

**D-52-1 (Decision 52-IX-23R)**

A-23-9-5 (Annex 1)



# **CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (2025–2034)**

**In response to the climate crisis,  
the AFoCO Climate Action Plan will help Member Countries  
bring down massive amounts of carbon from the atmosphere through  
restoration of at least 100,000 hectares of terrestrial forests and mangroves,  
and improve livelihoods through  
100 nature-based community forestry enterprises and 20 green villages  
supported with digital innovations in forest database management and forest  
disaster risk reduction  
and a climate action matching platform**

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# Section 1. About the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization

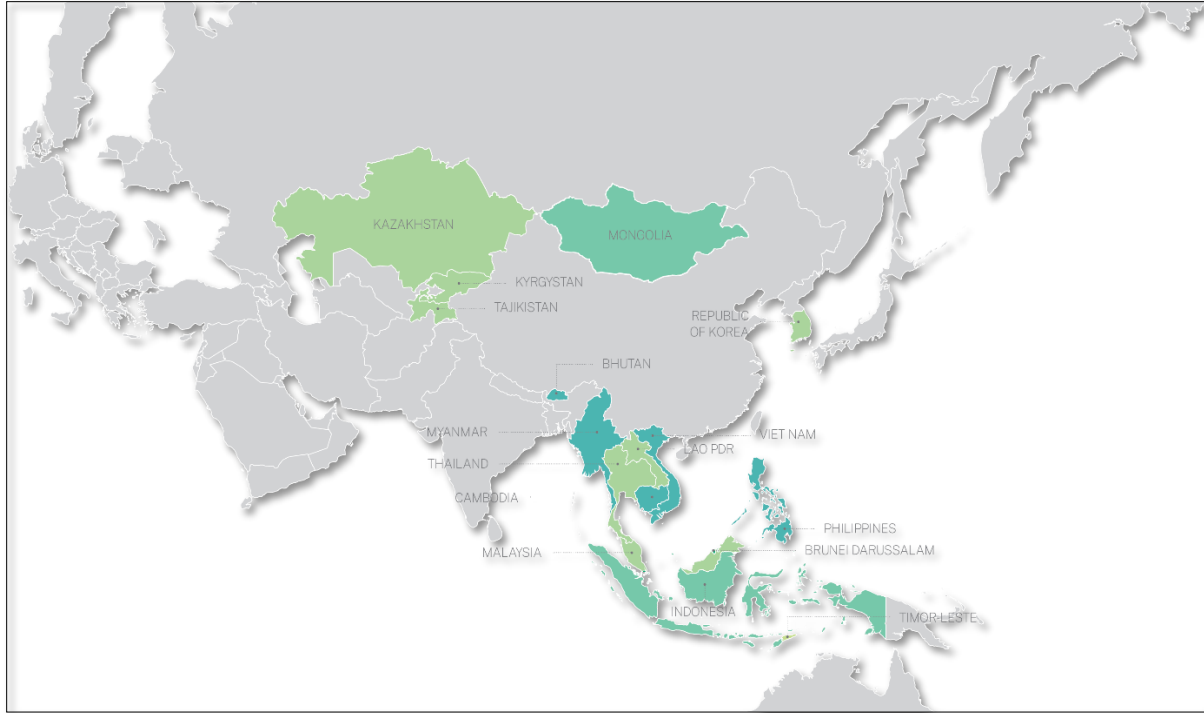
## Quick facts

- A treaty-based intergovernmental organization with 14 Parties and two Observer countries
- A Permanent Observer at the United Nations General Assembly (admitted 2020)
- Overseas Development Aid status granted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (2021)
- Supporting Partner to the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2022)
- Nine (9) completed and twenty-five (25) on-going projects on forest land restoration and rehabilitation, climate-change adaptation, forest disaster risk reduction, and community livelihoods and institutional capability enhancement
- Six (6) research and development projects partnered with the National Institute of Forest Science, Republic of Korea
- Twenty five (25) partnerships and growing

Beginning its operations as an intergovernmental organization in April 2018, AFoCO currently has 16 Member Countries consisting of 14 Parties to the Agreement — Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam — plus two Observer Countries: Malaysia and Singapore.

AFoCO was originally established on the solid foundation of the 2012 Forest Cooperation Agreement between the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Republic of Korea with a vision and mission that has been carried through to the present, with membership expanding to include countries in Central, South and East Asia.

AFoCO's mandates are aligned with, and responsive to, global climate and development objectives, including the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on climate change. AFoCO is committed to facilitating the transfer and translation of best policies and practices for site-specific actions through numerous projects in Asia. AFoCO focuses on enhancing the capacities of stakeholders through research and development, sharing of knowledge and experience, technology transfer and exchange and, most importantly, forging partnerships between the Parties and others for cooperative activities, building on the initiatives of forest-related international agreements and organizations.



