

# AFOCO

## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*Dr. Chongho Park at the 1st Friends of Asia and Asian Forests (FAAF) Forum in February 2024, Seoul*



*Eighth Session of the Assembly in April 2023, Seoul*

2023 has been a remarkable year for AFoCO, marked by significant strides in international forest cooperation and sustainable management. In April, the Eighth Session of the Assembly of AFoCO in Seoul underscored our commitment to sustainable forest management and set the stage for future strategic initiatives. The Ninth Session of the Assembly of AFoCO emphasized alignment with global climate and development objectives, focusing on the AFoCO Strategic Plan (2024-2030) and the AFoCO Climate Action Plan. With a strong emphasis on resource mobilization, we aim to double our funding over the next decade, reinforcing the critical role of forests in mitigating climate change and the importance of collective action in the Asia-Pacific region. We also welcomed Tajikistan as an Observer country of AFoCO.

Our collaboration with strategic partner organizations aims to leverage collective expertise for large-scale environmental restoration and sustainable agriculture projects, and capacity-building efforts. Furthermore, AFoCO also embarked on the development of forest carbon projects to channel private sector finance to benefit communities in our member countries. The partnership with Rabobank ACORN will explore advanced agroforestry techniques, carbon offset initiatives, and capacity building, contributing to climate change mitigation and improved livelihoods.

Looking ahead, we are gearing up for impactful public-private partnership initiatives through the Friends of Asia and Asian Forests (FAAF) platform in 2024, furthering our commitment to contribute to the global goals of increasing forest cover and implementing the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Chongho Park  
AFoCO Executive Director



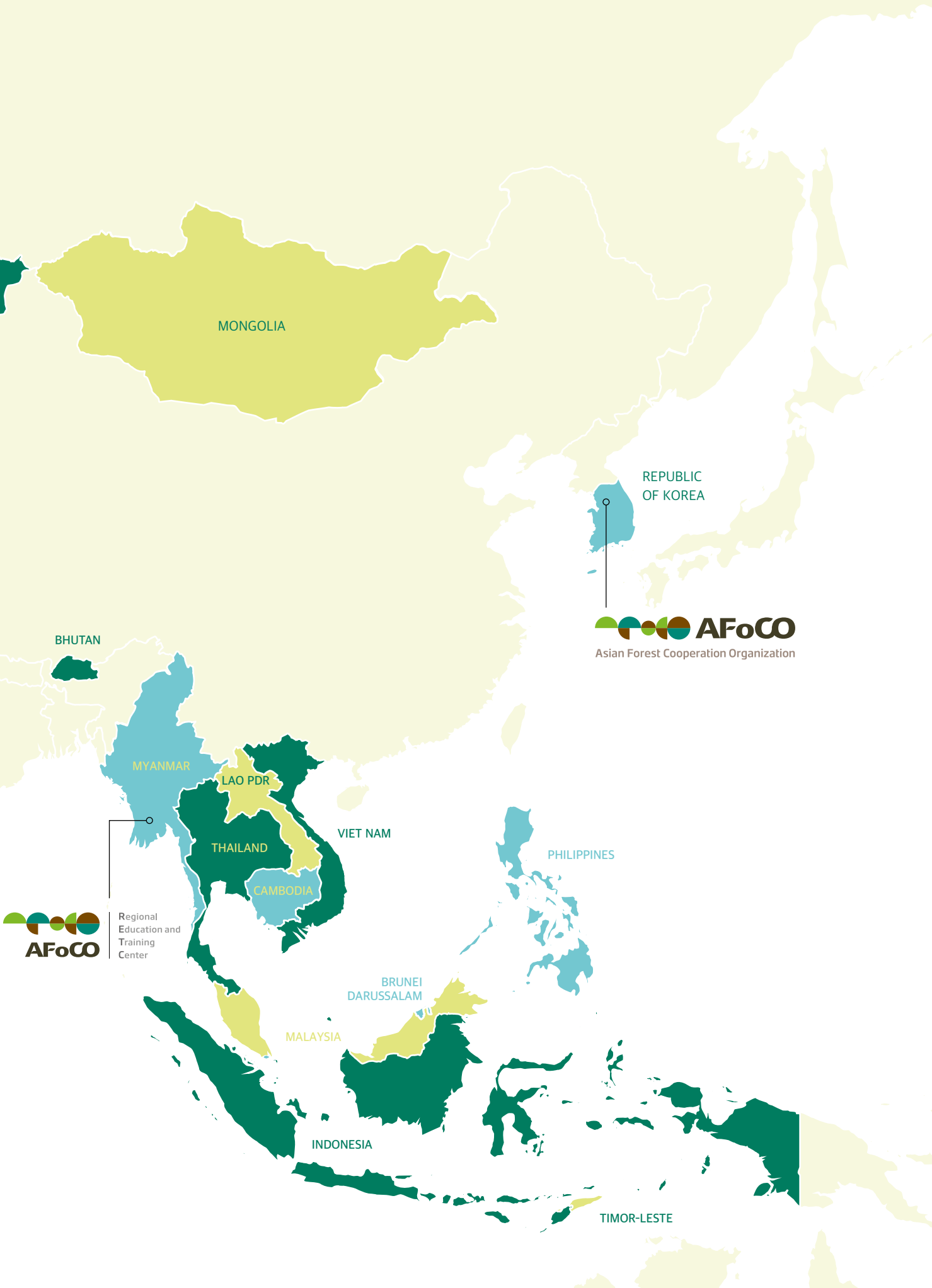
# ABOUT AFoCO



The Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO), a treaty-based intergovernmental organization established in 2018, is committed to strengthening forest cooperation and taking concrete actions to promote sustainable forest management and address the impacts of climate change. The initial iteration of AFoCO was the ASEAN-ROK Forest Cooperation, which was formalized in 2012 following the ASEAN-ROK Commemorative Summit in June 2009.

On a global scale, forests are essential resources that are of inestimable value. Despite their importance in combating climate change, sustaining livelihoods, and providing various ecosystem services, vast areas of forests continue to be overexploited or degraded. The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the global agenda for forestry require concerted efforts and inter-sectoral collaboration. By reaching out to member countries across Asia, AFoCO has been concentrating its efforts on addressing emerging forestry issues to contribute to the sustainable management of forests and achieve our vision of a Greener Asia.

As of March 2023, AFoCO's membership consists of 16 member countries, including 14 Parties (Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam) and 2 Observers (Malaysia and Tajikistan), who cooperate and provide support in the implementation of its programs and projects. The headquarters of AFoCO, including the Secretariat, is located in Seoul, the Republic of Korea.



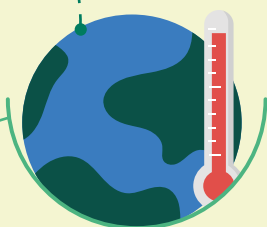
**AFoCO**  
Regional  
Education and  
Training  
Center

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2019-2023



## **INITIATING CUSTOMIZED RESTORATION & REFORESTATION MODELS**

Establishment of locally customized restoration and reforestation models in target communities and adoption and application of such techniques in other areas



## **SUPPORTING RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT IN CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION APPROACHES**

Implementation of scientific studies on forestry adaptation approaches and policy adoption of vulnerable member countries to apply relevant adaptation methodologies and approaches



## **INTRODUCING SYSTEMATIC MANAGEMENT OF FOREST RELATED DISASTERS**

Establishment of demonstration sites for control and management of forest-related disasters and extensive application of such technology-based techniques where appropriate



## **LOCAL LIVELIHOOD IMPROVEMENT & COMMUNITY-BASED ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT**

Identification and implementation of best practices on payments for ecosystem services, ecotourism, and community-based enterprise development in target areas and policy adoption in target countries



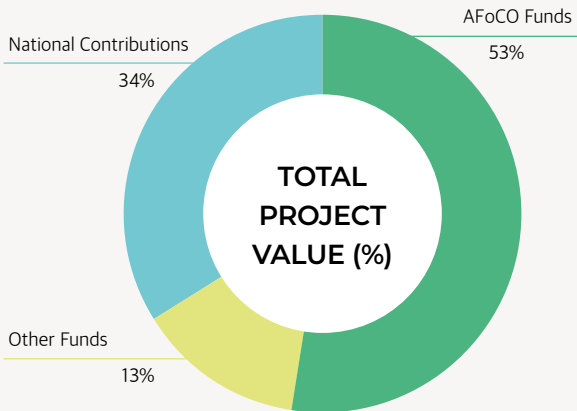
## **STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITIES, DIVERSIFYING RESOURCES & PROMOTING REGIONAL ACTIONS**

Development into a credible and accountable organization that takes action to deal with regional and international issues

# ACHIEVEMENTS

## PROJECT FUND DISTRIBUTION

- AFoCO Funds	US\$ 46.7 M
- Other Funds	US\$ 12.0 M
- National Contributions	US\$ 29.9 M
(in the form of in-kind or cash contributions)	
<hr/>	
<b>TOTAL PROJECT VALUE</b>	<b>US\$ 88.6 M</b>
(2013–2023)	

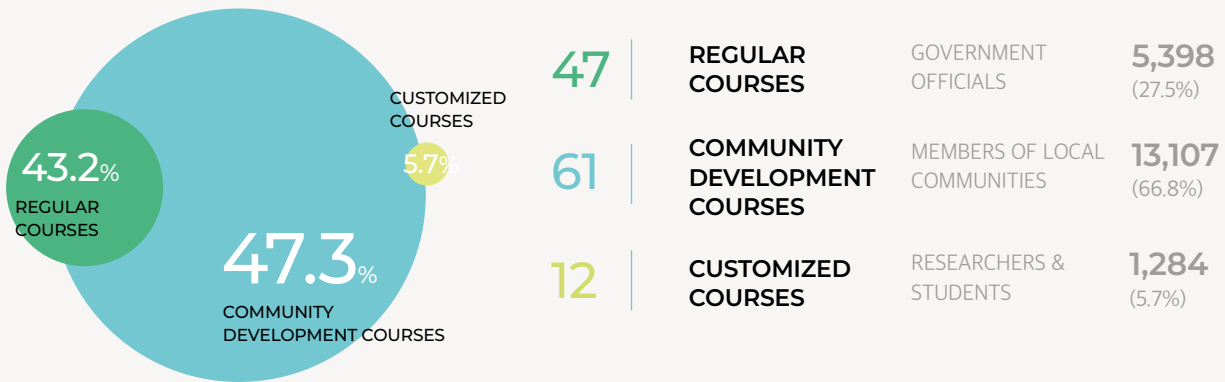


## BUILDING CAPACITIES IN FORESTRY

AFoCO’s flagship capacity-building programs — Fellowship Program, Landmark Scholarship Program, and Science & Technology Exchange Partnership (STEP) Program — have also benefitted young professionals forestry stakeholders at the national and local levels across Asia.

