

Eleventh Session of the Assembly
30-31 October 2024, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Agenda Item 8

Updates on the Implementation of Projects

I. Update on ODA Funded Projects

A. Overview

1. As of 30 October 2024, a total of 31 approved projects are in place, consisting of 27 individual projects—including five (5) projects under the AFoCO Landmark Program and one (1) project under the inception arrangements —and four (4) regional/multi-country projects. Total project value of these projects is 48.6 million USD funded by the Korea Forest Service (41.2 million USD), ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund (6.5 million USD) and Mekong-Korea Cooperation Fund (996 thousand USD). The list of current projects is summarized in [Annex-1](#).

2. Among the four (4) new individual projects approved by the 9th Session of the Assembly held in 2023, three (3) projects for Lao PDR (AFoCO/043/2024), Kazakhstan (AFoCO/044/2024) and Kyrgyzstan (AFoCO/045/2024) were successfully launched this year and one (1) project for Viet Nam (AFoCO/042/2024) is under inception arrangement. Four (4) individual projects (AFoCO/018/2020 for Timor-Leste, AFoCO/023/2021 for Indonesia & AFoCO/030/2022 for Thailand) including one project (AFoCO/008/2014 for Lao PDR) under the Landmark Program are scheduled to be completed by the end of this year.

B. Implementation Status of On-going Projects

• Individual Project

3. Based on the Mid-year Progress Report and the observations from the on-site project monitoring and evaluation, there is no significant delay in project implementation for on-going projects this year, showing that approximately 90% of the yearly planned budget has been executed as of October 2024 in accordance with the Annual Work and Budget plan approved by the Project Steering Committee (PSC) for each on-going project. The status of fund execution is summarized in [Annex-2](#).

4. The Secretariat conducted on-site project monitoring for six (6) individual projects in Indonesia (AFoCO/023/2021), Cambodia (AFoCO/005/2014 & AFoCO/036/2022), Kazakhstan (AFoCO/028/2022 & AFoCO/043/2024), and Thailand (AFoCO/030/2022). Additional on-site project monitoring for four (4) individual projects in the Philippines (AFoCO/029/2022 & AFoCO/040/2023) and Myanmar (AFoCO/014/2020 & AFoCO/015/2020) is tentatively scheduled to take place within the 4th Quarter of 2024. Mid-term evaluation was conducted by the Secretariat for three (3) individual projects in Lao PDR (AFoCO/025/2021), Cambodia (AFoCO/027/2022) and Viet Nam

(AFoCO/031/2022).

5. The PSC of the two (2) on-going projects has approved no cost extension for two (2) individual projects as follows:

- AFoCO/015/2020 has been extended until March 2025 to catch up of delay occurred in previous years caused by restrictions on the fund transfer to Myanmar.
- AFoCO/018/2020 has been extended until December 2024 to accommodate the requirement of participating local communities for enforcing Tara Bandu, a traditional ceremony by customary law crucial for project sustainability in Timor-Leste.

● **Regional/Multi-country Project**

a. **NTFP Project (AFoCO/035/2022)**

6. As of October 2024, 10 countries, including Bhutan, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam, have signed project implementation agreements and are actively implementing their projects. The Secretariat is currently in discussions with Thailand to finalize the project inception process.

7. To strengthen the capacity of project teams of participating countries, two (2) regional workshops were held under the themes of "*Developing and Managing Community-Based NTFP Enterprises*" and "*Sustainable Resource Management*". Additionally, a regional workshop aimed at developing national roadmaps for advancing NTFP projects will be held in Bali, Indonesia, from November 4-8, 2024. In parallel with the Regional Workshops, a customized mentoring program for project teams from participating countries has been operated in collaboration with NTFP-EP Asia since January 2024.

b. **AKCF Project (AFoCO/032/2022)**

8. Being supported by ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF), the Secretariat has been implementing the project, entitled: *Capacity Building on Enhancing Resilience to Forest Fire, and Local Livelihood and Market Linkages*, in CLMV Countries. Following project inception of Cambodia in 2023, Lao PDR held the Project Inception Meeting in April 2024 and started the in-country activities with the catch-up work plan. Myanmar and Viet Nam are undergoing the project inception arrangements after the signing of MOU.

