

Preparations for the Midterm Review (MTR) of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF)

Assessment on actions related to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)

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Through its resolution 2022/17, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), based on the outcome of the seventeenth session of the UN Forum on Forests, decided that the Forum would undertake extensive intersessional activities in preparation for the Midterm Review (MTR) of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF). The resolution called 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 this process, the Forum Secretariat hired consultants to assist in the preparation of background papers and assessments. These assessments and outcomes of preparatory intersessional work related to the midterm review, will be submitted to the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group on the preparations for the IAF-MTR, which will be convened in late 2023.

The views and opinions expressed in the assessment reports are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations Secretariat. The designations and terminology employed may not conform to United Nations practice and do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Organization.

January 2023

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All opinions expressed and any mistakes remain the responsibility of the authors.

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List of abbreviations

AFoCO	Asian Forest Cooperation Organization
AHEG	Ad Hoc Expert Group
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COFO	Committee on Forestry
COP	Conference of the Parties
CPF	Collaborative Partnership on Forests
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EGM	Expert Group Meeting
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FLR	Forest and Landscape Restoration
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFEP	Global Forest Expert Panel
GFG	Global Forest Goals
HLPF	High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
IAF	International Arrangement on Forests
IFSA	International Forestry Students' Association
IDF	International Day of Forests
ITTC	International Tropical Timber Council
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JI	Joint Initiatives
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Midterm Review
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
UNFI	United Nations Forest Instrument
UNFFS	United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSPF	United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests
WMA	Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award

Executive summary

Introduction

This report is one of ten assessment reports being carried out in preparation for the midterm review of the effectiveness of the International Arrangement in 2024. The report is guided by Section C in the Annex of the ECOSOC resolution 2022/17 on Actions related to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF).

The overall objective of the assessment is to identify the progress, gaps, strengths, and weaknesses regarding the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), its work, and related activities. In particular, it assesses the effectiveness, impact, and added value of CPFs activities and their contribution to fostering the implementation of the United Nations Strategic Plan on Forests (2017-2030) and achieving the Global Forest Goals. The assessment covers the period from 2015 to 2022.

Achievements

The assessment showed that since 2015, CPF had made good progress in carrying out its functions toward achieving the IAF objectives. Its progress has been most substantial in its contributions to the work of the UNFF through the provision of scientific and technical advice, identified as CPF's primary value creation mechanism and most valued contribution by member states and other stakeholders. Developing countries recognize the assistance to member states either directly or indirectly in implementing the UNFI and UNSPF. Developed and developing countries appreciate the information, data, and assessments provided by CPF to facilitate discussions at the Forum. Donor countries are, however, critical of the effectiveness and progress of CPF.

Since 2015, CPF has strengthened its guiding frameworks (e.g., Workplans, CPF Policy Document, CPF Strategic Vision 2030) in line with the guidance provided by the Forum.

CPF's **Joint Initiatives** are highly valued and provide visibility to the CPF member organizations, while their progress highly depends on funding availability. Also recognized is the good progress in reducing the reporting burden on member states through the work of the CPFs JIs on Monitoring Assessment and Reporting. The CPF Communicators Network, with its flagship activities, namely the International Day of Forests and the Wangari Maathai Award, are solid brands for the CPF and its communications-related activities. Its messages have effectively promoted the role of forests and their multiple benefits and shared best practices on SFM. The JI's generally have increased the visibility of the work of the CPF and UNFF and promoted the implementation of the UNSPF and the GFGs.

The Partnership creates a valuable space for its member organizations to build and maintain relationships, exchange information, network, and interact. This convening role of the CPF will be even more critical in this pivotal moment for the future of forests. However, it is noted that other global fora exist (climate change, biodiversity) where member organizations meet and work together and interact with member states, with a risk of overlap.

The assessment recognizes that the current CPF policy document sufficiently specifies criteria for membership, including a periodic review mechanism. CPF member organizations generally find the criteria sufficient and appreciate its flexibility, and don't see a need to establish further membership criteria. However, from the interviews, it is assessed that the application process for new members, based on periodic mapping and gap analyses, is not flexible enough and time-consuming.

Challenges

The composition of CPF, with its fifteen member organizations with diverse expertise, is one of the strengths of the partnership, but it also comes along with its challenges. While much goodwill exists to work together, doubts about the collaboration's added value and organizational benefits keep members from engaging more actively, with participation in CPF's activities sometimes limited to a few members. This impacts the collective ownership and effectiveness of CPF's work, particularly its joint initiatives, activities, and statements. The voluntary and informal nature of CPF is seen by its members as a prerequisite to its success but limits the possibilities to challenge each other on progress and commitments

The main challenges are related to its resources, the focus of the CPF work, balancing the guidance provided by the Forum and its member's governing bodies, and UNFF processes leaving limited flexibility to the CPF. Many CPF member organizations are yet to integrate the UNSPF and the GFGs into their strategic plans.

Limited resources provided by CPF member organizations and, to a lesser extent, external funding by donor member countries continue to be a significant challenge; CPF's progress and impact depend on the availability of resources to go beyond the current level.

Finally, CPF's ways of working are perceived as formal and not flexible enough to make optimal use of the diversity of its membership CPF is not structured and organized to take full advantage of its comparative advantages

An overall observation of the consultants is that several of the issues captured in the key takeaways of the findings section (e.g., substantial differences in engagement and ownership, lack of a mechanism to evaluating and demonstrating the effectiveness, impact, and added value CPF activities, and clear funding mechanism for CPF joint activities/programmes) are not new and already mentioned in earlier reports or discussed in CPF meetings. For various reasons, the partnership has not been able to resolve most of these issues satisfactorily.

Recommendations

The assessment of the progress, effectiveness, and interaction with the Forum, Member States, and Major Groups has resulted in several recommendations for CPF for the different groups. Central to this recommendation is that the Partnership should find collaborative ways to address some of these outstanding issues through open and honest interactions, focusing on strengthening engagement and accountability.

The recommendations are summarized as follows:

- Clarify CPF's focus by developing a more consistent guiding framework for the CPF work and reflect this in the work plan. Consider developing a set of partnering guiding principles capturing how working together creates additional value, with the overall goal of contributing to the GFGs.
- Clarify the issues related to the alignment of mandates and programmes of work with the UNSFP and the GFGs. Explore a practical way forward on how the CPF member organizations can demonstrate their alignment with GFGs.
- As an alternative to an MoU type of document, CPF should consider organizing regular (annually) Head of Agencies meetings to review the progress, address challenges, align expectations, and identify member's contributions to the partnership and its planned activities

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- Building on the experience from the donor meetings and the recent Friends of the CPF meeting, strengthen CPF donor coordination mechanisms and introduce a structured approach to attract funding for the CPF and its related activities.
 - Invest the time to ensure the relationship and communication between CPF member organizations and member states remains healthy, mutual expectations are managed, and actions are taken when things don't work as expected. An example is using open resource partnering tools, such as the Partnership Health Check included in the UN SGD Partnering resource Book.
 - Undertake a regular (light touch) assessment of completed JIs and other joint activities to identify challenges and successes and document lessons learned to share with the Forum, member states, and other stakeholders.

