to be home to most of tropical Africa's ecosystems. Their most characteristic components are their highly contrasting topography and their vegetation, which R. Letouzey (*Phytogeographic Study of Cameroon, 1973*) describes as: «*a condensed version of that of inter-tropical Africa with a dense and humid southern forest, a central savannah, a northern steppe, and a mountainous forest and meadow*».

In this context and given the responsibility that GFBC members have in relation to the forest concessions that the State has granted them, their companies are for the most part committed to private legality and/or sustainable management certification systems in order to ensure the sustainability of the forest areas that have been allocated to them.

In addition to the GFBC members' commitment to the private certification systems, the Group is working in partnership with the MINFOF (Ministry of Forests and Wildlife) on a forest plantation programme. In

this context, the GFBC has obtained an agreement in principle from this Ministry for the implementation of the forestry project called «*Restore our environment differently through forest plantations*». In this agreement in principle, the MINFOF has proposed several forest reserves and reforestation sites in which the project could be implemented by the GFBC and its members. Currently, the GFBC is looking for partners to enable the launch of this forest plantation programme.

The GFBC is also highly involved in vocational training issues, and it frequently alerts both donors and training professionals regarding the need to improve skills in the woodworking trades. Companies are often unable to carry out their planned investment projects and in-house training has not achieved the expected results.



As a result of this situation, companies frequently seek to hire qualified staff from competitors for a better salary. This system creates a kind of skills market that is unbalanced, because demand often exceeds supply, and other sectors (oil and mining) are able to offer salaries that are much more attractive, thereby hiring employees with certain specific skills: truck and equipment drivers, HSE technicians, etc.

In this context, several projects have attempted to address these problems.

The most recent one is the PARAFE (*Projet d'Appui au Renforcement de l'adéquation Formation-Emploi* - Project in Support of the Reinforcement of the Training-Employment Match) project, which has enabled the creation of several documents (business standards, generic work/study training guide and various tools) and has highlighted the fact that the private sector still lacks tools to evaluate, trace and formalise its qualification needs.

In a nutshell, three levels of training/job inadequacy have been observed:

- training programmes that are not always in line with the needs of companies or with their organisational human resource contexts;

- shortcomings in the design of programmes, with approaches that are often outdated in terms of trainees' operational skills and employability and in terms of the educational content; content that is too often academic; a lack of educational support methods in relation to the practical aspects of training; a lack of training systems' responsiveness and adaptability in terms of the sector's needs;
- knowledge transfer systems that are hard to implement, often due to geographical reasons.

As the GFBC is still highly concerned by these issues, which are a major obstacle to business development, it is calling for an improvement of vocational training systems in Cameroon.



VPA situation						
	Cameroon	Congo	CAR	Gabon	DRC	Côte d'Ivoire
Status	In effect	In effect	In effect	Under negotiation	Under negotiation	Under negotiation
Signature	6 October 2010	17 May 2010	21 December 2010	NA	NA	NA
Ratification	9 August 2011	July	23 November 2011	NA	NA	NA
Implementation	1 December 2011	1 March 2013	1 July 2012	NA	NA	NA
Situation	Preparation for implementation	Preparation for implementation	Preparation for implementation	Negotiation underway since Sept. 2010	Negotiation underway since Oct. 2011	Negotiation underway since Feb. 2013

Figure 1 : VPA situation in the Congo basin and in Côte d'Ivoire

Certification						
	Cameroon	Congo	CAR	Gabon	DRC	Côte d'Ivoire
FSC						
Number of Forest Management certificates	2	4		3		
Certified surface area	411 976 ha	2 410 693 ha		2 042 616 ha		
Number of Chain of Custody certificates	6	3		10		
PAFC (PEFC)						
Situation	PAFC Cameroon under development	PAFC Congo under consideration	Opportunity assessment	PAFC Gabon operational, PEFC recognition underway	Opportunity assessment	NA
Number of GF certificates	NA	NA	NA	1	NA	NA
Certified surface area	NA	NA	NA	596 822 ha	NA	NA
Legality certifications (sustainable management of forests)						
OLB – BV (ha / no. of certificates)	2 759 872 ha / 12	852 820 ha / 2				1 204 198 ha / 4
FLV – RA (ha / no. of certificates)	40 992 ha / 1	1 696 211 ha / 2				
FSC – CW (ha / no. of certificates)	359 060 ha / 2	669 589 ha / 1				

Figure 2 : Certification situation in the Congo Basin and in Côte d'Ivoire

Sources :

FSC : Facts & figures, April 2018 - OLB : Bureau Veritas, April 2018 - FLV : Rainforest Alliance, February 2018

CONCLUSION

The challenges faced by the logging sector in Central Africa and in Côte d'Ivoire

As a conclusion, we will attempt to highlight the essence of the above testimony.

When professional associations talk about the challenges their members are facing and will face in the near future, they all say the same thing:

- Improvement is needed in forest governance, which will require the private sector to strengthen its involvement and that of its members (i) in the negotiation and/or implementation of voluntary partnership agreements (VPAs) in their country (legality and traceability), as well as (ii) in forest certification processes.
- Bringing together the sector's national professional associations in order to address the major challenges of the profession is essential (as an joint union).
- There is a need to address recurring problems linked to increasing taxation and incidental taxation rates, as well as backlogs of VAT credit refunds, mentioned by professional associations.

In addition, each country highlights what it considers to be the major issues facing the sector during the next few years:

- In **Gabon**, the aim is to remedy the lack of qualified personnel to support the government in terms of its intensive transformation programme (2nd and 3rd levels).
- As for **Côte d'Ivoire**, it suffers from a drastic lack of timber resources, and it is imperative that it launch agroforestry programmes.
- **Cameroon** needs to address new requirements in terms of forest plantations, as well as logistics;
- The congestion of the port of Matadi in the **Democratic Republic of Congo** is

preventing the smooth flow of exports.

- In the **Republic of Congo**, future legal standards for the south of the country represent serious consequences for UNIBOIS' members, who will have to adapt to a new regulatory framework.
- Lastly, in the **Central African Republic**, the search for funding mechanisms is key for the development of its logging sector.

To carry out these improvements, the professional association - members of ATIBT - are unanimous regarding their relations with the Association: it is necessary for them. First of all, it represents an excellent transmission link between the South and the North in terms of support for the development programmes for Central Africa's forest-timber sector, and it implements a marketing programme that is key to improve the perception of African timber in Europe. Second of all, thanks to the actions that it conducts, it supports (both technically and financially) the local activities of professional associations, on various fronts such as those involving the FLEGT VPA, certification, markets, timber transformation, and through support for forest resource and agroforestry studies.

Lastly, everyone's primary goal is to work on both current and future issues facing the professional associations and their members in order to ensure sustainable economic, social and environmental management. ATIBT's role is to support all of them, as part of this complex goal: responsible forest management and market awareness of responsible purchases of this unique tropical timber material.

Future generations will be grateful!

12 THE TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES OF ATIBT

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE FOR TROPICAL TIMBER PRODUCERS AND USERS

In 2017, ATIBT intervened at the request of both members and professionals of the tropical timber industry to inspect materials upon delivery, arbitrate disputes between buyers and sellers, establish

objective diagnoses in conflictual situations or advise parties in disputes with technical arguments that are backed by regulations and standards. During the year, ATIBT was solicited in different 18 cases.

TRAINING : AN ACTIVITY THAT HAS BEEN REORGANIZED

ATIBT regularly organises professional training sessions for the sector. The themes are varied: general knowledge on tropical woods, training in sawnwood and log classification, sharpening ... (*you can find the list of the trainings and registrar on our website in the training area*). Only one in-company training session was provided in 2017, for the Durieu company, mainly due to the difficulties encountered in the implementation of SATA classification rules, which disrupted the organisation of ATIBT's classifier training courses. These training courses have been rescheduled for the year 2018.



The year 2017 was marked by the creation of a specific commission dedicated to training to better match supply and demand. *You can find more details on this topic in the commissions section p. 18/19.*

REVISION AND DRAFTING OF TIMBER PROCESSING AND USAGE STANDARDS

ATIBT is involved in standardisation committees on both the European and the international level. In 2017, work focused on the revision of the following standards:

- EN 350 - Natural durability of timber
- EN 14298 - Estimation of drying quality
- EN 844 - Terminology for roundwood and sawn timber
- ISO 38200 - Sustainable forest management - Chain of custody

Two French standards have also received particular attention from ATIBT due to the lack of an equivalent standard at the European level:

- the NF DTU 51.4 - Implementation of wooden decking;
- and the standard NF B 54-040 - Wooden decking boards.

ANSWERS TO TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

ATIBT regularly assists professionals by answering the technical questions they face. The most frequent questions relate to the properties and singularities of certain specific species of tropical timber,

the terms of use in commercial transactions and requests for the contact details of professionals. ATIBT has also been asked to write letters confirming a technical fact, in order to reassure consumers.

ATIBT IS INVOLVED IN THE CITES DISCUSSIONS



ATIBT and FRMi participated in CITES' 69th standing committee meeting, which was held in Geneva from 27 November to 1 December 2017. CITES is the «convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora», signed by over 180 States. It regulates the trade of various «specimens» from a list of species considered as threatened and classified in Convention's three Appendices. The standing committee is one of the decision-making bodies, the others being the Conference of the Parties, the Plants Committee and the Animals Committee.

