

## Concept Note

### Expert Meeting on the Contribution of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) to the Implementation of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) 2017-2030

Chengdu, China, 6-8 March 2018

The United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat (UNFFS) will convene an expert meeting with financial support from China to discuss guidelines for the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) and how to enhance its contribution to the implementation of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) 2017-2030 and the Forum's Quadrennial Programme of Work (4POW) 2017-2020.

#### Background

At the special session of its ninth session in 2009, the UNFF adopted a resolution on the means of implementation of sustainable forest management (SFM) in which it decided to establish a facilitative process aimed at assisting countries mobilize financing for SFM.

At its eleventh session in 2015, the UNFF decided to strengthen and upgrade the Facilitative Process and rename it the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network or GFFFN (see E/2015/42-E/CN.18/2015/14, chapter IV), with a view to:

- (a) Promoting the design of national forest financing strategies to mobilize resources for SFM,
- (b) Facilitating access to existing and emerging financing mechanisms, including the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund,
- (c) Serving as a clearing house on existing, new and emerging financing opportunities and as a tool for sharing lessons learned from successful projects.

According to the resolution, special consideration should be given to the special needs and circumstances of Africa, the least developed countries, low-forest-cover countries, high-forest-cover countries, medium-forest-cover low-deforestation countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, in gaining access to funds.

The resolution added that one of the core functions of the UNFF is to promote, monitor and assess the implementation of SFM and to mobilize, catalyse and facilitate access to financial, technical and scientific resources to this end. It also identified the GFFFN as one of the six components of the International Arrangement on Forests from 2015 to 2030.

The United Nations Strategic Plan on Forests (UNSPF) adopted in January 2017 reiterated and expanded the above-mentioned priorities as follows:

- (a) Promote the design of national forest financing strategies to mobilize resources for sustainable forest management;
- (b) Assist countries in mobilizing, accessing and enhancing the effective use of existing financial resources from all sources for SFM;
- (c) Serve as a clearing house and database on existing, new and emerging financing opportunities and as a tool for sharing lessons learned and best practices from successful projects; and
- (d) Serve to contribute to the achievement of the global forest goals and targets as well as priorities contained in the 4POWs.

In addition, according to the Quadrennial Programme of Work (4POW), also adopted in January 2017, the following issues related to the GFFFN should be considered at the 13<sup>th</sup> session of the UNFF to be held from 7-11 May 2018:

- (a) Progress on the activities and the operation of the GFFFN;
- (b) Guidelines for the operation of the GFFFN; and
- (c) Measures to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the GFFFN.

Member States of the UNFF are the beneficiaries of the GFFFN which provides support on a first come, first served basis. As of December 2017, the GFFFN has assisted or is assisting the following countries in accessing financing mechanisms such as the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund: Cameroon, Ecuador, Fiji, Guinea, Iran, Madagascar, Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Senegal, Uganda, Ukraine and Zimbabwe.

The GFFFN is also supporting two countries in designing national forest financing strategies, namely Ukraine and Madagascar, and collaborated with the UN-REDD Programme to promote national forest and REDD+ financing strategies in Latin America. This is in line with the Capacity Development Goal of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) to strengthen national capacities to mobilize the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Further requests for support have been received from the Central African Republic, Jamaica, St Christopher & Nevis and St Lucia, as well as from Cameroon and Gabon on behalf of COMIFAC (Central African Forests Commission). These requests are currently being considered in light of existing financial resources.

The GFFFN is collaborating with a wide range of organisations, including members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) such as FAO, the GEF, IUCN, UNCCD and UNDP as well as other partners, notably the Green Climate Fund, the African Development Bank, African Forest Forum and Conservation International.

## **Objectives**

In light of the priority actions of the 4POW for the 13<sup>th</sup> session of the UNFF, the two primary objectives of this expert meeting are (i) to propose draft guidelines for the operation of the GFFFN, and (ii) to consider recommending measures to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the GFFFN. The development of guidelines and measures to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the GFFFN will take into account the experiences and lessons learned from GFFFN activities in the 13 countries mentioned above, as well as information and experiences of similar mechanisms adopted/used by other organizations. The guidelines could focus on the following areas of operation of the GFFFN:

- Process for requesting support from the GFFFN;
- Prioritization of requests for support from the GFFFN;
- Creation of partnerships with key donors and members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests;
- Operationalization of the clearing house;
- Resource mobilization and financial needs for GFFFN activities;
- Reporting on the activities of the GFFFN; and
- Other measures to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the GFFFN.

In order to provide a basis for discussion at the Expert Group Meeting, the UNFF Secretariat shall commission a background study reviewing GFFFN work and related work by other organizations and putting forward a set of proposed guidelines and measures.

## **Expected Output**

- Proposed guidelines for the operation of the GFFFN;
- Recommendations on measures to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the GFFFN.

A background study will be prepared for the meeting. The outcome of the expert group meeting will provide substantive inputs for the Secretariat's Note to the 13<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNFF on the means of implementation of sustainable forest management.

## **Date and Venue**

The Expert Group Meeting will be held in Chengdu, Sichuan province of China, from 6 to 8 March 2018. The specific venue will be determined shortly.

## **Participation**

The meeting will be composed of experts from Member States and other relevant stakeholders with due regard to geographical distribution. Considering the capacity of the meeting facilities, the maximum participants will be around 50.

## **Format and language**

The expert meeting will be held in English from 10 am to 6 pm daily.