UNFF Member states can contribute directly and indirectly to the effectiveness and impact of the UCPF by influencing the UNFF resolutions guiding the CPF work to the Forum. The Forum should encourage CPF member organizations through their governing bodies to review and adjust the mandates of the CPF member organizations and establish a more direct interaction between member states and the CPF.

1 Introduction

By the provisions of ECOSOC resolutions 2015/33¹, 2021/6², and 2022/17³, the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) is conducting a midterm review (MTR) of the effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) in achieving its set objectives. The outcome of the review is planned to be presented at UNFF19, scheduled to be convened in 2024.

This report is one of ten assessment reports⁴ being carried out in preparation for the MTR of the IAF by the UNFF in 2024. It refers to **Assessment C: Actions related to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests⁵ (CPF)**. The report refers to actions identified in the Annex of the ECOSOC resolution 2022/17 regarding the mid-term review in 2024 of the "Effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests in achieving its objectives". This review is consistent with the provisions of ECOSOC resolution 2015/33 on the International Arrangement on Forests beyond 2015 and resolution 2021/42 on the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) work programme 2022-2024.

The ECOSOC Resolution 2022/17 calls for these actions to be implemented transparently and independently and in close consultation with other relevant stakeholders of the Forum. To facilitate the process, the UNFF Secretariat (UNFFS) hired several consultants to assist in preparing assessment reports for the MTR of the IAF. This report is the independent assessment report on the CPF.

1.1 Objective and scope of the assessment

The overall objective of the assessment is to identify the progress, gaps, strengths, and weaknesses regarding the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, its work, and related activities. The assessment covers the period from 2015 to 2022. Text Box 1 highlights the objectives and scope of the Assessment C on actions related to the CPF as specified in the annex to ECOSOC resolution 2022/17. In this report, these actions will be referred to as Assessment C.

Text Box 1: Assessment C, Actions related to the CPF Assessment,

(Annexe to ECOSOC Resolution 2022/17)⁶

1. Assess the progress made by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in carrying out its functions towards the objectives of the international arrangement on forests, as defined in Council resolution 2015/33.
2. Assess the effectiveness, impact, and added value of the activities of the Partnership as outlined in its workplan, including with regard to its resources; output delivery; joint initiatives, including how the Forum can provide input thereto; and recurrent activities to foster the implementation of the United Nations Strategic Plan for forests 2017–2030 and the achievement of the global forest goals and the Sustainable Development Goals.

¹ See section XII of the resolution at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/259/77/PDF/N1525977.pdf?OpenElement>

² See the Programme of Work of the UNFF for the period 2022–2024 contained in the resolution at: https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/RES/2021/6

³ ECOSOC Resolution 2022/17: outcome of the seventeenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

⁴ See Annex 1 for list of assessment reports

⁵ The Collaborative Partnership on Forests presently comprises of fifteen international organizations, institutions and secretariats that have substantial programmes on forests. These are CIFOR, CITES, FAO, GEF, ITTO, IUCN, IUFRO, SCBD, UNCCDs, UNDP, UNEP, UNFCCC Secretariat, UNFF Secretariat, ICRAF and World Bank

⁶ ECOSOC Resolution 2022/17: Outcome of the seventeenth session on of the UNFF [[N2114930.pdf \(un.org\)](#)]

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3. Consider the suitability of establishing criteria for membership in the Partnership.
 4. Assess how the Partnership could provide greater support to the policy development work of the Forum and assist countries in strengthening their implementation of the strategic plan, Forum resolutions and decisions on the ground, including the means to further benefit from the capacities of other international and regional stakeholders and partners.
 5. Assess the efficacy of internal communications within the Partnership to promote mutual synergies, reduce duplication and enhance the Partnership's communications and outreach externally to promote awareness-raising of the multiple benefits of forests and raise the visibility of the strategic plan and the global forest goals within other forest-related processes.

1.2 Structure of report

The report contains the following Chapters:

Chapter 1: is the introduction, objectives, and scope of the assessment.

Chapter 2: describes the methodology and approach to the assessment and highlights the limitations.

Chapter 3: describes the background, context, and relevant developments of CPF since 2015, based on an analysis of relevant literature, CPF policy documents, and related reports regarding the work of the CPF and its member organizations.

Chapter 4: presents the findings from the document research, survey responses, and interviews with CPF members, UNFF National Focal Points, and other relevant stakeholders. This section further highlights progress made and identifies gaps, strengths, and weaknesses in the work of the CPF.

Chapter 5: presents the conclusions and recommendations.

2 Assessment Methodology

2.1 Assessment Framework

To guide the assessment of the effectiveness, impact, and value-added of the CPF's activities (Action 2 and internal communication element of Action 5), the consultants draw on the OECD DAC criteria (OECD, 2021) and the UN SDG Partnership Guidebook⁷. The table below provides an overview of the definitions used for this assessment.

Table 1 Modified Evaluation Criteria Framework

Evaluation Criteria	Definition
Effectiveness	The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and results, including any differential results across groups.
Impact	The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.
Value creation	The extent to which a partnership has created or is expected to create significant additional value in comparison to the resources required and deliver benefits and impact far greater than the sum of the parts

OECD/DAC Network, 2021, UN SDG Partnership Guidebook, 2021

To identify underlying issues and options to improve the partnership's effectiveness, value-added, and impact, the consultants' team structured the assessment framework around the four vital building blocks of an effective partnership⁸, defining the essential elements every partnership needs to develop and continuously maintain. These building blocks are visualized below.

⁷The SDG Partnership Guide Book: <https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/SDG%20Partnership%20Guidebook%201.11.pdf>

⁸ The Partnering Initiative developed the fit-for-partnering approach, providing four building blocks of effective partnership. See the UN [SDG Partnership Guidebook](#)