ATIBT wished to follow the discussions held within CITES, because of their potential implications for the tropical timber industry. The issues addressed at this Standing Committee meeting focused on the implementation of the decisions taken

at the last Conference of the Parties (COP 17), and on the classification in Appendix II of the so-called «rosewood» species (a name that is unfortunately far too broad and unsuitable), including all species of the *Dalbergia* genus, *Guibourtia demeusei* (Bubinga, also called Ebana), *Guibourtia pellegriniana* and *Guibourtia tessmannii* (Bubinga, also called Kevazingo) and *Pterocarpuserinaceus* (Vene, also called Kosso). In addition, a recommendation was adopted for the management of inventories and regulations covering the international transport of musical instruments containing timber whose species are used in products that have recently been covered in CITES' Appendix II classification. The implementation of this CITES decision raises a number of issues that could lead musical instrument manufacturers to abandon the use of tropical timber.

In parallel, a study will have to be carried out by the CITES Secretariat on the following types of species for possible classification in Appendix II of new species at the COP 18 conference in 2019:

- **Guibourtia:** *Muntenyé, Mussibi and Ovéngkol*
- **Dicorynia:** *Basralocus*
- **Caesalpinia:** *Bridalveil, Pernambouc, Pao Ferro, Sebipira and Ebano*
- **Chamaecrista:** *Muirapixuna*
- **Pterocarpus:** *Drago, Muninga, Padauk Amboina, Padauk Burma and African Padouk*
- **Swartzia:** *Panacoco, Saboarana, Jorori, Pao rosa and Wamara*
- **Millettia:** *Thinwin and Wengé*
- **Machaerium:** *Caviuna rosewood*



For the record, these species should not be considered endangered species until the results of the study are available.

The Standing Committee also discussed the DRC's implementation of Annex XIII to the convention and made two recommendations regarding *Pericopsis elata* (Afroformosia), regarding the follow-up of exports and the factor of conversion (for this monitoring of quotas) of the volumes of products that are converted into equivalent roundwood volumes. Monitoring of this work is essential, because several «experts» classify many species under the «rosewood» name and want to include them in the CITES appendices because they're under the impression that the tropical forests will benefit from greater protection.

MECHANICAL AND SUSTAINABILITY TESTING ON 12 TROPICAL SPECIES

The C029 project (marketing subproject) is funded by the KfW through the COMIFAC, and managed by the PPECF. Its objective is to evaluate the performance of 12 tropical species in terms of mechanical resistance and durability, and to improve standards. Five companies - CIFM (PALLISCO), Rougier, CEB (PRECIOUS WOODS), IFO (INTERHOLCO) and CIB (OLAM) - are co-funding the project by supplying the timber required for the tests (4.5 m³ per species tested). The project was supposed to end in 2016, but many difficulties delayed its completion. The TU Delft and FCBA laboratories have been selected due to their ability to validate the integration of

results into European standards. During 2017, the FCBA laboratory performed mechanical tests on 6 species: Okan, Alep, Eveuss, Osanga, Monghinza and Ossoko. The test report was presented in March 2018. After several customs clearance problems (VAT applied to timber with no commercial value), the University of Delft laboratory received 3 species (Mukulungu, Lati and Longhi) on 16 October 2017. The other 3 species (Kanda, Tali, Limbali) could not be delivered due to a lack of space at the Delft laboratory. The tests should be carried out sometime in 2018 and a report is expected by December 2018, at the latest.

IMPROVEMENT OF MATERIAL YIELDS THROUGH THE CLASSIFICATION OF SAWN TIMBER : THE PROJECT IS INITIATED

The rules for lumber grades define the quality of products and establish their market value. They therefore have an impact on the profitability of the raw material and the waste rate (scraps) of a logging company during the primary transformation process.

In the more general context of improving the quality of industrial production, the optimisation of timber's value, the quest for material profitability, improved waste management (meeting the certification objectives according to FSC's 5th criterion), Congo Basin's timber producers are considering the adoption of a grading rule system: SATA (*Sciages Avivés Tropicaux Africains* - Tropical African Sawn Timber) rules.

ATIBT has always focused a great deal on the implementation of sawn timber classification rules. It should be noted that the project is based on the SATA classification rules, developed in 1976 by the CTFT (Centre Technique Forestier Tropical - Tropical Forest Technical Center), which are quite elaborate and require few corrections (details of over-lengths and introduction of quality names rather than choices no. 1, 2, 3 and 4, among others). This book provides a solid foundation for the project.

Professionals have agreed to begin the operation on a first species: the Sapelli. This first 2-year project will enable us to assess the feasibility of the project and implement these new rules by preparing producers, importers, traders, distributors and clients in the best manner possible.



The implementation of these rules requires a step-by-step approach.

- 1)** Beforehand, ATIBT will assess the material yield gains by comparing the existing rules (conventional rules, business rules and SATA rules) and by highlighting the proportions of the different qualities for each of them. This work will be shown to the various stakeholders in order to raise awareness. In particular, buyers should be asked if the rules meet their needs and whether attractive commercial names can be adopted.
- 2)** In addition, technical and commercial documents should use simpler terminology in order to communicate to professionals the foundations and the principles of these classification rules.
- 3)** Lastly, training of producers and sales representatives will be necessary for the gradual implementation of the classification rules and, if possible, the definitive implementation on 1 January 2020 for Sapelli.

For the project launch (hopefully in 2018), which benefits from 188,000 euros in funding from the PPECF, Sapelli producers will have to confirm their commitment to the project, their commercial adhesion and their co-funding of the project in writing during the first phase.

LKTS 2020 PROJECT - PROMOTING LESSER-KNOWN TIMBER SPECIES TO RESTORE VALUE TO THE AFRICAN FOREST

At the beginning of the second quarter of 2017, ATIBT launched the «LKTS 2020» project to promote Lesser Known Timber Species (LKTS) in the Congo Basin. With this project, ATIBT seeks to facilitate access to information on these species, which are either barely available or are completely absent from the markets, and which - although not unknown to tropical timber sector professionals - deserve greater recognition.

Led by Elise Héral, an ENSTIB engineer in charge of secondary species at ATIBT, in liaison with the Marketing Commission, the project is divided into practical modules that bring together targeted actions (recent developments, PPECF tests, railway sleepers, sectoral approaches, commercialisation methods, etc.), while relying on ongoing initiatives or initiatives that remain to be defined on this topic.



The spotlighting of new species makes it possible to provide more economic value to the forest and thereby reduce its conversion into farmland, a genuine cause of deforestation. The diversification of species makes it possible for the sustainable development concept to be profi-

table, while adhering to commitments linked to the sustainable management of the forests, and it also allows for greater resilience in the event of an economic crisis, a modification of the ecosystem or the overexploitation of a given species. The development of new species creates new incomes for African producers whose logging surfaces are currently not profitable enough. Small and medium-sized producers are indeed key players in the use of new species, as demonstrated by the diversity of species offered by small certified producers located in both South America and Asia.



Both consumers and industrial players (whether African or otherwise) need to be convinced that tropical species that are unknown today are able to meet their needs while remaining in line with the benefits of a social, environmental and economic approach. By demonstrating concrete examples with the help of traditional stakeholders of the tropical timber industry (for example, the work done with the SNCF railway entity – see pg. xx), as well as with new African players, consumers will be more inclined to use new species.

The subject of the promotion of lesser-known species is transversal to the entire «forest timber» sector and requires the implementation of both technical and marketing tools. Four specific areas have been defined:

- 1) Resource: Identifying the species to be promoted according to moveable quantities, specific market dynamics, accessibility of the resource and the preservation of biodiversity
- 2) Technique: Knowing the properties of the selected timber species, publishing technical information by sector, conducting a profitability study in terms of both market potential and processing
- 3) Market: Interesting «prescribers» in new products, establishing flagship projects, promoting initiatives using LKTS, setting up and monitoring usage tests
- 4) Coordination: Involving tropical timber sector players in this subject, participating in actions that are already in place and promoting the visibility of LKTS

The first stage – the latest developments in the field – was completed in September 2017. It aimed to summarise the initia-

tives carried out in recent years in a non-concerted manner with the timber-forest industry by the sector's various players, in terms of available resources and renewability, as well as processing behaviour. This is to identify shortcomings as well as actions to be implemented for the effective promotion of new species.



You can find this document (in French) on the ATIBT website: Latest developments in terms of LKTS and recommendations

ATIBT's Forest & Industry Commission will centralise the contributions and recommendations of professionals. The success of this project depends on the involvement of the private sector. Through this project, ATIBT aims to provide a solution to the local market's timber needs, in terms of both construction and furniture. The other markets identified by this project are the traditional outlets of tropical timber that are likely to accept new species: sleepers and hydraulic structures, street furniture, decking, facades.

