

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

Agenda Item 2.1

Follow-up actions for the 2019 Institutional Review Recommendations

1. With reference to recommendations of the Assembly at its 3rd Session, the Secretariat prepared a report on follow-up actions taken in response to the recommendations of the 2019 Institutional Review of AFoCO and Secretariat as appended in **A-4-IV-20R-1**.
2. As tasked by the Assembly, the report contains an action plan on strategic recommendations of the Institutional Review presenting baseline, target and progress as of November 2020.

To prepare this report and draw up the action plan, the Secretariat has carefully assessed the urgency and feasibility of the recommendations by the review panel to develop the action plans to address the 16 identified strategic areas. The strategic areas and corresponding action plans are classified into three categories – short term (category A), medium term (category B), and long term (category C). Taking account of the views of the Parties, any issue which entail implications of amendment of the Agreement text are placed under category C.

The Secretariat notes that many of the recommendations from the RP align with strategic actions being taken at the initiative of the Secretariat management. Hence, those on-going efforts are updated in Section II on “Secretariat Management Response to the Recommendations”.

Section III presents Action Plans to address strategic issues identified in the Institutional Review Report 2019. Given the nature of the institutional review, which is forward-looking and visionary, the Action Plans are geared to strengthening the organizational strategic framework through open and inclusive consultation with relevant stakeholders. Though, in 2020, many of planned consultation opportunities were postponed or cancelled due to the outbreak of global pandemic COVID-19, the Secretariat will, in consultation with the Parties, arrange necessary strategic discussion opportunities in the coming years.

Points for consideration

3. The Assembly may wish to consider and endorse the report on “Follow-up actions for the 2019 Institutional Review Recommendations” and task the Secretariat to make continuous efforts to implement the action plan set forth therein.

A-4-IV-20R-1

November 2020



Follow-up actions for the 2019 Institutional Review Recommendations

Important Notice:

This document is drafted for internal use only for AFoCO. Any part or whole of this document is not allowed for disclosure in accordance with the Information Disclosure Policy of AFoCO without a written agreement.

All rights reserved for the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization Secretariat.

8th floor, Forest Vision Center, 9 Gukhoe-daero 62-gil, Yeongdeungpo-Gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea 07236

©AFoCO Secretariat 2020

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
Abbreviations and Acronyms	ii
I. Introduction	1
Background.....	1
Key findings and recommendations of the Institutional Review	1
Basic Approaches in Developing Action Plan.....	2
II. Secretariat’s Response to the Recommendations	3
<Category A: Short term>	3
Vision and Mission of AFoCO (R1).....	3
Niche of AFoCO (R2).....	3
Priority Areas of AFoCO (R3).....	4
Cooperation with Regional & International Partners (R10)	4
Capacity as an Intergovernmental Organization (R11).....	5
Dissemination and Communication (R12)	5
Management (R15)	5
Organizational Structure (R16).....	6
<Category B: Medium Term>	7
AFoCO’s Funding – Membership & External (R5).....	7
Profile of Activities (R6).....	7
Sustainability (R8).....	8
Policy Relevance (R9).....	8
Capacity Building (R13)	9
<Category C: Long Term>	9
Membership with AFoCO (R4)	9
Systems View (R7)	10
Governance (R14)	10
III. Follow-up Report and Action Plan	11

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFoCO	Asian Forest Cooperation Organization
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
CLMV	Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Viet Nam
DOA	Delegation of Authority
ED	Executive Director
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GPFLR	Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IKI	International Climate Initiative
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris climate agreement
ODA	Overseas Development Aids
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECD-DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries
RECOFTC	The Center for People and Forests
RETC	Regional Education and Training Center
RP	Review Panel
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
UNCCD	UN Convention on Combating Desertification

I. Introduction

Background

This report intends to update the Assembly members on the progress made so far in taking necessary actions in response to key findings and recommendations of the External Institutional Review of AFoCO reported in September 2019. With reference to the Assembly's recommendation *"to identify and prepare, in consultation with the Parties, the action plan on those strategic recommendations"* provided at the third session of the AFoCO Assembly, **this document provides information on on-going actions being taken with relevance to the recommendations, and proposes an array of strategic actions to address major challenges and recommendations identified for the future consideration of AFoCO.** The 2019 Institutional Review of AFoCO has been arranged by the initiative of the Advisory Roundtable that was endorsed by the Assembly at its second session. The review was tasked to an independent international Review Panel (RP) to identify strategic areas and directions for the future development of AFoCO and conducted with open and full cooperation from all parties and the Secretariat staff in the course of work.