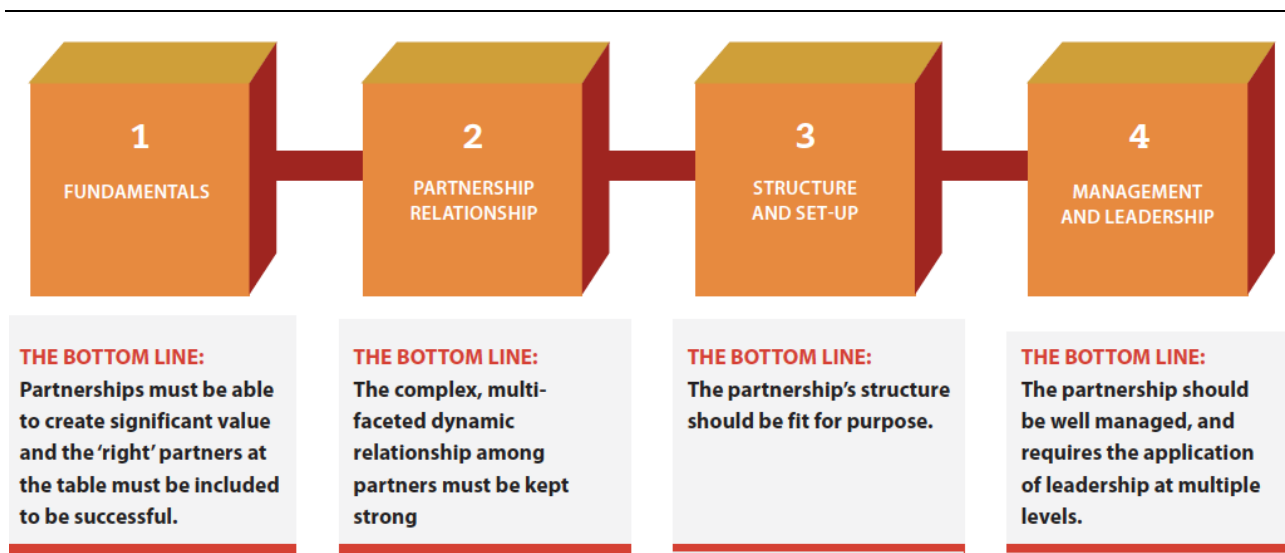


Figure 1: Building blocks for effective partnerships

The assessment would also provide insights into the perspectives and expectations of the individual CPF member organizations, the UNFF member states, and major groups.

The lines of enquiry presented below are used to guide the research and interviews and structure the findings around five major elements covering the five actions from Assessment C. The proposed framework considers the assessment of internal communication to promote mutual synergies and reduce duplication, an essential part of the effectiveness of the Partnership (Action 2). The five elements are summarized as follows:

I. Progress made by the CPF in carrying out its functions

This aspect of the assessment is about the outputs of the Partnership and its progress since 2015. Questions to guide this aspect of the assessment include:

- *Is the Partnership 'on track' in carrying out its functions? How does this contribute to the objectives of IAF? Are there any functions that are performing particularly well or lacking progress?*
- *How do member states, CPF major groups, and other stakeholders describe the progress and impact of CPF on the work of the Forum?*

II. Effectiveness and added value of the CPF and its activities

These elements focus on how the Partnership is set up and functioning in delivering its activities towards the goals, using the main elements of the four building blocks for effective partnerships.

- *Is there alignment around the CPF vision and goals?*
- *How would CPF members describe the added value of working through CPF compared to the resources required? What are the drivers and benefits perceived by its members? Are there any issues (mandates, resources, high-level support) keeping the members from engaging effectively in CPF?*
- *Are the Partnership's structure and set-up 'fit for purpose' to make and act on decisions, implement effectively (including its working modalities, current workplan, and delivery mechanisms), and check that the partnership is staying on track and creating value through implementing its activities, and joint initiatives? Are there areas for improvement?*

-
- *Are the different members of the partnership working together in a collaborative, equitable way that promotes mutual synergies and enhances coherence and cooperation? Are there strong, trust-based relationships among partners?*

III. Suitability of membership criteria

- *Should CPF consider setting up membership criteria, both explicit and implicit? What could be the elements of such criteria?*

IV. Providing support and assistance to the policy development work of the Forum and member countries

- *How can the Partnership provide greater support to the policy development work of the Forum and assist countries in implementing UNSPF and achieving the GFGs?*
- *Is CPF making optimum use of the already existing knowledge, expertise, resources, and networks?*

V. CPF's external communication and outreach

- *How can CPF enhance its external communication and outreach?*

2.2 Assessment Methodology

A mixed-methods approach was used, entailing document review, an online survey, and individual interviews, capturing the perspectives of the CPF members, the UNFF member states, and Major Groups

The document review included published studies, reports, policy briefs, websites (particularly of CPF member organizations), and documents produced by CPF, including its work plans, reports of its joint initiatives, and organization-led initiatives. A joint survey questionnaire was developed for all ten areas of study for the assessment of the IAF. Each assessment area was limited to a maximum of four questions in the survey. The Chair of the UNFF17 Bureau sent out the questionnaire. This joint questionnaire was to avoid overburdening member countries, CPF member organizations, Major Groups, and other stakeholders with a questionnaire from the different areas as per the task in the UNFF17 resolution.

The consultants working on Assessment C on Actions related to the CPF conducted formal and informal interviews to understand the CPF, including the implementation dynamics from the perspective of the member organizations and a selection of UNFF member states. The approach aimed at getting the view of a balanced cross-section of the UNFF member states by covering the different regions and their forms of engagement with CPF. The report has preserved anonymity and does not attribute any statements to interviewees.

Given the available interview time, it was often only possible to review a limited number of questions from the assessment framework. In that case, the consults followed a pragmatic approach and structured the interviews around the views on the current state of CPF, its strengths and weaknesses, challenges and opportunities, and possible suggestions for the way forward.

For the interviews, the consultants took advantage of FAO COFO26⁹ to interact in person and obtain views from CPF members and member states that were a part of the meeting. Furthermore, the

⁹ 26th Session of the FAO Committee on Forestry, Rome, 03/10/2022 - 07/10/2022

consultants participated in a workshop held in Nairobi from 17-19 October 2022¹⁰ and interacted with some UNFF National Focal Points.

The assessment of the work of the CPF was undertaken in 3 phases as follows:

Phase 1: Inception phase – A kick-off meeting was held with the Director of UNFFS and staff. The meeting was an opportunity to introduce the consultants working on different areas of IAF assessment and enabled the consultants to clarify the scope of the assessment. An initial literature review helped the development of an annotated outline to guide the post 2015 assessment of IAF and the work of the CPF.

Phase 2: Data Collection – This phase involved collecting data, including holding meetings and interviews with members of the CPF and other UNFF stakeholders on the margins of FAO COFO26 and other UNFF/FAO-organized events. Where submissions of responses to the questionnaire sent out by the UNFF17 Bureau Chair were not complete, the consulting team arranged follow-up interviews with the respondents.

Phase 3: Analyses and reporting – This phase involved data analysis, cross-checking of information, synthesis, and drafting of the report.

¹⁰ Africa region validation workshop on “Guidelines to assess the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on sustainable forest management in Africa”

3 Background and context

3.1 The CPF and recent developments in the forest sector

This paragraph presents key post-2015 developments in the forest and related sectors relevant to the work of the CPF and could provide opportunities for IAF and, by extension, the CPF.

Forests have increasingly been seen as the pathway for achieving a green recovery, tackling the environmental crisis, reducing the risk of future pandemics, ensuring food security, addressing poverty, particularly in forest communities, and building inclusive and sustainable green economies¹¹. The global discussions recognize the crucial role of forests in sustainability, climate, and biodiversity, given the multi-sectoral nature of forests.

