

Fourth Session of the Assembly
25-26 November 2020, Virtual

Agenda Item 2.7.4

Update on the New and Potential Projects and Programs

1. Consistent with Strategic Priority Area 5 of the AFoCO Strategic Plan (2019-2023), “Strengthening institutional capabilities, diversifying resources, and promoting regional actions”, the Secretariat has been sustaining its efforts to initiate and develop projects and programs to facilitate the achievement of the AFoCO vision while at the same time contribute to the attainment of forest and climate-related national, regional and global targets/initiatives.
2. In consultation with member countries, the Secretariat has so far initiating various projects and programs in partnership with relevant bodies/organizations as well as initiatives emanating from high-level discourses and commitments at the regional and international arena, such as the following:
 - a. AFoCO in cooperation with CIFOR-ICRAF and the Global Evergreening Alliance (GEA) are collaborating on Landscape Partnership for Asia (LPA) for the restoration of an initial area of 10 million hectares of drylands and drought-prone areas for 10 years. The work for LPA visioning/road map and sub-regional programming will take its course towards the end of CY2020 up to 1st quarter of 2021 leading to the eventual soft launching of the Partnership at the World Forestry Congress in May 2021. AFoCO host and manage the LPA Secretariat in terms of coordination, communication and administrative support to LPA.
 - b. The Secretariat in coordination with Korea Forest Service (KFS) and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) channel will facilitate project development initiatives for Peace Forest Initiative (PFI) as an active member of the PFI Regional Working Group. The project development has been initiated and will be further pursued as soon as the PFI Terms of Reference (ToR) has been issued by the UNCCD Secretariat.
 - c. The KFS has communicated to the Secretariat to advance the discussion on realizing the ASEAN-ROK Garden through AFoCO.
 - d. The Secretariat will be embarking on the development of a program to implement more forest rehabilitation and livelihood improvement activities with diverse stakeholders, through private sector support and funding. Likewise, as part of the Statement of Intent (SOI) between World Bank and KFS, the Secretariat is in the process of developing an e-learning course in Forest Fire Management (FFM) to complement with the regular on-campus FFM training course in the Regional Education and Training Center (RETC).
3. Pertinent attachments on the details of the above project and program development initiatives are in **Attachment-1**.

Points for consideration

4. The Assembly may wish to task the Secretariat to sustain afore-mentioned initiatives and further consult with the Parties on project development concerns in accordance with potential donors' requirements and timelines.

Summary of New and Potential Projects/Programs and Other Initiatives

1. The followings are new and potential projects and programs which the Secretariat has been initiating in consultation with member countries.

a. Landscape Partnership for Asia (LPA): restoring drylands and drought-prone areas

Participating Countries:	Initially, Parties and Observers of AFoCO and Kyrgyzstan
Partner Organizations:	CIFOR-ICRAF and GEA
Timeframe / Budget:	10 years (2022-2032) (TBD) / USD 100 million (target to be raised)
Goal:	Working target of 10 million hectares of both forest and agricultural drylands and drought prone areas to be restored a period of 10 years, contributing to national/regional targets in Central, East, South and Southeast Asia
Progress and Schedule:	(From Jul. 2020) Prepared the draft of the Program Concept Note (Aug. - Sep. 2020) Preparation for establishment of LPA Secretariat at AFoCO (ToR of Secretariat, Roles of Founding Partners, Drafting of Communication Strategy, etc.) (Sep. - Oct. 2020) Scoping survey on the coverage and governance of both forest and agricultural drylands and drought-prone areas at the county level (22 Oct. 2020) Signing of Cooperation Agreement between four founding partners (Nov. - Dec. 2020) Partners' consultation LPA visioning/road map preparation (Jan. - Mar. 2021) Sub-regional Program submitted to Ark 2030 (Apr. - May 2021) Drafting the 10 year LPA vision and roadmap (May 2021) Soft launching of LPA at the World Forestry Conference 2021 (Jul. 2021) Preparation for the ensuing LPA Annual Work Plan
Roles of the Secretariat:	Host, staff and manage the Secretariat of LPA as per the separate ToR, in terms of: coordination, communication and administrative support to LPA. Seek and manage commitments from member countries to actively support and collaborate in the implementation of restoration projects generated or funded through LPA; leverage own and internationally - supported restoration projects to synergize with those of LPA restoration projects and provision of technical advice.

b. Peace Forest Initiative (PFI)

Participating Countries:	Parties of AFoCO
Timeframe / Budget:	TBD
Goal:	Contribute to building collaboration and trust as well as promote peace through trans-boundary cooperation in sustainable land management in fragile and conflict-affected regions, especially in post-conflict situations
Progress and Schedule:	(Apr. 2019) PFI Introduced to AFoCO Assembly by KFS (Sep. 2019) Initiative officially launched at the UNCCD COP 14 held in New Delhi, India (Aug. 2020) KFS requested AFoCO to be the PFI implementing partner in Asia (Jan. 2021) ToR of PFI is finalized, expression of interest and draft concept notes are submitted through UNCCD focal points (Feb. 2021) Review and endorsement of concept notes by Regional Working Group (May 2021) Assessment of concept notes, securing donors' funding commitments by the Partner's Roundtable (approved concept notes will advance to the preparation of full proposal for funding) (Dec. 2021) Launch of regional projects (pilot cases), and PFI website with relevant information, etc.
Roles of the Secretariat:	The Secretariat will work as part (leading role) of the PFI Regional Working Group for Asia. To facilitate preparation of Concept Notes from AFoCO member countries, the Secretariat will initiate review of the project concept in advance until the same is endorsed through the UNCCD channel up to the Regional Working Group for Asia for eventual review/approval at the Partners' Roundtable meetings.

c. ASEAN-RoK Garden

Participating Countries:	ASEAN member countries
Timeframe / Budget:	TBD
Goal:	Establish ASEAN-ROK Garden for strengthening regional forest cooperation to promote ecotourism and conduct educational programs
Progress and Schedule:	(Nov. 2019) Co-chairs' statement at the ASEAN ROK Commemorative Summit welcomed a proposal to establish an ASEAN-RoK Garden as a symbol of friendship

(Feb. 2020) KFS communicated to the Secretariat to advance the discussion on realizing the ASEAN-RoK Garden through AFoCO
(Apr. - May 2020) Circulation of the concept note and request for the submission of letter of intent

(May - Aug. 2020) Received letter of intention from six countries (BN, KH, LA, MM, TH, VN) and Concept Note from five countries (KH, LA, MM, TH, VN)

(Sep. - Oct. 2020) Reviewed the concept notes by the Secretariat (from 2021) Pursue cooperation with Korea National Arboretum (KNA) for the Phase I (Research, Consultation) and request more project ideas in other countries

Roles of the Secretariat:

Facilitate project development (concept note/full proposal), cooperation/funding (in consultation with KFS) and project implementation

2. In line with the AFoCO resource mobilization strategy, the Secretariat consider developing a program to implement more forest rehabilitation and livelihood improvement activities with diverse stakeholders including private sector. The Secretariat will mobilize funds from individuals, groups, and businesses which will be used for the activities in our member countries.

3. As part of Statement of Intent (SOI) between KFS and World Bank (WB), AFoCO will serve as the organization that will facilitate any cooperation activity in line with the SOI. Initially, the Secretariat and WB are in the process of developing an e-learning course on Forest Fire Management (FFM) as a part of AFoCO regular training course on FFM, a blended type of e-learning course may be implemented to cover the fundamentals of forest fire management through e-learning and practical knowledge and skill level exercises during the on-campus learning in AFoCO RETC.