9. The design process of forest fire lookout tower was completed, and its construction is in progress for Cambodia. The output for local livelihood and market linkages is being implemented in collaboration with project partner, NTFP-EP Asia, mostly as planned so far in all participating countries. Cambodia will organize the Mekong-Korea Forest Fire Management Symposium, as part of the project output, during 5-7 November 2024 in Siem Reap, Cambodia, and the invitation to the symposium has been extended to all ASEAN Member States with facilitation by the ASEAN Secretariat.

c. **MKCF Project (AFoCO/037/2023)**

10. Being supported by the Mekong-Korea Cooperation Fund (MKCF), the Secretariat has been implementing the project, entitled: *ICT for Climate Change Adaptation and Forest Fire Management in the Mekong Region*, with Cambodia and Viet Nam. Following the project approval of Cambodia in May 2023, Viet Nam approved the project in June 2024.

11. Currently, the forest fire danger rating system has been developed for project sites in both

Cambodia and Vietnam. A pilot installation of the system is underway in Cambodia, and installation in Vietnam is expected to be completed within this year. The development of forest protection policies utilizing this system is also anticipated to progress accordingly.

d. SAFE Project (AFoCO/041/2023)

12. The Sustaining an Abundance of Forest Ecosystems (SAFE) Project is a collaborative initiative between the Korea Forest Service and the United Nations Environment Programme. This project encompasses three primary objectives, referred to as Outputs: conserving and restoring vulnerable forest ecosystems, establishing monitoring frameworks, and promoting local livelihoods that contribute to the health and resilience of forest ecosystems.

13. Through an agreement with UNEP, the Secretariat has been working on the development of Country-level Implementation Plans for Output 1, "Conserving and Restoring Vulnerable Forest Ecosystems," from June 2023 to May 2024. Under this initiative, project sites in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam have been successfully identified. From June 2024, the focus has been shifted to developing 5-year Community Forest Management Plans for the SAFE project sites identified in the previous year in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Viet Nam. Bhutan has also joined the project this year and is simultaneously developing its Country-level Implementation Plan alongside the Community Forest Management Plan.

C. Issues and Considerations

14. Prolonged project delays over the past few years, caused by restrictions on project activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, have been successfully resolved, and most on-going projects are now evaluated to show good performance in terms of project efficiency and effectiveness. However, proponent countries are expected to engage more proactively in addressing prolonged delay in project inception caused by domestic legal procedure and facilitate project delivery with improved project efficiency by properly managing indirect costs for project management, including taxation and commission.

15. To ensure the sustainability of the project and enhance its impact, especially at a time of concluding the 10-year ODA project implementation under the 1st long-term strategic plan of AFoCO, it is essential to place greater emphasis on devising strategies that go beyond project outputs, focusing on mainstreaming and utilizing the project's achievements to support national forestry policies and other relevant policies of the proponent countries.

II. Update on Carbon-focused Projects

A. Overview

16. In accordance with the Decision 43-V-21R and Decision 49-Viii-23S of the Assembly, the Secretariat has developed the AFoCO Strategic Plan (2024-2030) and AFoCO 10-year Climate Action Plan (2025-2034) aligned with the global climate and development objectives.

17. Pursuant to AFoCO 10-year Climate Action Plan (2025-2034) in line with the AFoCO Strategic Plan (2024–2030), the Secretariat, in cooperation with the member countries, has been developing and implementing the carbon-related projects since 2023 based on the legal arrangements with the concerned countries.

18. As of 24 October 2024, AFoCO x Acorn agroforestry carbon projects, Mekong REDD+ project-P1 and World Bank Project are on-going including the agroforestry carbon projects in

Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam under the development.

19. For the said carbon projects, the Secretariat and the implementing countries are striving to address the operational issues and concerns through a series of the meetings and on-site visits.

