

**ITTO's Criteria and Indicators
A Tool for Monitoring, Assessing and Reporting on SFM**

**Steven E. Johnson
ITTO Secretariat**

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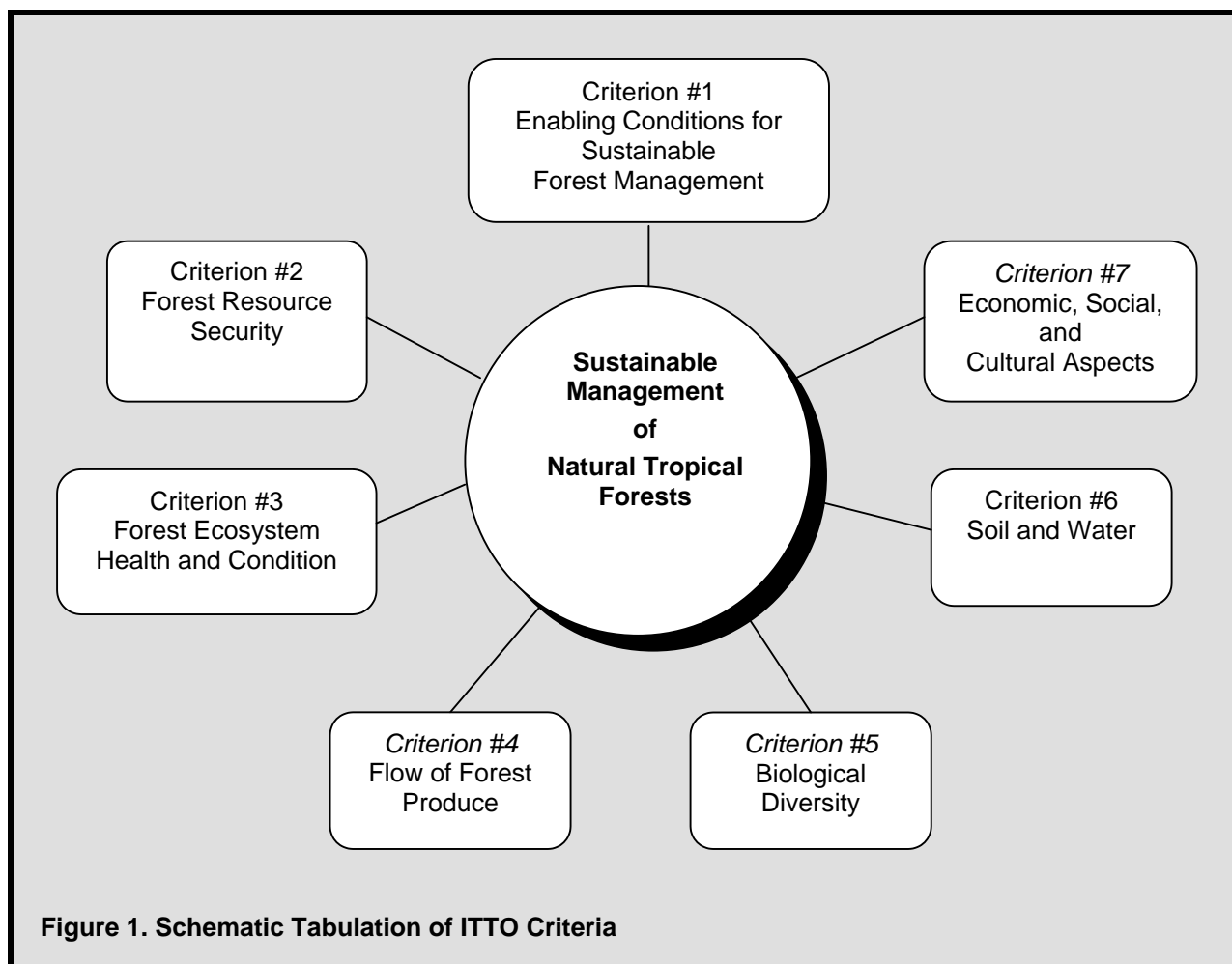
ITTO was a pioneer in the development of criteria and indicators (C&I) for sustainable forest management, beginning work in this field over a decade ago. This paper briefly reviews the evolution of ITTO's work on criteria and indicators and describes recent related work carried out by the Organization of relevance to monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress towards sustainable forest management in the tropics.