**Figure 1.** AFOCO Parties and Observers (together: 'Member Countries')

**The key to addressing the climate crisis is reduction of deforestation, desertification and degradation of forests and land**

Through joint approaches with Member Countries, AFOCO undertakes action-oriented, cooperation programs focused on addressing the climate crisis through

- Sustainable management of forests
- Conservation of biodiversity
- Maintenance and enhancement of forest ecosystem services
- Reforestation and rehabilitation of forest landscapes
- Support to REDD+ initiatives
- Mitigation of forest-related disasters through technology exchanges
- Enhancing resilience of forest-dependent communities through development of sustainable enterprises

## Section 2. Why the need for a climate action plan?

**“Today’s IPCC Working Group 1 report is a CODE RED for humanity.”**

*United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres in 2021*

### **AFoCO needs a Climate Action Plan because Asia — and the world — needs urgent action!**

Working Group 1 of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued its contribution to the Panel’s Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) in 2021. The Group reported that many climate impacts were becoming ‘irreversible’ unless we take immediate action. That was in 2021 and not enough action has been undertaken.

Several analyses of the timing of the 1.5 °C and 2 °C thresholds have been conducted. The IPCC Special Report on 1.5 °C (SR1.5) found that, “Global warming is likely to reach 1.5 °C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate”<sup>1</sup>. The AR6 found that, “In all scenarios assessed here except SSP5-8.5, the central estimate of crossing the 1.5 °C threshold lies in the early 2030s, about 10 years earlier than the midpoint of the likely range (2030 to 2052) assessed in the SR1.5, which assumed continuation of the then-current warming rate.”<sup>2</sup>. The ‘early 2030s’ deadline for exceeding the 1.5 °C threshold is consistent with estimates based on linear extrapolation of the global temperature trend<sup>3</sup> (Figure 2).

Further, although the IPCC SR1.5 concluded that emissions to date have not been sufficient to cause warming of 1.5 °C on their own, the relationship between cumulative emissions and global temperature change implies that one additional decade at the current rate of annual emissions would be sufficient to create a one-third likelihood of exceeding the 1.5 °C threshold<sup>4</sup>.

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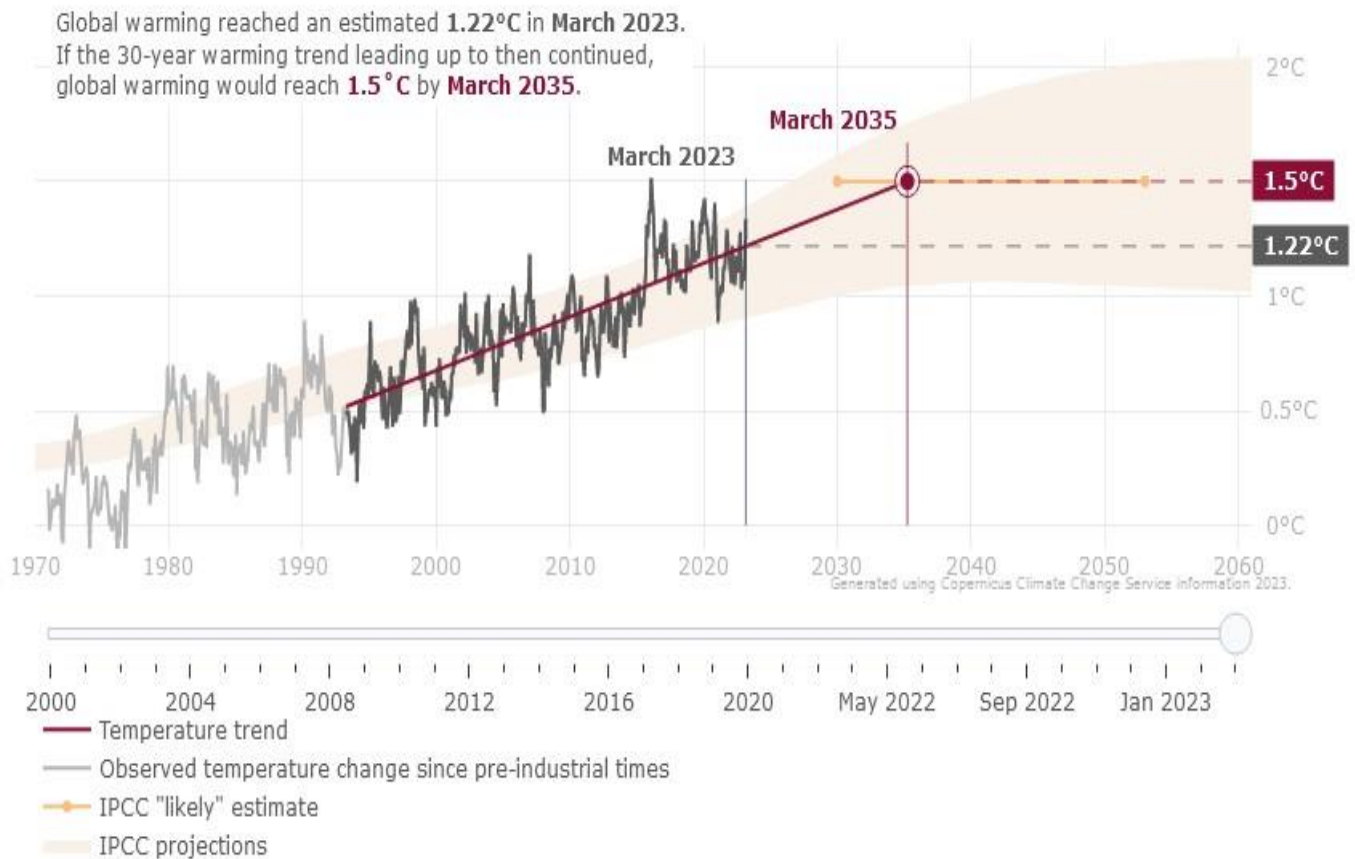
<sup>1</sup> Allen M, Babiker M, Chen Y, de Coninck HC. 2018. IPCC SR15: Summary for policymakers. In: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. *IPCC Special Report Global Warming of 1.5 °C*. Genève, Switzerland: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