31	27	16
FELLOWSHIP OFFICIALS	SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS	STEP PROGRAM RESEARCHERS
(2015–2023)	10 PhD, 17 MSc (2015–2023)	(2019–2023)

### TRAINING COURSES (2014–2023)



The AFoCO Regional Education and Training Center (RETC), a specialized subsidiary organ of AFoCO, was established in Yangon region, Myanmar, in 2018 to serve as a platform for capacity development, knowledge transfer, and information sharing. The RETC operates diverse training and workshops to address capacity development needs in the forest sector.

# 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

## I Ninth Session of the Assembly of AFoCO 25-26 October 2023

The Ninth Session of the Assembly of AFoCO highlighted the organization's alignment with global climate and development objectives, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. The session, attended by various countries and observers, focused on key agenda such as the AFoCO Strategic Plan (2024-2030) and the AFoCO Climate Action Plan. Emphasis was placed on resource mobilization to address climate change issues, with a commitment to seek funding from bilateral, multilateral, and private-sector partnerships to double funding over the next decade. The session underscored the critical role of forests in mitigating climate change and the importance of collective action to tackle climate challenges in the Asia-Pacific region.



## I 5th Anniversary Celebration of AFoCO 26 April 2023

AFoCO celebrated its 5th anniversary, marking a significant milestone for the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization. At the celebration, AFoCO unveiled the “AFoCO 10-year Climate Action Plan” — a plan that outlines AFoCO’s vision for expanding cooperation projects focusing on forest restoration, community engagement, and digital innovation to combat climate change effectively.

## I Eighth Session of the Assembly of AFoCO 25-26 April 2023

Held as a special session, the Eighth Session of the Assembly of AFoCO was organized in Seoul, the Republic of Korea from 25 to 26 April 2023. The session emphasized the importance of sustainable forest management and set the stage for future sessions to further deliberate on key initiatives and strategic plans aimed at enhancing forest cooperation in the Asia region.





## ● New Partnerships

### Signing of AFoCO-Rabobank Acorn MoU for \$50 million forest carbon project

4 September 2023

AFoCO entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Rabobank, a global financial institution headquartered in the Netherlands, to collaborate on agroforestry projects with Rabobank's Acorn program to assist small-holder farmers in accessing the voluntary carbon market. This partnership lays the groundwork for a decade-long cooperation, with an initial investment of KRW 65 billion in the Asian region. In the coming years, AFoCO and Rabobank's Acorn intend to expand their collaboration into various areas, including advanced agroforestry techniques, tracking technology, carbon offset initiatives, and capacity building. The overarching aim is to accelerate the response to climate change, improve smallholder's livelihoods, and make meaningful contributions to carbon neutrality goals.



Executive Director Dr. Park Chongho (left) and Rabobank Board Member Ms. Els Kamphof (right) at the headquarters of Rabobank in Utrecht, Netherlands

### Signing of MoU with International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

12 June 2023



IUCN Regional Director for Asia and Hub Director for Oceania Dr. Dindo Campilan (left) and Executive Director Dr. Park Chongho (right) at the IUCN Asia Regional Office in Bangkok, Thailand

AFoCO signed an MoU with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), an international organization working in the field of nature conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, to collaborate in several areas, including the development of a regional collaborative strategy, joint program implementation, capacity building activities, and mobilizing support for implementing multilateral environmental agreements. The organizations will also participate in partnership platforms such as the Landscape Partnership Asia (LPA) and the Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP), fostering broader engagement and knowledge exchange among stakeholders in the region.

### Signing of MoU with Global EverGreening Alliance

1 June 2023

AFoCO took a significant stride towards strengthening international forest cooperation by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Global EverGreening Alliance Limited (GEA), an international NGO which coordinates the development and implementation of massive-scale environmental restoration and sustainable agricultural intensification projects in developing countries around the world. The AFoCO-GEA collaboration will leverage the expertise and resources of both organizations to identify opportunities for land restoration programs, present, market, and promote joint opportunities, share knowledge and building capacity, and operate the Landscape Partnership Asia (LPA).

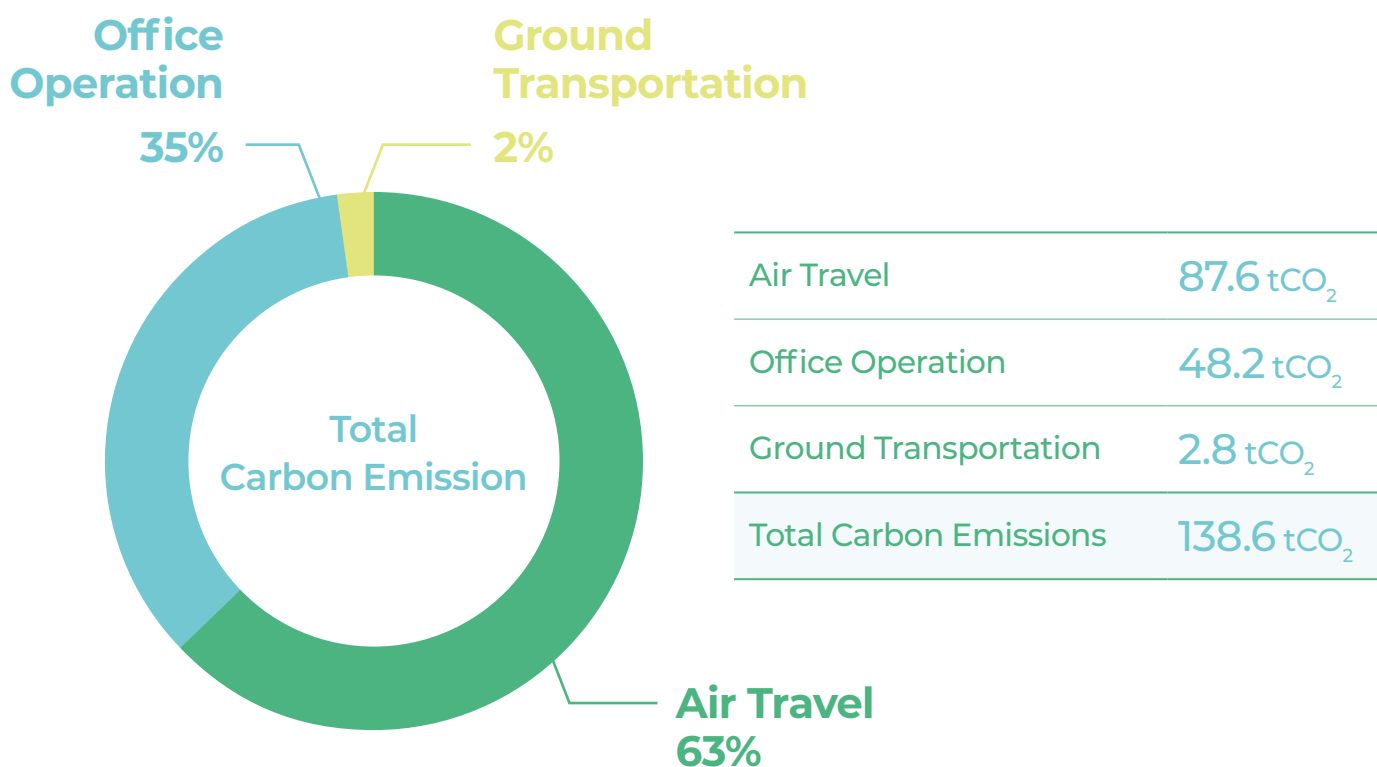


Executive Director Dr. Park Chongho (left) and Mr. Christopher Armitage, CEO of GEA (right) at the MoU signing

# AFoCO's CARBON EMISSIONS IN 2023

## ● Overview

AFoCO's commitment to environmental sustainability extends to actively measuring and mitigating our carbon footprint. To achieve this, we employed established methodologies to assess emissions across three key sectors: air travel, electricity consumption, and vehicle use.



## ● Emissions Offsetting



AFoCO's carbon dioxide emissions

138.6tCO<sub>2</sub>



Number of trees to plant to offset carbon emissions

993 Pine Trees

# AFoCO's CARBON REMOVAL EFFORTS

AFoCO works with the forest departments of member countries to undertake action-oriented forest programs and projects targeted at rehabilitating degraded forest landscapes and preventing deforestation and forest degradation.



*Tropical forest restoration in Maabat suco, Manatuto municipality, Timor-Leste (as part of the AFoCO/026 project to restore 150 ha of forests)*

*Village-based forest rehabilitation in Viengthong district, Bolikhamxay Province, Lao PDR (as part of AFoCO/008 project to rehabilitate 3,000 ha of forests)*



*Mangrove restoration in Sumbawa district, West Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia (as part of the AFoCO/023 project to restore 40 ha of karst, peat and mangrove forests)*

## ● AFoCO Carbon Tree Calculator

The AFoCO Carbon Tree (A·C·T) Calculator is a tool developed to promote environmental protection and carbon neutrality. It calculates the amount of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions generated from a user's activities and determines the number of trees needed to offset these emissions. The goal of the A·C·T Calculator is to provide information so that individuals and businesses can make better environmental choices, aiming to achieve environmental protection and carbon neutrality. Through this tool, users can visualize the environmental impact of their activities and actively contribute to environmental protection by planting trees.



# ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

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# AFoCO at the UNFCCC COP28

## ● AFoCO, Rabobank and Kyrgyzstan collaborate to advance forest carbon projects 1 December 2023

On 1 December, AFoCO signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Kyrgyzstan and the global financial institution, Rabobank of the Netherlands, for the “Collaborative Carbon Offset Project through Agroforestry in Kyrgyzstan” on the occasion of the 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Dubai. Through this MOU, AFoCO will launch agroforestry carbon projects across northern and southern regions of Kyrgyzstan starting in 2024. Kyrgyzstan, known for its natural environment and agricultural potential, presents a conducive setting for integrating agriculture and forestry through agroforestry practices, facilitating sustainable agricultural and forest management. The MOU aims to restore 600,000 hectares of deteriorated forests in Kyrgyzstan, launching a five-year, \$20 million carbon initiative directed at small-scale farmers from 2023 to 2027. This initiative involves agroforestry practices that sequester carbon in biomass, allowing farmers to generate additional income from the sale of agroforestry carbon removal units.



3 (From left to right) Dr. Park Chongho, Executive Director of AFoCO; Mr. Stefaan Decraene, Chair Managing Board of Rabobank; and Mr. Melis Turgunbaev, Minister of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic.



Participating farmers in Issuk-kul province, Balykchy region and Jalalabad province, Nooken region, Kyrgyzstan

## ● AFoCO and Korea Forest Service's joint side event on “Enhancing Climate Action in Asia Forests and Global Stocktake” 9 December 2023

AFoCO worked with the Korea Forest Service to organize a side event titled “Enhancing Climate Action in Asia Forests and Global Stocktake” at the UNFCCC COP28 on December 9, 2023. The event spotlighted forests in mitigating and adapting to climate change, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. At the side event, discussions emphasised the need for urgent climate action in line with the Paris Agreement, focusing on forest restoration, climate adaptation, disaster management, and capacity building. Presentations by experts shed light on various aspects, such as bilateral REDD+ cooperation, Laos’ approach to REDD+ initiatives, empowering small-scale farmers through agroforestry, and the AFoCO’s Climate Action Plan role in addressing climate challenges in Asia.



1 Welcome Remarks by Mr. Sunpil Jin, Vice Executive Director of AFoCO

2 Panel discussion with (from left to right) Dr. Pham Duc Chien, Director of Programs and Project Division of AFoCO; Ms. Ga-Yeong Kim, REDD+ Coordinator, Korea Forest Service; Dr. Martine Jansen, Head of Partnerships, Rabobank; and Dr. Oupakone Alounsavath, Deputy Director General, Department of Forestry, Lao PDR





# “Let’s Forest 2023, Seoul” Event

1-24 September 2023

AFoCO, in partnership with the Seoul Metropolitan Government and Korea Forest Service, hosted “Let’s Forest 2023, Seoul.” This multifaceted event ran from September 1 to 24, 2023 at Seonyudo Park, and featured a range of programs including an exhibition using fire-damaged wood, performances, participatory programs such as woodworking experiences and insightful lectures on climate change and forestry. “Let’s Forest 2023 Seoul” aimed to raise public awareness about the severity of forest fires while raising public awareness of resource recycling. Additionally, this event underscores the importance of forests as nature-based solutions amidst escalating climate change crises. Organizations such as the Korean Society of Forest Science, Korea Forestry Promotion Institute, Korean Forestry Welfare Promotion Institute, Korea Association of Forest Enviro-conservation Technology, and Korea Association of Wood Culture were also invited to deliver lectures themed around climate change and forest protection to share knowledge with the public. Various side events included orchestra performances, fashion shows, live paintings, forest busking, Korean reforestation photo exhibitions, seminars, woodworking experiences, park explanations, and natural object crafting. Additional cultural activities showcased fashion items and performances using fire-damaged wood, enhancing the overall visitor experience.



- 1 Launching ceremony of “Let’s Forest 2023, Seoul
- 2 Photos of the “Let’s Forest 2023, Seoul” exhibition



## I “Let’s Forest” tree-planting activities

**Viet Nam:** The AFoCO Let’s Forest tree-planting event was successfully conducted in Ngoc Thanh Commune, Phuc Yen City, Vinh Phuc Province, Vietnam, in collaboration with AFoCO and the Vietnam Administration of Forestry, generously sponsored by two companies based in the Republic of Korea, GLURI and PENTAWORKS. The Forest Science Center of North-Eastern Vietnam played a pivotal role in site preparation, ensuring the event’s success. The reforestation initiative aimed to create employment opportunities for the local community and establish a demonstration model of Caribbean Pine (*Pinus caribaea*). The demonstration model serves as a learning platform, encouraging the adoption of sustainable forestry practices. The event garnered active participation from local government representatives and enthusiastic community members, resulting in the planting of a total of 1,700 Caribbean Pine trees across 1.5 hectares of land. In 2023 October, the mangrove rehabilitation project in Thai Binh Province continued its efforts to restore 1.6 hectares by planting 3,200 *Sonneratia caseolaris* trees. This year marked another phase of support from Soofe’e of SK Corporation, reaffirming their sustained commitment to the site. The project, executed with the Science-Technology and Sustainable Forest Management Joint Stock Company, focuses on enhancing community resilience against natural disasters and supporting biodiversity. Local residents participated in the tree-planting and maintenance tasks to ensure community involvement.



**Kazakhstan:** Following the AFoCO-NEPA-IKEA joint exhibition, ‘Green Life Must Go On’ held in November 2022, NEPA has taken yet another step forward in environmental sustainability by making a monetary contribution for AFoCO “Let’s Forest - Plantree”, to establish forests to combat the desertification in Kazakhstan. AFoCO partnered with the Republican State Enterprise (RSE) on the right of economic management, “Zhasyl Aimak,” and the Committee of Forestry and Wildlife of the Republic of Kazakhstan to green suburban area in Astana. Over the course of June 13 and 14, 2023, guided by RSE “Zhasyl Aimak” specialists and with the active participation of the forestry institution’s head, deputy, a mechanic, and employees, 2,000 two-year-old pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) seedlings were planted across a 1.0-hectare site.



- 1 Group photo representatives of GLURI, Vietnam Administration of Forestry, Forest Protection Department of Phuc Yen City and local government representatives in Vinh Phuc Province, Viet Nam
- 2 Members of local communities helping with the planting work in Thai Binh Province, Viet Nam, supported by Soofe’e of SK Corporation
- 3 NEPA's Let's Forest-Plantree donation sign board in Astana, Kazakhstan

# Other Engagements

## ● AFoCO and Korea Forest Service celebrate International Day of Forests with Ambassadors

21 March 2023

AFoCO, in partnership with the Korea Forest Service and Sejong National Arboretum, celebrated the 2023 International Day of Forests on 21 March 2023 through a ceremonial tree-planting event at Sejong National Arboretum. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declared March 21 to be the International Day of Forests to commemorate and promote the value of forests of all types. On this day, countries are encouraged to make local, national, and international efforts to prepare events involving forests and trees, such as tree-planting programs. The theme for 2023 is “Forests and health.” The FAO Representative, Ambassadors and Representatives of the diplomatic missions of the AFoCO Parties and Observer countries noted the importance of forests and expressed support and willingness to work together to deal with forest-related issues.



1 Mr. Jin Sunpil, Vice Executive Director of AFoCO, introducing AFoCO to the attendees

2 Group photo taken with delegates





## ● 2023 REForest Campaign with Soofe'e and Wadiz 20 April - 7 May 2023

The 2023REForest Campaign, a collaborative effort by AFoCO, Wadiz, and Soofe'e, has been launched to celebrate Earth Day. This initiative aims to increase public awareness about the vital role of forests in mitigating climate change effects and to inspire active participation in addressing the climate crisis.

Visitors could engage in the campaign from April 20th to May 7th, 2023, at the offline pop-up store in Space Wadiz, Seongsu, Seoul. By decorating a Let's Forest wall with green leaves or purchasing designated products, participants contribute to planting mangrove forests in Vietnam, supporting carbon neutrality efforts. The campaign offers participants the opportunity to choose green leaves representing eco-friendly practices, receive an AFoCO x Soofe'e reusable bag made from plastic waste, and plant trees corresponding to their selected leaves.

The campaign's anticipated outcomes include restoring 2023 mangrove trees, enhancing environmental awareness, and fostering active engagement in conservation initiatives. Join the campaign at Space Wadiz in Seongsu, Seoul, and be part of planting mangrove forests in Southeast Asia while making a positive impact on conservation initiatives and spreading awareness about forests' crucial role in combating climate change.



1 Visitor activities the booth



## ● Specialized Forest Healing Program with the Korea Forest Welfare Institute 27 - 28 July 2023

In collaboration with the Korea Forest Welfare Institute (KoWI), AFoCO hosted a forest healing program, Forestory, for Ambassadors and foreign staff members of AFoCO Member Countries at the National Center for Forest Therapy in Yeongju-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do. This event aimed to strengthen cooperation on sustainable forest management, promote forest-based welfare services, and raise awareness about the vital role of forests in public health and quality of life. Participants immersed themselves in various forest healing activities such as forest walks, Aqua Massage Therapy, Singing Bowl Meditation, and Tea Therapy. Beyond the therapeutic benefits, the program underscored the significance of sustainable forest management, leaving attendees with a deep appreciation for forest therapy's healing effects and a renewed dedication to advocating for sustainable practices to ensure a greener future for all.