Key findings and recommendations of the Institutional Review

Key findings and recommendations of the RP drawn from its holistic analysis and assessment of AFoCO are organized and presented into **16 strategic areas in Report of External Institutional Review of AFoCO (Institutional Review Report 2019)** submitted in September 2019 and further shared to the Representatives of the AFoCO Assembly accordingly. Key recommendations included are:

- a. Revisiting the organization's vision and mission taking into account their linkage to other strategic areas including the identified niche of AFoCO;
- b. Further scrutinizing the priority areas through an open process with all levels of stakeholders;
- c. Developing the membership and cooperation strategies on a broader geographical basis beyond Asian countries;
- d. Revisiting the contribution formulas of the Parties and developing an open resource mobilization policy as regards to external funding;
- e. In terms of project development and management, taking care of the systems view on it and developing the strategy on policy relevance with criteria for full scale sustainability;
- f. Establishing an Executive Board of the Assembly and increasing the term of ED to 3 years for more efficient and sustainable governance of AFoCO; and
- g. Improving the management system of the Secretariat including program execution system, working conditions, communication, staff requirements, financial and staff regulations, and internal reporting system.

Basic Approaches in Developing Action Plan

In response to the Institutional Review Report 2019 and building upon the Assembly's initial deliberation on its suggestions for action, the Secretariat has carefully assessed the urgency and feasibility of the recommendations by the RP to develop the action plans to address the 16 identified strategic areas. The strategic areas and corresponding action plans are classified into three categories – short term (category A), medium term (category B), and long term (category C), as shown in **Table 1** below. Taking into account that many Parties to AFoCO were “not in a position to consider some of the recommendations of the institutional review that requires the amendment to the Agreement text”, any issue which entail such implications (i.e. membership) was intentionally placed under category C.

Table 1. Categorization of the strategic areas in the Institutional Review Report 2019

Category	Strategic areas
A. Short term	Vision and Mission of AFoCO (Recommendation 1) Niche of AFoCO (R2) Priority Areas of AFoCO (R3) Cooperation with Regional & International Partners (R10) Capacity as an International Organization (R11) Dissemination and Communication (R12) Management (R15) Organizational Structure (R16)
B. Medium Term	AFoCO's Funding - Membership & External (R5) Profile of Activities (R6) Sustainability (R8) Policy Relevance (R9) Capacity Building (R13)
C. Long term	Membership with AFoCO (R4) Systems View (R7) Governance (R14)

The Secretariat notes that many of the recommendations from the RP align with strategic actions being taken at the initiative of the Secretariat management. Hence, those on-going efforts are updated in Section II on “Secretariat Management Response to the Recommendations”.

Section III presents Action Plans to address strategic issues identified in the Institutional Review Report 2019. Given the nature of the institutional review which is forward-looking and visionary, the Action Plans are geared to strengthening the organizational strategic framework through open and inclusive consultation with relevant stakeholders. Though, in 2020, many of planned consultation opportunities were postponed or cancelled due to the outbreak of global pandemic COVID-19, the Secretariat will, in consultation with the Parties, arrange necessary strategic discussion opportunities in the coming years.

II. Secretariat's Response to the Recommendations

<Category A: Short term>

Vision and Mission of AFoCO (R1)

The RP viewed that the current vision of AFoCO is not well understood and conceived in various ways by stakeholders. Considering the value of clear and correct vision and mission statements in strengthening organizational culture and communicating aspirations of the organization, it was recommended to initiate a process of re-examining AFoCO's vision through an open process with participation of staff and other stakeholders at all levels.