B. Implementation Status of Carbon-focused Projects

20. The progress of the AFoCO x Acorn agroforestry carbon projects was updated to the 10th Session of the AFoCO Assembly held on 17-18 April 2024 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Afterwards, the Secretariat has been developing the project in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam and has onboarded farmers to participate in the project in Kyrgyzstan since 2023:

a. 5.1 AFoCO x Acorn agroforestry carbon projects

21. Kyrgyzstan: As of September 2024, 11,421 plots for the existing agroforestry carbon project have been on-boarded in Jalalabad, Osh, Chui, Talas and Issuk-Kul regions. The Carbon Removal Units (CRUs) have been generated in partnership with the stakeholders in Kyrgyzstan in October 2024. In order to commemorate the CRU payment, the Secretariat, Kyrgyzstan government and Acorn will organize the ceremony with the onboarded farmers in tentatively December 2024.

b. Mekong REDD+ project-P1 (MRP 1) in Cambodia

22. A project launching workshop in Stung Treng was held in April 2024. Since then, regular patrolling activities have been conducted across all Community Forestry (CF) areas, and a new nursery has been established.

23. Due to challenges such as insecure land tenure rights, unclear boundaries, limited remaining forest cover within the CFs, ongoing illegal land claims, and conflicts between authorities and community members, the project is undergoing site adjustments. These changes involve eliminating some CFs and replacing them with others, resulting in an overall shift from 12 CFs to 14 CFs. MRP P1 will adopt the new Verra methodology (VM0048). This updated methodology addresses concerns of carbon credit overestimation found in previous approaches, including those used in the initial feasibility study.

c. Green Resilient Landscapes in Mongolia

24. The “Mongolia Green Resilient Landscapes (GRL)” Technical Assistance project supported by the World Bank commenced on 16 July 2024 (contract commencement) will last for 18 months until 30 January 2026. The project objective is to enhance collaboration between the World Bank and the Government of Mongolia to improve the design and operationalization of large-scale forest landscape restoration efforts to address climate change to facilitate the implementation of the “Billion Trees National Movement (BTNM)”.

25. Two missions to Mongolia were conducted with the Seoul National University (SNU) Team (as Technical Partner for the project): (1) Scoping Field Visit from 22-26 July 2024 and (2) Inception Workshop and Field Visit from 5-9 August 2024. The SNU Team is now finalizing the first deliverable of the project, the Scoping Review and Inception Report.

III. Updates on 2024 Annual Technical Workshop

26. The 5th Session of Annual Technical Workshop on Project Management and Performance Review co-hosted by the Royal Forest Department of Thailand was successfully held from 9 to 11 September 2024 in Bangkok, Thailand. With the aim of revisiting the year’s achievements, assessing

project progress, and facilitating the sharing of lessons learned among the Implementing Agencies, the workshop was attended by 81 participants, including project managers/staffs and National Focal Point (NFP) from the 12 AFoCO Member Countries. The 3-day workshop was composed of four sessions: 1) project management and performance review, 2) 10-year assessment of AFoCO projects, 3) amendment of AFoCO Project Manual, and 4) project development under the AFoCO's new strategic plan.

27. As a key highlight of the Workshop, the project management and performance review session was divided into 3 sub-sessions for 4 completed projects, 19 on-going projects including 4 carbon-focused projects and 5 newly launched projects. Each sub-session included presentations on project progress and way forward based on lessons learned, followed by Q&A discussions moderated by ODA experts, focused on project impact and sustainability for completed projects, project efficiency and effectiveness for on-going project, and project relevance and coherence for the new projects.

28. AFoCO's achievement over the past 10 years of forest cooperation with Member Countries under the AFoCO Agreement, along with strategic recommendations for more effective future, were shared by ODA experts who conducted 10-year assessment of AFoCO projects. The amendment to the AFoCO Project Manual was successfully finalized following a final consultation meeting with NFPs. Action plans to implement AFoCO'S new strategic plan were also shared, along with Key Performance Indicators and relevant targets for each program priority area under the new strategic plan.

29. The 1st AFoCO Project Photo Exhibition was held concurrently with the workshop. Participants explored the projects through photos, and the winners were selected by combining the jury assessment and public vote.

