

**United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)
Expert Meeting on the
Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN)**

**6-8 March 2018
Chengdu City, Sichuan Province, China**

PROPOSED ELEMENTS

**FOR GUIDELINES FOR THE OPERATION OF THE
GLOBAL FOREST FINANCING FACILITATION NETWORK (GFFFN)**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

4POW	Quadrennial Program of Work
CPF	Collaborative Partnership on Forests
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
GCF	Green Climate fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFFFN	Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network
GFG	Global Forest Goal
SFM	Sustainable forest management
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
UNSPF	United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Table 2 of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) Quadrennial Programme of Work 2017-2020 (4POW) sets the agenda for the 13th session of the Forum (UNFF13) which will meet 7-11 May 2018 in New York (see [Annex 1](#)). Under Item 3 of Table 2, the Forum will consider three matters related to the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN):

- Item 3.a: Progress on the activities and the operation of the GFFFN
- Item 3.b: Guidelines for the operation of the GFFFN
- Item 3.c: Measures to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the GFFFN

2. This background paper focuses on Item 3.b.¹ The paper reviews existing guidance on the GFFFN and, building on this foundation, proposes a set of elements for guidelines for the operation of the GFFFN.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Purpose and priorities of the GFFFN

3. In 2015, based on the recommendation of UNFF11 (May 2015, New York), the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) established the GFFFN under the auspices of the Forum, building on the “facilitative process” launched in 2009 (ECOSOC resolution 2015/33). Consistent with the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF), the GFFFN aims to contribute “to the scaling up of sustainable forest management by facilitating access for countries to resources to implement the UNSPF and to achieve its Global Forest Goals and targets”. The UNFF reaffirmed this purpose at its 12th session in May 2017.

4. Paragraph 60 of the UNSPF sets out four priorities for the GFFFN which draw on guidance contained in paragraph 13 of ECOSOC resolution 2015/33 (see [Box 1](#)).

Box 1 – Priorities of the GFFFN as set out in the UNSPF

1. Promote and assist Member States in designing national forest financing strategies to mobilize resources for sustainable forest management, including existing national initiatives, within the framework of national forest programmes or other appropriate national frameworks.
2. Assist countries in mobilizing, accessing and enhancing the effective use of existing financial resources from all sources for sustainable forest management, taking into account national policies and strategies.

¹ Item 3.b also relates to Item 3.c. since the adoption of guidelines for the operation of the GFFFN can be expected to enhance the Network’s effectiveness and efficiency.

3. 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, building on the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) online sourcebook for forest financing.
4. Serve to contribute to the achievement of the Global Forest Goals and targets set out in the UNSPF, as well as the priorities contained in the Forum's 4POWs.

B. Existing guidance on operation of the GFFFN

5. Current guidance on GFFFN operations can be found scattered throughout ECOSOC resolution 2015/33, the UNSPF and the UNFF12 resolution. This guidance is compiled below. For ease of understanding, the relevant operative paragraphs are organized by general topic areas:²

Management

- A core function of the UNFF Secretariat is to manage the GFFFN. (E/2015/33³ paras 17.a.iii⁴ and 17.b.ii)
- The capacity of the UNFF Secretariat will be enhanced to effectively and efficiently manage the GFFFN. (E/2015/33 para 13.e)

Guiding principles

- The GFFFN should carry out its priorities as set out in the UNSPF in a balanced, effective and transparent manner. (UNFF12 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. (UNSPF para 61, E/2015/33 para 13.d)

Collaboration/partnerships (CPF, GEF, GCF)

- The UNFF Secretariat will implement GFFFN activities in collaboration with relevant members of the CPF. (E/2015/33 para 17.b.ii)
- Collaboration with the CPF in implementing the activities of the GFFFN will be strengthened. (E/2015/33 para 13.f)
- The GFFFN should promote the design of national forest financing strategies to mobilize resources for SFM to facilitate access to existing and emerging financing mechanisms, including the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF), consistent with their mandates, in order to implement SFM. (E/2015/33 para 13.b)

² In a number of cases, the original negotiated language has been simplified for readability.

³ E/2015/33 refers to ECOSOC resolution 2015/33

⁴ Throughout this paper, references in ECOSOC resolution 2015/33 to a "strengthened facilitative process" are replaced with "GFFFN".