Noting the interlinkage between vision and mission and their implications to other strategic areas like the niche, membership, and priority of AFoCO, the Secretariat has prioritized the reformulation of the vision and mission statements to set the ground for developing other strategic components. The initial draft vision and mission statements are developed as shown below through a series of open discussions initially at the Secretariat and will be finalized through consultation processes with the member countries:

- Vision: "A greener Asia with resilient forests, landscapes and communities"
- Mission: "To strengthen cooperation in promoting practices of sustainable forest management through policy support, capacity development, and inclusive partnership to combat climate change and its impact."

Niche of AFoCO (R2)

The RP highlighted the need for a clearly recognized niche in light of avoiding undesirable competition with other international organizations working with overlapping issues with the AFoCO agenda and becoming a sustainable institutions. Noting the significant implications of well-defined niche can demonstrate on many strategic dimensions of the organization, the RP suggested to review the AFoCO's niche through an open interactive process with participation of stakeholders at all levels.

The Secretariat identified some key features that distinguish AFoCO from other international organizations, as follows.

- High level of ownership and initiative demonstrated by the founding members in formalizing a treaty-based intergovernmental organization with strong desire for action-oriented cooperation.
- Pursuit of South-South or Triangular Cooperation models using proven technologies and policies and exchange of successful experiences among countries that share similar challenges
- Direct engagement of forest departments of the member countries which enables contextualized approaches in formulating and implementing actions
- Programs with a strong focus on building capacities of policy-makers, technical practitioners and researchers in the forest sector and specialized regional training facility, Regional Education and Training Center (RETC).

Building upon this initial analysis, the niche position of AFoCO will be further elaborated along the strategic management process. Listed below are potential areas of niche that can be considered through the process:

- Capacity building and policy assistance for certain areas that are considered vital for forestry through Triangular Cooperation models
- Bridging the gaps in transforming global goals into local actions, especially for the attainment of international climate goals through NDCs and in building readiness for REDD+
- Regional based approaches in formulating actions by facilitating sub-regional dialogue to share knowledge and experiences among the countries facing similar challenges
- Supporting the development of coordinated approaches in tackling climate change and development issues by promoting cooperation among local stakeholders (i.e. forest, agriculture, environment sectors)

Priority Areas of AFoCO (R3)

The RP suggested that priority areas be scrutinized as a part of the strategic process through “with all levels of stakeholders in a view that the current strategic priority areas do not match that well with the current vision and mission and they may not have sufficient relevance for the future due to a new identified niche of AFoCO and revised vision and mission. The Secretariat has also been aware of the need in terms of improving message clarity of the current priority areas which appear to be slightly scattered and lack thorough analysis of baseline conditions and contexts of the operation.

With the new formulation of vision and mission statements, the Secretariat team has jointly identified a new set of priority areas that are aligned to demonstrate clear linkages to new vision and mission. They are:

1. *Accelerating contextualized actions on tackling forest loss and promoting forest restoration;*
2. *Establishing greater resilience of forest and forest-dependent communities against increasing climate and disaster risks;*
3. *Advancing community forestry and sustainable livelihood strategy; and*
4. *Strengthening human and institutional capacities to enhance sustainable forest management.*

Following the RP’s recommendation, the new proposed set of priority areas will be further discussed and finalized along the strategic process engaging various stakeholders around AFoCO, especially those from member countries.

Cooperation with Regional & International Partners (R10)

The RP viewed that a partnership can help in securing a critical mass of experts and competencies needed for the sake of achieving the organization’s ambitions, and suggested to establish a strategy with a priority list of partners, based on the vision and mission of the organization.

The Secretariat team views this is in line with the recommendations provided from the AFoCO Ministerial Meeting in 2019 and the Assembly’s decisions pertaining to partnership arrangements with potential partner organizations. Guided by the Assembly and the RP, a number of partnership has been arranged with key partners playing in the forest and forestry sector, including FAO, UNCCD, World Bank, GPFLR, RECOFTC, CIFOR, ITTO, and relevant Korea-based forest agencies. And considering the evolving nature of partner landscape, the

partnership guidelines are being developed to provide guiding principles for future partnership development.