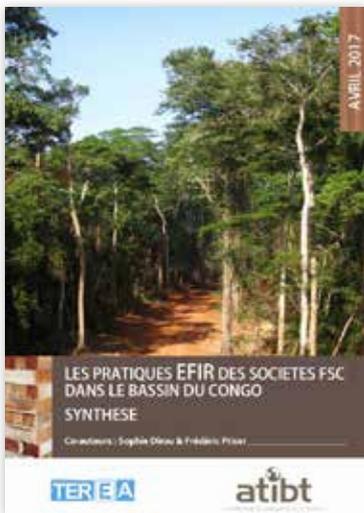


SUMMARY OF INTACT FOREST LANDSCAPES (IFL) ADAPTED TO CENTRAL AFRICA'S COUNTRIES

The final report of the study entitled «*Synthèse sur les Intact Forest Landscapes (IFL) adaptée aux pays d'Afrique centrale*» was provided by Barbara Haurez in March 2017. This study, conducted with the assistance of Nature+ with funding by the AFD, was conducted as part of our reflection on motion 65 and the IFLs. It highlights the contributions of FSC-certified logging companies to sustainable forest management in Central Africa and advocates for the

concerted, landscape-level planning of forest management strategies. Its results show that the integration of the IFL concept into forest management policy in Central Africa seems irrelevant, and that the consequences of motion 65 could be detrimental to the protection of these «intact» areas. If motion 65 is retained, the study recommends the use of botanical and wildlife data to identify the most mature areas of the IFLs, which would be considered «key areas».

SUMMARY OF «LES PRATIQUES EFIR DES SOCIÉTÉS FSC DANS LE BASSIN DU CONGO» (THE RIL PRACTICES OF FSC COMPANIES IN THE CONGO BASIN)



In order to contribute to the debate on the implementation of Motion 65 (voted at FSC Seville's General Assembly in 2014, and aimed at the protection of Intact Forest Landscapes (IFL)), Congo Basin FSC-certified concessionaires, through the ATIBT, wanted to produce a book that explains and lists the various Reduced Impact Logging (RIL) practices that they implement on a daily basis, particularly in terms of roads, and that are not particularly known.

Highlighting the techniques developed and refined over many years of experience, in particular through the FSC certification process, this summary presents the main results of the analysis conducted by the TERE A research firm.

It reveals that particular attention is paid to the environmental and social values specific to each field and that research to mitigate negative impacts is deeply rooted in each of the Congo Basin's FSC-certified logging operations, particularly in terms of the planning and construction of roads.

The study also includes the results of several scientific publications demonstrating that FSC-certified logging in the Congo Basin can be considered as a sustainable alternative both from an environmental and a social point of view in terms of land use, and even the protection of IFLs... all the more so in contexts where agribusiness is making an even greater impact.

In parallel, a 2-minute video was developed with the technique of motion design to explain in a brief, clear and fun way what are the EFIR practices and to show the different stages.

This work is likely to continue, with the aim to improve both the impact and effectiveness of these techniques.

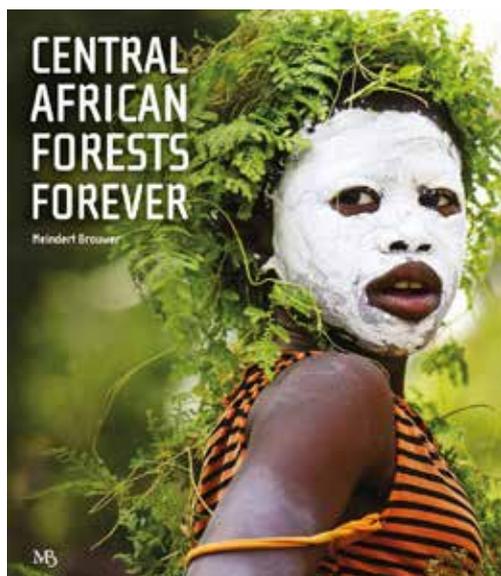


Find our video of 2 mn «What is RIL (Reduced impact logging)? On our Youtube channel



The entire study can be found in the ATIBT website's media section (in French)

ATIBT'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE COLLECTIVE WORK ENTITLED THE FORESTS OF CENTRAL AFRICA FOREVER BY MEINDERT BROUWER



Compiled by Meindert Brouwer, this book is a leading reference as it addresses the opportunities and solutions to all of the major problems linked to the protection of Congo Basin forests, by addressing them at their various levels: ecological, economical and social.

This collective work contains a four-page contribution on the LKTS (Lesser Known Timber Species) written by Patrick Martin and Elise Héral entitled «*Plaidoyer pour l'utilisation d'espèces d'arbres moins connues dans la gestion durable des forêts*» (Appeal for the Use of Lesser-Known Tree Species in Sustainable Forest Management).

The European launch of the book was held on 31 May in The Hague (Netherlands) at the «*future of Central Africa's forests and populations*» conference, organised by the Tropenbos International NGO, the Dutch Global Compact network of the United Nations and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Now everyone in Central Africa – and elsewhere – can benefit from the information provided by this book regarding best forestry practices, ecotourism and other important topics for the preservation of Central Africa's forests.



www.centralafricanforests.org

THE PROJECTS MANAGED BY ATIBT

FAIR & PRECIOUS MARKETING PROGRAM AND BRAND

The contours of the Fair & Precious brand and its communication tools having been arrested in 2016 (registration of the mark, semantic and iconographic charters, regulation of use, manifesto, leaflets, creation of the campaign «African woods, more than wood», website), the year 2017 was dedicated to its launch.

2 MAJOR STEPS TO KNOW THE FAIR & PRECIOUS BRAND

The ATIBT Forum in Dubai in March 2017

The ATIBT Forum made it possible to present for the first time to our members and to our partners the identity of the brand, and the variations of his campaign «*The African timber, much more than timber*», intended to promote the different benefits certified tropical wood (economical, social, technical and environmental) and to highlight the values worn by the industry.



The official launch of the brand on the 8th November in Paris

In the presence of 70 participants, members and ATIBT donors, but also partners, NGOs and journalists, the new Fair & Precious collective brand has been launched at the Jardin d'Agronomie Tropicale Paris, where ATIBT sits. On this occasion, the commitments of the companies of the brand have been redefined in 10 parts, displayed during this morning. Approach was carried by interventions of horizons varied: the ATIBT, the AFD which supported the program, the forestry company Interholco to testify to a realization on the plan SNCF on the sleepers project of tropical wooden railway. This event, which was the subject of a file of press, gave rise to a number of media coverage (print media and audiovisual). This launch was followed by presenting the brand internationally Hardwood Conference in Venice November 16th.

These two great moments of communication constitute the first steps of an international deployment that will continue in 2018, at various events and with support for press relations in Europe.

Other highlights of the year 2017

- Integration into the marketing committee of LCB and PEFC - ongoing discussion with FSC to find synergies between our marketing programs
- Collaboration with SNCF

2018 FAIR&PRECIOUS COMMUNICATION PLAN

A NEW ORGANISATION FOR THE PROJECT

The brand's powerful upswing requires the establishment of a new organisation, in order to split up the tasks between the various stakeholders and to allocate the resources that are necessary to ensure that the various channels of communication are optimised. The proposed organization at december 5th marketing committee is as follows:

The brand ambassador

His mission will be to represent the brand:

- in the political and institutional world,
- and the media and NGOs.

He will work closely with the managing director, the communication manager at ATIBT and the marketing and communication experts.

The partnership manager

The search and development of partners of Fair & Precious brand will consist in :

- recruiting from among ATIBT's existing members,
- developing new partnerships from new targets.

This mission will be handled by the managing director of the ATIBT, the communication service and the marketing and communication experts, especially for media partnerships

The co-branding manager

The development of co-branding actions, especially with major DIY retailers could be handled by the managing director of

ATIBT relying on partners such as FSC, PEFC and WWF and with the operational support from the marketing and communication experts. Concerning large areas of DIY, it is planned to contact the responsible for sustainable development Leroy Merlin and Castorama.

The webmaster

The recruitment of a webmaster (freelance or intern) to manage the update and contents of digital tools has become indispensable. The webmaster will manage, update and enliven the websites. He will manage the social networks. His mission will be to upgrade the websites according to the needs and the evolution of the brand, and to ensure the update of the Acollab platform.

DIGITAL TOOLS

ATIBT website

The website in its structure is complete. A Spanish version is in progress. An important job of webmastering was undertaken with the help of Justine Jobbé Duval, trainee at ATIBT from February to July 2018.



Fair & Precious website

The site is also complete in its structure, it has been declined in French version and English. A Spanish version has just been put online by Justine Jobbé Duval. The Fair & Precious website should be enriched during 2018 and 2019 by satellite sites presenting one by one the species through their technical, social, environmental and commercial issues.



The websites of the brand carriers

Coordination work will have to be put in place with the carriers of the brand, in order to increase the visibility of Fair & Precious in their websites, and to ensure that all websites are part of the same digital ecosystem.