<sup>2</sup> Lee J-Y et al. 2021. 2021: future global climate: scenario-based projections and near-term information. In: Masson-Delmotte V et al, eds. *Climate change 2021: the physical science basis in contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Cambridge, UK; New York NY, USA: Cambridge University Press. pp. 553–672. <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-working-group-i/>.

<sup>3</sup> Amici A. 2021. *Global temperature trend monitor: user guide*. Reading, UK: Copernicus Climate Change Service, European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts.

<sup>4</sup> Diffenbaugh NS, Barnes EA. 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2207183120>.





**Figure 2.** Estimate by the Copernicus Climate Change Service of the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts of the 1.5 °C threshold being reached in March 2035, based on current trend<sup>5</sup>

Also, according to the Emissions Gap Report 2022 of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), there is “no credible pathway to 1.5 °C in place” today<sup>6</sup>. The Earth is on track to exceed 1.5 °C warming within the next decade.<sup>7</sup>

Even targets in countries’ nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to limiting global warming — which were enhanced at the 2022 Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change — take less than 1% off projected 2030 emissions and need to be further increased by a total of 23 gigatonnes of carbon-dioxide equivalents (GtCO<sub>2</sub>e) to achieve the 2030 climate target (Figure 3).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <https://cds.climate.copernicus.eu/cdsapp#!/software/app-c3s-global-temperature-trend-monitor?tab=app>

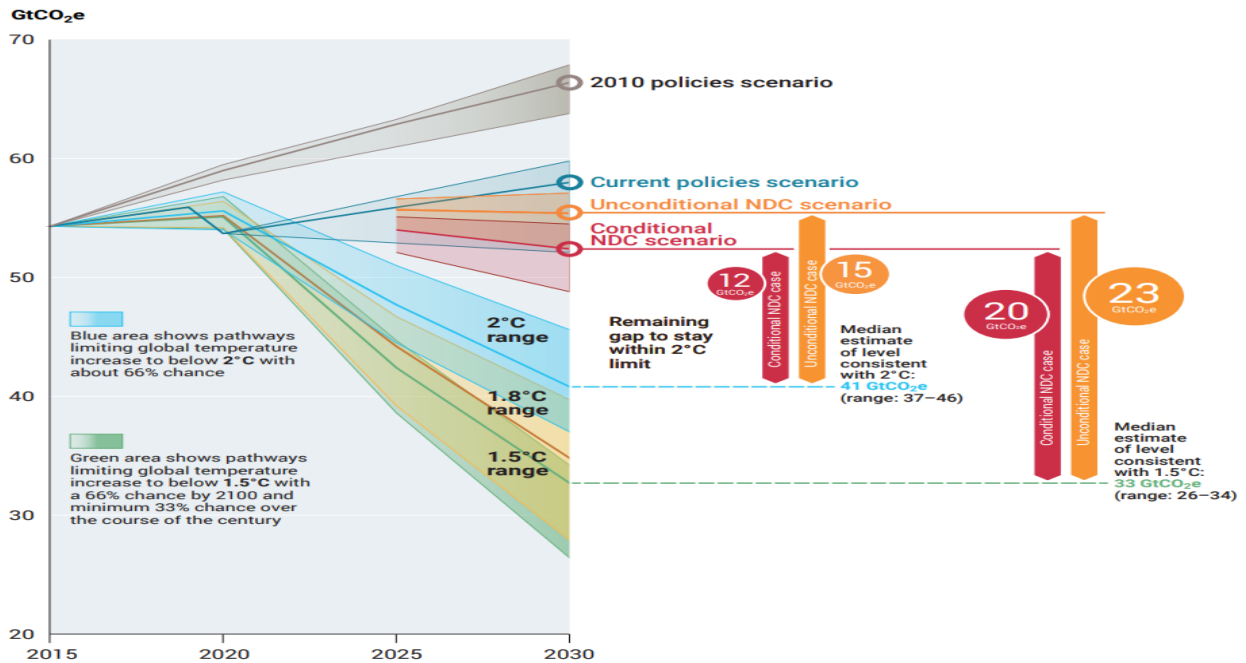
<sup>6</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. 2022. *Emissions gap report 2022: the closing window: climate crisis calls for rapid transformation of societies*. Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Environment Programme. <https://www.unep.org/emissions-gap-report-2022>.

<sup>7</sup> Diffenbaugh NS, Barnes EA. 2023. Data-driven predictions of the time remaining until critical global warming thresholds are reached. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 120(6):e2207183120. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2207183120>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.unep.org/emissions-gap-report-2022>.

