

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

Agenda Item 16

Report of the Donor's Meeting in 2021 and plan for the next Donor's Meeting

Report of the 3rd Donors Meeting

1. The third Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO) Donors Meeting was held on 26 February 2021 at the AFoCO Secretariat in Seoul, Republic of Korea. The meeting was attended by a delegation from the Korea Forest Service (KFS) representing the Government of the Republic of Korea, and the Secretariat.
2. The meeting had been informed by the Secretariat on:
 - Status of completed projects and final evaluation results of the selected projects;
 - Progress updates on AFoCO projects, including issues and concerns;
 - New projects approved and proposed for funding;
 - Project proposals being developed; and
 - 2021-2025 forward estimates and targets for project fund mobilization.
3. Through the meeting, the Secretariat proposed the KFS to render its voluntary contributions for the new and on-going projects of AFoCO and the KFS has generously pledged KRW 5.0 billion (equivalent to USD 4.1 million) for 2021 contribution.
4. The meeting noted that by receiving the newly pledged KRW 5.0 billion, the Secretariat would have a target of disbursing USD 9.5 million this year. Given the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and a sudden political change in some countries, the KFS advised the Secretariat to rationalize the target of financial execution as much as the supported projects can produce the intended tangible results.
5. The meeting also noted the plan of the Secretariat to enhance its project management capacities by rationalizing the deployment of staff members and forging partnership with existing regional cooperation centers.
6. Through the meeting, the KFS reiterated its request for the following:
 - To put the top priority on project fund execution, particularly in responding to the anticipation of enhanced monitoring requirements of the Korean government on its

contributions to the international organizations under newly enacted “Act on Contributions to International Organization.” Considering this policy will be enforced from 2022 through pre-assessment period of 2021, the Secretariat is requested to demonstrate good value for money for both operational budget and project funds.

- To develop quality projects in due consideration of the Korean government’s guidelines relevant to Official Development Aid, including ‘ROK ODA Strategy 2021’ and ‘International Development Cooperation Evaluation Guidelines 2021’.
- To minimize the level of remaining unobligated balance by scrutinizing the causes of delay in project executions and devising timely solutions to mitigate them.
- To prepare a realistic project execution plan for all projects in 2021 on an annual and quarterly basis.
- To make joint efforts in diversifying sources of funds and increase the size of funds to support the organizational project portfolio. The KFS is willing to fully support the Secretariat reaching out to potential donors, such as through the German Embassy to Korea.

7. The Secretariat committed to take necessary measures to comply with the requests from the KFS, particularly in ensuring good value for money for contributions from the Korean government to AFoCO and requested the KFS to keep the Secretariat informed on any updates or detailed requirements relevant to the “Act on Contributions to International Organization.”

Plan for the next Donor’s Meeting

8. Through the 3rd Donor’s Meeting, the Secretariat proposed the next donor’s meeting to be held in November or December 2021 so as to facilitate the inception of new projects at the onset of the following year.

Points for consideration

9. The Assembly may wish to:
- Take note on the request and suggestion from the Republic of Korea on the administration of its contributions to the organization; and
 - Encourage each Party to render support in taking necessary actions, such as expediting the project fund execution and ensuring production of greater impacts from the project implementation.
