

## IPSI Collaborative Activity Proposal Form

The following form is for use when submitting proposed IPSI Collaborative Activities for consideration by the IPSI Steering Committee. See the Collaborative Activity Guidelines on p. 3 for more information.

Please return the completed form to the IPSI Secretariat ([isi@unu.edu](mailto:isi@unu.edu)).

*IPSI Collaborative Activities are the activities that shall be undertaken by more than one IPSI member and constitute an important part of IPSI activities with the purpose of fostering collaboration within the IPSI membership and implementing the IPSI Strategy and Plan of Action. The IPSI Collaborative Activities shall be developed and implemented with the endorsement of the Steering Committee in accordance with the Collaborative Activity Guidelines. Resource mobilization for IPSI collaborative activities shall be the responsibility of the implementing members in principle. – IPSI Operational Guidelines, Chapter 5.4*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Date of Application:</b>   | <b>November 30, 2015</b>   |
| <b>Project title:</b>   |  |
| Rehabilitation and Sustainable Management of Sacred Forests on Ramsar Sites 1017 and 1018 in Benin<br>[PD 754/14 Rev.2 (F)]         |  |
| <b>Collaborating organizations (IPSI members):</b><br>(*Please underline the leading organization)                                  |  |
| <u>NGO Circle for Conservation of Natural Resources (ONG CeSaReN) - Benin</u><br>International Tropical Timber Organization         |  |
| <b>Other contributing organization(s) (including IPSI non-members):</b>   |  |
| General Directorate for Forests and Natural Resources (DGFRN), Benin<br>Beninese Environmental Agency (ABE), Benin                  |  |
| <b>Contact:</b>   |  |
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| Telephone: (81-45) 223-1110   | Fax: (81-45) 223-1111  |
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| <b>Expected term (e.g. 1 January 2014 – 31 December 2015):</b>  |  |
| April 2017 – March 2020 (project is approved but still pending finance)   |  |
| <b>IPSI strategic objective(s) addressed (tick all that apply; see p. 3 for more details):</b>                                      |  |
| X   | 1. Increase knowledge and understanding of SEPLS                                     |
| X   | 2. Address direct and underlying causes responsible for the decline or loss of SEPLS |
| X   | 3. Enhance benefits from SEPLS   |
| X   | 4. Enhance human, institutional and sustainable financial capacities                 |

*Continued on next page.*

**Description of the activity:**

Please provide as much information as possible on:

- Background
- Activities (including site locations if applicable)
- Expected outcomes
- Actors and task sharing
- How the activity relates to the *IPSI Strategy* and *IPSI Plan of Action*
- Resources, funding
- Monitoring and reporting

**Full project document is attached as a PDF.**

**PROJECT BRIEF****1. Context and problem to address**

RAMSAR Sites 1017 and 1018 contain more than 500 sacred forests **which although** limited in size are rich in biodiversity. These forests play a vital role in the lives of people and the conservation of local natural resources. Now with the emergence of new religions, high population growth, the weakness of traditional power, and the increasing impoverishment of the rural population, taboos and restrictions are no longer complied with. Most sacred forests are subject to abuse and uncontrolled exploitation leading to degradation or even total destruction. The recent studies on sacred groves in Southern Benin showed that 60% of them are in a degraded state. Between 1998 and 2013, 34% of sacred forests have experienced a significant reduction in area and 14% have disappeared. Degradation of these ecosystems is a serious threat to biodiversity and the lives of surrounding communities who heavily depend on it.

The NGO Club for the Conservation of Natural Resources (Ce.Sa.Re.N), aware and concerned about the situation, took the initiative in collaboration with the Forestry Administration, the Communal authorities and local communities to develop the Project “Rehabilitation and Sustainable Management of Sacred Forests on RAMSAR Sites 1017 And 1018 in Benin”. This project stems from the implementation of pre-project PPD 165/12 Rev.1 (F) which collected baseline information to develop this project.

**2. Implementation objectives and indicators**

The development objective of the project is to contribute to sustainable forest management of wetlands in southern Benin. This objective indicators are (i) by 2020, the wetland ecosystem degradation process currently affecting wetlands of global importance in southern Benin is reduced by at least **30%**, (ii) At the end of the project the living standards of communities closely dependent on forest resources have been raised by at least 20%, (iii) the volume of timber product has increased by 15% by 2038.

The specific objective of this project is to sustainably manage sacred forests within Ramsar sites 1017 and 1018 in Benin by building the capacity of stakeholders to improve the living conditions of local populations. Indicators are: (i) At the end of the project, **40** sacred forests feature operational management tools; (ii) at the end of the project, revenues derived from sacred forest have increased by 25%; (iii) **40** rehabilitated sacred forests are integrated in the System of Municipal Protected Areas.