The emissions gap in 2030 is predicted to be 15 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e annually for a 2 °C pathway and 23 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e for a 1.5 °C pathway. This assumes full implementation of the unconditional NDCs and is for a 66% chance of staying below the stated temperature limit.

These emissions will almost double by 2050 if current practices remain in place as populations and incomes grow.<sup>9</sup>



**Figure 3. Emissions gap**  
Source: UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2022.

Further, the most recent science on ‘Earth systems tipping points’ suggests an even more dire situation. Five tipping points are likely to be surpassed by the time 1.5 °C is reached.

These include accelerated melting of permafrost, release of enormous quantities of CO<sub>2</sub> and methane into the atmosphere, and the collapse of the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets, accelerating sea-level rise to 1 m or more by 2100.<sup>10</sup>

Together, these facts make it obvious that the global goal of net-zero emissions by 2050, in line with the Paris Agreement, is totally inadequate to stabilize a warming climate.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.unep.org/emissions-gap-report-2022>.

<sup>10</sup> Armstrong McKay DI, Staal A, Abrams JF, Winkelmann R, Sakschewski B, Loriani S, Fetzer I, Cornell SE, Rockström J, Lenton TM. 2022. Exceeding 1.5 °C global warming could trigger multiple climate tipping points. *Science* 377(6611). doi: 10.1126/science.abn7950

## Section 3. Forests are the solution

**Protecting, restoring and sustainably managing forests could deliver 30–36% of the emissions reductions needed to avert climate catastrophe.**

*Making good on the Glasgow Climate Pact: a call to action to achieve one gigatonne of emissions reductions from forests by 2025, United Nations Environment Programme*

**The private sector has an enormous role to play in [mitigating the climate crisis], undertaking the investment and technological innovation that will underpin low carbon growth, providing finance for mitigation and adaptation, adopting lower carbon production processes, and encouraging and facilitating more climate conscious purchasing decisions...**

[The private sector and climate change in developing countries](#)

Overseas Development Institute

The UNEP report released during the COP27 UN climate summit in November 2022<sup>11</sup>, revealed that to have a 66% chance of limiting global warming to no more than 2 °C, it is critical to sequester 11–13 gigatonnes of atmospheric carbon emissions per year by 2030. The report argues that protecting, restoring and sustainably managing forests could deliver 30–36% of the emissions reductions needed to avert climate catastrophe, specifically, “[p]rotect[ing] natural ecosystems, such as forests and peatlands, from conversion for agriculture”.<sup>12</sup>

Measured against a milestone of paying for 1 gigatonne of high-integrity emissions reductions from forests by 2025, public and private commitments are only at 24%.<sup>13</sup>

The report calls for a boldly increased forest carbon floor price of USD 30–50 and sufficient volume of payments to unlock supply and leverage demand; accelerated upfront finance for REDD+ readiness and implementation; high integrity with robust quantification, mechanisms to deal with leakage and reversals, and strong adherence to safeguards; and effective and equitable participation and benefits sharing.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. 2022. *Making good on the Glasgow Climate Pact: a call to action to achieve one gigaton of emissions reductions from forests by 2025*. Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Environment Programme.

<https://www.unep.org/resources/report/making-good-glasgow-climate-pact-call-action-achieve-one-gigaton-emissions>  
<sup>12</sup> <https://www.unep.org/emissions-gap-report-2022>.

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. 2022. <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/making-good-glasgow-climate-pact-call-action-achieve-one-gigaton-emissions>

<sup>14</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. 2022. <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/making-good-glasgow-climate-pact-call-action-achieve-one-gigaton-emissions>

Regarding private-sector contributions to alleviating the climate crisis, according to CDP<sup>15</sup>, “water and forests are rising up corporate agendas as more companies than ever take leading action; 14 pioneering companies were awarded Triple A scores for their work across climate change, forests and water security; a record 13,000+ companies reported environmental data through CDP in 2021 but nearly 17,000 companies worth USD 21 trillion were still failing to disclose.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> CDP is a not-for-profit charity that runs the global disclosure system for investors, companies, cities, states and regions to manage their environmental impacts.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.cdp.net/en/articles/media/2-percent-of-companies-worldwide-worth-12-trillion-named-on-cdps-a-list-of-environmental-leaders>

## Section 4. State and importance of Asian forests

Although the forests of Asia and the Pacific cover only about 7% of the Earth's land surface, they host nearly two-thirds of the floral and faunal diversity and store 68% of carbon stocks.<sup>17</sup>

Forests in the Central and East Asian regions play an essential role in mitigating climate change, sequestering millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide but also alleviating the impacts of extreme weather events. In addition, these forests are source of fuel, wood and income for the often poor, rural populations.<sup>18</sup>

Under the Bonn Challenge, commitments of forest restoration in Asia are around 176 million ha, although research suggests the total area suitable for restoration is more than double this area:<sup>19</sup> Over 150 million ha are available for large-scale restoration and around 300 million ha can be used for mosaic-landscape restoration wherein trees and forests are combined with other land uses.<sup>20</sup> Further, detailed survey results from AFoCO focal representatives in eight Member Countries indicated that total degraded land area is estimated to be more than 200 million ha.<sup>21</sup>

To address this, restoration and rehabilitation through the planting of trees in state-owned forests, private plantations, parklands, rangelands, and farmlands through agroforestry offers innovative, low-cost tools for resource users to improve the ecological health of whole landscapes alongside increasing the resilience of people's livelihoods.