The Evolution of ITTO's Criteria and Indicators

ITTO's work on C&I had its genesis in the late 1980s when a survey of the extent of sustainable forest management in the tropics resulted in the finding that less than 1% of such forests were sustainably managed. This finding, published in the book "No Timber Without Trees" galvanized the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC) to develop agreed guidelines for the sustainable management of natural tropical forests, which were adopted and published in 1990. Two years later, ITTO's first version of its Criteria for the Measurement of Sustainable Tropical Forest Management was published to assist members in implementing the guidelines.

Subsequent developments over the next 5 years led to Council's adoption and publication of Guidelines for the Establishment and Sustainable Management of Planted Tropical Production Forests, Guidelines for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in Tropical Production Forests and Guidelines on Fire Management in Tropical Forests. The development of these additional norms, as well as the parallel development of a number of other initiatives for the measurement and assessment of sustainable forest management, led ITTO to undertake a substantial revision of its original Criteria in 1998, leading to the Organization's current Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forests. These consist of seven criteria (Figure 1) and 66 associated indicators.

The desire to assist member countries to apply the ITTO C&I at the field level led to the publication in 2000 of Manuals for the Application of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forest, one each for the national and forest management unit (FMU) levels. The next section details ITTO's recent experiences in training on the use of these manuals and field testing them in actual FMUs. Partly in response to this training and comments by members, the manuals have now evolved into "Reporting Formats" which countries are expected to use to inform ITTO of progress in sustainable forest management from next year. At least 10 national workshops in selected countries will be held in 2002 to assist members in identifying gaps and possible data sources for completing the reporting formats.



Training on and Field Testing of ITTO C&I

During 2000 and early 2001, regional training workshops were convened in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), Bogor (Indonesia), Quito (Ecuador) and Sangmelima (Cameroon). In these workshops, 110 forest management professionals from 32 countries were trained in the application of ITTO's C&I. Testing of the national level C&I was carried out with workshop participants as well as with representatives from relevant national forestry agencies in each country (Forestry Department, Malaysia; Ministry of Forestry, Indonesia; COMAFORS and Ministry of Environment, Ecuador and the National Working Group on SFM and Certification, Cameroon). Field testing of the FMU C&I was undertaken with the cooperation of one or more concessionaires or forest operators in Peninsular Malaysia, Kalimantan Indonesia, Esmeraldas on the north-west coast of Ecuador, and the Lokoundje-Nyong forest on the south-west coast of Cameroon.

Training on and Field Testing Findings

A full report on the regional training and field testing activities was made to Council in May 2001. One of the most significant findings was that three-quarters of the 32 participating countries had difficulty to obtain data on 40-50% of the indicators. The main problem areas identified by most of these countries related to the lack of data for the biodiversity and soil and water criteria. The participants also noted that some indicators for which information was requested at the FMU level (e.g. endangered species status, socio-economic

measures) were in fact more applicable at the national level. Although the sample size was small and biased towards relatively well-managed forests whose operators had agreed to undergo scrutiny, the FMU level testing also found that the size and ownership of the concession or forest was an important determinant with respect to data availability, with smaller, publicly owned FMUs more likely to have access to data. The desire of concessionaires/operators to obtain certification for their timber products was also closely correlated to the relative availability of data for many of the indicators. The existence of overlapping or duplicate data requirements under different indicators was also identified as a problem during the training, as was the use of subjective or general qualifiers (e.g. “light”, “heavy”) in some of the indicators. The participants also recommended that the C&I Manuals be formatted so as to make them more user-friendly. All of these recommendations and findings were taken into account in the development of the Reporting Formats that were approved by the ITTC in May this year.