**The following main results are expected at the end of the project:**

1. **Improved use of the resources of 40** sacred forests;
2. **The levels of income derived from sacred forests** by local communities have be raised
3. SFs are integrated in the System of Municipal Protected Areas

**3. Beneficiaries, results, outcomes and expected outputs:**

The main beneficiaries of this project are: dignitaries, traditional chieftains, village elders, kings, earth priests and land chiefs, community leaders, voodoo priests, communities and local populations composed of men, women and children of the village who live on SF resources together with farmers using arable lands adjacent to SFs.

The main **outcomes, outputs and results expected** from this project are the following:

- Simplified management plans allocated to **40 sacred forests**. This will enable dignitaries and owners to

define the terms of their forest management and better control and monitor their management practices and interventions;

- Providing these **40 sacred forests** with titles of legal recognition to avoid “breaking and nibbling at the estate” or selling portions of it;
- **Crop cultivation techniques improved in the vicinity of sacred forests on a total area of 80 ha to increase farming outputs on these lands without encroachment on the land estates of sacred forests (SEPLs).**
- The demarcation and staking of 40 sacred forests, to prevent any encroachment and reduce the pressure for land;
- The establishment of **60 ha** of multi-purpose plantations to help meet the needs of local communities for forest products (SEPLs);
- The diversification of sources of income for the local communities through the development of alternative income generating activities, the promotion of Improved Agricultural Production Systems (SAP) and the development of community-level social infrastructure to raise the income level of the local population by at least 20%
- Capacity-building for at least 200 individual beneficiaries in local communities for forest planning/development and management techniques, and private plantations (SEPLs);
- The strong involvement of municipal authorities through the establishment and operation of municipal committees coordinating and monitoring the integration of SFs in the System of Municipal Protected Areas;
- Improving the biodiversity of 40 sacred forests by planting valuable plant species of value and undertaking the release of specimens of appropriate CITES faunal specimen.

The development of reforestation-related activities such as seed collection, high-quality seedling production, the promotion of fuelwood plantations to meet the demand for wood energy, which is the main source of domestic energy in rural areas. This may also help to raise the income levels of grassroots communities.

#### **4. Implementation strategy**

This project will be implemented in three successive phases:

- Firstly, local management committees will be established both at the SF level and municipal level. These committees will facilitate the development, validation and implementation of management tools. **They will also help to identify the beneficiaries of Improved Production Systems (SAP).**
- The second phase will consist in organizing the grassroots to implement enrichment planting and rehabilitation of SFs; and develop alternative income-generating and environmentally friendly activities to reduce the level of poverty and improve the livelihoods of people at grassroots level (SEPLs).
- In the third phase, SFs will be incorporated in the System of Municipal Protected Areas to ensure their sustainability.

#### **5. Sustainability of project results**

Institutional and political sustainability of this project will hinge on the involvement of the General Directorate of Forestry and Natural Resources and the Beninese Environment Agency and Municipalities at all stages of development and implementation. Furthermore, the various commitments made by the municipalities through the letters of endorsement attached hereto in Appendix bear witness to the ownership of the project by the municipal authorities and clearly herald the institutional sustainability of project outcomes.

The financial sustainability of project outcomes and achievements shall be secure beyond the duration of the project through the commitment of municipalities to fund the project.

Technically, the sustainability of outcomes and achievements is secured by the inclusion of traditional and modern methods of forest management **as well as through the technical monitoring services to be provided**

**by the National Forest Service which is represented in all municipalities in Benin.**

## **6. Assumption and risks**

The main assumptions on which the successful implementation of the project is based are as follows:

The various stakeholders support and participate in the project: One of the difficulties in the implementation of forest development projects is the lack of communication among stakeholders. This project will particularly address this aspect by involving all stakeholders in the implementation process.

Sustainable management of wetland ecosystems remains a national priority. Policy guidelines may change and the support of decision makers for the conservation of sacred forests decline. In the international context where issues related to climate change are taken seriously by the international community, the risk is almost absent.

The probable risks identified in connection with this project are as follows:

Reluctance by dignitaries and managers of sacred forests in relation to interventions by not religiously initiated outsiders in these forests. This risk can be reduced by education and outreach sessions.

Climate hazards observed lately and climate change may affect ecosystems, the flow rate of water streams and forest health in the intervention area. This may negatively impact the development actions undertaken. This risk can be reduced by the use of appropriate adaptation to the adverse effects of the most immediate climate change and the use of resistant and resilient species.