IV. Points for Consideration

30. The Assembly may wish to take note of the information on the on-going projects and provide further guidance and recommendations, as appropriate.

Queries on the content of the document may be addressed to:

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List of on-going projects and projects under inception arrangements

Unit: Thousand USD

On-going Projects					
Individual Projects					
	Project code	Country	Project title	Period	Project Value
1	AFoCO/005/2014 (Landmark Program)	KH	Establishment of Forest Genetics Research Center for Restoration of Major Timber Species in Cambodia	2016-2025	1,500
2	AFoCO/007/2014 (Landmark Program)	Sec.	Establishment of Regional Education and Training Center in Myanmar	2014-2023	8,734
3	AFoCO-LP-2 (Landmark Program)	Sec.	Development of Education and Training Programs for Capacity Building (Landmark Scholarship Program)	2014-2025	2,334
4	AFoCO-LP-4 (Landmark Program)	Sec.	Development of Advocating Activities	2014-2025	1,000
5	AFoCO/008/2014 (Landmark Program)	LA	Village-based Forest Rehabilitation in Lao PDR	2016-2025	1,500
6	AFoCO/014/2020	MM	Integrated Pest and Disease Management in Teak Plantations in Bago Regions, Myanmar	2020-2025	955
7	AFoCO/015/2020	MM	Model Forest for Livelihood Improvement of Forest Dependent Communities through Development of Community-based Enterprise and Forest Conservation	2020-2023	952
8	AFoCO/016/2021	PH	Promotion of Vertical Integration in Wood Processing through People's Organizations in Community Based Forest Management Areas in the Philippines	2021-2026	929
9	AFoCO/017/2020	BH	Sustainable Community-based Enterprise development for Improved Rural Livelihood	2020-2025	1,000
10	AFoCO/018/2020	TL	Development of Agroforestry Models for Promotion of Reforestation in the Different Zones in Timor-Leste	2021-2024	517
11	AFoCO/023/2021	ID	Innovative solution for climate change and biodiversity landscape strategy to support SDGs in Indonesia	2021-2025	700
12	AFoCO/024/2021	VN	Conservation and development of forest ecosystems biodiversity resources at Cat Tien National Park	2021-2026	1,132
13	AFoCO/025/2021	LA	Integrated village-driven forest rehabilitation and livelihood improvement in Viengthong district, Bolikhamxay province, Lao PDR	2021-2026	1,088
14	AFoCO/026/2021	TL	Re-greening the bare lands in Timor-Leste through promotion of locally customized restoration models	2021-2024	1,000
15	AFoCO/027/2022	KH	Site Restoration and Sustainable Management of Community Forest Using Multiple Use Tree Species and Agroforestry	2022-2027	663
16	AFoCO/028/2022	KZ	Pilot project on inventory of unaccounted forests in Kostanay and North Kazakhstan regions and automation of the collection of information on forestry	2022-2025	953
17	AFoCO/029/2022	PH	Ensuring Functioning of Cultural Ecosystem Services in an Urban Setting: Assimilating Nature for Forest Healing and	2022-2026	705