A summary of key developments in the forest and related sectors in the assessment period is presented below, and details provided in Annex B

- **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030):** The UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/73/284 invited UN Environment Program (UNEP) and the FAO to lead in the implementation of the UN Decade. The UN Decade seeks the protection and restoration of ecosystems globally for the benefit of people and nature. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is based on a robust and transparent partnership structure with clear roles and responsibilities. The UN Decade provides partnership options that enable individuals and organizations within and outside the UN System to leverage their unique skills and resources to contribute to ecosystem restoration. This could provide opportunities for exchanging lessons within the CPF, given UNEPs membership of the partnership.
- **The Paris Agreement:** Adopted on 12th December 2015 by 196 Parties at UNFCCC COP21 and entered into force on 4th November 2016, its goal is to limit global warming well below two but preferably 1.5 degrees Celsius. The Paris Agreement and the IAF, ratified in 2015, stress the importance of furthering sustainable management of forests¹². Some provisions of the Paris Agreement and the IAF, as per ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33, provide opportunities for greater coherence and collaboration¹³.
- **UNFCCC 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26),** can be seen as a turning point, with commitments and pledges, including the Glasgow leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, signed by 145 countries to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 and backed by public funds for forest conservation and a global roadmap to make 75% of forest commodity supply chains sustainable.
- **UNFCCC Sharm El-Sheikh Climate Change Conference (COP27)** (6-20 November 2022), where countries agreed to recognize the need for finance to respond to "loss and damage" associated with the adverse effects of climate change and to establish a fund and the required funding arrangements and for which details would be worked out over next year.
- **CBD UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15), Montreal,** (3-19 December 2022), where on 19 December 2022, the parties adopted the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework (GBF) that seeks to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. The GBF, a successor to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets set in 2010, has four long-term goals and twenty-three action-

¹¹ FAO, 2022: State of the Worlds Forests 2022

¹² [United Nations Forum on Forests » IAF and the Paris Agreement](#)

¹³ <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Forests-in-Paris-Agreement-policy-brief.pdf>

oriented global targets to be achieved by 2030¹⁴. Through the GBF, biodiversity policy in the coming years will be guided to attain the overarching goals and set targets up to 2030. The GBD Framework seeks to protect at least 30% of terrestrial, inland water, coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed while recognizing “indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable.” All four goals and 23 targets of the framework are linked to forests, particularly targets 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 16, 18, 19, 20, and 21.

- **Post COVID-19:** During the pandemic, CPF was able to leverage its expertise and release a joint statement,¹⁵ “Towards sustainability: forest solutions in response to COVID-19 pandemic,” in October 2020. The joint statement, among others, highlighted the potential of forests to promote a transition to building a green, healthy, and resilient future and how Nature-based Solutions¹⁶ (Nbs) can deliver enormous socio-economic benefits.

A crucial development for CPF has been adopting the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33, strengthening the international arrangement on forests¹⁷ (IAF) and extending it to 2030, thereby making it consistent with the target date of 2030 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The resolution confirms maintaining the composition of the IAF. Still, it emphasizes the need to strengthen partnerships as per paragraph 1(c): *“That the international arrangement on forests involves as partners interested international, regional and subregional organizations and processes, major groups and other stakeholders.”*

Regarding developments specific to the CPF, ECOSOC decided on the exact resolution on its four core functions, reaffirmed its relationships with the UNFF, and encouraged the CPF and its members to strengthen its partnership, including through formalizing its working modalities, consideration of a multilateral memorandum of understanding, developing procedures for its effective functioning and operation, and assessing its membership and the potential added value of additional members with significant forest-related expertise.

Another significant development for CPF was the agreement on the first-ever UN Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF), forged at a special session of UNFF held in January 2017. UNSPF provides an ambitious vision for global forests in 2030, including six Global Forest Goals (GFGs) and 26 associated targets to be achieved by 2030. The plan was adopted by the UN ECOSOC in 2017 and was subsequently adopted by the UN General Assembly on 27 April 2017¹⁸.

The implementation framework for the UNSPF recognizes the critical role of the CPF and its member organizations. It invites the CPF to support UNFF and its members in advancing the GFGs and targets, along with existing forest-related intergovernmental objectives and targets. It also encourages members of UNFF to support the CPF work plan and provide voluntary financial contributions to support the activities of the CPF and its member organizations¹⁹.

¹⁴ Global Biodiversity Framework: <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://prod.drupal.www.infra.cbd.int/sites/default/files/2022-12/221222-CBD-PressRelease-COP15-Final.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/cpf-statement-on-covid-19/index.html>

¹⁶ Nature-based solutions (NbS) are actions taken to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems while simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits.

¹⁷ The international arrangement on forests is composed of the UNFF and its Member States, the UNFF secretariat, the CPF, the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and the UNFF Trust Fund.

¹⁸ Report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its 2017 special session, E/2017/10–E/CN.18/SS/2017/2, ECOSOC Resolution 2017/4, GA Resolution 71/285.

¹⁹ Paragraphs 38-40 of E/RES/2017/4.

3.2 International Arrangement on Forests

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) was created in 2000 by ECOSOC Resolution 2000/35, an intergovernmental subsidiary body with the primary objective to promote "... the management, conservation, and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end. The exact resolution established the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) and invited the heads of relevant international organizations to form the CPF as a part of the IAF²⁰. ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33 strengthened the IAF and established its composition as the following five (5) components: the United Nations Forum on Forests; Member states of the Forum; the Collaborative Partnership on Forests; the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) and the Trust Fund for the UNFF.