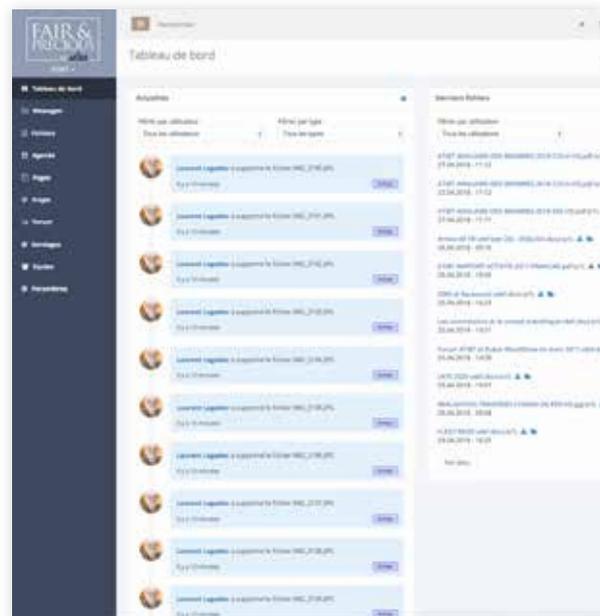
My tropical timber website

The development is complete. Work with the federations is ongoing to enrich and optimize the content in each country. Fair & Precious companies will be distinguished and put forward.



The private collaborative space

Brand carriers have access to a media library in which they can obtain the Fair&Precious communication kit and where they can make specific requests.



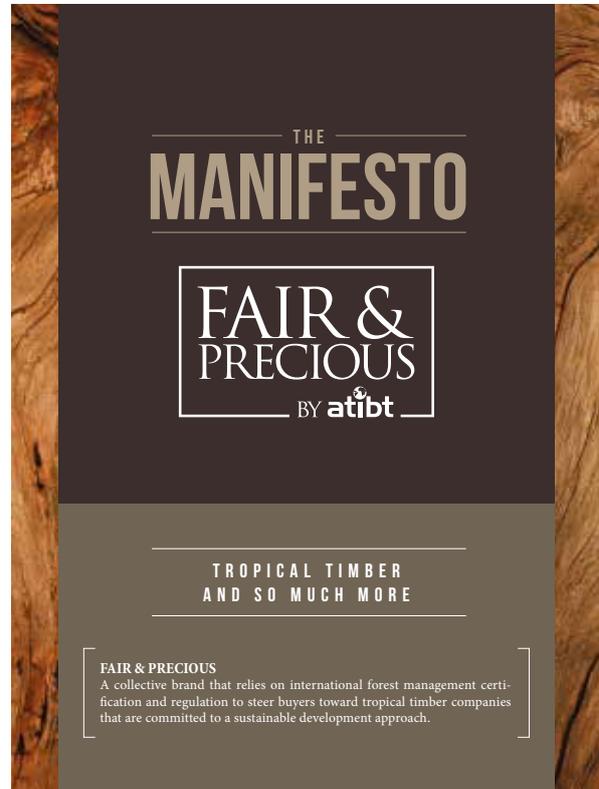
Social networks

A Facebook account has just been created. Instagram and Twitter accounts as well as a Youtube channel are in progress.



Manifesto

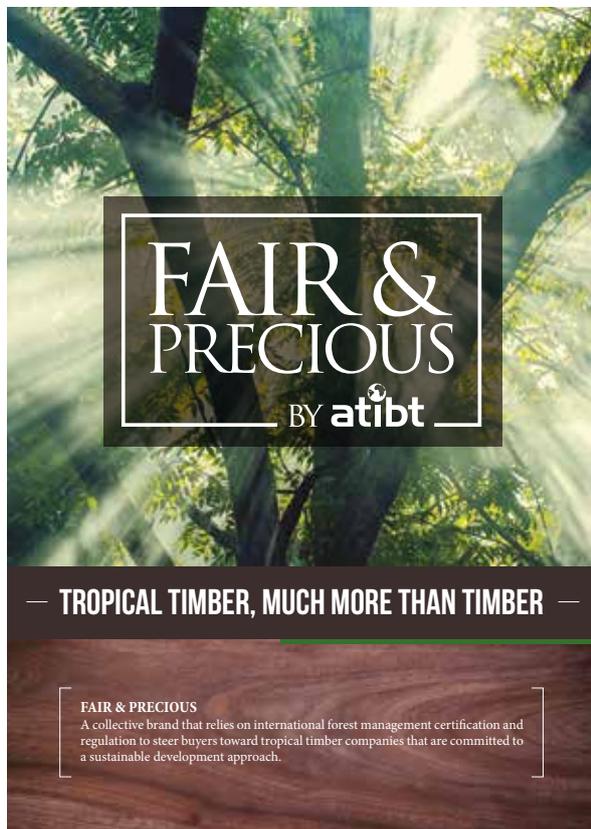
Present on the Fair & Precious website in French and English, a printed version has also been edited. A Spanish version is in progress.



CONTENTS / MEDIA - PRINT

Fair & Precious Flyers and Brochures

French and English flyers have been made, a Spanish version is in progress.



The 10 commitments

The 10 Fair & Precious commitments were edited in 10 bilingual large posters format and given for the launch of the brand last November 8th.





The FAQ

Once finalized, the FAQ will be published on the Fair & Precious website and will be edited in a trilingual paper version.

Campaign posters and postcards

Campaign posters were produced in different sizes according to how they will be used; they will be available in digital format in collaborative spaces. These posters have been made in postcard format and may also be adapted for the press.



Updating of technical books

A number of technical documents need to be updated. These documents will be corrected by Patrick Martin and edited in accordance with the ATIBT graphic charter. They can be an excellent communication tool while providing a technical guarantee.

Here is the list of documents:

- User guide for ecocertified African timber
- Classification of sawn timber
- Technical guide for marketing tropical veneers
- Log classification rules
- Processing levels
- ATIBT measurement rules



A series of documents, that are part of the collection « *A few clarifications are necessary!* », will also to be reviewed and corrected:

- AIC
- Reaction wood
- Abnormal colouring
- Durability
- Deformation
- Humidity
- The name of the woods
- Mulching
- Drying
- Treatments

The species sheets could also be updated by giving them a more commercial dimension, and be part of digital versions that also bring additional content to the brand. The existing sheets are:

- Azobé
- Moabi
- Okoumé
- Sapelli
- Obéché

The «collection» could be expanded to other species and perhaps even to lesser known timber species.

CONTENT / MEDIA - VIDEO

Update of the FFEM video with an F&P touch

The idea is to Fair&Precious-ise the FFEM video in its design and in some of its contents. We will also enrich it with versions in Spanish, German, Italian, Dutch ...).

Creation of brief videos displaying the themes of the campaign

The «*African timber, much more than timber*» campaign will be the subject of short video clips lasting between 20 to 30 seconds, borrowing from each of the various topics and broadcast on the social networks, at trade shows, at the points of sale of partners...

Creation of brief interview clips of Fair&Precious stakeholders

A series of video interviews will be filmed with carriers and partners of the brand on the different themes of the campaign, and broadcast on the social networks and websites of the digital ecosystem.

CONTENT / MEDIA E-MAILING AND NEWSLETTER

Fair&Precious Information E-mailings

Thematic e-mailings will be made based on printed documents. They will enable the implementation of digital communication campaigns from the mailing lists obtained in the context of trade fairs and exhibitions.

Fair&Precious Newsletter

A Fair & Precious newsletter will be written every 2 months by Laurent Lagadec, with the help of Christine Le Paire, Bertrand Faucon, and the ATIBT team.

PRESS RELATIONS / PUBLIC RELATION - ACTIONS

Press relations were entrusted to Econovia agency for the launch of the brand last November. Contacts were established with an agency to expand press relations to the whole Europe.

Exhibitions & Events - Actions

- Stand of the City of Sustainable Development at Producible Salon.
- ATIBT stand at the International *Carrefour du Bois*
- Racewood in Gabon
- ArchiExpo, online fair for products for architecture

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

Institutional

The launch of the Fair & Precious brand must also extend to commercial, technical, scientific and institutional partners of ATIBT. (*See directory*)

- Establish contact with Good Planet, the foundation of Yann Arthus Bertrand Collège Directors of Sustainable Development
- The College of Sustainable Development Directors (C3D) is an association governed by the law of 1901, which brings together over 100 sustainable development and CSR directors of private and public companies and organizations, representing over 2.5 million employees in France.

Media

Initiate contacts and search partnerships with TV channels like:

<https://www.ushuaivatv.fr/>

<https://terre.tv>

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/NatGeoTvWild>

<https://www.animalplanet.com/tv-shows/>

and with leading figures directly related to the protection of fauna and flora like Rhett Butler, founder of Mongabay among other entities, an environmental information website specialized in tropical forests and biodiversity:

<https://global.mongabay.com/fr>

<http://www.tropicalconservationscience.org/>

CO-BRANDING - BIG BRANDS

Leroy Merlin

Since 2004, Leroy Merlin France has made a number of commitments to reduce its environmental impact. For tropical woods for example, Leroy Merlin France imposes the procurement of FSC-certified or TFT-labelled timber on its suppliers. In order to increase transparency for consumers, a label featuring the geographical origin and the name of the species of the marketed timber is affixed to relevant products. To date, nearly 95% of the timber marketed by Leroy Merlin France comes from responsible sourcing, almost

all of which is guaranteed by TFT, FSC and PEFC labels and certification.

