

## United Nations Forum on Forests - UNFF

### Questionnaire on the Mid-Term Review of the International Arrangement on Forests

#### Introduction

In accordance with its programme of work, the UN Forum on Forests at its seventeenth session (UNFF17) adopted an [omnibus resolution](#). The annex to this resolution contains the actions to be taken in preparation for the Midterm Review (MTR) of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF). The resolution calls for these actions to be implemented in a transparent and independent manner, and in close consultation with Members of the Forum, as well as the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) member organizations and other relevant stakeholders. To facilitate the process, the UNFF Secretariat has hired several consultants to assist in the preparation of background papers and assessments. This questionnaire is prepared by the consultants to solicit views from UNFF national focal points and representatives of relevant stakeholders, for use in their assessments.

You are kindly invited to send your responses to the UNFF Consultant at: [itomaselli@stcp.com.br](mailto:itomaselli@stcp.com.br) with copy to: [yan.lang@un.org](mailto:yan.lang@un.org); [shirakuri@stcp.com.br](mailto:shirakuri@stcp.com.br), by **6 December 2022**.

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#### A. Questions related to the United Nations Forum on Forests and its Members

**Question A-1:** Considering the objectives of the [IAF](#), what progress has been made by the UNFF and its Members towards:

- a. Implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests?

**Thailand has implemented many schemes to ensure the sustainable forest management and multiple benefits. Recognition of the multiple roles of forest beyond timber production such as biodiversity conservation, water regulation, recreation, land conservation, ecotourism, etc. have been nationwide spreading into all responsible government bodies and civil groups. Moreover, timber certification program has also been implemented in align with law enforcement conduction. All initiatives will follow the guidance from 20-Year National Strategic Plan (2018-2037).**

- b. Enhancing cooperation, coordination, coherence, and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels?

**Legality and good governance are promoted in order to improve forest governance through all levels of collaboration and coordination for both national and international levels. For example, increase cross-border collaboration and information-sharing with neighboring countries, provide forest users with adequate access to information to ensure transparency and governance. Furthermore, international cooperation has been strengthened by following the commitment on global governance initiatives such as United Nations Strategic**

**Plan for Forests 2017-2030, New York Declaration on Forest, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Paris Agreement on Climate Change, Glasgow Declaration on Forests and Land use, etc. Indeed, achieving those global objectives will be a priority for Thailand's global cooperation.**

- c. Promoting North-South, South-South, triangular cooperation, public-private partnerships, and cross-sectoral cooperation at all levels?

**Thailand has supported many country-led capacity development programs for neighbouring countries within the region and other parts of the world. Best practices in Thailand which are considered to appropriate to those southern countries are introduced and shared. Furthermore, Thailand commits to support the design and implementation of country-led capacity development plans to scale-up the effectiveness of South-South and Triangular programs and initiatives. The supports through the adaptation of experiences sharing and lessons learned, as well as the involvement of Southern academia will be key for the success of these programs.**

- d. Strengthening forest governance frameworks and means of implementation, in accordance with the United Nations Forest Instrument (UNFI)

**Thailand has put forward to mobilize forest governance by evolving and engaging public and private actors at many levels to make and enforce decisions that are clear, transparent, just, and lead to the sustainability of forests and the fair distribution of the benefits derived from forest resource utilization. Meanwhile, forest governance and means of implementation also conducts to the amendment and reformation of institutional, policy and legal dimensions addressing both direct and indirect drivers of forest loss and degradation. Various of relevant policies, laws and regulations have been formulated and amended to ensure good governance applying to the forest sector of the country.**

- e. Strengthening long-term political commitment to the achievement of the IAF objectives?