A graphic presentation of the IAF is presented in Figure 2 below

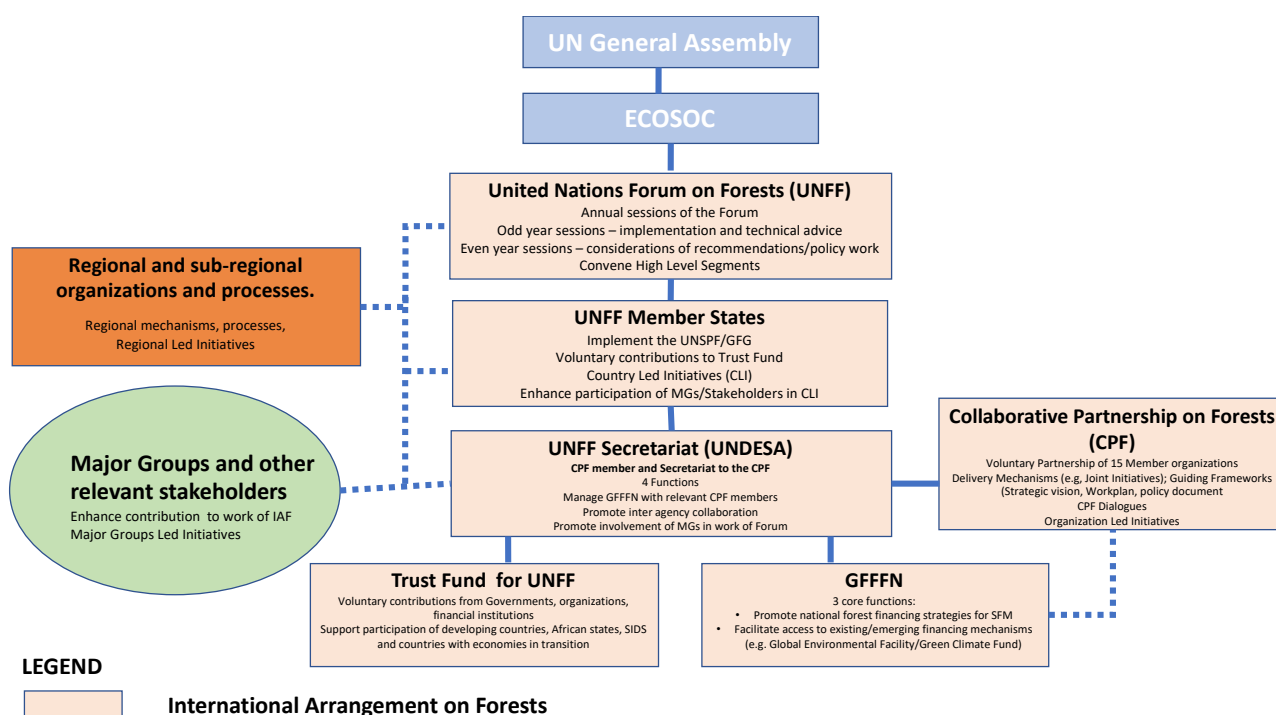


Figure 2: Graphic presentation of the IAF

Source: Adapted from Blaser et al., 2014

The invitation by the UNFF through ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33 to the heads of CPF emphasizes the voluntary nature of the partnership. The Partnership comprises fifteen international organizations²¹, institutions, and secretariats with substantial forest programmes²². CITES was the last member to join the CPF in 2018. Nine (9) of the organizations are within the UN System, while the remaining six (6) are international organizations outside the UN System but have programmes related to the forestry sector.

The vision of the CPF is that "by 2030, all types of forests and forest landscapes are sustainably managed, their multiple values are fully recognized, the potential of forests and their goods and

²⁰ The other components of the IAF are the UN Forest Forum and Member States, the UNFF Secretariat, the CPF, the UN Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN), and the UNFF Trust Fund.

²¹ CIFOR, CITES Secretariat, FAO, GEF Secretariat, ITTO, IUCN, IUFRO, SCBD, UNCCD Secretariat, UNDP, UNEP, UNFCCC Secretariat, UNFF Secretariat, ICRAF, World Bank

²² <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/index.html>

services is fully unlocked, and the Global Forest Goals, the Sustainable Development Goals, and other global forest-related goals, targets, and commitments are achieved.²³

The CPF supports the implementation of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) 2017-2030 and enhances cooperation and coordination on forests by carrying out its functions and sharing information to capitalize on synergies and avoid duplication of effort. The core functions of the CPF are presented in Text Box 2.

Test Box 2: Functions of the CPF

1. To support the work of the Forum and its member countries
2. To provide scientific and technical advice to the Forum and governing bodies of other CPF members, at their request
3. To enhance coherence as well as policy and programme cooperation and coordination at all levels among its member organizations, including through joint programming and the submission of coordinated proposals to their respective governing bodies, consistent with their mandates
4. To promote the implementation of the Forest Instrument and the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests, as well as the contribution of forests and trees to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other major forest-related Agreements

Source: ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33

3.3 CPF set-up

CPF is a so-called UN Type II partnership, including UN and non-UN partners. And has its collaboration and meeting structure, which comprises the position of the chair (FAO), the rotating vice-chair (CIFOR in 2022), the secretariat (UNFFS, a division of UNDESA), and CPF member organizations. The partnership does not have its own human and financial resources. However, FAO has a limited budget dedicated to the CPF and proportionally limited staff time. Germany has supported the CPF by funding an Associate Professional Officer (APO) position at FAO. Its activities are resourced through its members (primarily in-kind) and the country's contributions and financial contributions for specific activities, for instance, the Joint Initiatives.

CPF recognizes three mechanisms to deliver the Partnership's mandate, objectives, core function, and work plan, per its Policy Document (revised 2019). These are 1) Focal agencies, 2) CPF Dialogue, and 3) Joint Initiatives.

1. Focal agencies

CPF could designate focal agencies for the elements addressed in their workplan, following a principle of shared responsibility based on each member's mandate, competence, resources, and comparative advantage. The Policy Document further defines: "The focal agency coordinates the Partnership's work on the respective programme elements, strengthens the collaboration among members and other partners to mobilize resources and expertise, avoids duplication of effort, and

²³ CPF Strategic Vision: <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/strategic-vision-2030/index.html>

maximizes efficiency and synergies in performing its core functions. The focal agencies work closely together with identified supporting agencies”.

2. CPF Dialogue

Through a CPF dialogue, the Partnership seeks collaboration with a wide range of partners and stakeholders in furthering sustainable management of all types of forests. These dialogues aim to facilitate cooperation and communication between the Partnership and interested parties, including major groups and other stakeholders. The CPF Dialogue could bring together a broad range of expertise, resources, and perspectives to enhance collaborative actions in promoting sustainable forest management.

3. Joint initiatives

Joint initiatives are established between several CPF member organizations to jointly coordinate and implement activities that contribute to the same goals. CPF joint initiatives strengthen collaboration and mobilize political, scientific, technical, and financial support within and beyond the partnership.

The workplan distinguishes different types of recurrent activities.

- **Communication and outreach**, including maintaining a website and organizing CPF side events, dialogues, sessions, etc., at significant events to communicate within and outside the forest sector.
- **CPF regular meetings** for operational planning and policy coordination, including OLIs and donor meetings, developing CPF strategic and policy documents
- **Contributions to UNFF documentation and sessions** to support its work and provide scientific and technical advice
- **Activities on emerging issues and challenges** and involving other significant groups and other stakeholders in CPF activities.

4 Findings and Observations

This section presents the findings of the assessment, based on the document review, the responses to the questionnaire (Annex C), and the interviews (Annex D) with CPF members, UNFF National Focal Points, and other stakeholders involved in the work of the Forum. A summary of the responses to the questionnaire and the number of people interviewed is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 2 Number of survey respondents and interviewees

Stakeholder Group	Recipients of the Questionnaire	Respondents to the Questionnaire ²⁴	Interviewed ¹⁹
UNFF Member States	197	16	12
CPF member organizations	15	4	13
Other stakeholders	51	2	2
Total	259	20	27

With a total of 259 questionnaires sent out to (197 member states, all 15 CPF member organizations, and 51 other stakeholders), a response rate of less than 10% is very low and could affect the reliability of the survey outcomes. However, based on the outcomes of the survey and the additional interviews with member states, the consultants believe that the results are sufficiently consistent and that interviewing more member states would not significantly have changed the findings.

4.1 CPF's progress in carrying out its functions

This section assesses the progress made by CPF in carrying out its functions as per Action 1 of Annex C. It also provides an overview of the main CPF achievements during this period, as reported in the official CPF and UNFF documents, as well as interviews of member states, CPF member organizations, and other stakeholders.