### MORE THAN CARBON

Asia's forests, of course, aren't just a collection of trees storing carbon; they are home not only to much of the world's diverse fauna and flora<sup>22</sup>, which act as the foundation of our food systems, but also livelihoods for hundreds of millions of people, many of whom live below the poverty line. The COVID-19 pandemic has severely disrupted their already precarious livelihoods, putting increased pressure on forests for food and material for consumption and sale. Other benefits of Asian forests include watershed and climate regulation, soil stabilization and protection, and habitat for agricultural pollinators and natural predators.

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<sup>17</sup> [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/jrc-news/southeast-asias-forests-their-future-affects-ours-2019-05-21\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/jrc-news/southeast-asias-forests-their-future-affects-ours-2019-05-21_en)

<sup>18</sup> <https://unece.org/DAM/timber/publications/sp-47-soccaf-en.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Li J, Merten J, Burke G, Mumford EC, eds. 2018. *Application of Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) in Asia. Summary of findings from the first Asia regional ROAM learning exchange*. Bangkok, Thailand: IUCN Asia Regional Office. <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2018-053-En.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Li J, Merten J, Burke G, Mumford EC, eds. 2018. <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2018-053-En.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> This total included survey data on degraded land areas from Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar and Philippines.

<sup>22</sup> "Southeast Asia is a bio-cultural hotspot encompassing about 20% of global plant, animal and marine species. The region contains three mega-diverse countries — Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines — where four of the world's 25 biodiversity hotspots are located. Its montane ecosystems are particularly noted for their high diversity of ferns, mosses and orchids." Subramanian SM, Gasparatos A, Braimoh AK, Elliott W. 2011. *Unraveling the drivers of Southeast Asia's biodiversity loss*. Tokyo, Japan: United Nations University.

## **WAY FORWARD**

Asia's forests are continuing to decline in area and in quality. This is despite international agreements to reduce, halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation to address not only the climate crisis but the multiple associated crises, such as increasing food insecurity amid growing populations, decreasing fertility and chemical pollution of soils, desertification, new and devastating outbreaks of pests and diseases, increasing inequity and declining rural prosperity.

The drivers of decline are various and persistent but not irreducible and there is the willingness and technologies available to rehabilitate and reforest damaged land.

With determined, joint actions across Asia, we can reverse the trend and achieve the vision of AFoCO: a Greener Asia with climate-resilient and sustainable forests, landscapes and communities.

## **Section 5. Climate Action Plan (2025–2034)**

In response to the climate crisis and in recognition of the critical role of forests in mitigating the crisis and AFoCO's unique position and responsibility to act, a 10-year Climate Action Plan must be in place as a program under the AFoCO Strategic Plan (2024–2030).

AFoCO puts major effort into assisting Member Countries enhance their contributions to achieving the Paris Agreement's goals and accelerate efforts to remove large amounts of atmospheric carbon to stabilize global temperatures.

AFoCO bolsters support for a fair, equitable, prosperous, adaptable and sustainable transition to post-pandemic and post-fossil-fuel societies in Member Countries.

AFoCO works harder and smarter to narrow the developmental gap among Member Countries through climate-smart practices and nature-based solutions.

AFoCO is a credible partner in attaining the goals of global forest restoration for climate-change mitigation and adaptation, food security and improved livelihoods.

### **OBJECTIVE AND IMPACT**

**The Climate Action Plan outlines accelerated efforts amongst AFoCO Member Countries to draw carbon from the atmosphere to arrest global warming while simultaneously advancing economic prosperity.**

#### **The Climate Action Plan will**

- **deliver positive impacts on Member Countries' carbon-removal targets**
- **make their economies greener and improve communities' well-being**
  - **strengthen regional and inter-regional cooperation on Asian forests**
- **position AFoCO as a globally recognized credible partner in efforts to address the climate crisis.**

## **STRATEGIC APPROACHES**

To turn the Plan's objective into actions and deliver impact, AFoCO will employ five (5) strategic approaches.

### **1. Climate-focused cooperation**

Cooperation will focus on the critical role of forestry in addressing the climate crisis, particularly removing atmospheric carbon. Proven forest-based climate solutions will be identified with Member Countries to fit with national and international goals for mitigation of, and adaptation to, the climate crisis while simultaneously building communities' livelihoods and protecting biodiversity.

### **2. Diversified funding**

Together with Member Countries, the private sector, specialist organizations and individual experts, AFoCO will develop tailor-made packages of financial solutions for meeting the challenges faced by Member Countries in their efforts to meet climate and development goals.

### **3. Monitoring, reporting and validation**

AFoCO with Member Countries will develop context-appropriate monitoring systems that are able to capture necessary data for reporting requirements while also provide the information needed to adjust, or create new, programs for forest restoration or rehabilitation.