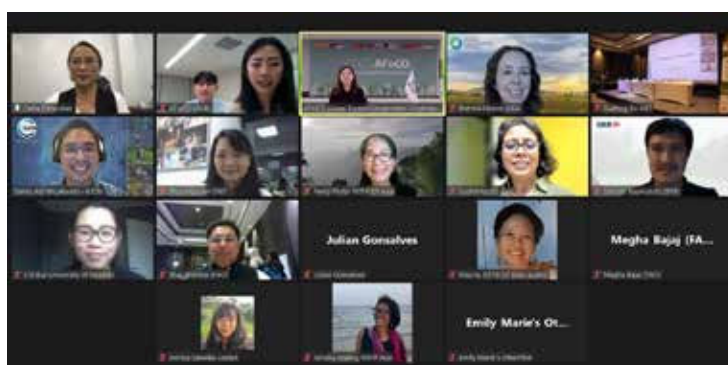


1 Group photo

2 Forest healing activities (top: forest therapy with hammock, bottom: singing bowl meditation)

## ● Landscape Partnership Asia (LPA) Technical Partners Roundtable Dialogue at FLR Investment Forum 15 November 2023

Held as a parallel event during the Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR) Investment Forum on November 15, 2023, the LPA Technical Partners Roundtable Dialogue (RTD) gathered members of the LPA management team — AFoCO, Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF), International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and Global Evergreening Alliance (GEA) — alongside representatives from technical partners such as the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), Non-Timber Forest Products - Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP), and the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR). The RTD featured a presentation on LPA's progress, ongoing FLR initiatives, and discussions on collaboration and future partnerships in restoring drylands and fostering landscape sustainability.







- 1 (Left) H.E. Pedro dos Reis, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries of Timor-Leste, and Dr. Chongho Park, Executive Director of AFoCO
- 2 Late Dr. Hojoong Youn, AFoCO Regional Project Manager, introducing the AKCF Project
- 3 Group photo taken with representatives from LPA partner organizations

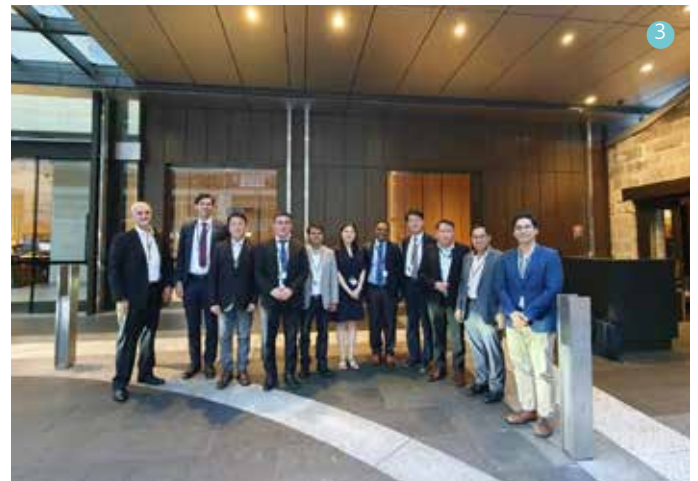
## • Donation of Computer and Laptops to Timor-Leste

26 April 2023

AFoCO has been working to enhance the capacities of its member countries' forestry sectors and working environments through various measures. Over the past four years, several central and local government agencies in the Republic of Korea (ROK) have donated forest fire management equipment and related items to the AFoCO Secretariat. In 2022, the Korea Forest Welfare Institute (FoWI) donated fifty-nine desktop computers to support technology transfer and enhance the capacity and working environment of AFoCO member countries. Upon request from Timor-Leste, AFoCO provided ten desktop computers and two laptops to support the capacity-building and the use of computer softwares of staff involved in the ongoing AFoCO projects in Timor-Leste.

## • AFoCO's participation at 30th Session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC)

19 October 2023



AFoCO participated as an Associate Member of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations during the 30th Session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC). The session focused on advising forest policy formulation, coordinating its implementation, and exchanging technical information. AFoCO emphasized its commitment to advancing Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) mechanisms in Asia through its new Strategic Plan 2024-2030 and Climate Action Plan 2025-2034, and introduced the Landscape Partnership Asia (LPA) aimed at promoting forest and landscape restoration in drylands and drought-prone areas. In discussions about integrated fire management, AFoCO presented on the ASEAN Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF)-funded project on capacity building for enhancing resilience to forest fires and supporting local livelihoods and market linkages in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam.

# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- 24 Strengthening forest fire resilience and community market linkages in the Mekong region
- 26 Empowering communities through sustainable Non-Timber Forest Products
- 28 Participatory agroforestry approaches to accelerate Indonesia's FOLU goals
- 30 Supporting the Billion Trees National Movement in Mongolia
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# Strengthening forest fire resilience and community market linkages in the Mekong region

Forests in the the ASEAN region are under increasing threat as they are converted and degraded to meet the demands of growing human populations. Forest fires, driven largely by human activities, are a significant contributor to this degradation, causing immense damage to the environment, human life, property, and livelihoods. These fires often start from intentional activities to clear land for agriculture or other economic pursuits. Recognizing the urgency of this issue, our project focuses on supporting community forestry enterprises (CFEs) to provide sustainable economic alternatives for local communities in high-risk areas. CFEs add value to local economies and larger value chains, yet their potential within ASEAN has not been fully realized. This project aims to maximize CFEs' impact, particularly in countries like Myanmar, Lao PDR, and Viet Nam, where access to CFE development programs is limited.

Funded by the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF), the AFoCO regional project on “Capacity Building on Enhancing Resilience to Forest Fire, and Local Livelihood and Market Linkages (AFoCO/032/2022)” aims to enhance the capacities of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam (collectively known as CLMV) in managing forest fires through integrated approaches that conserve natural resources, improve local livelihoods, and promote Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

The heart of this four-year initiative lies in its practical impact on local communities and forests. By enhancing forest fire resilience and creating market linkages, we aim to tackle the recurring threat of forest fires, which peak during the dry seasons from January to April. For instance, in 2021, forest fires ravaged 210 hectares of land in Lao PDR, particularly in the northern regions, underscoring the need for proactive measures. One of the innovative solutions being implemented in Lao PDR includes 24-hour surveillance towers equipped with CCTVs and a network of mobile applications that allow residents to report potential fires swiftly. This system will be supported by a comprehensive monitoring center to ensure rapid response when fires break out.

Beyond fire resilience, the project is deeply committed to supporting local communities whose lives are frequently disrupted by forest fires. The project will establishing product collection hubs and connecting them to local markets, providing communities with sustainable economic opportunities. Experiential learning programs are also being introduced to empower communities with the knowledge and skills needed for sustainable local development. By leveraging modern technologies and involving local communities, the prohect will not only work towards preventing forest fires, but also promote biodiversity conservation, mitigate climate change, and enhance the overall well-being of local populations.



2 MoU signing ceremony between the Department of Forestry of Lao PDR and AFoCO (1st row, from left to right: Late Dr. Youn Hojoong, Regional Project Manager of AFoCO; Mr. Sousath Sayakoummame, Director General of the Department of Forestry; and Dr. Thatsaka Saphangthong, Director General of the Department of Planning and Cooperation)

1 MoU signing ceremony between the Forestry Administration of Cambodia and AFoCO (Late Dr. Youn Hojoong, Regional Project Manager of AFoCO; Mr. Chheang Dany, Deputy Director General of the Forestry Administration; Mr. Hem Saravuth, Forestry Administration; Mr. Jin Sunpil Jin, Vice Executive Director of AFoCO; Dr. Park Junghwan, Regional Program Manager of AFoCO)







Project activities include workshops and conferences in Thailand, Viet Nam and the Philippines

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Capacity Building on Enhancing Resilience to Forest Fire, and Local Livelihood and Market Linkages (AFoCO/032/2022)

Duration	2022-2026
Budget	US\$ 2,000,000
Site	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam



In memory of the late Dr. Youn Hojoong

Dr. Youn Hojoong served as AFoCO’s Regional Project Manager for the regional project “Capacity Building on Enhancing Resilience to Forest Fire and Local Livelihood and Market Linkages (AFoCO/032/2022)” funded by the ASEAN Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF). Dr. Youn played an integral role in coordinating these cross-country initiatives to enhance forest fire management, promote sustainable forest practices, and safeguard the well-being of local communities in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam. Before his tenure in AFoCO, Dr. Youn served the National Institute of Forest Science (NIFoS) of the Republic of Korea for close to four decades, his last position being the Director General of the Department of Forest Environment Conservation.



Dr. Youn Hojoong, a true champion of forest management and fire prevention, passed away on 8 December 2023. His legacy of dedication and significant contributions will forever be remembered in the Republic of Korea.

## ● Empowering communities through sustainable Non-Timber Forest Products

Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) have long been essential sources of food, fodder, fuel, and other vital goods, particularly during challenging times. According to the FAO's World Forest Report 2022, an estimated 3.5 to 5.8 billion people rely on NTFPs for personal use or to support their livelihoods. These products are integral to multimillion and even multibillion-dollar industries, including cosmetics, food, and health sectors. NTFPs play a critical role in stabilizing incomes across seasons, helping to prevent poverty and sustain economic resilience.

With support from the Korea Forest Service, AFoCO is implementing a regional project titled "Improved Local Community Livelihoods Through Increased Income From Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP): Modeling Scalable Community-Based Enterprises in Asia (AFoCO/035/2022)." The project's goal is to empower local communities by promoting the sustainable use of NTFPs, thereby fostering economic growth and sustainability through community-based enterprises. The NTFP Project is a transformative initiative aimed at unlocking the potential of NTFPs in selected countries, encompassing medicinal plants, wild edibles, and handicraft materials sourced from forests. The project focuses on empowering local communities through sustainable NTFP use, promoting economic growth, and ensuring environmental stewardship and biodiversity conservation.

From September 3-9, 2023, the project held its 2nd Regional Workshop in Hanoi, Viet Nam, bringing together participants from 12 Asian countries: Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam. The workshop centered on two primary themes: Community-Based Enterprise Development and Management (CBE-DM) and NTFP Sustainable Resources Management (NTFP-SRM). These sessions were designed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills needed to develop and implement effective NTFP management strategies. The workshop provided a platform for sharing country-specific activities and fostered a unified approach to achieving the project's goals.