Capacity as an Intergovernmental Organization (R11)

The RP viewed that, as a relatively young and small organization, AFoCO needs to develop its capacities in ways that can better accomplish its mission as an intergovernmental organization. The RP suggested AFoCO develop partnership to learn ways other international entities work to achieve their respective missions by mobilizing necessary partnerships and forging synergies with each other. And the RP viewed that this will eventually make AFoCO responsive to considerable demand from the member countries for assisting their institutional coordination in the international arena.

In line with the RP's recommendation, the Secretariat team has sought for various opportunities to develop institutional capacities along the partnership development scheme. In addition, there have been efforts to increase the credibility of AFoCO in international fora – such as observer status in the UN General Assembly and the Rio conventions, ODA-eligibility status under the OECD DAC, and accreditation with the GCF. To secure privileges and immunities that assure complete independence of action and ensure that funds contributed to the organization are utilized solely to achieve the purpose of the organization, the Headquarters Agreement and the Agreement regarding Hosting the RETC are being finalized respectively with the Republic of Korea and Myanmar. The Secretariat management will continue its efforts in enhancing institutional capacities as an intergovernmental organizations as guided by the recommendations of the RP.

Dissemination and Communication (R12)

The RP suggested AFoCO enhance dissemination and communication by developing a dissemination and communication strategy based on its vision, mission and priority areas structure, in a view that transparent information and enhanced efficiency in communicating cooperation results are key to building relevance, image and visibility of the organization. The Secretariat also understands that advocacy and information dissemination is critical to ensure the continuity of existing partnerships and donor appeal. Consistency in communication strengthens the image and reputation of AFoCO.

In this perspective, the Secretariat has set the institutional dissemination and communications strategy in achieving: 1) the position of AFoCO as an effective and intergovernmental forestry organization to lead initiatives on the ground and shares best practices and technologies; 2) enhancement in coordination and collaboration among stakeholders to contribute to the achievement of global and regional forestry commitments; 3) improvement of the visibility of AFoCO and its work in addressing forest-related issues such as deforestation, forest degradation, and climate change; and 4) promotion of transparency.

Management (R15)

The RP made assessments with respects to Program Execution, Working Conditions, Communications, Staff Requirements, Financial and Staff Regulations and provided the following recommendations to improve the organizational performance:

- i. AFoCO gradually move to a results-based management system where objectives and expected outputs are defined, allocated and monitored at each level of the*

organization. At what levels key decisions are taken should also be made clear with emphasis on delegation.

- ii. The full UN remuneration system be implemented and the Headquarters Agreement concluded to exonerate staff from taxation thus making AFoCO jobs attractive internationally.*
- iii. All jobs be re-defined grouping together like functions and a job classification system be implemented to ensure equal pay for work of equal value and a structure enabling career development*
- iv. Management encourage staff to communicate more and across organization unit lines, perhaps aided by a team-building retreat, to communicate across organizational lines and to express their views openly.*
- v. AFoCO recruit more international staff, more experienced staff, and staff with additional forestry competencies matching AFoCO's priority areas. Yearly recruitment and training and development plans should also be developed.*
- vi. Financial regulations should be both reduced and split into regulations approved by the Assembly and rules decided by the ED.*
- vii. The staff regulations should be amended to include the full package of benefits now lacking but common in other international organizations.*

Guided by said views and recommendations, the Secretariat had instituted the staff performance appraisal system with pre-defined goals and outputs of the service and success criteria for their assessment; refined and adjusted individual duty descriptions for each staff member; and introduced a new internal policy for contract renewal and promotion of the staff members based on performance review. Furthermore, the Secretariat has elaborated a plan to establish a new functional unit dedicated to the coordination of capacity development activities of the organization to increase coordination of various capacity building programs being organized in/outside the RETC. And to make up for capacities for project management and experiences in field, a new senior staff has been recently recruited for a Director position responsible for cooperation and project division.

