Congo Basin

A forestry sector with a future
ATIBT - International Tropical Timber Technical Association

More than 60 years of experience

- Founded in 1951 by FAO and OCDE
- International association, dedicated to the protection of tropical wood resources
- Key partner for industry professionals and animator of tropical wood sector
- Leading technical and scientific authority in terms of tropical timber resources
- Representation of timber industry engaged in sustainable forest management

Promotion of a sustainable, ethical and legal tropical wood sector

130 members
The Congo Basin forests

The world’s 2\textsuperscript{nd} largest tropical basin

- 200 million hectares
- 6 countries:
  - Cameroon
  - Central Africa Republic
  - Republic of Congo
  - Democratic Republic of Congo
  - Gabon
  - Equatorial Guinea
- Hosts 30 million people

Source: WRI
Forest management and wood sector in the Congo Basin

A wide range of species

- The diversity of the rainforest is beautiful and vast
- **Sustainable Forest Management** is the ideal tool to preserve it!
- **A potential to market some 100 species, but in reality only 15-20 species are really harvested** *(potential to expand LKTS)*
- **Main species**: Ayous, Azobe, Bosse, Frake, Iroko, Kosipo, Okan, Okoume, Padouk, Sapelli, Sipo, Tali, Wenge...
- The main technical characteristics are:
  - Natural durability (for select species, even in direct contact with sea water)
  - Resistance to bending
  - Hardness
  - Stability
  - Resistance to fire
Forest management and wood sector in the Congo Basin

Some data

- **Private-sector managed forest concessions**
  - Forest belong to States
  - Convention with operators (20-30 years)
  - Conception and validation of Forest Management Plan

- > **24 millions of ha under forest management**
  = half of attributed forest areas *(OFAC – 2016)*

- > **16 million m³ potential** of RWE / year

- Operators mainly **vertically integrated**
  (harvesting + processing)

- Potential to further go down the value chain
General trends and opportunities

An evolving sector over the past 3 decades

- Gabon has institutionalised voluntary certification
- Taxes and administrative procedures are being improved
- Lack of level playing field with the informal sector and non-certified companies which do not feel compelled to comply with the law
- Know-how transfer over the last decades: on-site training, skilled employees
- Yield improvement from the log to the final product, still a way to go
- Hydro-power infrastructure has improved, but public grid needs to be finalised and further spread out
About logistics in Congo Basin

4 countries considered
4 corridors
4 logistic hubs
3 modes of transport:
- Road
- Rail
- River

1'700 km is the longest distance
Challenges and potential solutions

Improve knowledge of the forest-wood sector

- Develop a **state of play** of the forest private sector
  - State of play and mapping of actors in 4 countries - *project FLEGT IP*
  - Market Analysis (Asian and Domestic-Africa)

- Get closer to **Asian operators**
  - towards a shared forest management standard / level playing field
  - Inter-union initiatives *(ex. UFIGA in Gabon)*
  - Raising awareness adapted to Asian operators: *projects FLEGT IP - PPECF*
  - International Africa-Asia events: the ATIBT forum was held last week in China
Challenges and potential solutions

**Improve responsible forest management, governance and law enforcement**

- Development of **private certification**
  - ATIBT certification commission
    - Coaching of companies to certification - *projects FLEGT IP / PPECF*
    - Advocacy for certification recognition in VPAs/FLEGT
    - Support regulatory measures in favor of certification

- Support **FLEGT VPAs** by involving the private sector
  - ATIBT FLEGT commission
    - Strengthen consultations in the revision of regulatory texts - *FLEGT IP / FAO projects in Congo*
Challenges and potential solutions

Give value to the forest

- **Include private sector** support into donor strategies

- Sustain the certified forest concession **business model**
  - Support change: *Think Tank PPECF-ATIBT: Special Action Plan Supporting Certification 2018-2019*

- Enhance the **services provided** by forest companies (payments for environmental services – PES)

- Explore **planting** opportunities and **agro-forestry** projects in savannah-like areas (afforestation)
  - Support of cocoa projects under forest shade - *project FLEGT-REDD+*
Challenges and potential solutions

Secure forests and facilitate activities

- Define **land-use plans** in producing countries
  - Advocacy with the states (*ex. private sector intervention at the Forum on Forest Governance, and the CBFP*)

- Define **incentive mechanisms** (tax exemption at the source, financing at acceptable interest rates)

- Support for infrastructure development **facilitating logistics**
Challenges and potential solutions

**Improve the image of tropical timber and access to information**

- **Communication** on positive impacts of legal/sustainable forest management
  - Marketing strategy for certified products in consumer markets – *development of Fair & Precious brand - ATIBT/AFD/PPECF*
  - Strengthen the communication of national professional associations - *communication plan development – ATIBT/PPECF*

- **Raise awareness of tropical timber buyers**
  - Harmonisation of the application of the EUTR, Lacey Act - *EU awareness campaign, study tours - project FLEGT REDD*
  - Provision of information on legality (*e.g. platforms like TTP, OTP/WRI*)
Challenges and potential solutions

Towards a new forest resource management

- Improve knowledge of **forest resources**
  - Understanding forest dynamics to improve management plans (*ex. projects Dynafor and P3FAC ATIBT/AFD/FFEM*)

- **Diversify** the use of the resource
  - Promotion of LKTS (*ex. project LKTS ATIBT/PPECF*)
THANK YOU

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