### **4. Strengthened competencies**

AFoCO will work closely with Member Countries to build capacity and competency in a range of technical and other skills that directly support achievement of national and international climate and development goals.

### **5. Diverse partnerships**

Our Asian community is hugely diverse, from local indigenous knowledge through a huge and growing middle class to high-technology companies and more. AFoCO will bring stakeholders together for focused solutions and wide-ranging discussions targeted at bringing out the best in our communities of practice.



## CLIMATE ACTIONS

The Climate Action Plan (2025–2034) focuses on three (3) major, interlinked Actions: Forest land restoration and rehabilitation; Community solutions; and Digital innovations.

### 1. Forest land restoration and rehabilitation

Forest land restoration or rehabilitation is, by far, one of the most effective and cost-efficient way of increasing carbon removals from the atmosphere with multiple co-benefits. Forests are not only carbon sinks but also harbor biodiversity and support healthy watersheds.

Rehabilitation and restoration contributes to global commitments, such as the Paris Agreement through NDCs, Forest Land Restoration and the Bonn Challenge.

The focus of this Action is on terrestrial ecosystems, including peat and flooded forests, drylands and drought-prone areas, and riverine and coastal ecosystems, particularly mangroves, through several mechanisms, such as reforestation and rehabilitation projects with the private sector to address NDC targets; support for REDD+ in collaboration with governments and in partnership with the private sector; and regional projects, such as establishing sustainable seed supply systems and improving technical capacity.

Under this Action, AFoCO unconditionally targets 100,000 ha of rehabilitated and restored terrestrial and coastal forests with an investment of a total of USD 50 million. Additional hectareage will be rehabilitated and restored with support from external donors and/or investors (conditional).

#### **Rationale**

AFoCO is a Supporting Partner of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030), which aims “to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean”.

Further, the 27<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to UNFCCC closed on 20 November 2022 with “a breakthrough agreement to provide ‘loss and damage’ funding for vulnerable countries hit hard by climate disasters”. The fund intends to address the losses and damages experienced by communities whose lives and livelihoods have been ruined by the impacts of climate change.<sup>23</sup>

This imperative complements AFoCO’s Vision — A Greener Asia with climate-resilient and sustainable forests, landscapes and communities — and the demand of Member Countries to restore their millions of hectares of degraded forest land.

This Action will, thus, focus on interventions for the restoration and rehabilitation of terrestrial and coastal forest lands, including flooded forests, peat and mangroves.

**Mangroves.** In Southeast Asia, about 100,000 hectares (2%) of mangrove forest cover was lost over the last decade owing to conversion to aquaculture, rice and oil palm. The biggest

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<sup>23</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. 2022. *COP27 reaches breakthrough agreement on new “Loss and Damage” fund for vulnerable countries*. Bonn, Germany: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

mangrove deforestation ‘hotspots’ were in Myanmar, Indonesia and Malaysia followed by Thailand, Viet Nam and the Philippines.

**Terrestrial forests.** Restoration and rehabilitation of degraded terrestrial forests, including semi-deserts and deserts (for example, aridity of rivers and lakes) peat and seasonally flooded forests from natural disasters (for example, typhoons, landslides) and human-induced activities (such as agricultural expansion and fires) will magnify carbon removals with co-benefits on biodiversity and other ecosystem services and speed up recovery of affected communities, and increase adaptation and mitigation benefits. In particular, Cambodia faces the challenge of reduced seasonal flooding of forests around the great lake, Tonle Sap, and Indonesia has over 1 million hectares of degraded peatland targeted for restoration. In Kazakhstan, 5.4 million hectares of state forest fund lands are subject to afforestation (clearings and degraded areas) and restoration (from cutting down, forest fire, and dead plantations).

Investments under this Action will therefore focus on, but not be limited to, the above forest lands to sequester large quantities of carbon from the atmosphere and bring back important goods and ecosystem services to human communities through proven and scalable restoration approaches, such as assisted natural regeneration, enrichment planting, mixed-species and riverine plantations and agroforestry. The state of forest land degradation will be assessed in a participatory manner, employing the ecological knowledge of local people combined with scientific and evidence-based knowledge of restoration.

Capacity building, institutional development, governance arrangements are key activities under this Action. Community-based forestry organizations, individual forest land managers and state-owned forestry enterprises are the main stakeholders of projects under this Action. Work will include developing public–private partnerships to build synergies, foster co-investments and optimize benefits from restoration and rehabilitation.

Action	Target (ha)
Restore or rehabilitate terrestrial (including flooded and peat forests) and coastal forest land, such as mangroves (unconditional)	100,000
Additional target subject to donor support (conditional)	1 million

## 2. Community solutions

The Asian region has one of the fastest growing populations in the world, adding more pressure to already declining and degraded forests. To ensure the health and wellbeing of present and future generations while addressing the climate crisis, AFoCO will seek to support solutions at landscape scale, including within urban landscapes and across whole watersheds.

Under this Action, a minimum of 100 nature-based community forestry enterprises and 20 green villages are targeted with an investment of a total of USD 30 million.

### **Rationale**

Communities are the most critical factor in restoration or rehabilitation of forests stemming from initial degradation that is often driven by communities' need to alleviate poverty through providing livelihoods by use of forests.