			Experiential Learning in Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center		
18	AFoCO/030/2022	TH	Improving local community's livelihoods and engagement in sustainable forest and land management in Thailand through Forest Landscape Restoration	2022-2024	304
19	AFoCO/031/2022	VN	Rehabilitation of degraded and potentially deserted forest land in the Northwest region of Viet Nam through application of integrated technical measures	2022-2026	800
20	AFoCO/036/2022	KH	ASEAN-Korea Garden	2022-2025	1,802
21	AFoCO/038/2023	KH	Advancing Restoration of Native Agarwood – <i>Aquilaria crassna</i> and <i>A. Malaccensis</i> – for Sustainable Use and Management in Southwestern Cambodia	2023-2025	658
22	AFoCO/039/2023	MN	Forest Restoration Demonstration through High-Capacity Tree Nursery and Capacity Building in Support to “1 billion Tree” Campaign in Mongolia	2023-2025	1,000
23	AFoCO/040/2023	PH	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	293
24	AFoCO/043/2024	LA	Establishment of ASEAN-Korea Garden in Lao PDR	2024-2025	1,153
25	AFoCO/044/2024	KZ	Technology and capacity enhancement for massive production of quality planting materials to support national forestation goals in Kazakhstan	2024-2025	978
26	AFoCO/045/2024	KG	Conservation of useful and rare tree species in Kyrgyzstan through establishment of a seed storage in order to retain significant resource	2024-2025	978
Subtotal					33,628
Regional/Multi-country Project					
27	AFoCO/032/2022	CLMV	Capacity Building on Enhancing Resilience to Forest Fire and Local Livelihood in CLMV Countries <i>*Co-funded by Korea Forest Service and ASEAN- Korea Cooperation Fund</i>	2021-2026	8,502
28	AFoCO/035/2022	All	Improved local community livelihoods through increased income from non-timber forests products (NTFP): Modeling scalable community-based enterprises in Asia	2022-2027	4,000
29	AFoCO/037/2023	KH,VN	ICT for Adaptation to Climate Change and Forest Fire Management in Mekong Region <i>*Funded by Mekong-Korea Cooperation Fund</i>	2023-2025	996
30	AFoCO/041/2023	BT, KH, LA, VN	Sustaining an Abundance of Forest Ecosystems <i>*Please note that the total project value indicates the amount received for 2 years (2023-2024) and the budget for the remaining years will be determined by UNEP.</i>	2023-2030	320
Subtotal					13,818
Project under Inception Arrangements					
31	AFoCO/042/2024	VN	Establishment of ASEAN-Korea Garden in Viet Nam	2024-2025	1,153
Subtotal					1,153
Grand Total					48,599

Summary of Project Fund Execution Status

Unit: Thousand USD

On-going Projects					
Individual Projects					
Project code	Country	Project Value		Budget Execution	
		Total Budget	Contributed as of SEP. 2024	Execution in 2024 ¹	Total Expenditure as of SEP. 2024
AFoCO/005/2014	KH	1,500	1,494	117	1,332
AFoCO/007/2014, AFoCO-LP-2&4	Sec.	12,068	11,987	957	2,884
AFoCO/008/2014	LA	1,500	1,498	142	1,500
AFoCO/014/2020	MM	955	909	11	704
AFoCO/015/2020	MM	952	952	118	856
AFoCO/016/2021	PH	929	617	83	597
AFoCO/017/2020	BH	1,000	987	324	1,001
AFoCO/018/2020	TL	517	488	0	487
AFoCO/023/2021	ID	700	700	209	631
AFoCO/024/2021	VN	1,132	1,080	422	893
AFoCO/025/2021	LA	1,088	1,002	173	762
AFoCO/026/2021	TL	1,000	989	243	683
AFoCO/027/2022	KH	663	406	228	407
AFoCO/028/2022	KZ	953	781	233	722
AFoCO/029/2022	PH	705	665	493	493
AFoCO/030/2022	TH	304	304	110	272
AFoCO/031/2022	VN	800	605	72	441
AFoCO/036/2022	KH	1,802	1,802	144	1,549
AFoCO/038/2023	KH	658	387	296	350
AFoCO/039/2023	MN	1,000	832	803	803
AFoCO/040/2023	PH	293	174	150	175
AFoCO/043/2024	LA	1,153	1,153	32	32
AFoCO/044/2024	KZ	978	224	224	224
AFoCO/045/2024	KG	978	224	88	88
Subtotal		33,628	30,260	5,671	17,885
Regional/Multi-country Project					
AFoCO/032/2022	CLMV	8,502	5,251	1,822	1,995
AFoCO/035/2022	All	4,000	3,250	812	1,569
AFoCO/037/2023	KH, VN	996	471	65	301
AFoCO/041/2023	BT, KH, LA, VN	320	260	140	201
Subtotal		13,818	9,232	2,839	4,066
Project under Inception Arrangements					
AFoCO/042/2024	VN	1,153	0	0	0
Subtotal		1,153	0	0	0
Grand Total		48,599	40,645	8,510	21,951

¹ Note) Total expenditures from 2024 yearly budget and carry-over budget