

Expert Group Meeting on the Clearing House of the UNFF Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network

9-11 January 2019, CR11-UNHQ, New York

Concept Note

Background

Adequate financial resources are crucial for the implementation of sustainable forest management, achieving the Global Forest Goals of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF), forest-related Sustainable Development Goals, and other international forest-related instruments, processes, commitments and goals. Access to information and reliable data on funding opportunities for forests, as well as sharing best practices and lessons-learned on funding forests are also key for developing countries and countries with economies in transition to mobilize resources for sustainable management of their forests.

The Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) was established in 2015 under the auspices of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC resolution 2015/33). One of the priorities of the GFFFN as set out in the UNSPF is “to 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 experience of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) Online Sourcebook for Forest Financing” (ECOSOC resolution 2017/4).

The resolution adopted during the thirteenth session of the UNFF¹ requests the UNFF Secretariat to “initiate development of the Network’s online clearing house mechanism” in accordance with the guidelines for the operation of the GFFFN.² The guidelines further stipulate that the Secretariat should develop, without duplicating existing efforts, the Clearing House (CH) in consultation with interested members of the CPF, with a view to providing:

- A comprehensive up-to-date database on forest financing opportunities from all sources for sustainable forest management, drawing and building on existing initiatives and sources of information, including information on procedures for accessing resources;
- A web-based interactive platform for the exchange of data, lessons learned and best practices among users, including, for example, on project conceptualization and;
- A source of data for assessing progress on target 15.b of the Sustainable Development Goals and Global Forest Goal 4.

In light of the above, the UNFF Secretariat is organizing an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) from 9 to 11 January 2019 in New York on the CH of the GFFFN.

Objective

The main objective of the EGM is to thoroughly discuss and identify the requirements, components and categories of information for the development of a comprehensive database on forest financing opportunities, taking into account the need to build on, and add value to, existing databases from CPF members and other sources.

¹ Available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N18/162/00/PDF/N1816200.pdf>

² Annex II of the unff13 report, also available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N18/162/00/PDF/N1816200.pdf>

Main issues for discussions

The CH provides an opportunity to stimulate partnerships and create synergies among CPF members, information providers and users, and relevant stakeholders. In light of the mandate of the CH, as specified in the UNSPF, UNFF13 resolution and the GFFFN guidelines, the following issues shall be discussed with regard to the design and content of the CH:

- Required steps for the development of a “comprehensive up-to-date database on forest financing opportunities from all sources for SFM”;
- Identification of the potential data/information users of the CH and their needs;
- Added value of the CH and data gaps within the existing clearing houses and suggestion on the ways for the GFFFN-CH, based on its mandate, to fill these gaps and build on their work;
- Identification of the main components and topics for data collection and inclusion in the CH, taking into account the reports by the consultants;
- Identification of data providers and the means to work and collaborate with them;
- Type of information and topics for data-sharing in the CH (opportunities for forest financing based on major challenge areas in global forestry, procedures on accessing resources, lessons learned and best practices, progress on global commitments on forest financing, etc.);
- Standards for inclusion of data in the CH, and issues for consideration in the development of technical standards, information/data model and IT architecture of the CH; and
- Suggestions on the elements and components for a web-based interactive platform for exchange of data, lessons learned and best practices.

A set of two background documents on the above-mentioned issues will be made available to the meeting participants prior to the meeting and will be presented at the meeting.

Format and Expected Outcome

The expert meeting will be from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm and from 2:00 pm to 5:30 pm in Conference Room 11 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The meeting will be conducted in English. It will include an introduction of the mandate and background for the establishment of the CH, presentations of the two background papers by the UNFFS consultants, one on the concept and content of the GFFFN CH and one on existing experiences in other fora, discussions on the “main issues” as outlined above, and a brief conclusion of the discussions of the EGM. The programme of work for the meeting will be sent to the participants in due course.

The outcome of the expert group meeting will be a concise summary of the discussion, highlighting the suggestions and proposals emanated from the discussions. A brief overview of the discussions and suggestions of the EGM will be incorporated in relevant UNFF14 documentation.

Participation

The meeting will bring together a limited number of selected experts from potential data/information providers and users of the CH, experts on forest financing and database management from relevant CPF member organisations, UN entities, other international organizations, academia and other stakeholders.

For all logistical issues related to the EGM, including issuance of required passes, please contact Ms. Yan Lang at yan.lang@un.org.