Accordingly, this Action will not only seek to reverse this trend but also help meet Member Countries' achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly, goals 1 (No Poverty) and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), by supporting the development of 1) nature-based, community forestry enterprises; and 2) 'green', or sustainable, villages.

This Action will focus on two major areas of community solutions.

**Nature-based community forestry enterprises.** Forest communities will be supported with capacity development and start-up, or supplemental, funding for developing micro-to-small-scale, nature-based enterprises for raw material and value addition, such as products from both timber and non-timber activities, agroforestry, bioenergy and forest-ecotourism, the latter offering, for example, wellness and educational services, guided walks and 'forest bathing'. This Action will cater to producer groups, forest-user groups and individuals that are already engaged in nature-based forestry enterprises and those starting to develop products from forests. The Action will include support to value-chain analyses of deforestation-free commodities, expansion of social forestry programs for mitigation and adaptation, development of commercialization approaches and technologies and improvement of distribution channels.

**Green villages.** Villages will be identified as 'green villages' wherein local communities are collectively managing their landscapes in a sustainable and integrated way and engaging in circular bioeconomic activities, for example, adopting environmentally friendly fuel-management techniques, such as biochar<sup>24</sup>, along with other biodiversity-friendly, climate-smart and agroecological practices — such as agroforestry — engaging in nature- or forest -

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<sup>24</sup> "Biochar is a carbon-rich, solid material derived from a wide range of biomass or organic waste through a thermochemical method. It is an organic charcoal material that is the final product of pyrolysis, or high-temperature burning, of agricultural biomass without the presence of oxygen. The use of biochar is a simple yet powerful tool to combat the climate crisis by sequestering atmospheric carbon into soil as well as processing agricultural and other waste into useful clean energy." Sustainable Biochar Production through Agroforestry Systems and its Application: a Climate-resilient Soil Management Approach project. <https://www.worldagroforestry.org/blog/2021/06/14/sustainable-biochar-agroforestry-and-its-application>. Biochar "can support rural, isolated and low-to-middle income communities to overcome [...] obstacles while simultaneously promoting enhanced restoration and management of degraded" land. Njenga M, Sundberg C, Kätterer T, Roobroeck D, Thevs N. 2021. *Biochar for climate-change mitigation and restoration of degraded lands*. White Paper. Nairobi, Kenya: World Agroforestry (ICRAF).

based enterprises, and protecting and managing surrounding community forests and watersheds, along with addressing governance issues, including benefit sharing and decision making.

AFoCO support will be both for existing green villages under different names and the establishment of new ones. The Action is a performance-based mechanism wherein incremental payments or rewards accrue to villages in compliance with agreed performance criteria. Green village rewards may be in monetary or material form such as a shed or tree nursery. AFoCO interventions in green villages also include capacity building in various aspects of community empowerment, circular bioeconomy, business planning and management among others. The identification of at least 20 green villages — one or more in each Member Country — are targeted by the Action, with opportunities for expansion.

Action	Target
Nature-based community forestry enterprises	100 enterprises
Green villages	20 villages

### 3. Digital innovations

Environmental disasters are more common than ever in Asian regions, mainly owing to the climate crisis, which increases demand for technological interventions and support. Forest fires, transboundary toxic smoke, landslides and new outbreaks of pests and diseases are some of the climate-forest-related disasters. Technologies and approaches for climate-forest-related disaster management in many countries are limited for countering such threats.

#### ***Rationale***

A key message of the Seoul Forest Declaration at the Fifteenth World Forestry Congress was: “Innovative technologies and mechanisms are emerging for the provision of, and equitable access to, accurate information and knowledge of forests. These must be applied widely to enable evidence-based forest and landscape decision-making and effective forest communication.”

In close collaboration with Member Countries, AFoCO will target disaster-prone areas — such as hotspots of forest fires and sites of landslide incidences — to implement cooperation projects. Based on the latest, proven technology and the technical assessment of the target areas, specific technology-based projects will cover both preventive and control measures, such as forest-fire monitoring and management, erosion and landslide control, establishment of demonstration sites, and capacity building.

Under this Action, investment of a total of USD 20 million will help create digital solutions for forest-related disasters and integrated forest data management.

***ICT-based climate–forest disaster risk reduction technologies.*** The Republic of Korea has developed ICT-based forest disaster mitigation and response technologies that can be transferred and/or customized to suit the needs and capacity of Member Countries. These include drone surveillance for mapping and monitoring, satellite and terrestrial warning systems, risk mapping, and fire-fighting techniques. Likewise, Member Countries’ climate–forest disaster risk management technologies can be shared across the AFoCO membership. Technology exchange includes building users’ capacities to effectively use new technologies.

***Integrated forest data management.*** Monitoring, measurement and reporting are an integral part of AFoCO’s Climate Action Plan. Building upon, and linked to, national forest data management systems of Member Countries, this Action will create a central, interactive, integrated forest data management system that captures long-term forest changes, impacts, issues and achievements within Member Countries. This integrated forest data management system will be designed and developed in collaboration with Member Countries to ensure relevance and will play a pivotal role in aiding national communications and reporting to international conventions through systematically recording and disseminating advances and effects of climate actions.