## **7. Budget contributions**

| SOURCES                | Contribution in US\$  |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>ITTO</b>            | <b><u>591,618</u></b> |
| Benin (Ce.Sa.Re.N NGO) | <b><u>118,100</u></b> |
| <b>TOTAL</b>           | <b><u>709,718</u></b> |

*Please attach additional pages as necessary.*

*IPSI Secretariat use only*

## **IPSI Collaborative Activity Guidelines**

### **Overview**

IPSI Collaborative Activities are activities that are carried out by two or more IPSI member organizations and that contribute to IPSI's strategic objectives. Participants may include contributing IPSI non-members also, but at least two must be IPSI members. Activities may include research, capacity-building, awareness-raising, on-the-ground or any other activities that contribute to IPSI's strategic objectives.

IPSI's strategic objectives, as identified in the *IPSI Strategy*, are:

1. Increase knowledge and understanding of SEPLS
2. Address the direct and underlying causes responsible for the decline or loss of biological and cultural diversity as well as ecological and socio-economic services from SEPLS
3. Enhance benefits from SEPLS
4. Enhance the human, institutional and sustainable financial capacities for the implementation of the Satoyama Initiative

In order to be recognized as an IPSI Collaborative Activity, an activity must be proposed to and endorsed by the IPSI Steering Committee.

### **Proposal and endorsement procedure**

Activities to be considered for recognition as IPSI Collaborative Activities should be proposed to the IPSI Secretariat using the "IPSI Collaborative Activity Proposal Form" included in this document (p. 1-2). Upon initial verification, the Secretariat will forward proposals to the IPSI Steering Committee for consideration.

### **Responsibilities and benefits**

Participants in IPSI Collaborative Activities are encouraged to use IPSI's name and the Satoyama Initiative logo in promotional and informational materials related to the activity, and to acknowledge IPSI's support in all outputs.

Collaborating organizations are strongly encouraged to provide the IPSI Secretariat with updates on the progress of IPSI Collaborative Activities on a regular basis or as new information becomes available, to be disseminated throughout IPSI's communications network. The form attached as Annex 1 (p. 4) below may be used for this purpose.

At the conclusion of an IPSI Collaborative Activity, collaborating organizations are asked to report on the activity and any outputs and/or outcomes using the form attached as Annex 2 below (p. 5).

It is up to the participants' discretion which organization will serve as the contact point for the IPSI Secretariat.

### **Resource mobilization**

Organizers of IPSI Collaborative Activities are strongly recommended to secure resources necessary for activities on through their own means. Collaboration with other IPSI partners and use of an IPSI Collaborative Activity's endorsement to find funding sources are recommended means of mobilizing resources for IPSI Collaborative Activities.

### **Contact**

Secretariat of the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI)  
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## Annex 1: Progress report for IPSI Collaborative Activity (ongoing)

The following form is for use when reporting progress of an ongoing Collaborative Activity. Please fill out this form as updates become available and submit to the IPSI Secretariat ([isi@unu.edu](mailto:isi@unu.edu)).

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Reporting Date:</b> |  |
|------------------------|--|

|                       |
|-----------------------|
| <b>Project title:</b> |
|-----------------------|

**Study for the Rehabilitation and Sustainable Management of Sacred Forests on Ramsar Sites 1017 and 1018 in Benin [PPD 165/12 Rev.1 (F)]**

Please provide any relevant information on the activities and any outputs and/or outcomes below:

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

*Please attach additional pages as necessary.*

## Annex 2: Report of conclusion of IPSI Collaborative Activity

The following form is for use in reporting the conclusion of an IPSI Collaborative Activity. Please fill out this form when the Collaborative Activity is finished and submit to the IPSI Secretariat ([isi@unu.edu](mailto:isi@unu.edu)).

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Reporting Date:</b>  |  |
| <b>Project title:</b>   |  |
| <b>Study for the Rehabilitation and Sustainable Management of Sacred Forests on Ramsar Sites 1017 and 1018 in Benin [PPD 165/12 Rev.1 (F)]</b>  |  |
| <b>Actual term (e.g. 1 January 2014 – 31 December 2015):</b>  |  |
| <b>April 2013 – May 2014</b>  |  |
| <b>Please provide a description of the activities and its outputs and/or outcomes below:</b>  |  |
| <p>It is our understanding that Mr. Achille Orphée LOKOSSOU from Benin reported the precursor collaborative Activity as completed at Accra this year.</p> <p>ITTO also reported this collaborative activity as completed at its 50<sup>th</sup> ITTC session in November 2014, as follows:</p> <p>I. <b><u>Introduction</u></b></p> <p>The 8-month pre-project was approved under Autumn-2012 Project Cycle through the electronic approval system put in place, and the financing was made at the same Project Cycle by the Government of Japan, Korea and USA. The Agreement regulating the implementation of the pre-project was signed in March 2013. The pre-project implementation was initiated in April 2013 following the disbursement of the first installment of ITTO funds. As an acceptable version of the pre-project completion report was received in May 2014, as well as the financial audit report, the duration of the pre-project implementation had lasted 13 months instead of 8 initially designed by the implementing agency (ONG-CESAREN).</p> <p>II. <b><u>Objective</u></b></p> <p>The aim of this pre-project was to contribute to the sustainable forest management and conservation of biodiversity in Benin by building the capacity of local communities to improve their living conditions, through the conservation of Sacred Forests (SFs) part of Ramsar Sites 1017 and 1018. It specifically intended to evaluate the potential of Sacred Forests located in the Ramsar Sites 1017 and 1018, in order to formulate a project aiming to support their rehabilitation and sustainable management.</p> <p>III. <b><u>Achievements and Outputs</u></b></p> <p>The main pre-project achievements and outputs are summarized in the two following tables:</p> <p><b>a) Achievement of outputs</b></p> |  |