Other ITTO Work on Criteria and Indicators

In addition to the policy work undertaken by ITTO to develop and test its C&I, the Organization has granted over \$5 million in project aid since 1995 to Brazil, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Congo, Gabon and Indonesia explicitly for the development of national criteria and indicators based on the ITTO framework. A new project in this area was just approved at the 31st Council session for the Philippines. Also, ITTO’s substantial body of project work to promote sustainable forest management in member countries often involves the application of the C&I in developing and monitoring forest management plans. And many countries (e.g. Malaysia, Myanmar) have developed national level C&I based on those of ITTO with no external assistance.

C&I related activities have also been undertaken by ITTO in Indonesia to strengthen the National Forest Program as well as to assist the development of the national eco-labelling institute. ITTO has recently worked closely with the African Timber Organization (ATO) to harmonize the two Organizations’ C&I and will begin implementation of a project to field test the ATO/ITTO C&I in common member countries next year.

The ITTC has continued to stress the importance of C&I for reporting on sustainable forest management in its decisions, urging all members to use the C&I and the newly developed Reporting Formats for their annual progress reports. The Organization has received requests for assistance from five countries (Colombia, Congo, Peru, Thailand and Vanuatu) in the preparation of their initial reports using the new Formats. It is anticipated that most members will attempt to provide their initial reports in 2002.

Certification and Auditing

ITTO’s C&I training and field testing showed that a major motivator for many countries/forest managers in collecting C&I related data was the desire to eventually seek certification of their timber products. ITTO has been following developments in this area since the late 1980s and recently began developing auditing guidelines for sustainable forest management. The proposed audit guidelines are based on ITTO’s C&I, adding another layer of “verifiers” to each indicator. The guidelines provide a benchmark for internal monitoring of performance that could also contribute to external certification. Several countries (e.g. Malaysia, Indonesia) are already working on standards of performance and national certification systems based on ITTO C&I and it is likely that

these countries will be best placed to provide information on sustainable forest management to ITTO and others. These audit guidelines will be circulated to all members under a decision reached by the ITTC at its 31st session. The decision also provides almost \$300,000 to assist countries that wish to establish credible auditing systems for ITTO's C&I.

The Future

ITTO will continue to work to promote the use of its C&I for reporting on the status of forest management in its member countries. As introduced earlier, an expanded program of training and field testing has been approved, with 10 national level workshops with 50 FMU level participants each to be implemented starting in early 2002. More countries have expressed interest in national auditing and certification schemes based on ITTO's C&I, with the recent Council decision on this topic sure to raise interest even further. It seems likely that the proliferation of national and regional certification schemes will continue.

In the training work carried out to date, and also in the development of the Reporting Formats, it has been widely agreed that the ITTO C&I and Reporting Format should be periodically updated, revised and/or refined to reflect developments in member countries and internationally. It is likely that ITTO will undertake a thorough review of all aspects of its C&I within the next couple of years.

ITTO has been a strong supporter of the conservation and rehabilitation of mangrove forests in its member countries and is currently in the process of developing a mangrove workplan to guide its future work in this area. One area to be investigated is the potential development of a special set of C&I for these unique forest ecosystems. ITTO will host an international workshop on mangroves next year and the prospect of mangrove C&I will be one item on the agenda.

"Box 1. C&I Processes in ITTO Member Countries"

Producers (31)

Cameroon*	ATO / ITTO	Bolivia	ITTO, TARA
C.A.R.	ATO / ITTO	Brazil*	ITTO, TARA
Congo*	ATO / ITTO	Colombia*	ITTO, TARA
Cote d'Ivoire	ATO / ITTO	Ecuador	ITTO, TARA
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	ATO / ITTO	Guatemala	ITTO, LEP
Gabon*	ATO / ITTO	Guyana	ITTO, TARA
Ghana	ATO / ITTO	Honduras	ITTO, LEP
Liberia	ATO / ITTO	Panama	ITTO, LEP
Togo	ATO / ITTO	Peru	ITTO, TARA
Cambodia	ITTO	Surinam	ITTO, TARA
Fiji	ITTO	Trinidad & Tobago	ITTO
India	DFAs, ITTO	Venezuela	ITTO, TARA
Indonesia*	ITTO		
Malaysia	ITTO		
Myanmar	DFAs, ITTO		
PNG	ITTO		
Philippines	ITTO		
Thailand	DFAs/ITTO		
Vanuatu	ITTO		

Consumers (3)

China*	DFAs, ITTO, MON
Egypt	ITTO, NE
Nepal	DFAs, ITTO

(All 23 others involved in MCPFE or MON)

*C&I Projects funded by ITTO.