The NTFP Project is poised to drive economic growth through community empowerment with NTFP commodities. By integrating sustainable practices and fostering cross-border collaboration, the project aims to protect forest resources and maintain biodiversity. This initiative not only supports local economies but also ensures that forests continue to provide essential resources for future generations.



Brief of Project AFoCO/035/2022





Workshop and Project Inception Meeting Activities



NTFP Program in Vietnam, left: community enterprise; right: bamboo product

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Improved Local Community Livelihoods Through Increased Income From Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP): Modelling Scalable Community-Based Enterprises In Asia (AFoCO/035/2022)

Duration	2022-2026
Budget	US\$ 4,000,000
Site	Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam







## ● Participatory agroforestry approaches to accelerate Indonesia's FOLU goals

The AFoCO-Indonesia project, titled “Innovative Solutions for Climate Change and Biodiversity Landscape Strategy to Support SDGs in Indonesia (AFoCO/023/2021),” contributes to Indonesia’s Forestry and Other Land Use (FOLU) Net Sink 2030 emissions reduction objectives through a comprehensive approach integrating agroforestry, research, capacity development, and community engagement and empowerment. By partnering with diverse stakeholders, including local government bodies and Forest Management Units (FMUs), the project emphasizes sustainable management practices to mitigate emissions and advance Indonesia’s sustainable development goals. Employing participatory methodologies, the project establishes demonstration plots to monitor biomass and carbon stocks across various forest ecosystems. Furthermore, through Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA) in target provinces, community input is solicited on aspects such as preferred plant species and management practices, fostering a culture of stewardship for natural resources.



- 1 View of the karst agroforestry plot in Maros district, South Sulawesi Province
- 2 Officials from the General Directorate of Forestry of Timor-Leste during a visit to the project site in South Sulawesi in January 2023 to learn lessons and share experiences
- 3 Villagers helping to measure plant growth in the project site in South Sulawesi
- 4 Peatland agroforestry plot in Kepau Jaya, Kampar district, Riau Province

Following the completion of three planned 10-ha demonstration plots, demonstration plots in West Nusa Tenggara and South Sulawesi provinces were expanded with the use of project savings. Notably, a field survey in South Sulawesi identified a suitable area for expanding the karst demonstration plot by 5 hectares, with delineation, fencing, and seed collection completed by December 2023.

Similarly, Teluk Santong village was chosen for an additional 5-ha mangrove demonstration plot in West Nusa Tenggara, where 11,250 seedlings were planted. Furthermore, 12 training sessions involving 409 FMU and community participants as well as two workshops on Long Term Forest Management Plans were conducted with 119 FMU officers. The project also released a research publication on “Value chains and market analysis for the potential commodity of Buah Tani Tonggak Negeri forest farmers group,” where Kepau Jaya forest area for specific purposes (KHDTK) initiated a collaborative peat forest management program with the Forest Farmers Group (KTH) Buah Tani Tonggak Negeri, and identified red chili emerged as the commodity with the highest market value and most potential for cultivation.



1 Capacity-building activities teach communities how to process parts of a mangrove plant into food and other products to support enterprise development

2 Mangrove plot in Sumbawa district, West Nusa Tenggara Province

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

### Innovative Solution for Climate Change and Biodiversity Landscape Strategy to Support SDGs in Indonesia (AFoCO/023/2021)



Duration	2021-2024
Budget	<b>Total - US\$ 800,000</b> (AFoCO - US\$ 700,000; National: US\$ 100,000)
Site	<p>40 ha of forest restoration and rehabilitation demonstration plots and Permanent Sampling Plots (PSPs) for long-term monitoring established in 3 provinces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- West Nusa Tenggara Province - 15 ha mangrove demonstration plot, silvofishery demonstration plot, and PSPs in area managed by Ampang Plampang FMU, Sumbawa Regenc</li> <li>- South Sulawesi Province - 15 ha karst and lowland ecosystem demonstration plot and PSPs in area managed by Bulusarang FMU, Maros Regency</li> <li>- Riau Province - 10 ha tropical peatland demonstration plot in Kepau Jaya Specific Purpose Forest Area (SPFA), Kampar Regency; PSPs and capacity-building activities in Minas Tahura FMU, Siak Regency</li> </ul>



## ● Supporting the Billion Trees National Movement in Mongolia

Mongolia has faced escalating deforestation and forest degradation, particularly evident in the eastern Khentii mountains, resulting in significant ecological and economic repercussions. Limited availability of quality forest seedlings and insufficient capacity among staff have hindered restoration efforts, leading to low survival rates of planted forests. In 2021, the President of Mongolia initiated the “Billion trees” National Movement (BTNM), which aims to increase forest area up to 9% by 2030 to protect degraded land, mitigate climate change, and combat desertification (BTNM strategic plan 2023). While the BTNM strives to increase forest area to 9% by 2030, addressing challenges related to seed supply systems, slow-growing native species, harsh climate conditions, and the need for substantial investments and capacity building is crucial. The short timeframe and competing land uses further complicate large-scale restoration efforts.

In line with national efforts, the project on Forest Restoration Demonstration through High Capacity Tree Nursery and Capacity Building in Support of the “1 Billion Trees” Campaign in Mongolia (AFoCO/039/2023) aims to restore 120 ha of degraded forests in the Ereen mountain range, establishing mechanized nurseries for forest restoration, building the capacity of frontline forestry staff and communities, controlling soil erosion, conserving water, and contributing to income generation for participating communities. Key activities involve establishing new tree nurseries in the Ereen Mountain Range and Deediin Valley, expanding existing nurseries, conducting training on seedling propagation and reforestation techniques, and preparing a 10-year forest management/restoration plan for both sites. The project also aims to produce guidelines on advanced tree nursery techniques, develop extension materials to share lessons learned, and draft a policy brief with recommendations for improving forest restoration in degraded areas. Expected outputs include the establishment of tree nurseries, increased seedling production, capacity-building training, the development of a forest restoration plan for the Ereen Mountain Range and Deediin Valley, reforestation of 120 hectares, and the documentation and sharing of knowledge on the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of forest restoration.



Participatory tree-planting activity in Bayan-Uul soum, Dornod aimag, Northeastern Khentii

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

#### Forest Restoration Demonstration through High Capacity Tree Nursery and Capacity Building in Support of the “1 Billion Trees” Campaign in Mongolia (AFoCO/039/2023)



Duration	2024–2025
Budget	Total - US\$ 999,656
Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Bayan-Uul soum, Dornod aimag, Northeastern Khentii</li> <li>– Deendiin valley, Ulaanbaatar city, Mongolia</li> </ul>



● Enhancing seed supplies to support national reforestation efforts in Kazakhstan

The frequent forest fires in Kazakhstan have caused significant damage, resulting in the loss of 150 thousand hectares of forest and over \$400 million in economic losses in the past three years. These fires mainly occur in the central, northern, and eastern regions, underlining the urgent need for robust reforestation efforts. However, reforestation initiatives face challenges due to an annual shortage of 200 million seedlings, worsened by Kazakhstan’s harsh climatic conditions. With a low survival rate of seedlings exacerbated by an extended fire season lasting up to 270 days, establishing a comprehensive forest seed complex is imperative. This complex would address the deficit in planting materials and improve forest gene pool quality for long-term sustainability.

The project “Technology and Capacity Enhancement for Massive Production of Quality Planting Materials to Support National Forestation Goals in Kazakhstan (AFoCO/044/2024)” aims to tackle the lack of modern technology and capacity for mass production of high-quality planting material essential for achieving national afforestation goals and ensuring environmental sustainability. The project will establish a forest seed complex to cultivate high-quality planting material, particularly Scots pine seedlings, for national reforestation efforts post-natural disasters and to meet the goal of planting 2 billion trees by 2025. Additionally, it will pilot urban green windbreaks with economically valuable species to develop scalable restoration models, contributing to regional/international forest area goals and combating soil degradation. To address forestry seed material needs, the project will modernize forest nurseries and reconstruct permanent seed plots, facilitating research on seed properties based on local climates and the location of superior trees for effective forest seed zoning.

In October 2023, AFoCO conducted a site survey with experts from the Korea Association of Forest Enviro-conservation Technology (KAFET) to wildfire-affected areas in the Abay and Kostanay regions. The team conducted on-site surveys, evaluated forest stands and soil characteristics, visited tree nurseries for seedling production confirmation, and inspected forest fire stations to observe monitoring and firefighting systems. The team found that the nursery in Semey Ormany of the Abai region can produce up to 25 million pine seeds annually, including 3 million containerized pine seedlings. This initiative aims to provide technical recommendations to facilitate forest restoration efforts aimed at rehabilitating forest landscapes degraded by large-scale forest fires. Joint training programs targeted at enhancing the capacities of Kazakhstan’s forest fire experts/officials in forest fire management will also be explored.



1 Aerial view showing extent of damage in state forest nature reserve, Semey Ormany, Abai region

2 Taking tree measurements during the site survey

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Technology and Capacity Enhancement for Massive Production of Quality Planting Materials to Support National Forestation Goals in Kazakhstan (AFoCO/044/2020)

Duration	2024-2025
Budget	Total - US\$ 1,228,146 (AFoCO - US\$ 978,146; National: US\$ 250,000)
Site	Burabay district on the territory of the “Northern Region” branch of the Republican State Enterprise “Republican Forest Selection and Seed Center” and Akmola region

A map of Kazakhstan with its administrative regions outlined. The Akmola region is highlighted in a darker green color, and the word "Kazakhstan" is written across the center of the map.