Castorama

The commitment of Castorama: eco-certified timber, naturally! The eco-certification of timber guarantees the proper forest management. Castorama offers products whose timber is PEFC or FSC-certified, or is part of an approach leading to this certification (TFT in particular). As of 1 January 2010, Castorama's new supplies of tropical timber are both certified and controlled, which is key for the preservation of tropical forests. As of 1 January 2011, this system has been extended to cover non-tropical timber.

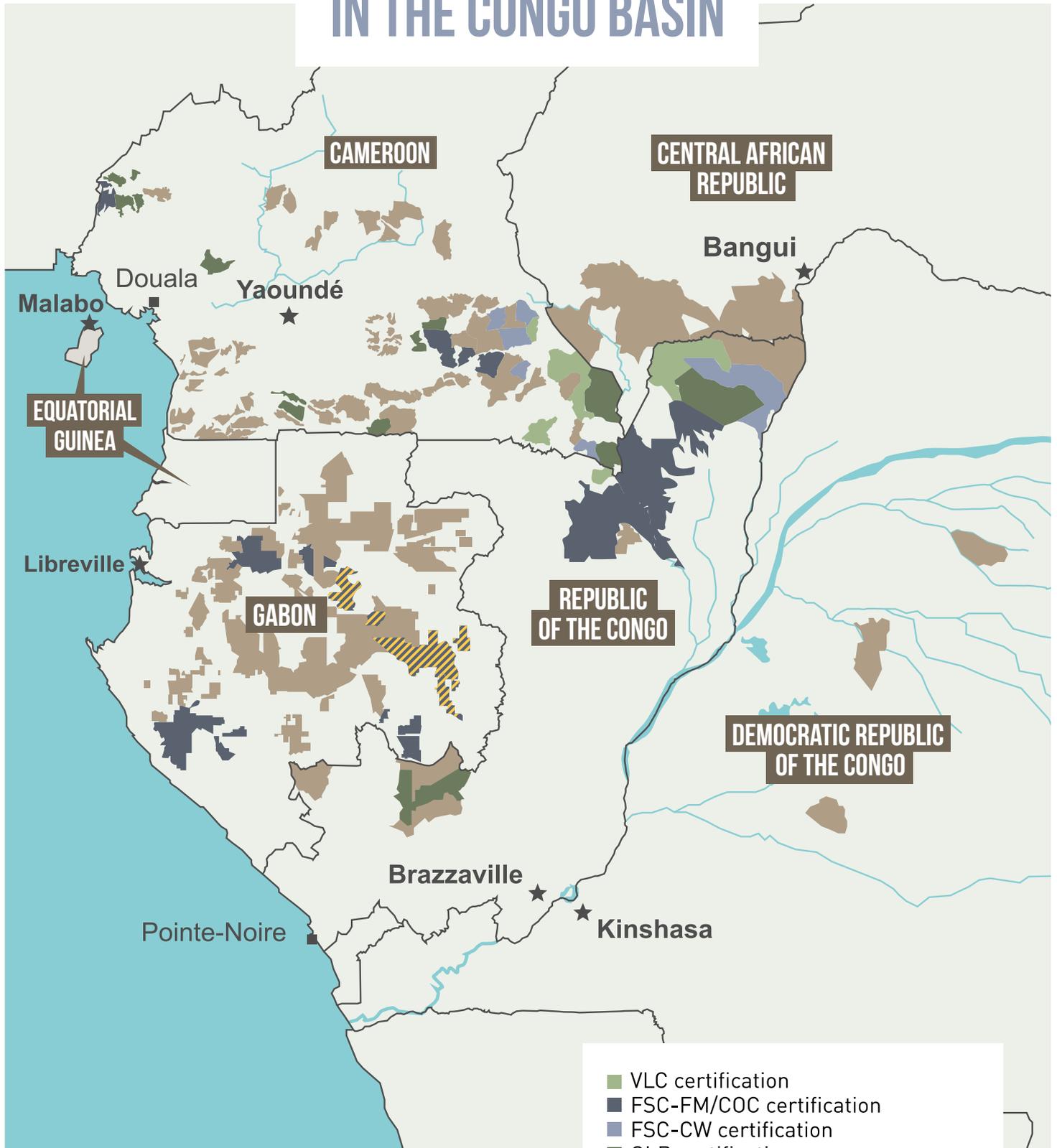
Points P et Dispano

CIBM (purchasing centre for both Point P and Dispano) is a client of many ATIBT members. Contacts will be taken with them to adhere to Fair & Precious and do the promotion of useful and responsible purchase.



CERTIFICATION AND LEGALITY

MAP OF FOREST CONCESSIONS IN THE CONGO BASIN



Source : Comifac observatory
 Situation in June 2018

THE DYNAFFOR AND P3FAC PROJECTS: UNDERSTANDING FOREST DYNAMICS TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT PLANS



Signature of the P3FAC project agreement between the FFEM and ATIBT with Mrs. Aurélie Ahmim Richard during the ATIBT Forum in Dubai (March 2017)

The DynAfFor and P3FAC projects aim to improve the quality and sustainability of development plans. They aim to better understand tree population dynamics through systems used in the field (forestry tracks and plots) where measurements are conducted regularly over time.

To date, both projects benefit from funding from the FFEM (Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial - French Facility for Global Environment) and co-funding from technical partners: CIRAD, University of Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech, Nature+, various companies and ATIBT. Funding from the PPECF, among other entities, is expected in 2018. The two projects gradually began to blend into a single one, so to speak, during the course of 2017. P3FAC will be supportive of DynAfFor's private partners while enriching itself with new private partners.

A DynAfFor steering committee was held on 28 November 2017, in Yaoundé. For P3FAC, this was its true launch after the official signature for funding at the Dubai Forum (March 2017). This meeting, jointly organised by the COMIFAC (Commission des forêts d'Afrique Centrale - Commission of Central African Forests) and ATIBT, was held under the patronage of Cameroon's Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF) in the presence of the FFEM, his Excellency the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium in Cameroon, the three private sector associations - who are also ATIBT members - (GFBC, FIB, UFIGA) as well as some of their members. Of course, the various technical partners were also present.



Third DynAfFor project steering committee on 28 November 2017 in Yaoundé

Recommendations were made by the Committee members regarding the value-enhancement and communication plan, with the pooling of the COMIFAC/OFAC databases, a shared website for both the DynAfFor and P3FAC projects, the addition within the target audiences of the plan pertaining to the training organisations (such as the RIFFEAC) and the communication departments of the various ministries and, lastly, the broadening of the communication objectives to the interna-

tional scientific community. Technical and political actions are planned, including the publication and dissemination of a map of Central Africa's forest types, a prerequisite for the consideration of changes to the

countries' planning procedures. COMIFAC and ATIBT must ensure that the scientific results will be presented in a form that is accessible to both ministry officials and decision-makers.

A REVIEW OF FLEGT-REDD+ AND FLEGT-IP PROJECT ACTIVITIES FOR THE VPA PROCESS

The following review features highlights of the 2017 VPA processes and the FLEGT project contributions made by ATIBT and its partners (FIB, GFBC, SPIB and UFIGA) for each of the target countries.

Cameroon

In Cameroon, the delivery of the software that will both serve as timber traceability software and a computerised legality verification system (SIGIF II) has been delayed. To overcome this problem, the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife decided to proceed with the issuance of legality certificates for timber processing units using document-based procedures. These certificates were awarded to companies as early as January. The issuance of legality certificates for forest permits, however, is more complicated because it requires changes in the legality grids in order to draft robust verification procedures. GFBC member companies have all obtained their legality certificates for their processing units.

The GFBC anticipated the need to adapt the legality grids by preparing a project effort to revise the FMU legality grid. This activity will include consultation meetings between private sector players and a workshop with all stakeholders.

To facilitate the use of SIGIF II by logging companies after its delivery, the GFBC is implementing FAO-funded projects in order to complement the Pallitrack traceability software with modules that

build bridges between the two software packages, and to enable interested parties to see the origin of a log using its barcode.



Participant scanning a barcode on a log using the Pallitrack mobile tracking application (source GFBC).

Congo

Congo: In Congo, the government wants to make significant progress with the implementation of the VPA. Activities are focusing on the development of procedures for the Legality Verification System (LVS) and the launch of an operational computer application that was developed to centralise data and automate the issuance of FLEGT Authorisations and Certificates.

In 2017, as part of its partnership with FRMi for the implementation of the «Support for VPA/FLEGT implementation in Congo» project funded by the

AFD and DFID, ATIBT facilitated several private sector consultation efforts. For example, the UNIBOIS syndicate was able to organise re-reading and consultation meetings in February in order to draft texts for the preliminary «Forest Regime» law and for the implementing decrees. ATIBT - in collaboration with UNICONGO and UNIBOIS - also organised a consultation regarding the procedure manual for the handling of cases related to non-compliance with legality. During the national consultation and validation workshops, the private sector proposed text adaptations and the stakeholders were able to agree on a final version of the procedures manual.

In October, the ATIBT carried out an analysis and consultation mission to assess if, and how, the SIVL can become operational for logging companies. The current version still requires several adaptations before being operational. These adaptations aim to be in line with the realities on the ground, and on the data entry methods.