ATO: African Timber Organization
DFAs: Dry Forests Asia
LEP: Lepaterique

MCPFE: Ministerial Conference for the Protection of
Forests in Europe (Pan-European)
MON: Montreal

NE: Near East
TARA: Tarapoto

There is substantial scope for partner organizations to collaborate on training and assistance in capacity building and the mobilizing required resources for implementing C&I in developing countries. ITTO will continue to work closely with FAO and all other partners in the future to ensure all countries have a comparable method for reporting on forest management.

Finally, there is a need for more collaboration between different processes to ensure we learn from each other and to avoid duplication of effort. Box 1 shows that most of ITTO's members are in fact involved in 2 or more C&I processes, illustrating the need for coordination. The collaborative initiative between ATO and ITTO has already been described. The International Conference on C&I (ICCI) set for next year will provide a good opportunity for further dialogue between processes in this regard.

C&I for UNFF MAR

The following concluding comments highlight some issues that ITTO feels are important for UNFF to consider as it moves forward with monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR) on forest management. First, UNFF needs to clearly define exactly what it wants from MAR, ensure that C&I provide the right tool(s) to achieve it, then work with all processes to establish a "minimum" reporting standard.

Assuming that C&I are chosen as the most appropriate basis for MAR, it is essential that all C&I processes commit to a timetable and periodicity for publishing available data for their member countries as soon as possible. As mentioned previously, several countries are already working on their first report to ITTO using the recently adopted Reporting Formats. ITTO plans to commence publication of a report entitled "Status of Tropical Forest Management" based on reports by members within two years. This compilation of information might prove useful to UNFF and others interested in forest management in the tropical member countries of ITTO. The full reports from the current ITTO Reporting Format will probably be too detailed for UNFF purposes. In fact it is anticipated that the analysis and synthesis of results from country reports will require additional resources in the ITTO Secretariat. Another option for sharing summarized data would be to use the proposed "Summary of Highlights" from the national level Reporting Format (Box 2). Regardless of the final mechanism chosen for sharing information, it will be best if it is based on existing data (C&I, TBFRA, FRA). If evolving UNFF requirements necessitate any direct collection of information from countries, the Inter-secretariat Working Group on Forest Statistics, which coordinates global forest production and trade data collection, provides a good model for global coordination

A final issue that UNFF will soon be well aware of if it isn't already is that many countries will require more assistance than provided to date in order to provide meaningful reports on their forest management. The upcoming ICCI (July 22-26, 2002) co-sponsored by ITTO, FAO, the USA and hosted by Guatemala will provide a useful forum for further discussions on this issue and others related to the use of C&I as a tool for MAR.

Box 2. Reporting Format “Summary of Highlights”

Title Page

Country.....	Date of the Report.....
Total area of the country (1000 ha)	
Total area of forest in the Permanent Forest Estate	
Number of Forest Management Units (FMU)	
Area of Forest Management Units (1000 ha)	
Number of FMUs for which questionnaires have been completed	
Area of FMU for which questionnaires have been completed	
Area of forest cover by forest management certification (specify system)	

Headings for Main Summary of Highlights Sections

- Changes in policies and legislation
- Changes in administrative arrangements
- Changes in investment or re-investment in the forest sector
- Changes in the balance of land use
- Changes in the extent (area) of the permanent forest estate
- Changes in the security of the permanent forest estate
- Exceptional damage to the forest through human activity or natural causes
- Increase of knowledge of the forest resource (e.g. new inventories, research on sustainable levels of harvest)
- Changes in management of the forest (e.g. ownership, tenure, management plans, reduced impact logging)
- Developments in the protection of biological diversity
- Developments in the protection of soil and water
- Major changes in trade (e.g. balance of external trade to domestic consumption, trends in value added products, certified exports)
- Changes in the involvement of interested parties (domestic and international) in the forestry sector
- Particular difficulties encountered which have hindered progress towards sustainable forest management