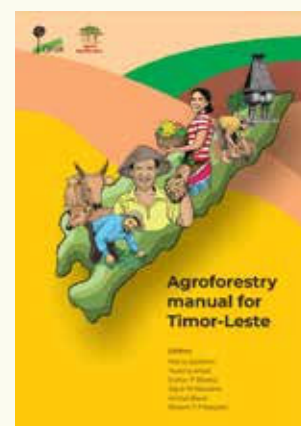
## ● Efforts to re-green Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste faces significant challenges in forest conservation and management, with an annual deforestation rate of 1.7% and forest degradation rate of 5.8%, among the highest in South Asia and South-East Asia. These issues stem from various factors such as overgrazing, farmland expansion, fuelwood demand, urban growth, and logging. Despite efforts by the Government of Timor-Leste to curb deforestation and degradation, anticipated improvements have yet to materialize due to the lack of comprehensive forest data, outdated forest maps, and inadequate legislative frameworks.



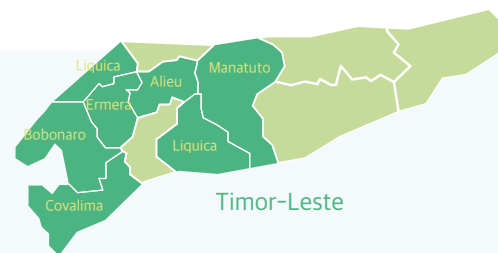
There is a critical need for an integrated forest data system to consolidate and manage forest-related information for evidence-based decision-making. Building institutional capacities and enhancing community-level knowledge and skills are essential to promote sustainable forest management practices and address the challenges faced by the forest sector in Timor-Leste. In response to these challenges, AFoCO is implementing two projects in Timor-Leste — “Re-Greening the Bare Lands In Timor-Leste Through Promotion of Locally Customized Restoration Models (AFoCO/026/2021)” “Development of Agroforestry Models for Promotion of Reforestation in the Different Zones in Timor-Leste (AFoCO/018/2020).”

- The AFoCO/026 restoration project in the municipalities of Manatuto and Aileu in Timor-Leste aimed to tackle pressing issues related to land degradation, unsustainable agricultural practices, and unclear land tenure. The project adopted a comprehensive strategy, encompassing stakeholder engagement, capacity building, spatial mapping, and the development of sustainable land management business models. It was found that collaboration with local communities and the incorporation of traditional knowledge significantly contribute to success. In addition to fencing, the restoration models are protected under the traditional law ‘Tara bandu’, preventing communities from destructive activities or illegal harvesting. Communities strictly adhere to this customary law, ensuring the successful protection of the planting site. The 140-ha restoration site in Ma’abat suco, Manatuto Municipality used to be an abandoned communal land known for its harsh conditions and low soil productivity. In 2023, over 20,000 sandalwood trees in February 2023 with an impressive 80% survival rate, showcasing its positive impact on environmental conservation and community well-being. The project’s success stories have earned the support of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry and Fisheries (MALFF), neighboring municipal governments, and communities, establishing it as a symbolic project in the country.
- Recognizing the potential of agroforestry as a viable solution for restoring degraded lands and forests, the AFoCO/018 project is strategically focuses on two main objectives: establishing field-tested agroforestry systems in different agroecological zones and building institutional capacity in reforestation through Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CB-NRM) approaches. In 2023, the project produced a comprehensive manual titled “Agroforestry manual for Timor-Leste.” This manual serves as a key output of the project, aiming to bridge this gap by providing fundamental concepts and principles of agroforestry, equipping technicians and practitioners with the necessary knowledge to develop effective agroforestry designs.



## PROJECT OVERVIEW

## Re-Greening the Bare Lands In Timor-Leste Through Promotion of Locally Customized Restoration Models (AFoCO/026/2021)



Duration	2022-2026
Budget	Total - US\$ 1,050,000 (AFoCO - US\$ 1,000,000; National: US\$ 50,000)
Site	Manatuto and Aileu Municipalities

## Development of Agroforestry Models for Promoting of Reforestation in Different Agro-Ecological Zones in Timor-Leste (AFoCO/018/2020)

Duration	2021-2025
Budget	Total - US\$ 605,580 (AFoCO - US\$ 516,700; National: US\$ 88,880)
Site	Six villages in four municipalities including Bobonaro, Covalima, Ermera and Liqueica

## Exploring Coffee Value Chain Potentials

Coffee plays a pivotal role in Timor-Leste's economy, contributing significantly to its non-oil export revenue and supporting around 60,000 households. Despite its importance, the sector faces challenges such as low and inconsistent production, attributed to poor plantation management and climate variability. Issues like inadequate shade tree integration and limited value-adding activities further hinder its growth potential. However, with strategic initiatives like the National Coffee Sector Development Plan and projects like the Coffee-Agroforestry and Livelihood Improvement Project, efforts are underway to address these challenges and maximize the country's coffee industry's potential.

The AFoCO team's exploration of coffee value chain potentials in Timor-Leste revealed significant insights. AFoCO visited key sites such as the Center for coffee tree nursery and Cooperative Café Timor (CCT) Company in Ermera District, a major hub for coffee seedling production. In Ermera District, a major nursery site produced 250,000 Arabica seedlings in 2023, supporting the country where 6-70,000 households rely on coffee as a primary income source. Challenges with the susceptibility of Timor-hybrid coffee species to diseases like coffee rust were noted, highlighting opportunities for collaboration in agroforestry, enhancing coffee species diversity and farmer capacity.

Additionally, the observation of a sandalwood plantation spanning 170 hectares underscored the government's efforts in sandalwood reforestation, highlighting the need for strategic planning and technical expertise in this endeavor. Addressing challenges in finding alternative income sources for affected communities remains a priority, underscoring the importance of collaboration in fostering sustainable development in the region.



- 1 Center for coffee tree nursery and Cooperative Café Timor (CCT): (left) coffee seedlings in a nursery and (right) coffee bean processing
- 2 Field planted sandalwood



## ● Empowering communities in Bhutan

Bhutan's rural communities heavily rely on natural resources for various purposes such as wild vegetables, medicinal herbs, and timber, among others. Recognizing this dependency, initiatives like community forest and non-wood forest products programs have been in place since the early 1990s, blending traditional knowledge with technical advancements to benefit rural populations. To further augment rural income while ensuring sustainable resource management, the AFoCO Project on "Sustainable Community-based Enterprise Development for Improved Rural Livelihood in Bhutan (AFoCO/017/2020)," targets 12 districts across Bhutan. The project interventions focus on bolstering community forest and non-wood forest product management groups, aiming to implement sustainable forest management practices and uplift rural livelihoods. By building capacities at various levels, including central and local governments, forestry officials, and rural communities, the project aims to establish community-based enterprises, develop alternative income sources, and enhance knowledge and technology for climate change adaptation through sustainable forest practices.



*Raw material improved by grinder machine  
to produce incense powder*



- 1 Tobked Menchhu - Gasa, a small ecotourism enterprise, specializing in traditional hot-stone medicinal baths
- 2 Jagoev Manchhu, an ecotourism enterprise in Gasa with a natural sulfur waterfall



This project has yielded significant achievements in Paro, Thimphu, Gasa, and Punakha. For instance, in Paro, the Drakey Chinto Group, with AFoCO’s assistance, witnessed a substantial increase in annual income by transforming incense production through training and infrastructure support. Similarly, in Gasa, enterprises specializing in traditional hot-stone medicinal baths, like Tobked Menchhu and Jagoev Manchhu, flourished, attracting over 100 visitors within a short span. These endeavors not only preserved cultural practices but also fostered sustainable community development, as evidenced during a final meeting in Thimphu, where future actions were discussed, underscoring the project’s role in enhancing livelihoods and promoting sustainability.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Sustainable Community-based Enterprise  
Development for Improved Rural Livelihood in Bhutan  
(AFoCO/017/2020)

Duration	2020-2025
Budget	Total - US\$ 1,400,000 (AFoCO - US\$ 1,000,000; National: US\$ 400,000)
Site	Bumthang, Chukha, Gasa, Haa, Lhuentse, Paro, Punakha, Thimphu, Trashigang, Tsirang, Pemagatshel, Wangdue Phodrang

# List of Projects as of March 2024

	PROJECT CODE	TITLE	PERIOD	COUNTRY	BUDGET
Completed Projects					
1	AFoCO/001/2013	Reclamation, Rehabilitation and Restoration of Degraded Forest Ecosystems (RRR-DFE) in Mekong Basin Countries	2 years (2013-2014)	KH, LA, MM, TH, VN	500,000 USD
2	AFoCO/002/2013	Capacity Building on Improving Forest Resources Assessment and Enhancing the Involvement of the Local Communities to Address the Adverse Impact of Climate Change	2 years (2013-2014)	BR, KH, ID, LA, MM, PH, TH, VN	1,847,528 USD
3	AFoCO/003/2014	Promotion of Forest Rehabilitation in Cambodia and Viet Nam Through Demonstration Models and Improvement of Seed Supply System	5 years (2015-2020)	KH, VN	1,000,000 USD
4	AFoCO/004/2014	Facilitating the Participatory Planning Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) Using Geographic Information System (GIS) and Remote Sensing (RS) Technologies in Forest Resources Management in The Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand	2014-2020	ID, PH, TH	1,500,000 USD
5	AFoCO/009/2015	Developing High Valuable Species in Viet Nam and Thailand as the Mechanism for Sustainable Forest Management and Livelihood Improvement for Local Communities	2015-2018	VN, TH	600,000 USD
6	AFoCO/011/2016	Capacity Building on the Application of Landscape Approach to Support the Sustainable Natural Resources Management in Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Philippines, and Singapore (BIPS Project)	2016-2019	BR, ID, PH, SG	539,726 USD
7	AFoCO/012/2019	The Registration of Small-scale Private Forest Plantations in Cambodia	2020-2022	KH	Total budget: 275,110 USD AFoCO fund: 249,410 USD
8	AFoCO/006/2014	Rehabilitation and Development of Mangrove Forest Ecosystem in Thai Binh Province, Viet Nam	2016-2023	VN	1,500,000 USD
Projects Under Completion Process					
9	AFoCO/010/2016	Domestication of Endangered, Endemic and Threatened Plant Species in Disturbed Terrestrial Ecosystems in Malaysia and Thailand	2016-2022	MY, TH	1,200,000 USD
10	AFoCO/005/2014	Establishment of Forest Genetics Research Center for Restoration of Major Timber Species in Cambodia	2016-2025	KH	1,500,000 USD
On-going Projects					
11	AFoCO/007/2014	Establishment of Regional Education and Training Center in Myanmar	2014-2025	MM	6,988,215 USD
12	AFoCO/008/2014	Village-based Forest Rehabilitation in Lao PDR	2016-2025	LA	1,500,000 USD