²⁴ Received questionnaire included Australia, Canada, China, Colombia, El Salvador, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Malawi, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Switzerland, Thailand, USA, FAO, ITTO, IUFRO, ACTO, Forest Europe, FAO Regional Forestry Commissions and Major Group Children and Youth

Key takeaways

- *CPF showed significant progress in supporting the work of UNFF and its member countries by providing scientific and technical advice to the Forum and governing bodies of other CPF member as captured in its first and second core functions*
- *CPF activities contributed to creating awareness of the importance of forests and their role in contributing to the SDGs.*
- *CPF is implementing most of its recurrent activities (meetings, contributions to the UNFF Forum and sessions) as planned.*
- *The Joint Initiatives are valued and visible activities of the Partnership. Progress and success are often depending on how these activities are resourced.*
- *While CPF reports annually to the UNFF on its activities, the current strategic framework doesn't provide insight into how these activities contribute towards the objectives of the IAF and the strategic thematic priorities of the Forum.*
- *CPF's progress is determined to a large extent by the available resources. The opinions differ on whether the Partnership is making 'satisfactory' progress, or in other words, is 'on track', with different interviewees stating that more could be achieved by the CPF.*

Since 2015, CPF has shown significant progress related to its first two core functions, namely (a) support the work of UNFF and its member countries and (b) provide scientific and technical advice to the Forum and governing bodies of other CPF members, at their request. An official annual UNFF session document describes CPF's contributions to the work of the Forum, the UNSPF, and activities supporting the thematic priorities for the biennium²⁵. All CPF members contribute to this official UNFF session document. These have ranged from providing scientific and technical advice to the sessions of the Forum and other events, providing resources, and being critical participants in UNFF's intersessional activities and those of the CPF member organizations' events.

Overall, there is broad recognition by member countries and other stakeholders of the progress made by CPF in its contribution to facilitating the work of member states, especially the progress in reducing the reporting burden by member countries and the capacity-building support. (See also paragraph 4.5), In a 2021 publication entitled the Global Forest Goals to report the CPF is credited with having helped advance progress towards the GFG6 at the international level²⁶

Key Achievements

Different CPF member organizations have been providing inputs to several thematic discussions, mainly providing scientific and technical advice to the Forum based on CPF's diverse expertise. In this regard, CPF has produced a significant number of reports²⁷ that have enriched the understanding of the relationships between forests and water, climate, biodiversity, energy, food security, poverty alleviation, education, and health. More recently, a subset of the CPF, namely FAO, CBD Secretariat, and Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), have provided support for preparing a study on the economics of ecosystem restoration. The consultants' assessment is supported by comments from the survey responses, such as "CPF has played an important role in raising international and public awareness of the critical role of forests in achieving

²⁵ Example of Note from the UNFFS to the Forum at UNFF17 ([N2225959.pdf \(un.org\)](#))

²⁶ [Global Forest Goals Report 2021 | United Nations](#)

²⁷ <https://www.fao.org/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/publications/en>

the Sustainable Development Goals and made positive contributions to the IAF. The CPF has emphasized advocacy on turning the tide on deforestation through its joint statement “Challenges and Opportunities in Turning the Tide on Deforestation” (2021), a related brochure featuring the flagship initiatives of CPF members on this topic several High-level policy events at international fora. The CPF has also published a joint statement on the emerging issue of the pandemic (Towards sustainability: Forest solutions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021). At the XV World Forestry Congress (2022, Republic of Korea), the CPF had an advisory role in the steering committee of the congress and actively shaped its agenda, events, and success. Through the CPF, global forest-related reporting is constantly improving, and in 2022 two assessments on the global cores set of forest-related indicators were published.

Table 3: CPF reports, statements, publications, and documents

Year	CPF Reports	CPF Statements	CPF Publications	CPF Documents	Total
2020-2022	2	2	8	3	15
2015-2019	5	5	3	1	14
2010-2014	4	5	6	2	17
2005-2009	4	7	1	3	15
2000-2004	5	2	-	3	10

Source: CPF/FAO²⁸

The table above provides an overview of the CPF publications and reports²⁹ during the assessment period, including joint statements, policy and scientific reports, and publications that have enhanced the understanding of the cross-sectoral nature of forests and the relationships and interlinkages between forests and climate change, water, energy, livelihoods, health, etc. Earlier years are also included in the table to show that CPF has delivered significant outputs in the last two years.

The Joint Initiatives are valued and visible activities of the Partnership, thanks to the significant efforts and resources provided by the CPF members. An overview of the main Joint Initiatives is provided in the table below

Table 4: Overview of Joint Initiatives

Joint Initiative	Objectives	Lead /collaborating Agency
Communicators network	Creating awareness through the International Day of Forests and the Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award	FAO, UNFFS, IUFRO/other CPF member organizations
Streamlining forest-related reporting	To reduce the forest reporting burden on member states and development of Global core set of Forest indicators	UNFF, FAO,/Other CPF member organizations
Forest Landscape Restoration	To enhance coordination among CPF member organizations on FLR	Lead: IUCN Other: CIFOR, FAO, ICRAF, ITTO, IUFRO, UNDP, UNEP, UNFF

²⁸ Paragraphs 38-40 of E/RES/2017/4.

²⁹ <https://www.fao.org/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/publications/en>

Joint Initiative	Objectives	Lead /collaborating Agency
Global Forest Expert Panel (GFEP)	Provides objective and independent scientific assessments of key issues to inform decision-making at regional/global levels	IUFRO
The Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN)	To facilitate access to finance for scaling up sustainable forest management	UNFFS, FAO, GEF, UNDP, UNEP, IUCN, UNCCD,
Green finance for sustainable landscapes (GF4SL)	"To influence the enabling conditions for commitments towards deforestation-free, sustainable commodity production and other forms of sustainable land use."	UNEP, CIFOR/other CPF member organizations
Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World (SW4SW)	To strengthen sustainable value wood value chains in enhancing their social, economic,c and environmental benefits from production to consumption	FAO, ACSFI, CIFOR, ITTO, WB, WWF
Global Forest Education Initiative	"To create awareness and foster partnership for inclusive forest education and knowledge-sharing systems."	FAO, ITTO, IUFRO, CIFOR-ICRAF/UNFF/UNFCCC

There are differences in opinion about CPFs activities on emerging issues and challenges. While Member States and Major Groups generally appreciated the CPF joint statements, including the reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic³⁰, some CPF members expressed that more effort could have been made to raise emerging issues relevant to the forest sector and create awareness on forest-related issues at the global level. For some interviewees, this lack of joint statements was seen as an indication of limited engagement in the CPF.

CPF meetings and events, including CPF OLIs, have contributed to the work of the Forum and other processes such as UNFCCC, CBD, UNEP, etc. This is discussed in more detail in Section 4.2.3.

