

## THE WAY FORWARD

AFoCO invites collaboration on forest biodiversity initiatives. Facilitating partnerships between governments, NGOs, the private sector, and international organizations is crucial for implementing integrated approaches to biodiversity conservation. By fostering collaboration and cooperation across sectors, diverse expertise, resources, and networks can be leveraged to address complex conservation challenges effectively. These partnerships enable the operation of holistic strategies that consider social, economic, and environmental dimensions, leading to more sustainable outcomes for biodiversity conservation.

AFoCO's collaboration with prospective partners covers the following areas:

### 1. Forest Restoration and Reforestation:

Restoring degraded forest landscapes and ecosystems involves a mandatory target of increasing forest cover with native species, enhancing biodiversity, and improving ecosystem services. This effort contributes to the KM-GBF target of restoring 30% of degraded ecosystems. Focusing on native species ensures the sustainability and resilience of restored ecosystems while supporting biodiversity and providing essential ecosystem services. Collaborations can be structured in a way that provides funding, technical expertise and coordination support.

### 2. Forest Biodiversity Conservation with Traditional Knowledge:

Involving local communities in conservation efforts ensures that biodiversity conservation respects traditional knowledge and practices. Local communities possess valuable insights and expertise passed down through generations, significantly contributing to effective conservation strategies. Active engagement with local communities fosters a sense of ownership and stewardship, enhancing the cultural and social relevance of conservation initiatives. Joint efforts can facilitate community engagement processes, provide capacity-building workshops, and support knowledge exchange initiatives to integrate traditional knowledge into conservation practices.

## BOX 2. Workshop Summary

The AFoCO RETC Capacity Building Workshop on Forest Biodiversity, entitled 'Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: Synergize in Achieving Future Conservation Targets' was virtually organized from 13 to 15 June 2023. The workshop welcomed 36 participants from 14 Member Countries and Observers: Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea (ROK), Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam. Two keynote speeches and five lectures were provided from the global and regional players, including the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), Korea Arborea and Gardens Institute (KoAGI), National Institute of Forest Science of the ROK (NIFoS), National Research and Innovation Agency of Indonesia (BRIN), UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), and UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

The workshop was aimed at:

- Building or enhancing knowledge on present and future trends in biodiversity conservation,
- Developing a strategic action plan in appreciation for KM-GBF, its directions, and future action agenda in the forestry sector, and,
- Recognizing the importance of genetic conservation for the sustainability of biodiversity.

### 3. Capacity Enhancement in NBSAPs:

Empowering AFoCO Member Countries to enhance institutional capacities in developing, updating, and implementing their NBSAPs is essential for ensuring sustainability in global biodiversity efforts. Aligned with the goals and targets of the KMGBF, countries can be aided by technical assistance, training programs, and funding opportunities to strengthen capacity in NBSAP development and implementation. Continued gap analyses enables partners to further explore potential fundraising opportunities.

## Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework - Synergize to Achieve Forest Conservation Targets

### BACKGROUND

The adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) signals a pivotal shift towards more robust, strategic global objectives for the conservation of biodiversity. More than 190 countries demonstrated leadership and ambition in adopting the KM-GBF and committing to translate these comprehensive global plans into national actions for implementation.<sup>1</sup> Now these countries have entered the phase of reviewing their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) to set national targets that align with the KM-GBF.

The KM-GBF is largely composed of the restoration of 30% of degraded ecosystems, the halting of the extinction of threatened species, and proactive measures in the mitigation of climate change impacts, including promoting and encouraging livelihoods in local communities for sustainable biodiversity use. Particularly, the new framework has brought about a shift in perspectives towards biodiversity as a global public good that necessitates responsible action. The globe already recognizes that more than 50% of global GDP (USD 58 trillion) relies on natural capital, and the sustainability of natural capital has become an essential factor for economic development.<sup>2</sup>

The Asian region is home to 622 million hectares of forests<sup>3</sup> that are rich in unique biodiversity, unmatched anywhere else in the world. Current estimates indicate that up to 42% of all species in Southeast Asia are at risk of disappearing by the end of the century, with at least half of them facing the threat of extinction worldwide. Located at the center of the Eurasian landmass, forests in Central Asia feature diverse landscapes and climates that support a wide variety of ecosystems and species. To achieve the global targets of the KM-GBF, it is crucial for the region to proactively take on the roles of preserving biodiversity, restoring and rehabilitating degraded lands, and encouraging the practice of sustainable forest management.