- The UNFF secretariat should engage in discussions with the GEF secretariat to facilitate collaboration between the GEF and UNFF to support eligible countries in gaining access to funding for SFM. (E/2015/33 para 14.f)
- The GEF Council is invited to request the GEF secretariat to discuss with the UNFF secretariat arrangements to facilitate collaboration between the GEF and the UNFF to support eligible countries in gaining access to funding for SFM. (E/2015/33 para 14.e)
- The GEF is invited to designate a staff liaison to serve as a link between the UNFF and the GEF, in order facilitate access to funding for SFM. (E/2015/33 para 15.b)

UNFF Trust Fund

- The Forum’s Trust Fund can be used to support activities of the GFFFN. (UNSPF para 62)
- Member States are encouraged to provide voluntary contributions to the Forum’s Trust Fund. (UNSPF para 62, UNFF12 resolution)

Monitoring and evaluation

- The Forum will monitor and assess the work and performance of the GFFFN on a regular basis, including the availability of UNFF Trust Fund resources⁵. (UNSPF para 63, E/2015/33 para 6.f.iii)
- The Forum will review and advise on the availability of resources for SFM funding, including the GFFFN, and ensure that the operation of the GFFFN is consistent with guidelines to be approved by the Forum.⁶ (E/2015/33 para 6.f.iii-iv)

III. PROPOSED ELEMENTS FOR GUIDELINES FOR GFFFN OPERATIONS

6. Annex 2 contains a proposal for the guidelines for operation of the GFFFN which is comprised of 12 elements (see Box 2). The 12 elements incorporate and build on the guidance set out in ECOSOC resolution 2015/33, the UNSPF and the UNFF12 resolution (see section II) and take into account experience gained in taking forward the “facilitative process” and initial implementation of the GFFFN. The proposed elements in Annex 2 are structured as stand-alone document that can be readily understood by those who are not UNFF “insiders”.

Box 2: 12 proposed elements for guidelines for GFFFN operations	
1. Purpose	7. Partnerships
2. Priorities	8. Clearinghouse
3. Principles	9. Funding and resource mobilization
4. Management	10. Reporting and communication
5. Eligibility	11. Monitoring and evaluation
6. Procedures	12. Review

7. The proposed elements aim to provide clear, substantive guidelines for the effective and efficient operation of the GFFFN (assuming adequate funds are available for its operation) and to

⁵ ECOSOC resolution 2015/33 lists this as a task for odd-year sessions of the Forum.

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foster accountability and transparency which are widely recognized as basic principles of good financial management. While the GFFFN is not a programme/project funding organization and currently carries out activities at a very modest scale, it is important that it operate in a manner that is accountable to the Forum and transparent to Member States, partners and stakeholders. This can be done through regular reporting, including financial reporting, and communication on GFFFN activities (e.g. participating countries, sources and levels of funding, allocation of resources, accomplishments, lessons learned and steps taken to upscale successes), as well as periodic independent evaluations of GFFFN operations. These practices will promote GFFFN effectiveness; enhance the confidence of Member States, partners and stakeholders in the Network; and help attract donor interest.

ANNEX 1**UNFF Quadrennial Programme of Work 2017-2020 – Table 2****Table 2****13th Session of United Nations Forum on Forests, 2018 (Policy Session)**

Priority actions

1. Implementation of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030

- (a) Policy dialogue on the thematic and operational priorities, priority actions and resource needs for the period 2017-2018, taking into account the review cycle of the HLPF during the biennium and the theme of the International Day of Forests
- (b) Voluntary announcement of Voluntary National Contributions (VNCs)
- (c) UN system-wide contributions to the implementation of the Global Forest Goals and targets
- (d) Development of the UNSPF communication and outreach strategy

2. Monitoring, assessment and reporting

- (a) Progress on the implementation of the UNSPF, including the United Nations Forest Instrument (UNFI) and voluntary national contributions
- (b) Progress on the development of global forest indicators

3. Means of implementation

- (a) Progress on the activities and the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN)
- (b) Guidelines for the operation of the GFFFN
- (c) Measures to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the GFFFN

4. Emerging issues and challenges**5. Forum's Trust Fund****6. Information on intersessional activities****7. Progress in the implementation of ECOSOC resolution 2015/33**

ANNEX 2

Proposed Elements for Guidelines for the Operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)⁷

ELEMENTS	
1. Purpose	The GFFFN aims to contribute to the scaling up of sustainable forest management by facilitating access for countries to resources to implement the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests: 2017-2030 (UNSPF) and achieve its Global Forest Goals (GFGs) and associated targets. <i>UNSPF para 60, UNFF12 resolution⁸</i>
2. Priorities	<p>The priorities of the GFFFN as set out in the UNSPF are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote and assist Member States in designing national forest financing strategies to mobilize resources for SFM, including existing national initiatives, within the framework of national forest programmes or other appropriate national frameworks. 2. Assist countries in mobilizing, accessing and enhancing the effective use of existing financial resources from all sources for sustainable forest management, taking into account national policies and strategies. 3. 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, building on the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) Online Sourcebook for Forest Financing. 4. Serve to contribute to the achievement of the GFGs and targets set out in the UNSPF, as well as the priorities contained in the Forum's quadrennial programmes of work. <p><i>UNSPF para 60, E/2015/33 paras 13.a-c</i></p>
3. Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GFFFN will operate under the auspices of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) and will be accountable to the Forum. • The operation of the GFFFN will be consistent with the applicable rules and regulations in the United Nations. • GFFFN priorities will be carried out in a balanced, effective and transparent manner. <i>UNFF12 resolution</i> • Special consideration will 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. <i>UNSPF para 61, E/2015/33 para 13.d</i> • Adequate and predictable funding will be required for effective functioning

⁷The UNFF is a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In 2015, ECOSOC established the GFFFN under the auspices of the Forum (ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33) based on a recommendation of the Forum at its 11th session (UNFF11, 4-15 May 2015, New York).