Organizational Structure (R16)

The RP assessed the current management system and the organizational structure and suggested the following changes:

- i. Project work be structured along thematic lines following AFoCO's priority areas thus promoting more specialization, improved competencies in the key substantive areas, better feedback from implementation and monitoring into strategy and new project formulation and greater efficiency.*
- ii. To strengthen resource mobilization, one P person concentrate on and coordinate this important function and this post could also deal with the related functions of public relations and outreach and communication and networking and should report directly to the ED to give it the visibility and high-level support it needs*
- iii. The RETC report directly to senior management rather than to the Cooperation and Project Division Director*
- iv. Each staff member report to only one immediate supervisor*

Among the recommendations from the RP, the Secretariat team viewed that the elimination of unnecessary bureaucracy in administration by setting an appropriate delegation of authority ("DoA") is a key measure to address the issues. As a first step, terms of reference (TOR) of

the senior managers (i.e. the ED and Vice Executive Director, and other Directors) should be defined with clear lines of communication and delegation of authority. For the resource mobilization, the relevant roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined across the organizational units in a way that can enable more comprehensive and integrated efforts for resource mobilization.

<Category B: Medium Term>

AFoCO's Funding – Membership & External (R5)

The RP's observations and recommendations relevant to AFoCO's funding are two folds – unprejudiced review of the membership contribution and development of resource mobilization strategy for external funding. The external funding here is understood all types of funding not resourced from the contribution for membership, including earmarked voluntary contributions from the member countries which are currently the main sources of project funding.

Since the launch of the organization, increasing the funding and funding bases for AFoCO has always been one the most important responsibility emphasized for the Secretariat management.

In response to the recommendations of the RP, the resource mobilization strategy is being prepared building upon the observations of the RP and further assessment by the Secretariat. Given that the resource mobilization is an institutional responsibility and is at the very top of the political agenda, the draft resource mobilization strategy initially prepared by the Secretariat will be further consulted with member countries for the adoption by the Assembly.

Profile of Activities (R6)

The key recommendation of the RP on 'profile of activities' is to develop a list of requirements regarding the profile of future projects and activities based on a revised vision, mission and niches. This recommendation was drawn from the observations that the dominating part of the projects are initiated by individual members, hence they are fragmented in the sense that there is limited synergy between the projects. The RP suggested that a certain number of projects and activities be initiated as full scale which then can better reflect a regional and global perspective and responsibility of AFoCO.

Considering the recommendations of the RP, the following list of requirements regarding the profile of future projects is initially being considered: 1) regional projects/programs over country-specific ones; 2) fewer projects/programs with diverse components inside with larger fund allocation and a longer period ; 3) project concepts to be aligned with the national and regional/global goals and applicability; 4) bridging on-going projects for more significant impacts; and, 5) upgrading synergies from previous projects and avoiding a manner of duplication.

As its progress, the Secretariat has been putting its efforts to identify and develop projects and programs as participating multiple countries with a larger scale, such as 1) Capacity building on enhancing resilience to the forest fire and local livelihood in CLMV countries (proposed to ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund, 7 million USD for 5 years); 2) Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Terrestrial Ecosystems in Asia through Conservation of Endangered, Endemic

and Threatened Plant Species (proposed to IKI, 23 million USD for 5.5 years); and, 3) Landscape Partnership for Asia with an initial target of restoring 10 million ha in 10 years (potential fund sources from Ark 2030, GCF, GEF, IFAD, FAO, etc., 100 million USD for 10 years).

Sustainability (R8)

The RP's recommendation on 'Sustainability' highlights the need of deeper understanding of sustainability and its demonstration in full scale in future projects and activities. This may start by formulating an AFoCO's statement of sustainability which takes into account the views and interests of the member countries, and complete by developing criteria for full scale sustainability to be applied in projects and activities.