### Key Messages

1. Biodiversity conservation and climate action must progress hand in hand.
2. NBSAPs demand multi-sectoral collaboration more than ever to bridge the gap between development and conservation.
3. Human resource development should be considered as part of biodiversity conservation.

Amidst this transformative era, the AFoCO Regional Education and Training Center (RETC) has organized the virtual workshop "Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: Synergize in Achieving Future Conservation Targets" on 13 to 15 June 2023.

In light of the KM-GBF, the workshop aimed to prepare participants for discussing challenges in refining their NBSAPs and understanding the new global conservation targets within the KM-GBF. The workshop further illuminated the multifaceted benefits of forest biodiversity, which extend beyond carbon sequestration to encompass sustainable forest management with climate resilient livelihoods.



An artificial water hole created for animals at the Nui Tuong grassland, Cat Tien National Park, Viet Nam @AFoCO, 2023



### Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO)

AFoCO is a treaty-based intergovernmental organization that is committed to strengthening forest cooperation and taking concrete actions to promote sustainable forest management and address the impacts of climate change.

[www.afocosec.org](http://www.afocosec.org)

<sup>1</sup> 194 of 198 Parties to UNCBD have developed at least one NBSAP.

<sup>2</sup> PwC. (2023, May 16). PwC boosts global nature and biodiversity capabilities [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://pwc.to/3UQSwD>

<sup>3</sup> FAO. (2020). Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en?details=ca9825en>

## POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

This policy brief encapsulates the combined insights derived from the country presentations of participants, the lectures by resource persons, as well as the discussions and interventions that took place during the workshop.

### 1. Integration of biodiversity and climate goals is essential for building a resilient future.

The workshop resonated the urgent need to integrate climate change adaptation and mitigation with biodiversity conservation, focusing on enhancing ecosystem services and functions and greenhouse gas emission reduction. Emphasizing sustainable management of natural resources, the workshop participants acknowledged the detrimental effects of land use changes and deforestation on climate change.

Joining these global efforts, AFoCO's two new strategic initiatives — Strategic Plan 2024-2030 and Climate Action 2025-2034 — embody a proactive approach to merging biodiversity conservation with broader climate actions, thus supporting the KM-GBF's global targets (see Box 2). It eventually pursues promoting climate-resilient forests, landscapes, and communities, moving the society closer to a future both resilient and rich in biodiversity.

The World Economic Forum's 2024 Global Risks Report states that extreme weather events, critical change to earth systems, and biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse are among the top three risks facing the world over the next 10 years. The significant role of the private sector in biodiversity conservation is needed more than ever to address climate change issues, urging businesses to transparently assess and report on biodiversity impacts and to foster sustainable consumption patterns.

By promoting sustainable forest management and restoration, these plans support diverse habitats, aiding in the conservation and recovery of flora and fauna, and thus aligning with global biodiversity objectives.

#### Box 1. AFoCO's New Strategic Plan and Climate Initiative

The AFoCO Strategic Plan 2024-2030 outlines a vision for "A greener Asia with climate-resilient and sustainable forests, landscapes, and communities," whereby contributing to the Paris Agreement goals and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Plan identifies three priority areas: (1) Forest Land Restoration and Conservation, (2) Community and Circular Bio-economy, and (3) Climate-Forest Disaster Risk Management. These are supported by cross-cutting themes of policy, capacity development, knowledge management, and technology exchange (<https://afocosec.org/publication/afoco-strategic-plan-2024-2030-2/>).

The AFoCO Climate Action 2025-2034 focuses on addressing climate change issues through sustainable forest management. The Action's main goal is to capture CO<sub>2</sub> from atmosphere by restoring 100,000 hectares of forests and mangroves. The Action further includes creating 100 community forestry enterprises and 20 green villages, supported by digital innovations in forest management and disaster risk reduction (<https://afocosec.org/publication/afoco-climate-action-plan/>).

### 2. New NBSAPs must effectively bridge the gap between development and conservation objectives.

The workshop underscored the importance of countries integrating biodiversity objectives into their national agendas by revising their NBSAPs. The participants shared a common view that integrated approaches in harmony between nature and economic growth are the key to effectively reversing biodiversity loss. It has been set by prior lessons learned from their efforts toward Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

Table 1 displays entry points on how countries can consider the forest and forestry sector in updating their NBSAPs, such as restoring 30% of degraded ecosystems, protecting endangered species globally, restoring genetic diversity for ecological resilience, and working with forest-related businesses to reduce their ecological footprint along the supply chains.

