

**United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat  
Harnessing Climate Change Financing for Forests  
29 April to 1 May 2014, Tehran – Islamic Republic of Iran**

**Concept Note**

**Background**

Financing sustainable forest management (SFM) has been a key issue since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 in Rio. It was examined in the follow up processes on forests including the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF), with limited success. The establishment of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) in 2000 led to the adoption of the UNFF non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (the Forest Instrument) and its four global objectives on forests (GOFs) by the General Assembly in 2007; and the establishment of the Facilitative Process in 2009 with the primary mandate of assisting countries to mobilize funding for forests. It has also overseen consensus-building on forest financing through major expert group meetings and unprecedented analytical studies on forest financing by the advisory group on finance of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and policy conclusions and recommendations on this issue within the Forum.<sup>1</sup> The Forum considered that current funding levels for SFM is insufficient and major efforts are needed to mobilize resources from all sources and at all levels.

In addressing the issue of financing SFM, the Forum, in light of its mandate, reviewed all aspects and all issues related to financing all types of forests. This includes financing from all sources, including funding for climate change, biodiversity, land degradation, energy and water. Meantime, the values and contributions of forests in addressing global challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss also led countries to put in place additional funding mechanisms and strategy that are closely inter-connected to forests including under the climate change convention.

Climate change financing has come to the forefront of innovations in forest financing in recent years, notably through financing for climate change forest-related activities. Climate change financing includes innovative mechanisms and initiatives, including the Green Climate Fund, adaptation financing and funds from private sources, as well as REDD+.<sup>2</sup> The latter has become a priority within new climate change financing from both public and private sources, as REDD+ will be most likely part of an expected USD 100 billion in climate finance for the period 2013-2020. REDD+ funding may come from emerging voluntary carbon markets, official development assistance or other sources.

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<sup>1</sup> The CPF's Advisory Group on Finance study is available at [http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/AGF\\_Study\\_July\\_2012.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/AGF_Study_July_2012.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> REDD+ stands for "Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries".

Due to the potential contribution of funding for REDD+ and additional climate change initiatives to financing for SFM, the ninth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) requested its Secretariat to examine the implications of new and emerging forest-related financing initiatives relating to the three Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, UNCCD and CBD) on broader forest financing.<sup>3</sup>

### **Climate Change Financing For Forests Project**

To respond to the request of the Forum, the UNFF Secretariat undertook several activities including conducting studies, holding expert group discussions and preparation of a specific project on “Climate Change Financing for Forests”.<sup>4</sup>

The Climate Change Financing for Forests Project was approved by the General Assembly through the United Nations Development Account and is managed under the UNFF Facilitative Process.<sup>5</sup> The objective of the project is to enable developing countries to harness and better access climate change financing for forests by (i) determining how climate change financing can contribute to the implementation of sustainable forest management (SFM), (ii) building capacity at national and regional levels to better harness climate change financing for forests, and (iii) impacting policy decisions on funding climate change in the respective global fora, making those decisions more inclusive, equitable and beneficial for SFM.

In the first phase, this project identifies current and new opportunities for financing SFM by surveying all known existing and pledged funding for forests originating in climate change financing. This shall result in (i) a global policy study on the challenges and opportunities in climate change financing for SFM, including from REDD+, and (ii) three subregional studies on the same issues in Central Asia, Southern Africa and the South Pacific respectively. For each subregion, a regional organisation has been selected as a potential platform for further collaboration: the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

The sub-regional studies will be followed by one workshop in each sub-region. These three subregional workshops are aimed at sharing views and experiences with national and subregional decision-makers (ministries responsible for forests, environment, climate, and foreign affairs in developing countries) on the sources and distribution of climate change financing for SFM. The workshops will increase awareness and – in so doing – begin to enhance the capacity of the countries in these regions to secure such funds. They will also result in the identification of key action points for increasing climate change financing for forests.

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<sup>3</sup> The UNFF9 Resolution is available at <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/261/57/PDF/N1126157.pdf?OpenElement>.

<sup>4</sup> Results are available at <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/facilitative-process.html>.

<sup>5</sup> The resolution of the special session of UNFF9 (October 2009) establishes the Facilitative Process and defines its nine functions. The primary function of the Facilitative Process is to assist developing countries to mobilize financing for SFM. The ninth session of UNFF (February 2011) added two additional functions for the Facilitative Process. These resolutions can be accessed here: <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=E/CN.18/SS/2009/2>.

These key action points will be taken up during the last phase of the project, when the consultants will build upon the action points to propose a strategy to harness climate change financing for forests for each region. They will then follow up with assisting host organizations of the workshops in the implementation of the strategy, and thereby country parties of those organizations. This will enhance national and regional capacity to attract climate change financing for forests

### **The Tehran Workshop**

The Tehran Workshop will be the first of the three sub-regional workshops to be held as part of the Climate Change Financing for Forests Project. It will take place over three days (29 April to 1 May 2014 in Tehran, Iran) and will be hosted by the ECO Secretariat as its co-organizer. It will provide the opportunity for participants from ECO Member States, regional and international organisations, and experts, to exchange a range of views and experiences on climate change financing for forests and to propose suggestions on how to harness climate change funding for forests. The following countries which are members of the ECO are invited to participate in the workshop: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

### **Organisation of work and expected outcomes**

- The workshop will be held in English and in Russian and will be structured in plenary, as well as working groups meetings to discuss national experiences and the challenges and opportunities in climate change financing for forests at national, regional and international levels.

During the workshop, participants will be invited to reflect on the following topics:

- What sources of climate change financing exist for Central Asia's forests (public, private, national and international)? Which ones exist at regional or global level, but have not yet been tapped into?
- What specific challenges and opportunities do Central Asian countries face in harnessing climate change financing for forests?
- Is low forest cover a handicap or an advantage in securing climate change finance for forests?
- What lessons can be learned of countries which have successfully harnessed REDD+ funding in Central Asia or elsewhere? Are financing mechanisms such as REDD+ economically viable in Central Asia at national and/or regional level?
- What role could the Economic Cooperation Organisation play in assisting Member States mobilise climate change financing for forests?
- How could international organisations improve their climate change funding mechanisms to better meet the SFM needs of ECO Member States and countries with low forest cover more generally?
- What key action points should be taken to harness more climate change financing for forests in Central Asia at national level? At regional and global levels?
- How could the UNFF Facilitative Process further assist in this respect?

The main expected outcome will be the identification and endorsement of a set of key action points that will lay the basis for a future strategy on harnessing climate change financing for forests.

### **Relevant Documents**

Participants will also be requested to have familiarised themselves with two background papers on climate change financing for forests – one at regional level, and one at global level. Both will be shared with participants in due time.

Additional background documents on the work of the UNFF on financing SFM may be accessed here, including the resolutions of the UNFF9 Special Session and of UNFF9; the AGF Study on Forest Financing (2012); and the UNFF Study on the impacts of REDD+ on financing SFM: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/facilitative-process.html>.

### **Visas**

All international participants must apply for a visa as soon as possible at the nearest diplomatic representation of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Please send us a copy of your passport as soon as possible, so that workshop organisers may facilitate the visa process.

### **Contact Details**

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