Other advanced technologies and approaches — such as for measurement, reporting and validation (MRV) — will be included in the integrated forest data management system to improve technological intelligence and transparency of reporting.

Action	Target
Early warning systems, risk prediction/forecast to mitigate forest disaster risks	1 system per country
Interactive, integrated forest data management system	Regional system

## ACTIONS AND MILESTONES

**Table 1.** Climate actions, impact and milestones and their links to AFoCO strategic Priority Program Areas

Priority Program Area	Priority Program Area Outcome	Climate Action	Target	Expected impact	Milestone (hectares)		
					2025–2027	2027–2030	2030–2034
Forest land rehabilitation and conservation	Degraded terrestrial and coastal forest land, including mangroves, flooded forests, peatlands, are restored or rehabilitated to healthy ecosystems through participatory design, planting, management and monitoring	Forest land rehabilitation and restoration	100,000 hectares (unconditional)	Atmospheric carbon removed through restored and / or rehabilitated terrestrial and coastal forest land	50,000	30,000	20,000
Community and circular bioeconomy	Enhanced forest-based value-chains, livelihoods and adaptive capacities of forest-dependent communities	Community solutions	100 nature-based community forestry businesses	Community well-being enhanced from nature-based forest value chains, resilient livelihoods, and collective actions in green villages	60	30	10
			20 green villages		15	5	0

<p>Climate– forest disaster risk management</p>	<p>Early warning systems, risk prediction/forecast, and models are used by member countries to mitigate forest disaster risks.</p> <p>An interactive, integrated forest data management system in place that captures changes, impacts, issues and achievements within and between Member Countries</p>	<p>Digital innovations</p>	<p>ICT-based technologies exchanged and used by Member Countries</p> <p>AFoCO Integrated forest data management system in place.</p>	<p>Reduced risk exposure from application of early warning systems and prediction models in Member Countries.</p> <p>Improved forest data communication, storing, sharing and access by and amongst Member Countries.</p>			
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## Section 6. Resource mobilization

The State of Finance for Nature 2022<sup>25</sup> report quantifies public and private finance flows to nature-based solutions to tackle biodiversity loss, climate change and land degradation, including reforestation. Finance flows as of 2022 were at USD 154 billion per year, which is less than half of the USD 384 billion per year needed by 2025 and a third of the USD 484 billion per year needed by 2030. As per the report, private-sector investment must increase ‘by several orders of magnitude’ from the current USD 26 billion per year, which represents 17% of total investment.<sup>26</sup>

Blended or a mix of funding sources are increasingly being called upon to address the world’s major challenges, including forest restoration.

AFoCO will seek to mobilize funding from bilateral, multilateral and private-sector partnerships, at least doubling its funding over the next 10 years.

AFoCO’s unique position as an intergovernmental membership organization provides the basis for the development and deployment of the Climate Action Matching Platform (CAMP). A blended financing approach will be introduced under CAMP, which is a crucial part of achieving the goals of the Climate Action Plan (2025–2034) and Strategic Plan (2024–2030). CAMP is an online marketplace and information centre where people can meet and make deals for flowing finance into forests for carbon sequestration, biodiversity, and livelihoods.

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/state-finance-nature-2022>

<sup>26</sup> <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/un-report-calls-for-doubling-finance-for-nature-based-solutions-by-2025/>



## **Section 7. Engagement, dialogues and learning exchange**

Consistent with the Strategic Plan (2024–2030), AFoCO will promote the objectives of the Climate Action Plan and build alliances through strategic events and activities.

### **GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT**

As the only intergovernmental organization entirely focused on the forestry sector in Asia, and a reliable and credible partner of global efforts to address climate change, the world is looking to AFoCO's Member Countries to keep to, and exceed, commitments made at the Conferences of Parties (CoPs) to the UNFCCC, UN Convention on Biological Diversity, UN Convention to Combat Desertification and others.

In keeping with this expectation, AFoCO will engage in the global arena through the CoPs on climate change, biodiversity and desertification and by forging partnerships and alliances, actively participating in and leading public debates, to bring forest-based climate actions and financing to Member Countries.

### **AFoCO LEADERS' FORUM ON CLIMATE, FORESTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFEGUARDS**

The forum is conceived as a high-level meeting of business and political leaders to cohere commitments and plan actions in an integrated but urgent manner with an associated conference for sharing knowledge and announcing commitments.

### **HIGH-LEVEL POLICY DIALOGUES**

High-level policy dialogues will be organized at regional and global levels on key issues affecting the forestry sector and addressing climate change. This will bring together ministerial officials in forums and dialogues to discuss policy challenges and solutions as well as encourage international and regional cooperation in halting the climate crisis.

### **CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT**

Conferences both large and small will be organized to bring together a diverse range of groups: Indigenous Peoples, local communities, NGOs, development agencies, researchers, political leaders, decision-makers, the private sector. Conferences will cover a range of pertinent topics.

### **EXHIBITIONS AND CAMPAIGNS**

AFoCO will seize opportunities to invest in exhibitions, promotional and media campaigns and specific knowledge-sharing and decision-making activities to maintain momentum and increase adoption of sustainable solutions through forest action.