

Fifth Session of the Assembly
25-27 October 2021, Hybrid

Agenda Item 7.3

Project Development Concerns

Establishment of expert pool for project appraisal

1. In accordance with Article 4.1 of the Project Manual, the Secretariat requested the Member Countries to nominate/review the Expert Pool to facilitate project appraisal and expanded expertise for other purposes (Ref. No.: DE-112 on 21 April 2021).
2. Based on the updated areas of expertise vis-à-vis AFoCO Strategic Priority Areas, a total of 23 areas of expertise for the Expert Pool are enumerated as follows:

Areas of Expertise for the Expert Pool

Forest restoration and rehabilitation

- a. Forest assessment (forest resource inventory, remote sensing technology, statistics)
- b. Forest restoration of degraded land
- c. Breeding and genetic resources

Forest and climate change

- d. Climate change mitigation in forestry (inc. REDD+)
- e. Climate change adaptation in forestry

Forest ecosystems services and biodiversity conservation

- f. Forest ecosystem services and Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)
- g. Biodiversity conservation

Social forestry and local livelihood improvement

- h. Agroforestry
- i. Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)
- j. Timber Products
- k. Eco-tourism, recreational/healing forest

Forest disaster management

- l. Forest fire management
- m. Forest insects and diseases
- n. Forest landslide

Forest policy and economics

- o. Forest policy and governance
- p. Forest law and environmental legislation (inc. land tenure)
- q. Forest resource economics and valuation
- r. Social economic aspects of forestry

Special type of landscape

- s. Dryland
- t. Mangrove
- u. Peatland
- v. Alpine

Forest education

- w. Forest education

3. As of 14 October 2021, a total nine (9) countries, namely Bhutan, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, and Viet Nam have submitted their nominations. The term of engagement of experts will cover three (3) years, renewable upon official written confirmation from the Member Countries. The experts will be engaged in appraisal of the project proposals in the schedule of project development in 2021-2022. Corresponding acknowledgement letter was issued by the Secretariat referring to the partial submission of concerned NFPs including request for further nomination.

2021-2022 project development schedule

4. The Secretariat has been providing guidance to member countries in terms of AFoCO's project development timelines in view of the pertinent provisions of the Project Manual and Decision 30-III-19R authorizing the Project Appraisal Committee to endorse the project to proceed with the funding process. Likewise, in consideration of the Korean government's planning and budgeting cycle, the appraisal process should be completed within the first quarter of each year. In order to cope up thereto, the project development schedule for 2021-2022 was circulated to Member Countries via official letter (Ref. No.: DE-107 sent on 20 April 2021). Under the 2021-2022 project timeline, the Secretariat recognized Cambodia, Mongolia, and Thailand submitted their CNs, and the ongoing initiatives of Kazakhstan and the Philippines to develop CNs as of 13 October.

5. Following the 2021-2022 project timeline, the indicative project development schedule in 2021-2022 is prepared as follows:

Date	Schedule	Action by
At any time but no later than 1 October 2021	Submission of Concept Note - Review by the Secretariat within 3 weeks	NFP, Secretariat
By 12 November 2021	Submission of Project Proposal	NFP

By 3 December 2021	Internal review by the Secretariat on the Proposals	Secretariat
6 December 2021 – 28 January 2022	Establishment of Project Appraisal Panel (PAP) for each project including actual appraisal by the PAP members	Secretariat, PAP
By 11 February 2022	Organize Project Appraisal Committee (PAC) meeting and donor's meeting	Secretariat PAC
Last week of October 2022	Approval of projects	Assembly
November-December 2022	Organize Donor's Meeting	Secretariat, Donors
After the Donor's Meeting	The project is launched according to inception arrangement of the member countries	Secretariat, NFP

Development of AFoCO Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) Guidelines

6. Tasked by the Assembly (Decision 28-III-19R), the Secretariat developed a draft Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) Guidelines based on the Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy. The ESMS Guidelines will provide guidelines to assess the environmental and social risks and likely impacts during the preparation and implementation of programs, projects, and activities carried out by AFoCO.

7. The ESMS Guidelines will undergo pre-testing with one (1) of each project proposals developed by the Member Country within the schedule of project development in 2021-2022. Upon which, further improvement and finalization of the guidelines will be conducted. Corresponding training and capacity building activities will also be provided for project proponents, Implementing Agencies (IAs), and relevant stakeholders including popularization of the ESMS Guidelines involving Low Risk projects.

Points for consideration

8. The Assembly may wish to:
- acknowledge the developed Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) Guidelines and plan for pre-testing and its full implementation in due course; and
 - task the Secretariat to facilitate the necessary actions on the project development according to the indicative project development timeline.

*Appendix: Guidelines for Environmental and Social Management System (draft as of 16 September 2021) is appended as **G-4-21R**.*