While endorsing the observation and recommendation of the RP, the Secretariat recognized 'Sustainability' constituted core values of the current strategic plan. Starting with scrutinizing and improving the value statement, the Secretariat will develop a set of sustainability criteria and standards to suit the diversity in project concepts. In this purview, the Secretariat set up the three main streams: 1) integration the criteria for project sustainability in the various stages of the project management cycle, particularly on project development; 2) facilitation activities of the sustainable mechanisms (policies, institutional, and environmental safeguards) to be embedded in project cycle; and 3) evaluation of criteria and standards through enhancement of project manual and related guidelines.

Policy Relevance (R9)

The RP indicated that policy relevance is a crucial factor for the survival of AFoCO in a view that policy relevant operations can build up interest in the member countries for AFoCO and ensure the delivery of long-lasting impacts in general and national development aspects. The Secretariat team understood that policy relevance as used herein means the fact that AFoCO's operation should be relevant and applicable for political decision-makers of the member countries. To make AFoCO's operation more policy-relevant, in 2019, AFoCO has convened the 1st Achievement Workshop to share lessons learned from the on-going and completed projects and make those project outcomes to inform policy development. Also the 2019 AFoCO Ministerial Meeting provided an initial platform to make AFoCO's future projects and activities aligned to the high-level political agenda and more responsive to the interests of the member countries. The Secretariat views that these two flagship events can be continued as regular communication platform for policy updates and development.

In addition to the establishment of regular communication platforms, the Secretariat team views that constructing institutional knowledge base on policy contexts of the member countries is most required at this stage of the organizational development. Benchmarking the other international organizations' cases, the Secretariat has been collecting policy documents and forest data of the member countries to develop baseline documents such as country cooperation frameworks (CCF).

Under this purview, a plan to enhance policy relevance of AFoCO's operation is being developed for the consideration and approval by the Assembly.

Capacity Building (R13)

The RP observed, in its review process, positive feedbacks and expectations about the AFoCO capacity building program and the RETC, and suggested AFoCO develop a new capacity building strategy within defined areas that contribute to the niche of AFoCO.

In response to the suggestions by the RP, AFoCO's overall strategy is being revised to include capacity building for member countries as one of the four (4) new priority areas. Furthermore, the organizational structure has been revisited to enhance the coordination of various capacity building programs. One program-wise development is the launch of in-country training program responding to the local capacity development demand. In 2020, three countries were selected for community development training. In addition, the AFoCO Science and Technology Exchange Program (STEP) has been conducted to enhance networks and cooperation among forest research and academic institutions in Asia and various other networking opportunities will be sought with partner research institutions to assist building necessary capacities of the member countries.

A new mid-term capacity-building strategy will be developed based on the review of '5-year capacity building target programs' and assessment on the potential and existing partnership opportunities with relevant organizations and initiatives.

<Category C: Long Term>

Membership with AFoCO (R4)

In views that the membership of an organization is crucial for its existence and relevance, the RP suggested AFoCO develop a membership strategy determining which members to be sought based on its vision, mission and niche of AFoCO. It further suggested to consider arranging formal working agreements with countries on a broader geographical basis and cooperation with non-member countries and other organizations to strengthen AFoCO's position.

The Secretariat also endorses the views of the RP to develop the membership strategy recalling that the 2019 AFoCO Ministerial Meeting reaffirmed the necessity of engaging all Asian countries to fulfill the vision, mission and goals of AFoCO. The meeting further noted that "sustainable financing and institutional strengthening are an important factor to consider while pursuing expansion of new membership."

Another important views shared by member countries relate to the scope of membership and observer that is stipulated by the Agreement texts (§ 5 and 6). Given that many Parties were "not in a position to consider some of the recommendations of the institutional review that requires the amendment to the Agreement texts", for the meantime engaging new state members either as Parties or observers will be confined to countries in Asia. However, considering that many of potential resource partners exist in other regions beyond Asia, the Secretariat views that AFoCO starts working with those countries through partnership arrangements. But in the long-run, creating avenues for participation of non-Asian states with full membership status may be revisited in the course of developing membership strategy through a dialogue process under the Assembly.