Opinions strongly differ regarding the progress and impact of the third function of CPF, 'enhance coherence and cooperation, as well as policy and programme and coordination, at all levels among its member organizations. The assessment shows that coordination and alignment are currently mainly at the 'technical' level, such as exchanging information, coordinating events organized by CPF members, and organizing joint events and initiatives. Although CPF members mention aligning their programmes and policies with the UNSPF and the GFG's, it is difficult to say whether and how CPF and CPF work plans have contributed to this. An assessment of the current strategic plans of CPF member organizations shows that only a limited number have aligned their strategic plans with that of the UNSPF and the GFGs.

The CPF reports to the Forum through an official UNFF session document, and the opportunity provided for the CPF Chair to present its reports. Some respondents, mainly member states, said there need to be more measurable and quantifiable indicators for tracking the progress of the CPF and its activities. It was also noted that such a process requires additional resources and that it must be weighed up to what extent this contributes to the functioning of the CPF. Reporting to the Forum is mainly qualitative information and does not usually cover a detailed analysis of the planned activities and outcomes. As a result, measuring the progress and contributions of the CPF activities

³⁰ . October 2020, the CPF published its joint statement titled "Towards sustainability: forest solutions in response to COVID-19 pandemic" in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby providing advice through the provision of technical and scientific information. The benefits of such publications go beyond the membership of the Forum.

to its core functions is challenging. The CPF made an effort in the past years by organizing a Friends of the CPF meeting³¹ at the margins of UNFF17 and a briefing to permanent representations in Rome (2021).

4.2 Effectiveness and added value of the CPF and its activities

This section covers Action 2 of Section C of the annex to ECOSOC Resolution 2022/17 in assessing the effectiveness and added value of CPF and its activities as outlined in its workplan, output delivery, etc., in determining if critical elements of the four building blocks, namely fundamentals, partnership relationship, structure and set up and management and leadership are in place. It also includes the first elements of Action 4, about how the CPF promotes mutual synergies and reduces duplication, as these are part of the effectiveness of the partnerships and their ways of working.

Box: Elements of an effective partnership

In an effective partnership, activities are guided by a shared vision and sufficient alignment of interests for that vision to benefit all partners. The partnership has the potential to create significant value if there is “buy-in” and ownership of CPF guiding frameworks. The approach to developing these guiding frameworks should be participatory and transparent. There should be senior-level commitment, and the partners are sufficiently enabled and resourced to contribute to the partnership. Partnerships work well when they enshrine the concepts of mutual accountability – partners are accountable to each other for the delivery of their commitments – and all partners are collectively committed and accountable for the delivery of the partnership as a whole.

Resource: UN SGD Partnership Resource Book

³¹ <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/events/friends-of-cpf-meeting/index.html>

4.2.1 Alignment and value creation

Key takeaways

10. CPF continues to create a valuable space for member organizations to build and maintain relationships, exchange information and network, and interact. This role of the CPF will be even more critical in this pivotal moment for the future of forests.
11. Although much goodwill exists to work together, doubts about the added value and organisational benefits keep members from engaging more actively.
12. CPF's progress and impact depend on the availability of resources to go beyond the current level. Almost all CPF members mentioned that its high ambitions do not match its limited resources, while the views on overcoming this differ.
13. The CPF guiding frameworks (Strategic Vision, Policy Document and Workplan) contributed to clarifying and better structuring CPF's approach and ways of working but have not yet contributed to agreed focus.
14. Although different interviewees describe the importance of better inter-agency coordination on forests, CPF is currently not seen as the platform for the required coordination beyond the activity level.
15. There are different views on the extent to which the mandates given by the governing bodies of individual members keep them from engaging effectively with the CPF and how this needs to be addressed.
16. Member States have an important role in strengthen policy coordination and coherence as well as allocate the related resources to support the implementation of the UNFF decisions and guidance to the CPF.

Despite the goodwill to work together, there is a perceived lack of engagement by members. This can be seen as one of a series of underlying issues - identified through the interviews and surveys - which are likely to be causing difficulties in effectively implementing the Partnership. These difficulties, which can explain many of the partnership challenges highlighted in this assessment, are presented in the figure below. It shows on the left arrows the elements in favor of effective collaboration and on the right side arrows the aspects that could work against it.

At the same time, the achieved progress and impact of the CPF can be seen as the result of successfully balancing these underlying issues. We return to opposing issues and potential resolutions in this report's conclusions and recommendations section.

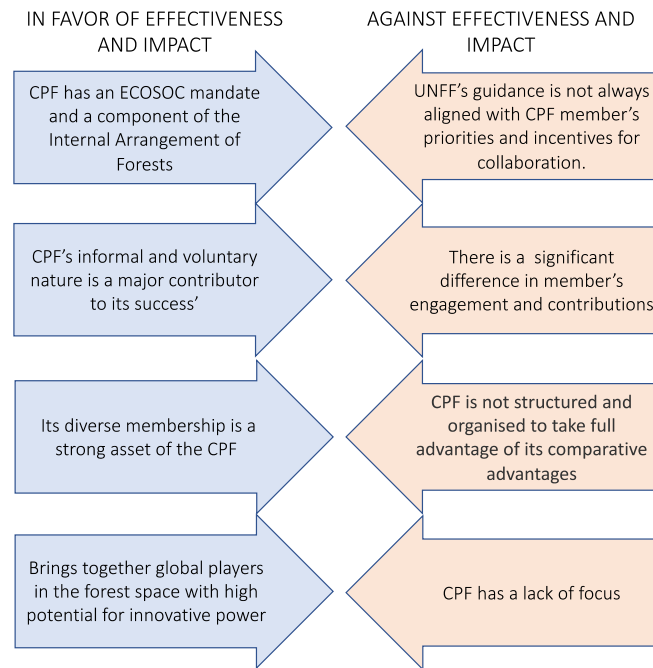


Figure 3: Underlying issues influencing CPFs effectiveness

Achieving the Global Forest Goals and targets and implementing the UNSPF 2017-2030 requires political commitment and action by all actors at all levels. Given the cross-sectoral nature of forests, the UNSPF highlights the need for strengthened cooperation, coordination, coherence, and synergies as essential in enhancing forests' contribution to sustainable development.

From the interviews with the CPF members emerged different reasons why members questioned the added value and surfaced various issues that could affect members' engagement, as discussed below

The focus of the CPF

First, there is a perceived lack of focus on the CPF. The different guiding frameworks and policies captured in the CPF Strategic Vision and CPF policy document don't provide sufficient direction to the CPF work. That becomes especially clear in the CPF workplan 2022-2024, which refers to multiple policy frameworks, making it more a compilation of CPF member priorities and activities rather than a joint workplan based on shared objectives and priorities. A further assessment of the CPFs work plan as a tool to increase effectiveness is provided in section 4.2.