⁸References in italics indicate the source of an element and are included here to facilitate review. Such references would not be included in the final approved GFFFN guidelines.

	of the GFFFN, including timely responses to requests for assistance.
4. Management	The UNFF Secretariat serves as the manager of the GFFFN. The capacity of the Secretariat will be enhanced as needed to ensure effective and efficient management of the GFFFN. <i>E/2015/33 paras 13.e, 17.a.iii & 17.b.ii</i>
5. Eligibility	All Members of the UNFF which are developing countries or countries with economies in transition are eligible to receive assistance through the GFFFN.
6. Procedures	<p><u>Requests for assistance by Member States:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Member State interested in receiving assistance through the GFFFN will submit a request to the Secretariat from the Minister responsible for forests and, where appropriate, through diplomatic channels. • The Secretariat will respond to requests in a timely manner, advising on the consistency of the request with GFFFN priorities and on the availability of funds. • If funds are available, the Secretariat and requesting country will agree in writing on the specific terms of the assistance, including parties involved, responsibilities, timeframe and expected outputs. <p><u>Allocation of funds:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat will allocate funds on a first-come first-served basis. • In approving funding amounts, the Secretariat will take into account the need to assist as many countries as possible. • If funds are not available, the Secretariat will maintain a waiting list of unfunded requests in the order received. • Management of GFFFN resources will be consistent with the financial rules and accounting standards of the United Nations. • The Secretariat may institute additional procedures as needed to ensure the effective and efficient allocation of resources.
7. Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat will seek to develop collaborative arrangements and partnerships with other organizations to facilitate and enhance GFFFN operations, including with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), other CPF partners, the Green Climate Fund, regional/subregional organizations, the private sector and philanthropic organizations, among others. <i>UNSPF para 60, E/2015/33 paras 13.b, 13.f, 14 e-f, 15.b, 17.b.ii & 20.c</i> • Where relevant, such partnerships will aim to strengthen collaboration at the national level in GFFFN partner countries.
8. Clearinghouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat will develop the online GFFFN Clearinghouse (GFFFN priority 3) in consultation with interested CPF members with a view to providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A comprehensive data base of financial flows for sustainable forest management building on existing initiatives and sources of information. - An interactive platform for the exchange of data, experiences and know how among users. - A source of data relevant to Sustainable Development Goal 15.2 and GFG 4. • The Secretariat will establish and maintain a network of regular data providers to the Clearinghouse.

9. Funding and resource mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member States in a position to do so are encouraged to provide voluntary contributions on a regular basis to the UNFF Trust Fund to support the GFFFN. <i>UNSPF para 62, UNFF12 resolution</i> • The Secretariat will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work closely with CPF members and other cooperating organizations, including international financing mechanisms, to identify opportunities to leverage co-financing and in-kind contributions. <i>UNSPF para 60, E/2015/33 para 13.f & 17.b.ii</i> - Actively explore opportunities for funding support from other sources, including UN technical assistance programs, the private sector and philanthropic organizations. - Seek the Forum’s guidance as needed on measures to ensure adequate funding for effective GFFFN operations.
10. Reporting and Communication	<p>The Secretariat will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a comprehensive annual report, including a financial report, to the UNFF on GFFFN activities, accomplishment and lessons learned. • As requested, provide donors with information on the use of their voluntary contributions to the UNFF Trust Fund earmarked for the GFFFN. • Highlight the GFFFN on the UNFF website and post regular updates of GFFFN activities. • Highlight the GFFFN in the communication and outreach strategy developed by the Forum.
11. Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Forum, during its odd-year sessions, will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor and assess the work and performance of the GFFFN, including reviewing and advising on the availability of UNFF Trust Fund resources (<i>UNSPF para 63, E/2015/33 para 6.f.iii-iv</i>) - Ensure that the operation of the GFFFN is consistent with these Guidelines. (<i>E/2015/33 para 6.f.iii-iv</i>) • The Secretariat will arrange for an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of GFFFN operations every four years coinciding with end of the Forum’s quadrennial program of work, beginning in 2020.
12. Review	<p>The UNFF will review these Guidelines in 2024 in the context of the mid-term review of the International Arrangement on Forests and revise them as needed. <i>UNSPF 65.a para, E/2015/33 para 41</i></p>