Systems View (R7)

The RP diagnosed that ongoing projects and activities of AFoCO are site oriented without careful examination of their linkages to the social development, industry or markets. Without taking a systems approach, the RP viewed the results of projects will have a short life-time and further suggested AFoCO develop a manual of how the systems view should be taken care of in future projects and activities.

To approach the systems view, the Secretariat has put a premium on building institutional capability and competence in adopting systems thinking. An interim process to develop a manual on Systems View will be taken in terms of enhancement of the project manual and its related guidelines by integrating the principles of systems view in the overall improvement of the project management cycle (from project formation to implementation and evaluation). Recently adopted internal operational policies, especially 'Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy' and 'Gender Policy', are viewed to have particular implications for a shift towards systems approach departing from silo thinking.

Governance (R14)

The RP assessed that the overall governance of AFoCO needs to be more organized and the recommendations were provided on three key governance aspects:

- i. to establish an Executive Board of the Assembly to increase governance efficiency by facilitating the preparations for and follow-up of the work of the Assembly; and*
- ii. to increase the term of the ED from two to three years, with the possibility of extension for another term since it is also related to the sound management of AFoCO.*

Meanwhile, in regards to the terms of the ED, many of the Parties viewed the matter is governed by the Agreement texts (§9) hence it is too early to consider the said recommendations. Taking note on the position of the Parties above, the Secretariat will facilitate the due consideration through a dialogue process under the Assembly and take appropriate follow-up actions.

Apart from the recommendations of the RP, AFoCO has also been strengthening its overall governance by adopting new institutional policies, such as policies on ethics and conflicts of interest for ED and for the Assembly of AFoCO; policy on anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism; and policy on information disclosure.

III. Follow-up Report and Action Plan

Recommendation from the Review Panel	Responsible department	Baseline	Target	Progress (November 2020)
A. Short Term				
Vision and Mission (R1)	SO	- Current vision & mission statements appear in the Strategic Plan (2019-2023)	- New formulation of the vision & mission statements and due consideration by the Assembly	- New provisional statements of vision & mission to be reviewed and endorsed by the Assembly
Niche (R2)	SO	- No clear niche position identified in the organizational strategic framework	- Clear definition of niche through an open interactive process with participation of stakeholders at all levels	- New provisional definition of niche positions of AFoCO to be consulted with many stakeholders around AFoCO
Priority Areas (R3)	SO	- Current set of priority areas defined in the Strategic Plan (2019-2023)	- Newly identified set of priority areas that match well with new vision, mission, and niche of AFoCO - Reflection of contingent changes to the Strategic Plan	- A new provisional set of priority areas to be finalized along the strategic process of revising vision, mission and niche of AFoCO
Cooperation with Regional & International Partners (R10)	ED, VED	- Ongoing partnership development guided by the Assembly's decision and recommendations from the 2019 AFoCO Ministerial Meeting	- Statement of guiding principles for future partnership development	- A new provisional set of the guiding principles for partnership development is prepared for consultation with the members

Recommendation from the Review Panel	Responsible department	Baseline	Target	Progress (November 2020)
Capacity as an Intergovernmental Organization (R11)	ED, VED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment by the RP: As a relatively young and small organization, several capacities that are expected to be possessed by an inter-governmental organization are not in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To improve and increase these capacities, in particular by building partnership with other international organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Various opportunities to develop institutional capacities have been sought and found along the partnership development scheme (i.e. short-term secondment to FAO RAP, assistance from the UNCCD Communication team in drafting AFoCO communication guidelines, development of in-house capacity to conduct a participatory training with RECOFTC) - Efforts were made to increase the credibility and engagement in international fora (i.e. observer status in the UN General Assembly and the Rio conventions, ODA-eligibility status under the OECD DAC, and accreditation with GCF)
Dissemination and Communication (R12)	SO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing communication management in AFoCO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To develop and operationalize a dissemination and communication strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A draft dissemination and communication strategy is developed for consultation with the member countries
Management (R15)	ED, VED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current organizational and management structure; staffing situation; Staff Regulations; and Financial Regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full implementation of results-based management system; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance appraisal system established; - Capacity development unit created to coordinate