| Outputs   | Level of achievement   |
|---|--|
| 1. Baseline information on the SFs of the target sites is available   | Several technical reports providing updated and documented information and data on the Sacred Forests located in the Ramsar Sites 1017 and 1018, in Benin, were prepared by consultants and validated by key stakeholders through a participatory approach.  |
| 2. A project proposal to support the rehabilitation and sustainable management of Sacred Forests within Ramsar Sites 1017 and 1018 in Benin is formulated and submitted to ITTO approval. | A project proposal was formulated with the updated information and data gathered and analyzed through the implementation of this pre-project. It was validated by main stakeholders, and submitted to the ITTO regular project cycle. It was registered as PD754/14 (F) by the ITTO Secretariat with the following title: <i>“Rehabilitation and sustainable management of Sacred Forests on Ramsar Sites 1017 and 1018”</i> . |

**b) Achievement of objectives**

| Objectives  | Level of achievement  |
|---|---|
| Development Objective: To contribute to the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity in Benin by building the capacity of local communities to improve their living conditions   | Relevant information and data (forest inventory, socioeconomic, environmental, mapping aspects) required for the formulation of a full project proposal were gathered and analyzed during the pre-project implementation, through studies and surveys carried out in the target zone of the future project, with the collaboration of key stakeholders. |
| The Specific Objective of the preliminary draft is to evaluate the potential of 1017 and 1018 Ramsar sites sacred forests in order to formulate a project proposal for the rehabilitation and sustainable management of these forests | A project proposal was developed in a participatory process while taking into account the findings of studies carried out by consultants in the Sacred Forests part of Ramsar Sites 1017 and 1018, in Benin. It was appraised by the 48 <sup>th</sup> Expert Panel in August 2014.  |

**IV. Outcomes and Impacts**

The main pre-project outcomes and impacts, in relation to the expected outputs and associated activities, can be summarized as follows:

- The pre-project implementation was an opportunity to gather and analyze more information and data (environmental and socio-economic aspects) on the Sacred Forests (SFs) part of Ramsar Sites 1017 et 1018 and also to precisely map and demarcate them;
- Key stakeholders were identified and involved in the assessment of the potential of these SFs and the



sensitization campaigns led some of them to endorse the project objectives and even contributed to get the commitment of some local authorities for the co-financing of the future project; and

- Better sharing of the project's aim and strong involvement of key stakeholders contributed to develop a project proposal based on accurate information and data.

## **V. Lessons Learnt and sustainability**

### **5.1 Lessons learnt**

For the project derived from the implementation of this pre-project, it was important to give priority to the establishment of a consultation technical committee aiming to address the issue of cultural beliefs and taboo linked to SFs in Benin, in order to ensure the involvement of key stakeholders operating in the target zone. The implementation of this pre-project was an opportunity for sensitization campaigns aiming to show the importance of Ramsar Sites 1017 and 1018, in Benin, which are dotted with pockets of Sacred Forests with a very rich biodiversity, representing a natural heritage of great value for their multiple functions (socio-cultural, ritual, environmental, etc.). These Sacred Forests constitute an endogenous form of biodiversity conservation and play a crucial role in the lives of local communities.

### **5.2 Sustainability**

For the future project derived from the implementation of this pre-project, the sustainability should be based on the involvement of key stakeholders, including local communities, through a participatory process to be considered as a key element of the project implementation strategy. The involvement of key stakeholders, including local communities, in the management of SFs part of Ramsar Sites 1017 and 1018, should contribute to the sustainability if their interests and needs are taken into account. As part of contribution to the sustainability, some local authorities have expressed the commitment for the co-financing of the future project.

**Remarks:**

*Please attach additional pages as necessary.*

*IPSI Secretariat use only*