Côte d'Ivoire

In Côte d'Ivoire, the SPIB conducted a major campaign between May and August to raise awareness among private timber industry players about the VPA/FLEGT process in all forest regions. These awareness meetings also provided a better understanding of the players and their constraints in relation to the market and legislation. The SPIB also commissioned 3 studies starting in September: a mapping of the timber industry's private players, a study to explore the possibilities of defining a new forest permit (replacing the former forest harvesting perimeter, which was cancelled by the 2014 Forest Code), and an analysis of the Forest Code to produce an annotated law document. The

conclusions and recommendations of the three reports should enable us to:

- improve consultation with the private sector, while including the various groups of timber industry stakeholders;
- support the government in their efforts to develop a new definition of the forest license;
- explain the law to all stakeholders, and offer adaptations to the Forest Code and the wording of implementing decrees on the basis of legally analysed arguments.

In addition, at the end of 2017, the SPIB completed its FLEGT project (funded by the European Delegation in Abidjan) through a workshop presenting the results of the project, in which the various stakeholders of the VPA/FLEGT process participated.



Participants in the FLEGT awareness workshop in San Pedro, Côte d'Ivoire (source ATIBT)

Gabon

In Gabon, the VPA/FLEGT negotiation process is rather slow. Nevertheless, preparatory activities have continued, in particular regarding the revision of the legality grid, in order to solidify consultation with the various groups of private players in the timber sector, and to prepare the LVS.

The UFIGA participated in a small group representing each of the stakeholders of the CTC (Comité Technique de Concertation - Technical Cooperation Committee). Together, the participants prepared a revision of the legality grid, separating the items that should instead be in the LVS. The UFIGA has also continued to strengthen inter-union communication with the syndicates UFIAG et SIAG via consultation meetings focusing on several new government measures. As part of this aim to enhance communication, it submitted a project to the FAO in order to improve small and medium-sized Gabonese companies' inclusion in the VPA/FLEGT process.

Democratic Republic of Congo

In today's politically and economically difficult context, the VPA/FLEGT process is an important tool for the strengthening of forest governance in the DRC. As such, and thanks to the many contributions by the FIB, the CTN (*Commission Technique de Négociation* - Technical Negotiating Committee) has completely revised the two legality grids: for industrial forest concessions and for artisanal timber harvesting, respectively. The FIB also contributed to the development of the LVS, based on the principles of the legality grid for industrial forest concessions. Lastly, and for the same purpose, the list of products to be submitted for FLEGT authorisation has been updated.

Since September, the FIB has also been implementing a project funded by the FAO-EU FLEGT Programme. The main objective of this project is to enhance the understanding of non-state stakeholders regarding the normative and regulatory provisions governing the timber supply

chain in each of the DRC's provinces. In this context, the FIB has set up a committee of legal experts that has collected and analysed normative and regulatory texts. During the awareness-raising workshops organised by the FIB in the Maindombe, Equateur, Tshopo and Kongo-central provinces, regulatory texts applicable to logging will be explained to the participants.

The intensity of activities for the negotiation or implementation of a VPA heavily depends on the political and economic situation of a country. This is also true for the development of new regulatory texts. In 2017, for example, two of the target countries for the FLEGT and REDD projects (Gabon and Côte d'Ivoire) saw the appointment of a new Minister in charge of forests.

And in these two countries, we have observed a slowdown in the VPA process during part of the year. If the means are available, professional associations can now choose to prepare for the next phase of national activities, for example by conducting a study to guide the development of a new procedure or new regulatory texts. The FLEGT project - implemented by the SPIB in Côte d'Ivoire, thanks to a grant from the European Union - was able to carry out 3 studies to this end.

PROSPECTS FOR THE 2018 VPA PROCESSES AND THE PLANNED CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR'S FLEGT PROJECTS

The outlook for the year 2018 looks rather positive. With its partners, ATIBT will expand its scope of activities in two areas:

1 The private certification of companies, thanks to support from phase II of the PPECF (*Programme de Promotion de l'Exploitation Certifiée des Forêts - Programme for the Promotion of Certified Forest Operations*) funded by the KfW;

2 The participation of small and medium-sized company in the VPA/FLEGT process, via individual union projects funded by the FAO-EU FLEGT Programme.

In 2018, we plan to:

- raise awareness on topics related to the VPA/FLEGT process and certification;
- map the timber industry's private players, as well as their associative representations;
- strengthen inter-union communication;
- support preliminary consultation with stakeholders of the private sector for the development and update of:
 - legality grids;
 - LVS procedures;
 - regulatory application texts;
 - and other normative texts related to logging and/or the timber industry.
- identify companies seeking certification (legality, FSC, PAFC) and facilitate their participation in the PPECF programme;
- support diagnostics of compliance with the certification standard that are chosen by applicant companies;
- support the development and/or operational launch of national traceability systems;
- initiate pilot activities to supply domestic artisans with timber from the industry.

FLEGT-REDD+ PROJECT ACTIVITIES: ASSESSMENT AND OUTLOOK

One of the objectives of the FLEGT-REDD+ project is to contribute to the standardised implementation of the EUTR in countries that import African timber and to promote efforts relating to responsible forest management in producing countries, and it devotes no less than two components to the EUTR.

Timber Trade Portal

The first component aims to facilitate the implementation of the EUTR by making relevant information available to involved stakeholders via the **hosting of an EUTR internet information platform** in order to meet importers' needs for information.

A partnership was signed between ATIBT



and ETTF in order to merge their respective websites together, and a contract was signed with Form International to update and adapt the «**Timber Trade Portal**» **website** (see also our article on page 25). The Timber Trade Portal platform will be completely restructured and translated into French and the profiles of the 23 producing countries will be updated. Contacts and exchanges will be maintained with the partners in order to develop synergies with the other existing initiatives, with a view to a possible federation of these initiatives and a pooling of efforts. Project and donor visibility requirements will be integrated (on a dedicated page) and a news section related to the EUTR will be added and kept updated. Pages will also be added to present the various regulations encouraging the fight against illegal timber trade (EUTR, Lacey Act, Australian Prohibition Bill, etc.), the different certification systems and links to obtain information on them, and a mapping of the various online platform initiatives (which provide information regarding the implementation of the EUTR).

The search for additional funding and the definition of a viable system to update the platform will also be pursued.

Advocacy and the raising of awareness among European players

The other EUTR project component is the generation of greater awareness at European level regarding the importance of standardising national approaches to

the implementation of the EUTR and the importance of relying on the value of forest certificates. (which include legality criteria and benefit from third-party verification). In 2017, activities related to this component have mainly consisted of an analysis of needs and opportunities for appropriate actions, which are now planned for the last phase of the project (2018-2019).

In addition to the monitoring and sharing of information on the implementation of the EUTR, **advocacy and communication activities** will be carried out, targeting Europeans players involved in the EUTR in order to standardise knowledge on certification and its inclusion in the EUTR through:

- an **awareness campaign aimed at European players** (competent authorities, federations and major buyers of African tropical timber, the European Commission, inspection bodies) regarding the role of private certification and the consideration of legal aspects, social aspects (both internal and external) and environmental aspects (biodiversity), and their utility when conducting Due Diligence, as well as the use of available information sources (such as the Timber Trade Portal);
- **field trips for European stakeholders in Central African producing countries** in order to: meet the stakeholders of these producing countries, visit certified and non-certified production sites, understand the traceability of forest products and visit sites that benefit from biodiversity preservation initiatives.

FLEGT-REDD+ PROJECT ACTIVITIES FOR THE REDD+ PROCESS: ASSESSMENT AND OUTLOOK

The first of the six components of the FLEGT-REDD+ project involves the private logging sector's participation in the REDD+ system, and aims to integrate private sector project opportunities into this system via studies and pilot projects. An «**opportunity assessment of the REDD+ system for the private forest sector**» (available on the ATIBT website, published in January 2017 and presented at the ATIBT forum in Dubai in March 2017) unfortunately concluded that carbon certification is currently not an appealing opportunity for the timber sector's private players, particularly due to a sluggish carbon market and the substantial investments.

The decision was therefore made to **focus REDD+ activities on the analysis of innovative plantation opportunities** to improve the forest concession model. **Three study topics** were therefore defined to support the development of pilot project concepts for innovative plantations in relation to their lumber, firewood and agricultural needs:

- Study on the use of shade-providing tree plantations in agricultural areas (cocoa)
- Capitalisation study on the experience gained in lumber plantations in Côte d'Ivoire
- Study on the legal context and current state of things in terms of the integration of plantations and reforestation within natural forest concessions

Three consulting firms (the Oréade-Bèche/Kinomé consortium, FRMi and Terea, respectively) were selected by tender and contracted to conduct these studies. They will be finalised in April 2018 and will be revealed during events in 2018 (workshop in Côte d'Ivoire and Racewood meeting in Gabon). Following

these studies, opportunities to support the **setting up of projects** (agroforestry, plantations, development of secondary species, NTFPs) will be identified and evaluated in 2018 in order to consider the support of such project efforts.



Beyond the FLEGT-REDD project, this initiative is part of broader consideration by ATIBT and ONFI that aims to propose a way to help improve the forest concession model in order to make tropical rainforests a sustainable lever for the development of populations and territories, particularly through agroforestry.

We also refer to this outlook in our feature on Agroforestry on page 57. Also, don't forget that the World Congress on Agroforestry will be held in Montpellier, from 20 to 25 May 2019.