Recommendation from the Review Panel	Responsible department	Baseline	Target	Progress (November 2020)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Re-definition and re-classification of jobs in the Secretariat; - Revisit Terms of Reference of executive officers (ED, Vice ED) - Transition from soiled culture to one that is more collaborative; - Recruitment and staff development - Inclusion of the full package of benefits for staff in reference to UN remuneration system in the Staff Regulations; - Streamlining the Financial Regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> various capacity development activities; - A director for Cooperation and Project Division recruited
Organizational Structure (R16)	ED, VED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current organizational and management structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restructuring project division along priority areas; - Designation of one P person to coordinate resource mobilization function - Streamlining the chain of command 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delegation of Authority (DOA) established

Recommendation from the Review Panel	Responsible department	Baseline	Target	Progress (November 2020)
B. Medium Term				
AFoCO's Funding – Membership & External (R5)	SO	Assessment of the RP on current funding situation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lion's share of membership contribution from the host country - Substantial competition over external funding among different organizations with overlapping agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To develop and operationalize a resource mobilization strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A draft resource mobilization strategy to be consulted with member countries
Profile of Activities (R6)	DE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uneven number of projects developed for each priority area - Ongoing projects with fragmented scope and limited synergies among them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To develop a list of requirements regarding the profile of future projects and activities based on revised vision, mission and niches of AFoCO. - To initiate a certain number of projects and activities that demonstrate regional and global perspective and responsibility of AFoCO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A set of tentative guiding principles for the profile future projects developed - Three (3) new multi-country regional projects being developed
Sustainability (R8)	DE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition of 'Sustainability' as one of core value in the current Strategic Plan - Current project manual and operational guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AFoCO's statement of sustainability - Reflection of sustainability criteria and standards in key manuals and guidelines for project management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project manuals and operational guidelines being reviewed for revision - Environmental & social safeguard policy, gender policy developed

Recommendation from the Review Panel	Responsible department	Baseline	Target	Progress (November 2020)
Policy Relevance (R9)	SO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On-going efforts to make AFoCO's operation relevant to policy contexts of the member countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To develop and operationalize a plan to enhance policy-relevance in the AFoCO's operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collection of forest policy and regulations of the member countries - Ministerial meeting and Achievement Workshop organized in 2019 - A draft plan to achieve policy-relevance in the AFoCO's operations, developed for the Assembly's consideration and endorsement
Capacity Building (R13)	CDC/SO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On-going capacity building programs at the HQ and the RETC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To develop and operationalize a capacity building strategy that contribute to vision, mission, and niche of AFoCO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity Development Coordination team created as an organizational unit dedicated for planning and implementation of capacity development programs
C. Long Term				
Membership (R4)	SO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current membership with AFoCO (12 Parties and 2 observers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To reach out to non-Asian states under partnership arrangement - To discuss and establish the membership strategy through a dialogue process under the Assembly and take appropriate follow-up actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial views and advice received from the member countries through the 3rd Assembly and the AFoCO Ministerial Meeting

Recommendation from the Review Panel	Responsible department	Baseline	Target	Progress (November 2020)
Systems View (R7)	IM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment of the RP on on-going projects: site-oriented, limited consideration of the linkages to the socio, environmental, economic factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To develop and operationalize a manual on systems view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy and Gender Policy are developed to partly adopt the systems view in future projects
Governance (R14)	SO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current governance structure, consisting of the Assembly and the Secretariat - A term of the ED defined by the Agreement texts 	<p>To consider the following recommendations of the RP through a dialogue process under the Assembly and take appropriate follow-up actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To establish an Executive Board of the Assembly to increase governance efficiency by facilitating the preparations for and follow-up of the work of Assembly - To increase the term of the ED from two to three years, with the possibility of extension for another term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial views collected from the member countries through the 3rd Assembly - A proposal for establishing a subsidiary body to be considered at the 4th Assembly

=====