Furthermore, countries need to take into account the following measures in developing the NBSAPs, which are newly introduced in the KM-GBF:<sup>4</sup>

- **Submission of national targets:** Countries not ready with revised national biodiversity strategies by the 16th Conference of the Parties should communicate national targets, including all KM-GBF goals and targets, by the same meeting, using the provided reporting template;
- **Encouragement for indicator use:** Countries are urged to incorporate headline indicators, along with other national indicators, into relevant planning processes like national biodiversity strategies, considering their individual contexts; and,
- **Promotion of NBSAP adoption and mainstreaming:** Countries are encouraged to integrate revised or updated

Table 1. Forest-related KM-GBF targets

	KM-GBF targets	Entry points from the forest and forestry sector
Reducing threats to biodiversity	T1: Plan and Manage all Areas To Reduce Biodiversity Loss	• Bring loss of areas of high biodiversity importance close to zero
	T2: Restore 30% of all Degraded Ecosystems	• Restore at least 30 % of degraded ecosystems (forests)
	T3: Conserve 30% of Land, Waters and Seas	• Enhance integrity and connectivity of natural forests
	T5: Ensure Sustainable, Safe and Legal Harvesting and Trade of Wild Species	• Conserve 30% as protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)
	T8: Minimize the Impacts of Climate Change on Biodiversity and Build Resilience	• Avoid overexploitation of wild species
	T10: Enhance Biodiversity and Sustainability in Agriculture, Aquaculture, Fisheries, and Forestry	• Enhance forest resilience, reduce negative impact of climate action on biodiversity
Tools and solutions for implementation	T11: Restore, Maintain and Enhance Nature's Contributions to People	• Manage areas under forestry in a sustainable way
	T12: Enhance Green Spaces and Urban Planning for Human Well-Being and Biodiversity	• Upscale sustainable forest management biodiversity-friendly practices, contribute to food security
	T15: Businesses Assess, Disclose and Reduce Biodiversity-Related Risks and Negative Impacts	• Ensure social, economic and environmental benefits for people, including health
	T16: Enable Sustainable Consumption Choices To Reduce Waste and Overconsumption	• Increase green spaces in cities
	T18: Reduce Harmful Incentives by at Least \$500 Billion per Year, and Scale Up Positive Incentives for Biodiversity	• Ensure due diligence requirements for commodities associated with the risk of deforestation
	T19: Mobilize \$200 Billion per Year for Biodiversity From all Sources, Including \$30 Billion Through International Finance	• Support sustainable supply chains
	T22: Ensure Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice and Information Related to Biodiversity for all	• Stimulate sustainable production and consumption
T23: Ensure Gender Equality and a Gender-Responsive Approach for Biodiversity Action	• Mobilize \$30 billion per year for forests	
		• Redirect financial flows from reducing harmful subsidies
		• Ensure benefits for people and biodiversity in innovative financial mechanisms
		• Participate in Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF)
		• Respect rights, culture, traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities, including rights over traditional lands
		• Facilitate a gender-responsive approach

(Source: Information adapted from presentation materials of the UNCBD Secretariat)

NBSAPs into policy and/or legal instruments, aligning them with broader strategies such as sustainable development plans, poverty reduction strategies, and sectoral plans, as per national priorities.

Governments should ensure that their NBSAPs include the contributions of business and finance sector entities. They should highlight and track national efforts that motivate companies to weave biodiversity considerations into their daily operations. The goal is to reduce their negative impact on biodiversity gradually, amplify their successful cases, lessen the risks to businesses and financial institutions, and champion sustainable production methods. By incorporating these points into the NBSAPs, countries can devise effective and actionable strategies that address the immediate threats to biodiversity as well as establish the groundwork for land-use planning and sustainable development.

### 3. Human resource development should be considered as part of biodiversity conservation.

Capacity building emerges as a cornerstone of collective efforts to implement the KM-GBF. Tailored training programs and knowledge-sharing platforms are needed to enable the effective application of biodiversity conservation techniques in forest management.

Challenges include a lack of qualified natural resource management personnel and inadequate infrastructure and technology. To effectively address these matters, it is essential to develop skilled human resources. In particular, fostering skilled personnels available for monitoring and evaluation work is needed.

The NBSAPs should incorporate a national strategy for human resource development to ensure that their personnel are able to competently use advanced conservation tools and technologies. This workforce will be crucial in building and enhancing the capabilities of national institutions through well-designed plans. By doing this, countries are able to generate meaningful impact along with achieving the KM-GBF.

<sup>4</sup> CBD. (2024). Revised and updated NBSAPs due by COP16 aligned with Annex-1 of the KM-GBF. Retrieved from <https://www.cbd.int/nbsap/post-cop15.shtml>