<https://agroforestry2019.cirad.fr/>

14 OUTLOOK 2018

AGROFORESTRY : A KEY ISSUE FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS



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In Kenya, intensive coffee plantations have ended up completely depleted due to the cost of fertilizers. As they have been forced to diversify their productions, farmers have introduced trees into their crops.

Agroforestry is a form of growing that generally consists of combining a main perennial plant (lumber trees, as well as coffee, cocoa, rubber, coconut, fruit trees, etc.) with other trees and other plants (possibly year-long growths), NTFPs (non-timber forest products from trees or otherwise) and potentially pastures and animal production. The associated trees can include «fuelwood» trees for local domestic energy or valuable and high-value timber trees (such as Teak, Mahogany, etc.). In the tropics, these sometimes very

old systems are often agro-forests or complex systems without annual harvests with several stratum of trees of different types (main crop, fruit trees, fuelwood trees and valuable timber trees).

The benefits of agroforestry systems are numerous; among them, we can highlight the following:

- improved economic efficiency via diversification of production and greater resilience, especially in relation to the volatility of product prices;
- improved environmental efficiency in terms of erosion, water management within land plots, preservation of biodiversity, positive inter-species interactions, etc.

One of the other main advantages of agroforestry systems is the possibility of integrating typically between 50 and 200 associated trees, thus potentially also valuable timber species, without any impact on the production of the associated plant, or with reasoned management allowing for less intensive growing (although it requires more time, ex: coffee and cocoa), which also implies differentiated exploitation strategies depending on the producers. Timber trees require a minimum amount of care during the main associated plant's first «pre-maturity» years (between 3 and 6 years of age) and then benefit from a protected and favourable environment for proper growth until felling, which coincides with the end of the main plant's life.

In conclusion, and according to Eric Penot of CIRAD, we can say that the production of valuable timber trees in agroforestry systems can be done on a large scale with a small number of trees per hectare, which will benefit from the proper management of the main crops. These trees therefore integrate themselves nicely within current agroforestry systems. Such production is promising for many small farmers, but also for large and medium-sized operations hoping to easily generate large volumes by the end of the cycle.

At the end of 2017, ATIBT launched three studies on topics related to agroforestry and lumber plantations in West and Central Africa. The results will be revealed to us during the first half of 2018; they will be used to pursue the consideration started in 2016, whose first steps have been taken jointly with the ONFI. In the medium term,

and given the growing importance of these agroforestry issues for ATIBT and its partners, the objective will be the establishment of a working committee.

Initially, this thought process would be organised within a working group, in order to gauge the various participants' interest and to validate the relevance of such an approach, taking into account various factors: the interest of forestry companies regarding such diversification, complementarity with their business model, the technical, organisational, financial and regulatory factors (particularly those related to land) likely to lead to commitments on their part. The participants in this thought process come from various backgrounds: research and engineering firms, research centres, professionals, forestry companies, plantation companies, etc.

TRAINING : WORK WITH RIFFEAC FOR THE FOLLOW-UP OF THE PARAFE



Thanks to a reactivated training commission, and with the prospect of an active resumption of training within ATIBT by our team of trainers, ATIBT was contacted by the AFD (French Development Agency) to participate in the consideration to be given to the follow-up of the PARAFE (*Projet d'Appui au Renforcement de l'Adéquation Formation Emploi* - Project in Support of the Reinforcement of the Training-Employment Match) project in Central

Africa, in order to consolidate the work that has already been done for this project. A closer relationship with the RIFFEAC (*Réseau des Institutions de Formation Forestière et Environnementale de l'Afrique Centrale* - Central African Network of Forestry and Environmental Training Institutions) is expected sometime in 2018.

ATIBT, a strategic and trusted player among private companies, state institutions and training organisations, is highly enthusiastic about this possibility.

THE CITY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ATIBT has been installed for several years on the historic site of the *Jardin d'Agronomie Tropicale of Paris* (JATP), in Nogent-sur-Marne. This place was the first site of the CTFT (Technical Tropical Forestry Center) before the unification of Cirad's departments in Montpellier.



Today, the **18 institutions present on the JATP website, active on the themes of sustainable development and international cooperation**, have the will to create a place of capitalization, sharing and scientific deepening on sustainable development: **the City of Sustainable Development.**



The ATIBT thought it was very positive to join this initiative because of the objectives pursued by its members.

This idea of the Sustainable Development City is based on a common diagnosis according to which new international agreements and new agendas (SDGs, Paris Agreement, Aichi Targets, Sendai Framework, New Urban Agenda, etc.) confirm the need to invent “new modes of development” in a perspective of sustainability and equity.

The main objectives of the *Cité du Développement Durable* would be:

- propose an integrated approach to the risks of non-sustainability of development, whether these stem from issues related to “global public goods”, the degradation of local and global environments (climate change), poverty and growing inequalities or globalization;
- improve the decision-makers’ taking into account innovative practices of development actors and scientific achievements of research and public authorities, the private market sector, NGOs / SSEs, citizens, etc.;
- improve the consideration of local demands by methods that promote the inclusion of all stakeholders in programs and projects;
- strengthen the French presence in the arenas of international debates: COP, IPCC, IPBES, IEA, FAO, EU, World Bank, UNEP, UNDP, G20;
- build a tool for sharing “field” knowledge and scientific knowledge on themes of common interest in order to decompartmentalise the “world of development” and federate the different categories of actors in the service of inclusive development (research- education, public authorities, private commercial sector, NGOs / SSEs, citizens...).



The City of sustainable development made its first appearance on the occasion of the ProDurable exhibition, dedicated to the actors and solutions of the sustainable economy, on April 4 and 5, 2018, with a stand held by the various actors that compose it. It will then be better known during various events, including *Les Tropikantes* festival, which will take place on 21 September in the Jardin d'Agronomie Tropicale of Paris, in Nogent-sur-Marne.

ATIBT IS WORKING TOWARDS A REGIONAL APPROACH TO PAFC CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

The idea of a pan-African certification took shape in the early 2000s, in a context where certification was having a hard time developing itself in Central Africa (even though sustainable forest management certification was primarily aimed at tropical forests).

In this context, in 2001, principles, criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management in Central Africa were defined within the framework of the African Timber Organization (ATO). The following year, the Libreville regional workshop recommended a joint approach for the various Central African states, referred to as PAFC (Pan African Forest Certification) with national variations. This approach openly intended

to be recognised by the PEFC Council, in order to enable the sale of PAFC-certified timber with the PEFC logo.

In 2009, **PAFC Gabon**, Gabon's forest certification system, became the **first certification system to be recognised by the PEFC Council in the Congo Basin**. The system was revised in 2012 and PEFC's recognition was renewed in 2014. It is currently in the final implementation phase (accreditation by a certification body in order to be able to conduct audits) thanks to funding by the IFH and PEFC. **In April 2018, the CEB-Precious Woods company obtained the first PAFC Gabon certificate.**

In Cameroon, PAFC Cameroon has been a member of PEFC since 2007. Its system is currently being evaluated by the PEFC Council and its implementation should be funded by the PPECF. The first audits are expected by the end of 2018.



Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between Congo, PEFC and ATIBT Helsinki November 15, 2017

In Congo, an opportunity study for the development of a national system was carried out by the Oréade Brèche firm, and **PAFC Congo became a member of the PEFC in 2017**. This initiative benefits from support from the Congolese government and ATIBT. A memorandum of understanding between the Republic of Congo, PEFC and ATIBT regarding support for the implementation of the PAFC Congo was signed in Helsinki on 15 November 2017, on the occasion of the PEFC's General Assembly.

ATIBT and its partners (in particular the UFIGA (in Gabon) and GFBC (in Cameroon)

forestry unions) are strongly committed to the development of these national certification schemes, convinced of the benefit of expanding the availability of sustainable management certification in order to improve the management of Congo Basin forests.

Thanks to funding from the IDH, ATIBT is able to fund initial audits of three companies in Gabon, which will validate the accreditation process and finalise recognition by the PEFC Council. One audit took place in September 2017 at CEB Precious Woods, the others will follow in 2018.

The next major development led by ATIBT is the proposal of a regional approach for the development of PAFC certification systems. This initiative, based on a capitalisation of experiences in Gabon, Cameroon and Congo, will aim to simplify, and therefore reduce, both system development and accreditation costs, and to standardise requirements in order to strengthen the system's visibility and credibility. The overall goal is to develop an alternative in terms of the sustainable management certification of African forests, by making such certification accessible and effective for all types of companies, and by adapting it to the Congo Basin's context. A project has therefore been submitted to the PPECF in order to obtain the funding necessary for the development of a regional system.

ATIBT & SNCF RÉSEAU (SNCF NETWORK): A COLLABORATION DEDICATED TO SUSTAINABILITY AND CERTIFICATION

SNCF Réseau - a member of ATIBT since 2016 and a user of timber for sleepers and other wooden pieces - uses approximately 13,000 m³ of tropical timber each year. Azobé is the main species used because of its hardness and natural durability, which means it can be used without a creosote treatment (excluding sapwood),

as creosote is a substance that the European Union plans to ban in 2021. Tropical timber is especially used for switching zones and engineering structures, where the constraints are particularly sensitive and the handling of the sleepers by railway operators is constant and more complex.