13	AFoCO/013/2020	Improving <i>Pinus caribaea</i> Morelet for Plantation on Degraded Land in Viet Nam's Northern Mountainous Region	2020-2023.12	VN	Total budget: 559,000 USD AFoCO fund: 486,000 USD
14	AFoCO/014/2020	Integrated Pest and Disease Management in Teak Plantations in Bago Region, Myanmar	2020-2025	MM	955,360 USD
15	AFoCO/015/2020	Model Forest for Livelihood Improvement of Forest Dependent Communities through Development of Community-based Enterprise and Forest Conservation	2020-2024*	MM	952,000 USD
16	AFoCO/016/2021	Promotion of Vertical Integration in Wood Processing through People's Organizations in Community Based Forest Management Areas in the Philippines	2021-2026	PH	Total budget: 1,118,537 USD AFoCO fund: 928,822 USD
17	AFoCO/017/2020	Sustainable Community-based Enterprise Development for Improved Rural Livelihood in Bhutan	2020-2025	BT	Total budget: 1,400,000 USD AFoCO fund: 1,000,000 USD
18	AFoCO/018/2020	Development of Agroforestry Models for Promotion of Reforestation in the Different Zones in Timor-Leste	2021-2025	TL	Total budget: 605,580 USD AFoCO fund: 516,700 USD
19	AFoCO/019/2020 (NIFoS)	Assessment of Adelgid diversity and distribution in conifer forest of Bhutan to mitigate future outbreaks	2020-2022	BT	Total budget: 60,976 USD AFoCO fund: 32,862 USD
20	AFoCO/020/2020 (NIFoS)	Investigation of the resistance of black saxaul ( <i>Haloxylon aphyllum</i> ) forms to gall-forming insects in Kazakhstan	2020-2022	KZ	32,864 USD
21	AFoCO/021/2021 (NIFoS)	Performance of Cluster Method in Rehabilitating Degraded Lands in Cambodia	2021-2023	KH	34,500 USD
22	AFoCO/022/2021 (NIFoS)	Research on Forest Enrichment using High Valuable Native Species in Hoa Binh Province, Viet Nam	2021-2023	VN	Total budget: 39,496 USD AFoCO fund: 34,496 USD
23	AFoCO/023/2021	Innovative solution for climate change and biodiversity landscape strategy to support SDGs in Indonesia	2021-2024	ID	Total budget: 800,000 USD AFoCO fund: 700,000USD
24	AFoCO/024/2021	Conservation and development of forest ecosystems biodiversity resources at Cat Tien National Park	2021-2025	VN	Total budget: 1,232,000 USD AFoCO fund: 1,132,000USD
25	AFoCO/025/2021	Integrated village-driven forest rehabilitation and livelihood improvement in Viengthong district, Bolikhamxay province, Lao PDR	2021-2026	LA	Total budget: 1,099,840 USD AFoCO fund: 993,440 USD
26	AFoCO/026/2021	Re-greening the bare lands in Timor-Leste through promotion of locally customized restoration models	2022-2026	TL	Total budget: 1,050,000USD AFoCO fund: 1,000,000USD
27	AFoCO/027/2022	Site Restoration and Sustainable Management of Community Forest Using Multiple Use Tree Species and Agroforestry	2022-2027	KH	Total budget: 727,515 USD AFoCO fund: 663,515 USD

28	<a href="#">AFoCO/028/2022</a>	Pilot project on inventory of unaccounted forests in Kostanay and North Kazakhstan regions and automation of the collection of information on forestry	2022-2026	KZ	Total Budget: 1,243,807.2 USD AFoCO fund: 953,277 USD
29	<a href="#">AFoCO/030/2022</a>	Improving local communities' livelihoods and engagement in sustainable forest and land management in Thailand through Forest Landscape Restoration	2022-2024	TH	300,000 USD
30	<a href="#">AFoCO/031/2022</a>	Rehabilitation of degraded and potentially deserted forest land in the Northwest region of Viet Nam through application of integrated technical measures	2022-2026	VN	Total budget: 920,000 USD AFoCO fund: 800,000 USD
31	<a href="#">AFoCO/029/2022</a>	Ensuring functioning of cultural ecosystem services in an urban setting: assimilating nature for forest healing and experiential learning in Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center	2022-2025	PH	Total budget: 984,175 USD AFoCO fund: 705,000 USD
32	<a href="#">AFoCO/032/2022</a>	Capacity Building on Enhancing Resilience to Forest Fire, and Local Livelihood and Market Linkages	2022-2026	AFoCO Secretariat (Lead Agency), KH, LA, MM, VN	Total budget: 5,000,000 USD AFoCO fund: 2,000,000 USD
33	<a href="#">AFoCO/033/2022 (NIFoS)</a>	Community-government restoration, recreation and livelihoods in Batur UNESCO Global Geopark	2022-2024	ID	Total budget: 43,800 USD AFoCO fund; 33,800 USD (KRW equivalent up to 40M)
34	<a href="#">AFoCO/034/2022 (NIFoS)</a>	Assessment of Financial Instrument and PES Model Application for Rare and Endangered Species Preservation in Thailand: Pilot site in Suratthani Province	2022-2024	TH	Total budget: 36,960 USD AFoCO fund: 30,960 USD
35	<a href="#">AFoCO/035/2022</a>	Improved local community livelihoods through increased income from non-timber forest products (NTFP): Modeling scalable community-based enterprises in Asia	2022-2026	All	4,000,000 USD
36	<a href="#">AFoCO/036/2022</a>	The Establishment of ASEAN-KOREA Garden in Cambodia	2022-2025	KH	-
37	<a href="#">AFoCO/037/2023</a>	ICT for Adaptation to Climate Change and Forest Fire Management in Mekong Region	2023-2026	KH, VN	MKCF
38	<a href="#">AFoCO/038/2023</a>	Advancing Restoration of Native Agarwood - <i>Aquilaria crassna</i> and <i>A. Malaccensis</i> - for Sustainable Use and Management in Southwestern Cambodia	2023-2025	KH	-
39	<a href="#">AFoCO/039/2023</a>	Forest Restoration Demonstration through High Capacity Tree Nursery and Capacity Building in Support of the "1 Billion Trees" Campaign in Mongolia	2023-2025	MN	-
40	<a href="#">AFoCO/040/2023</a>	Forest Restoration using Philippine Threatened and Endemic Tree Species (PTES) in Bacon-Manito Geothermal Reservation in Support to the Philippines' Forestry Sector's National Greening Program	2023-2025	PH	-

PROJECT CODE		TITLE	PERIOD	COUNTRY	BUDGET
Projects Under Inception Arrangements					
41	AFoCO/041/2023	Sustaining Abundance of Forest Ecosystems (SAFE)	2023-2024	KH, LA, VN	120,000 USD
42	AFoCO/042/2024	Establishment of ASEAN-Korea Garden in Viet Nam	2024-2025	VN	Total Budget: 1,253,759 USD AFoCO fund: 1,152,959 USD
43	AFoCO/043/2024	Establishment of ASEAN-KOREA Garden in Lao PDR	2024-2025	LA	Total Budget: 1,223,759 USD AFoCO fund: 1,152,959 USD
44	AFoCO/044/2024	Technology and Capacity Enhancement for Massive Production of Quality Planting Materials to Support National Forestation Goals in Kazakhstan	2024-2025	KZ	Total Budget: 1,228,146 USD AFoCO fund: 978,146 USD
45	AFoCO/045/2024	Conservation of useful and rare tree species in Kyrgyzstan through establishment of a seed storage in order to retain significant resource	2024-2025	KG	Total Budget: 1,228,146 USD AFoCO fund: 978,146 USD
46	New	Mekong REDD+ Project P1 Project	2024-2026	KH	-











# AFoCO RETC

# 18

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## TRAINING COURSES

- 4 Regular courses
- 9 Community Development courses
- 3 Customized courses
- 2 Special courses/workshops

AFoCO is committed to offering quality training courses that develop the capacities of member countries to deal with pressing forestry and environmental issues such as deforestation, forest degradation, and climate change. The AFoCO Regional Education and Training Center (RETC) was established as a subsidiary organ of AFoCO to develop the capacities of member countries to deal with forestry and related environmental issues. The RETC also represents the project outcome of Component 1 of the Landmark Program. Training courses and workshops are conducted regularly for government officials from member countries, university students, and members of local communities.

As the capacity-building arm of AFoCO, the RETC aims to

- educate and develop leaders to practice good governance in the forestry sector;
- provide practical and problem-solving oriented education programs to improve and promote sustainable forest management;
- enhance knowledge and practices to promote sustainable livelihoods for forest-dependent communities, and;
- serve as a hub for meaningful discourses and the implementation of customized forest restoration and rehabilitation models in Asia.



# Training Activities

## ● AFoCO RETC-Royal Forest Department (RFD) of Thailand Training of Trainers for Forest Fire Suppression 19 October 2023

- supported by the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs

The AFoCO Regional Education and Training Center (RETC), the Royal Forest Department of Thailand, and the French Embassy in Bangkok join hands to collaborate, develop and implement a joint capacity-building activity entitled “Training of Trainers for Forest Fire Suppression” at the Sakaerat Environmental Research Station and Wang Nam Khiao Forestry Research and Student Training Station in Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand. The training course welcomed 24 participants from 14 AFoCO member countries. Recognizing that enhancing the field-level forest firefighting capacities should be a prerequisite for the sound operation of the nationwide forest fire monitoring system, the training aims to improve forest fire suppression knowledge and skills through the acquisition of relevant theories and practical/hands-on exercises, and develop tactics in conducting domestic training on forest fire suppression in participants’ home countries.

