

Written submission of ITTO Statement on COFO 28 - Agenda Item 6 (Fire)

Chair, Distinguished delegates,

As fires become more frequent and severe across forest landscapes, ITTO joins others in recognizing the urgent need to strengthen awareness, knowledge, and capacity for Integrated Fire Management, particularly in relation to prevention and recovery.

ITTO thanks the Global Fire Management Hub for its work and contributions since its inception. We recognize the important role the Hub plays in bringing together different parts of the international fire management community and fostering more connected and constructive dialogue on IFM. We encourage the Hub to continue working in close coordination and collaboration with the many partners and initiatives already active in this field, with a view to strengthening complementarity and collective efforts.

ITTO's work on fire management dates to the 1990s and includes the publication in 1997 of *ITTO Guidelines on Fire Management in Tropical Forests*. When ITTO began updating our guidelines two years ago, consultations showed that the greatest need was **not** another set of international guidelines, but easier access to the wealth of knowledge already available - material that is currently scattered across many platforms and can be difficult for practitioners to find and use.

In response, ITTO recently launched the **first IFM toolkit focused specifically on the tropical region**: an online clearinghouse that brings open-source tropical fire knowledge, technical guidance, and decision-support tools together in one place.

While designed for all stakeholders, its user-friendly design and accessibility are particularly valuable for communities and local practitioners who may not be connected to the international fire community or aware of the wealth of resources already available.

We invite you to explore the Toolkit at tifm.itto.int and promote its use amongst stakeholders. Please also consider listing your forestry agencies or organization's open-source resources. Your contributions can put knowledge directly into the hands of communities and practitioners who need it, prevent valuable tools from remaining scattered or overlooked, and help build a living global resource for stronger integrated fire management across the tropics.