To support the company in its timber policy, ATIBT is working with Patrizia Gregori, «railway environmental footprint» project manager at *SNCF Réseau*. In 2017, the purchasing policy was modified to respect the CSR (corporate social responsibility) principle. In this context, the specifications for the procurement of tropical timber were reviewed, in consultation with experts from SNCF and ATIBT. As of 2018, the SNCF intends to buy timber that is not just legal, but also eco-certified (FSC or PAFC - the new version of the PEFC label in Africa), directly from Congo Basin sawmills and foresters.

This new approach has led the SNCF group to set up a due diligence procedure, with in-house training on traceability and certification, and a series of actions to raise awareness among staff regarding the use of timber from sustainably managed forests. Cooperation is being undertaken with ATIBT to work closely with African foresters, and the WWF in order to promote SNCF's responsible purchasing approach, in order to encourage producers to orient themselves towards certification and ensure a sufficient supply of certified timber.

The call for tenders launched last summer by SNCF for the supply of Azobé is also aimed at the purchase of other species that could also be used as wood under

rails. With this in mind, SNCF supports ATIBT's LKTS (Lesser Known Timber Species) 2020 research programme on the diversification of species. These new species are able to meet the demand for timber without endangering the renewal of Azobé and they favourably enhance the Congo Basin's highly diverse forest resource.



As part of SNCF's efforts to raise managers' awareness regarding the reality of sustainable forest management, as practiced in certified - and ATIBT member - concessions, a trip to Gabon was organised in early 2018. This field initiative will be followed during the year by SNCF's participation in the Gabon WoodShow in June and by SNCF communication actions, such as the sustainable timber day at SNCF's premises, and meetings with Railpensible (the international organisation of railway company buyers) and the UIC (*Union Internationale des Chemins de fer* - International Railway Union).

THE RACEWOOD WITHIN THE GABON WOODSHOW: A MAJOR DOUBLE EVENT IN THE CONGO BASIN IN JUNE 2018

RACEWOOD

In the same way that the ATIBT Forum was held in parallel with the Dubai WoodShow in March 2017, our next Racewood meeting, held from 20-22 June 2018, will be backed by a new and major timber show, the Gabon Woodshow.

The African equivalent of the ATIBT Forum, the Racewood is a place to share thoughts on the evolution of the timber industry. It is organised by ATIBT in one of the Congo Basin's producing countries. Its last editions took place in 2004 in Libreville (Gabon), in 2006 in Accra (Ghana), in 2010 in Douala (Cameroon) and in 2011 in Pointe Noire (Congo).



14 years later, ATIBT Forum is returning to Gabon, in Libreville's Botanical Garden. It will be hosted within the Gabon WoodShow, the Timber & Technology Fair, which will be an opportunity to meet timber professionals and discover the latest timber processing machines. The first edition of this show is organised by the same provider who does the Dubai WoodShow, the ATIBT Forum's partner

in Dubai, with the support of the GSEZ (Gabon's Special Economic Zone) and the Olam company. ATIBT will host a group booth with the association's forestry union members. These members are based in Cameroon, Gabon, DRC, Congo and Côte d'Ivoire: UFIGA, FIB, SPIB, GFBC, Unibois and Unicongo.

During this three-day show, the Racewood will bring together a hundred or so European and African companies to discuss four topics:

- the strengths of the African timber industry within the context of new international market rules,
- the supply of certified products from African producers who are committed to sustainable forest certification,
- the dynamics of the logging sector and processing industries at the regional level,
- the development of local markets and timber construction in Africa.



We are counting on this double event to strengthen our ties with our partners and with the various stakeholders of Africa's forest-timber, and we look forward to your participation.

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AFD (Agence Française de Développement)
 Christophe DU CASTEL
 Emmanuel FOURMANN
 5, Rue Roland Barthes
 75598 PARIS CEDEX 1 - FRANCE
 ducastelc@afd.fr / fourmanne@afd.fr
 Tél +33 (0)1 53 44 33 10
 Fax +33 (0)1 53 44 38 66
 www.afd.fr



FFEM (Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial)
 Aurélie AHMIM-RICHARD
 5, Rue Roland Barthes
 75598 PARIS CEDEX 13 - FRANCE
 ahmim-richarda@afd.fr
 Tél +33 (0)1 53 44 32 78
 www.afd.fr



World Bank
 Valerie HICKEY
 1818 H Street, NW Washington, DC
 20433 UNITED STATES
 vhickey@worldbank.org
 Tél +36343 / 1-202-473-6343
 www.worldbank.org



GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH)
 Herbert CHRIST
 Friedrich Ebert Allee, 40
 53113 Bonn - GERMANY
 herbert.christ@giz.de
 Tél +49 61 96 79 12 82
 Fax +49 61 96 79 73 33
 www.giz.de



BMZ (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung)
 Lena Siciliano BRETAS
 Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development - Division 122 - Rural development, lands rights, Forests
 Dahlmannstr. 4
 53113 Bonn - GERMANY
 Tél : +49 228 5353864
 Lena.Bretas@bmz.bund.de
 www.bmz.de



IDH (Dutch sustainable trade initiative)
 Nienke STAM
 Arthur van Schendelstraat 500
 3511 MH Utrecht - P.O. Box 1241,
 3500 BE UTRECHT - NETHERLANDS
 Stam@idhtrade.org
 Tél +31 (0) 6 5286 2393
 www.idhsustainabletrade.com



European Commission / DEVCO
 François BUSSON
 International Cooperation and Development - C2 Unit : Environment, Natural Resources, Water
 Rue de la loi, 41
 B-1049 Bruxelles - BELGIUM
 francois.busson@ec.europa.eu
 Tél +32 229-68590



KfW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau)
 Martin BOSTROEM
 Palmengartenstrasse, 5-9
 6325 Frankfurt am Main - GERMANY
 martin.bostroem@kfw.de
 Tél +49 69 74 31 4090
 www.kfw.de



DFID
 Julia FALCONER
 1 Palace Street SW1E 5HE
 London - UNITED KINGDOM
 j-falconer@dfid.gov.uk
 Tél +44 1355 84 3132



LIBERTÉ • ÉGALITÉ • FRATERNITÉ
 RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
 MINISTÈRE
 DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES
 ET DU DÉVELOPPEMENT
 INTERNATIONAL

MEAE (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères)
Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères - Sous-direction de l'environnement et du climat
Pôle Biodiversité-Forêts-Océans
 Philippe DELETAIN
 Catherine BODART
 27, Rue de la Convention
 75732 Paris CEDEX 15 - FRANCE
 philippe.deletain@diplomatie.gouv.fr
 catherine.bodart@diplomatie.gouv.fr
 Tél +33 (0)1 43 17 62 53
 Tél +33 (0)1 43 17 71 68



EFI (European Forest Institute)
 Jussi VIITANEN
 FLEGT and REDD Facilities
 80100 Joensuu - FINLAND
 jussi.viitanen@efi.int
 Tél +34 6 73 27 28 02
 www.efi.int



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 RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
 MINISTÈRE
 DE L'AGRICULTURE
 ET DE LA FORÊT

MAAF (Ministère de l'Agriculture, et de l'Alimentation)
 Célia DIDIERJEAN
 celia.didierjean@agriculture.gouv.fr
 19, avenue du Maine
 75732 Paris Cedex 15 - FRANCE
 Tél + 33(0)1 49 55 40 94



FAO (Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'Alimentation et l'Agriculture)
 Robert SIMPSON
 Viale delle Terme di Caracalla,
 00153 Roma - ITALY
 robert.simpson@fao.org
 Tél +240 22 20 55 416
 www.fao.org



ITTO (International Timber Trade Organisation)
 Sheam SÁTKURU
 International Organizations Center,
 5th Floor Pacifico-Yokohama, 1-1-1,
 Minato-Mirai, Nishi-ku,
 Yokohama, 220-0012 - JAPAN
 satkuru@itto.int
 Tél +81-45-223-1110
 Fax +81-45-223-1111



COMIFAC (Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale)
 Raymond NDOMBA NGOYE
 BP: 20818 Yaoundé
 CAMEROON
 Tél +237 222 21 35 12 / 677 42 42 94
 Fax +237 222 21 35 12
 comifac@comifac.org



SNCF RESEAU
 Patrizia GREGORI
 6 avenue François Mitterrand
 93574 La Plaine Saint Denis - FRANCE
 patrizia.gregori@reseau.sncf.fr
 Tél. : +33 (0)1 41 62 02 67
 www.sncf-reseau.fr

Writing and coordination: Christine Le Paire - Agency and graphic design: Laurent LAGADEC - Links Consultant - 06 60 65 37 11 - Geoffrey LANGINAY - 06 37 61 61 72 - Translation: John Carricaburu
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FOR SUSTAINABLY MANAGED TROPICAL FORESTS

ATIBT - Jardin d'agronomie tropicale de Paris
 45 bis, avenue de la Belle Gabrielle
 94736 Nogent-sur-Marne CEDEX - FRANCE
 Tél. +33 1 43 94 72 64 - Fax. +33 1 43 94 72 09