With support from the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, the trainees are able to learn and gain insight from three experts — Ms. Antonella Massaiu, Mr. Bruno Chitussi, and Mr. Rémi Lassourelle — who have 15 to 20 years of experience in dealing with forest fires. As the main AFoCO RETC trainer for forest fire management, Dr. Veerachai Tanpipat, Senior Expert and Senior Expert and Advisor at Upper ASEAN Wildland Fire Special Research Unit, Forestry Research Center, will also be sharing insight and knowledge on the Asian context of forest fire issues.



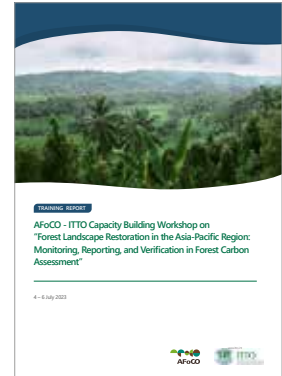
1 Participants at the forest fire suppression hands-on session with Ms. Antonella Massaiu

13-15 June 2023

## ● AFoCO Capacity Building Workshop on Forest Biodiversity “Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: Synergize in Achieving Future Conservation Targets”

The UNCBD COP15 concluded with the endorsement of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) in December 2022, uniting 196 nations toward biodiversity conservation and restoration by 2030, outlining four ambitious goals and 23 targets. The forestry sector aligns with the KM-GBF’s objectives, aiming for the effective restoration of degraded areas, enhancement of ecosystem functions, species preservation, sustainable land management, and more. The framework emphasizes capacity building, scientific collaboration, and equitable knowledge sharing for implementation.

Transparent processes and science-based indicators are essential for diverse funding opportunities. National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans (NBSAPs) and Reports remain pivotal for achieving global biodiversity goals, integrating biodiversity across sectors for informed decision-making. The AFoCO workshop held in June 2023 aimed to explore biodiversity conservation’s current and future directions, providing a foundational resource for member countries to contribute to the KM-GBF’s implementation.



4-6 July 2023

## ● AFoCO-ITTO Capacity Building Workshop on “Forest Landscape Restoration in the Asia-Pacific Region: MRV in Forest Carbon Assessment”

The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration emphasizes the urgent need to restore degraded forests, especially in the tropics, threatening millions of people. AFoCO and ITTO have jointly conducted FLR capacity-building workshops since 2021 with regional partners to address concerns in implementing FLR strategies. The workshops highlighted the lack of financing in the forestry sector, prompting discussions on synergies between FLR and REDD+ to access climate finance.

The AFoCO-ITTO Capacity Building Workshop on “Forest Landscape Restoration in the Asia-Pacific Region: Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) in Forest Carbon Assessment” virtually organized on 4 to 6 July, 2023, aimed to enhance understanding of MRV in forest carbon assessment and of the role of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement in promoting FLR across the world among the FLR implementing agencies in the Asia Pacific region. It also seeks to enhance their chances of accessing climate change finance from multilateral, bilateral, or private financing agencies. Overall, the virtual workshop laid the groundwork for the subsequent face-to-face event, fostering collaborative discussions on pressing challenges and opportunities in implementing MRV systems for FLR/REDD+ activities.



11-13 July 2023

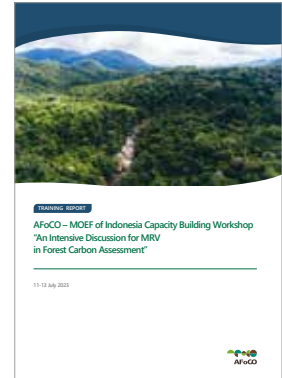
## ● AFoCO–MOEF of Indonesia Capacity Building Workshop “An Intensive Discussion for MRV in Forest Carbon Assessment”

Jointly organized with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MOEF) of Indonesia, the workshop on “An Intensive Discussion for MRV in Forest Carbon Assessment” conducted as a post-session of AFoCO-ITTO “Joint Capacity Building Workshop on Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) in the Asia-Pacific Region”. The workshop discussion aimed to focus on Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) in Forest Carbon Assessment. Acknowledge the importance of partnerships in maximizing the financial support for FLR, the workshop introduced the concept of the Climate Action Matching Platform (CAMP) currently under development as part of AFoCO Strategic Plan 2024-2030 and Climate Action Plan. Accordingly, the participants discussed challenges and opportunities in implementing FLR/REDD+, also synergizing the FLR/REDD+ to achieve sustainable development goals within the countries.

One of the key highlights of the workshop was the invaluable insights shared by Mr. Budiharto, the deputy director of GHG Inventory, who enlightened attendees about Indonesia’s MRV system. Mr. Budiharto showcased various examples of Indonesia’s REDD+ activities and provided an update on the current status of the country’s REDD+ initiatives.

The Indonesian government’s commitment to comprehensive data collection was evident through their use of satellite land monitoring systems and the National Forest Inventory to assess forest carbon stocks and changes. Participants were further impressed by the innovative web-based application, known as the Sistem Inventarisasi GRK Nasional Sederhana, Mudah, Akurat, Ringkas, Transparan (SIGN SMART), designed to support the national GHG Inventory System.

To deepen their understanding of on-the-ground practices, participants had the opportunity to visit the Muara Angke Mangrove Park. Dr. Anna Tosiani, National Forest Resource Data Analyst of the Directorate of Inventory and Monitoring of Forest Resources, led the group in practical demonstrations on how to measure forest carbon stock in mangrove forests, underscoring the importance of accurate data for informed decision-making.





# AFoCO Fellowship Program

AFoCO offers regular opportunities for government officials from Parties to work in the Secretariat through its Fellowship Program. The Program functions as a channel for effective communication and helps strengthen understanding between the Secretariat and the Parties for the fruitful achievement of AFoCO's goals. It is a mutually beneficial arrangement that allows Fellowship Officials to gain valuable working experience in an intergovernmental organization and have more opportunities to widen their networks while enabling the Secretariat to benefit from their expertise and skills. The 2022 Fellowship welcomed 4 officials from member countries:

- **Ike Mediawati**

Environmental Impact Controller, Assessment Center for the Implementation of Standard Instruments, Ministry of Environmental and Forestry of Indonesia

- **Niyaz Zholbarys Arystanuly**

Head of the Republican Dispatching Service of the Kazakh Base of Aviation Protection of Forests and Forestry Services, Forestry and Wildlife Committee, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan

- **Tshering Zam**

Deputy Chief Forestry Officer, Nature Conservation Division, Department of Forests and Park Services, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, Royal Government of Bhutan

- **Zaw Min Aye**

Staff Officer, Forest Research Institute, Forest Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation of Myanmar



Forest Aviation Headquarters (FAH) of the Republic of Korea organized a three-day training on Advanced Forest Fire Management for the fellowship officials from 19 June to 21 June 2023. The customized training included both theoretical and practical sessions hands-on training in forest fire suppression and fire line preparation.

# AFoCO STEP Program

The AFoCO Science and Technology Exchange Partnership Program (STEP Program) provides quality training to enhance knowledge and skills in forestry. Participants gain research experience through an intensive one-month program at forestry-related institutions. Designed for mid-level government officials, the program aims to narrow the developmental gap among member countries and cultivate professional skills and leadership qualities. In 2023, the STEP program officially included 4 specialized personnel from member countries.

The 2023 STEP Program focused on transferring advanced domestic technologies and developing human resources through joint international training programs, following the MOU with AFoCO. It aimed to enhance the professional competence of invited experts and contribute to forestry development in their countries, strengthening international forestry cooperation and building global networks. The program also aimed to elevate national prestige through training overseas forestry experts, create international publicity via individual video projects, encourage overseas seed deposits through the KEYS program, and promote UNESCO ESD certification through education for sustainable development.



## Educational programs for STEP 2023

- Practical training on seed collection, management, preservation storage, and viability testing
- Explanation of the concept and role of the seed vault, the KEYS program, and a tour of the seed vault
- Practical training on plant propagation management and tissue culture
- Visits to forestry-related institutions (National Arboretum, National Forest Seed and Variety Center, Forest Medicinal Resource Research Center)



**Ms. Nur Amrina Binti  
Mohammad Aminoor Rasyid**

Forestry Assistant, Brunei National Herbarium, Forestry Department, Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism, Brunei Darussalam.

*'Sharing sessions of 2023 STEP, transferring the skills on tissue culture and propagation to Forestry staff'*



**Mr. Saifurrohman Wahid**

Forest Ecosystem Controller and Manager of Mentawir Nursery, Mahakam Berau Watershed Management Watershed Management Agency (BPDAS), Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Indonesia.

*'Development of operational capacity Mentawir Nursery Center in Indonesia, New Capital City (Smart Forest City)'*



**Mr. Nolie A. Molina**

Science Research Specialist II, Laboratory Service Section, Laboratory and Experimental Services Division, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Philippines.

*'Sharing knowledge of conservation & industrialization to laboratory coworkers and local government units regarding forest fire prevention & climate change response'*



**Ms. Alfiana Pereira de  
Vasconcelos Gomes**

Communication and Public Relation Officer, General Directorate Forestry, Coffee, and Industrial Plants, Timor-Leste.

*'Propagating sandalwood through tissue culture trial and generation test'*

# PARTNERS

## | RESOURCE PARTNERS



Rabobank



United Nations  
Convention to Combat  
Desertification





## COOPERATION PARTNERS

In 2024, new partnerships were forged with Global EverGreening Alliance (GEA), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Korea Association of Forest Enviro-Conservation Technology (KAFET), and Rabobank.