**Achievement of the IAF objective implementation in Thailand could not be claimed in general. However, based on the endeavour and supports from all agencies in forestry sector, the following of some successes have been achieved:**

- **Capacity of stakeholders in forestry sector to recognize IAF and related activities has increased**
- **National consultation platforms related to IAF have established**
- **Stronger stakeholders' involvement in the policy process has more evidence**
- **Awareness raised and information shared through communication on best practices and forest policy issues have clearly seen**
- **Forest policy, laws, and regulations have been revised or newly formulated**

**Question A-2:** Could you list the objectives that have not been achieved, and how can this be improved?

**Notwithstanding the above successes, the following are among the areas for improvement in implementation of IAF:**

- The absolute need for a comprehensive governance framework for forest-related activities aimed at achieving SFM
- More emphasis on implementation and monitoring to complement the effectiveness of IAF in developing policies and action plans
- The need for capacity and authority for IAF to be country-owned and country-led
- Adequate involvement of stakeholders, for legitimacy and effectiveness of IAF

**In above-mentioned issues, they could be improved to achieve successful implementation by:**

- Provide continuous support mechanisms for all IAF implementation processes
- Enhancing more stakeholder participation in national forest programmes

**Questions A-3:** Has the IAF beyond 2015 been operating in a transparent, effective, efficient, and accountable manner?

**After 2015, Thailand has continued to implement IAF with moderate satisfaction in its implementation. However, there have some issues need to be careful considered such as:**

- Objectively measurable parameters for participatory forest governance need to be developed and established.
- Systematic documentation of existing experiences sharing regarding community empowerment and transformation of attitude of all stakeholders should be conducted.
- Promotion of gender and marginal groups should be enhanced in order to ensure increased participation of women and youth in participatory forest governance.
- Partnerships with development agencies, like NGOs/CBOs need to be strengthened.

**Question A-4:** Considering the functions of the UNFF in paragraph 3 of resolution [2015/33](#), what has been the progress made by UNFF towards:

- a. Providing a coherent, open, transparent, and participatory global platform for policy development, dialogue, cooperation, and coordination on issues related to all types of forests, including emerging issues, in an integrated and holistic manner through cross-sectoral approaches?

**Thailand shows strongly support to UNFF especially Goal 1 through the establishment of UNSPF Mobilizing Committee including to make a linkage and integrate UNSPF into the new National Forest Policy. As it has already specified that Thailand has set up the National Commitment to increase forest cover of the country in order to achieve 55% of the total country area under the 20-Year National Strategic Plan (2018-2037). It means, forest area of the country will increase from 20.68 m h in 2018 to be 28.47 m ha in 2037. This will be needed more holistic manner and cross sectoral cooperations as well as to remove some matters that obstruct the progress of promotion of sustainable forest management for all types of forest. For examples:**

1. Economic Forest Bureau was established under Royal Forest Department (RFD) in order to promote economic forest plantation nationwide.
  2. To reduce pressure on illegal forest land encroachment while providing agricultural lands for landless farmers, Thailand has launched the policy to allow landless farmers and poor families to subsistence their livelihoods in forest land. 196,217 ha of former natural reserve forest have been in the process to allocate to landless and poor farmers since the beginning of 2019.
- b. Promoting, monitoring, and assessing the implementation of SFM, in particular, the UNFI?

**So far, the Royal Forest Department of Thailand has promoted the monitoring and evaluation programs through:**

1. Technology has been deployed to support small, medium, and large scale enterprise in forestry business.
2. Forest products have been standardized for getting ready for national and international trades
3. To promote food security, Royal Forest Department (RFD) has established 1.6 m ha of buffer zones for 15,000 community forests to ensure food security for forest dependents in 2019
4. Under the responsible of Marine and Coastal Resources Department, awareness rising campaigns of mangrove forest conservation for food security has been promoted
5. Under the Article 65 of the 2019 National Park Act, it would be the responsibility of Department of National Park Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) to provide list of collective species for allowing forest dependents around the protected areas to harvest during the certain period of the year

**Under the above-mentioned initiatives, descriptions of activities are listed below:**

1. National Single Window System (NSW) has been implemented to link the information regarding forest product trading with other authorized agencies such as Customs Department, Transport Department, and Port Authority of Thailand to facilitate the business procedure for import and export.
2. Forest certification has been implemented by RFD to ensure standardization of forest products and trading
3. 1.6 m ha of 5-km strip of buffer zones between the national reserve forests and communities has established in order to secure food and non-timber forest products for 18,000 communities
4. Information technology has been applied to facilitate the accessibility of information regarding forestry information from the public. Some IT application could be accessed through mobile phone such as general information on forestry under the Royal Forest Department (RFD) such as (forest4thai), online-forest plantation registration for getting seedlings and tree planting (E-tree) while some applications such as DNP4Thai and NationalPark4Thai are also available for Department of National Park Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP)
5. More than 1,000 communities that are living inside and close to mangrove forests have been secure from food availability after joining the mangrove biodiversity conservation schemes.
6. Researches and inventory need to be conducted to in align with Article 65 of the 2019 National Park Act to provide list of collective species for allowing forest dependants around the protected areas to harvest during the certain period of the year. This initiative will include the investigation of biodiversity in some collective conservation areas in order to conserve rare and endangered plant species while develop some potential plant species fore economic value in the future.

