

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

Agenda Item 5.3

Promotion and Enhance of Partnership

Background

1. Recalling the objectives set out in Paragraph 2(e) of Article 3 of the 'Agreement on the Establishment of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization' (hereinafter 'the Agreement'), the organization is mandated to promote partnerships between the Parties and with other entities to carry out cooperative activities by building upon the current initiatives of other forest-related international agreements and organizations.
2. With the outlook on the expansion of Parties, the organization needs to consider resources to conduct various activities related to climate change and addressing the UN SDGs. In order to mobilize financial resources on a large scale for long-term plans, resources from diverse sources from both public and private sectors should be sought.
3. The Institutional Review Report also suggested AFoCO to develop a membership strategy built on a broader geographical concept beyond Asia. The Advisory Roundtable advised the Executive Director to develop a new category for participation and engagement of countries and entities other than 'Party' and 'Observer' to have a window for diverse resources mobilization and expansion of a cooperative network as well.
4. Having a new category of participation and engagement will foster the Organization to achieve its objectives, in consistency with the global initiatives such as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and etc., by building a strategic partnership, tapping the expertise for capacity building, and widening resources within and beyond Asia.
5. Based on paragraph 4(a) and 4(f) of Article 9 of the Agreement, the Secretariat prepared a draft of a new category of participation and engagement for AFoCO in the geographical location in Asia and beyond for consideration of the Assembly.

Proposed category of partnership

6. The term, a '**Partner**' may be considered as a new category for engagement to AFoCO in addition to Parties and Observers as defined in the Agreement¹ and gives the organization wider windows and opportunities of resource mobilization and cooperative network.

Definition of Partner

7. A '**Partner**' is a country or an organization who collaborates with AFoCO in terms of projects and programs without legally binding obligations, mandatory financial contribution, and authority to take part in the decision-making of the organization.

8. There are two types of Partners:

- a. '**Partner Country**' is the government of a country which is not a Party, irrespective of its geographical location, but has the intention to collaborate with AFoCO.
- b. '**Partner Organization**' is an organization (either public or private) working in relevant sectors with the intention to collaborate with AFoCO.

9. Key consideration points for identifying Partners are as below:

- a. Countries concern about climate change in developing countries in Asia
- b. Countries committed or pledged a reasonable amount of funds in ODA or voluntary for global initiatives and programs
- c. Countries have an interest in developing cooperative relations with the government, public or private sector
- d. synergize development of strategic partnership to consider pillars, principles, and/or strategies aligned with AFoCO

Qualification of Partners

10. Partners should:

- support the vision and mission of AFoCO
- support AFoCO's policies and activities
- be willing to make voluntary contributions for AFoCO programs and projects

Partners' Role for AFoCO

11. AFoCO partners may:

- provide and share their knowledge and experience for achieving the organization's vision and mission for mutual benefits

¹ In accordance with Paragraph 1(c) of Article 6, Observer status may be granted to international organizations and non-governmental organizations acting in the field of forestry. In accordance with Rule 6.1.2 of the Rules of Procedure, any entity that wishes to obtain Observer status shall submit to the Secretariat its letter of application, duly endorsed by the governing body of the entity, not later than forty (40) calendar days before the opening of a regular session. The Secretariat shall review the application, then present them, with a recommendation to the Assembly at its regular session, which will approve Observer status on a no-objection basis in accordance with these Rules of Procedure.

- provide voluntary contribution, exchange of human resources, and sharing best practices and tools for projects and programs
- propose activities for fulfilling the Organization's objectives

Benefits for the Partners

12. AFoCO can promote Partners' interests and concerns on global partnership on forest and climate change through intergovernmental organizations:

- Partners can have the leverage to mobilize resources with governments and international organizations through AFoCO.
- Partners can expand their influence on AFoCO policies and make impacts through cooperation with AFoCO on projects and programs in Asia.
- Partners can participate in AFoCO conferences and meetings with prior agreement of AFoCO.
- Partners may send a specialist to conduct programs or projects supported by the Partner.

Procedures to become the Partner

13. To become a Partner to AFoCO, any proponent or applicant should follow the procedures:

- a. The proponent country or organization shall express their intention to become a partner to AFoCO by sending a Letter of Intention to the Secretariat, or any Party to the Agreement on the Establishment of AFoCO may propose, in writing, to invite a country or an organization.
- b. The Secretariat will review and seek the consent of the Assembly. The Assembly shall consider the Letter of Intention or the proposal to invite, and the Secretariat's recommendation, and grant Partner status.

Potential Partners

14. Partner Countries:

- a. Norway
- b. Finland
- c. Sweden
- d. Netherlands
- e. Germany
- f. Switzerland (Swiss Confederation)
- g. Australia
- h. New Zealand

15. Partner Organizations:

- a. European Forest Institute (EFI)
- b. International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)
- c. International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO)
- d. World Resource Institute (WRI)
- e. Mekong Institute (MI)
- f. The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

- g. International Institute for Applied System Analysis (IIASA)
- h. Samsung
- i. Hyundai
- j. POSCO
- k. SK Group (SK Forest / SK Innovation)
- l. Nonghyup (NH) Bank
- m. Industrial Bank of Korea (IBK)
- n. Development institutions in European countries supporting pillars/programs/initiatives align with AFoCO (e.g., Norad, SIDA, SDA, GIZ, etc.)
- o. Others (private sector players in Member Countries)

Points for consideration

16. The Assembly may wish to:
- consider and adopt the decision for the “Partner”, including Partner Country and Partner Organization, as the new category of participation to the Organization, and
 - tasks the Secretariat to take actions required, including but not limited to the preparation of the Rules of Procedures, accordingly.
-