- c. Mobilizing, catalyzing, and facilitating access to financial, technical, and scientific resources?
  - 1. Investment and technical from the government itself are also accounted as major sources for mobilizing to achieve sustainable forest management including socio-economic and livelihood improvement of forest-dependents
  - 2. Supplementary financial and technical supports have been allocated to retail farmers who have participated in economic forest plantations within their property areas under Forest Industry Organization (FIO) program

**Under the above-mentioned initiatives, descriptions of activities for financial supports are listed below:**

- 1. The state-own organization such as Forest Industry Organization (FIO) received financial support from the government to establish economic forest within both state lands and private properties. Totally 2.6 m USD was supported from the government for managing sustainable forest plantation under FIO during 2015-2022.
  - 2. During 2017-2022, more than 1.16 m USD was allocated to farmers to plant valuable trees within their farms. The program is managed by Forest Industry Organization (FIO).
- d. Promoting governance frameworks, enabling conditions at all levels to achieve SFM?

**Royal Forest Department of Thailand has implemented frameworks for enabling the achievement of SFM through some initiatives such as:**

- 1. To reduce pressure on illegal forest land encroachment while providing agricultural lands for landless farmers, Thailand has launched the policy to allow landless farmers and poor families to subsistence their livelihoods in forest land. 193,600 ha of former natural reserve forest has been in the process to allocate to landless and poor farmers since the beginning of 2019.
- 2. Amended of forest law and regulation which may consider to be an obstacle of forest rehabilitation and plantation.
- 3. According to Article 65 of the 2019 National Park Act, collective natural resources will be allowed to be harvested by forest dependents around the protected areas (i.e. national parks)

**Description of actions:**

- 1. National Land Policy Committee was established in 2019 in order to allocate approximately 624,000 ha of national reserve forest to the landless and poor farmers within 2023.
- 2. The landless and poor farmers who join the program will have their duties to prevent illegal land encroachments into forested areas while planting forest trees within their allocated lands.
- 3. 2019 Forest Act has been amended by lifting Article 7 that was considered to be an obstacle to attract private forest plantation in private properties. The amended has been making positive impact to promote forest plantation within private and other types of land areas as well as enhance revenue of their livelihood.
- 4. Under the Article 65 of the 2019 National Park Act, it would be the responsibility of Department of National Park Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) to provide list of collective species for allowing forest dependents around the protected areas to harvest during the certain period of the year

- e. Strengthening high-level political engagement, with the participation of major groups and other stakeholders, in support of SFM?

**Participatory of all stakeholders such as local communities, ethnic groups, government, and private sectors, etc. in Thai society in forest resource management has been strongly supported by the Government of Thailand. Communities could initiate their management plan to conserve and develop their livelihood through sustainable forest resource management plan. Moreover, some potential plant species will be taken into the research to make value-added into nationwide markets by responsible agencies and education institutes.**

**Question A-5:** Are you satisfied with the current level of engagement of Members and stakeholders in the Forum's intersessional activities, and what are your suggestions to improve the use of the UNFF's annual sessions, including intersessional activities?

**In my opinion, I have satisfied with the engagement of members and stakeholders in the Forum especially the supports from developed countries to developing countries through North-South Cooperation including among the developing countries through South-South Cooperation. However, strengthen cooperation between and among the North-South and South-South Cooperations is needed to ensure the achievement of UNFF's objectives.**

**Question A-6:** What do you suggest could be done to encourage more Members of the UNFF to submit voluntary national reports and voluntary national contributions?

**To simplify format of voluntary national report would encourage more submission of UNFF members. For examples, less questions but exactly to the point of core questions, less quantitative information to fill up the format, open-end question to allow flexibility to answer the question, etc.**