Alignment of CPF policies and programmes with the UNSPF

CPF's composition of fifteen member organizations, although it provides advantages in terms of diversity, also challenges the alignment of policies and programmes. One of the reasons mentioned in the interviews is that the mandates of the different CPF member organizations do not explicitly recognize the UNSPF and the Global Forest Goals. CPF members indicate that the UNFF guidance is not always aligned with the member's policy frameworks, priorities, and incentives for collaboration. UNFFS is servicing the Forum guided by the UNSPF and GFGs, where different CPF members are guided by their respective policy frameworks and Governing Bodies. While that is often not contradictory, it could keep members from active engagement, especially when the CPF activities are not part of their current programmes and priorities. One interviewee summarised it as follows; 'for some organizations, especially the secretariats of the conventions, their hands are tied when it

comes to contributing to the CPF.' CPF started an inventory process of aligning members' mandates with the UNSPF but didn't complete it because of differences in views on how this might contribute to the better functioning of CPF.

Where there was a broad senior-level commitment to CPF Strategic Vision 2030³², only five organizations (FAO, UNFF, CITES, CBD, and ITTO) included guidance from their governing bodies in the annex of the workplan (2021-2024), indicating the relevant mandate given for the collaboration in the plan period. This reflects one-third of the CPF membership, while the 2017-2020 workplan included guidance from half of the members (seven out of fourteen). The interviews didn't clarify why this guidance was not given.

The limited progress, as stated above, concerning the UNFF guidance for CPF members 'to align their strategic plans and programs with the UNSPF and GFG and promote its usage' remains a challenge. A solution proposed through the interviews was that member organizations of the CPF who periodically report to their governing bodies should highlight the need to incorporate the provisions of UNSPF into their strategic plans, mainly when this has not been done and opportunities arise for the revision of these plans.

Resourcing and funding the partnership

Another common observation is that the available resources are not matching the high ambitions of the CPF. This concerns the voluntary resources of members dedicated to CPF, external (donor) funding, and the resources available to facilitate and manage CPF. CPF doesn't have a transparent process of allocating resources to individual members to the CPF. Most organizations have allocated limited resources to support CPF activities beyond participating in the CPF meetings and selected events for activities not part of the organization's core activities. As one interviewee stated, 'CPF is a by-product for some organization, instead of a goal in itself.' The significant differences in available resources between organizations also hampered the engagement of the smaller organizations as they can only provide the necessary inputs if they get external funding.

The same applies to the resources available for managing and facilitating the CPF, the task of FAO and UNFFS. The progress of CPF highly depends on the convening power of the FAO. The UNFFS is still lean on staff, and some CPF member organizations recall the nostalgia of the earlier days when member organizations seconded staff to UNFFS to cater to CPF capacity and expertise requirements.

Finally, different interviewees say that the resource mobilization approach needs to be strengthened and that CPF needs to make a stronger case for funding. The donors and the CPF members appreciated the donor meetings organized in conjunction with UNFF 13 and 14. Building on the experience with these donor meetings, a Friends of CPF meeting was held in conjunction with UNFF17 with the participation of interested member states³³.

Different interviewees shared that the CPF is 'less effective and impactful' than it has been in its first ten years. Although it is difficult to substantiate, one reason mentioned was a change in senior-level commitment to the CPF. CPF initially started as a Head of Agency partnership, where policy-related issues were discussed and actions coordinated. The current CPF is described as more technical, making it less necessary for senior management to engage. In other words, there is a tendency to delegate responsibilities 'down instead of up.' This appears to be related to the different interpretations of the mandate of CPF and the division between policy and implementation in member organizations

³² Approval of the CPF Strategic Vision at the CPF principles meeting, date 27 January 2020.

³³ <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Friends-of-the-CPF-meeting-11May2022.pdf>

Role of member states

Finally, different interviewees indicated that policy, programme coordination, and funding were also the responsibility of the member states. As members of the various governing bodies, and through their decisions and guidance through the Forum and the respective Governing Bodies of the CPF members, they could strengthen policy coordination and coherence as well as allocate the related resources to support the implementation of the UNFF decisions and guidance.

4.2.2 The set-up and functioning of the CPF

This section summarises the CPF member organizations' views on the partnership's current set-up, including what works well and could improve. Every partnership has its unique set-up: the governance, management, operational, and reporting arrangements required to make and act on decisions, implement effectively, and check that the partnership is staying on track and creating value. Essential elements are collective leadership, regular monitoring and review, adaptation, and internal communication.

Key takeaways:

- *The voluntary nature of CPF promotes flexibility and has contributed to its success since 2015 and is not questioned by its members.*
- *The CPF Focal Agency mechanism, which intends to catalyse collaboration between a subset of its membership around specific thematic areas, didn't materialize. Making it successful requires more proactive facilitation and stronger coordination.*
- *The CPF workplan is comprehensive and structured CPF's activities and outputs, but falls short in providing a clear framework for operationalizing the CPF Strategic Vision.*
- *There is room to improve the organization and follow-up of CPF meetings and events.*
- *The current institutional arrangements are not geared towards joint action and innovation: The UNFFS is under-resourced, and processes take time and have limited flexibility in responding to internal and external changes.*
- *Competition for financial resources and sometimes visibility between members drives fragmentation, what is inconsistent with the third function of enhancing coherence and coordination.*
- *Participation in the activities of the CPF is sometimes limited to a few members, which raises trust issues within the membership of the CPF. This impacts the collective ownership of CPF's work, particularly its joint initiatives, activities, and statements.*

The voluntary nature of CPF

The voluntary nature of the partnership limits the possibility of following up on the commitments and resources of the partnership. As evidenced by various documentation, including the earlier IAF assessment in 2014, CPF members value its voluntary nature based on its members' commitment to collaboration and joint activities. The advantage of the voluntary nature mentioned is that it is less bureaucratic and leaves flexibility on how the partnership moves forward. Although different CPF member organizations work with other members regularly, sometimes supported by a bilateral MoU, there is no formalization of the CPF membership or documentation of commitments or resources made available. The multilateral MoU, as referred to in the ECOSOC 2015/33 resolutions, didn't materialize. As one interviewee said, 'there are no consequences if commitments are not fulfilled.' Another remark was that "CPF needs an annual guaranteed budget to fund core activities agreed by members' and shouldn't have to rely on the goodwill of a few members to fund all activities."

On the other hand, the current informal nature of the partnership makes it challenging for members to make contributions when there are financing gaps in the CPF activities. There is a suggestion from a CPF member responding to the questionnaire: *“a minimal annual membership fee based on a small percentage of a Partner’s annual operating budget or some other equitable formula. CPF needs an annual guaranteed budget to fund core activities agreed by members and shouldn’t have to rely on the goodwill of a few members to fund all activities”*.

CPF Chair and Secretariat

FAO taking up the role of the permanent chair is broadly supported; for instance, citing one of the interviewees, ‘FAO has been doing a lot of the ‘heavy lifting for CPF.’ FAO has provided leadership and resources, including from their regional offices, and with an APO position (co-funded by Germany and FAO), convening and stimulating members, coordinating with UNFFS, supporting many JI, and hosting the CPF website. Also, the UNFFS has provided constant and broad support to all activities of the CPF, including secretarial and support services. The examples are the collaboration of UNFFS, FAO, UNFCCC, UNEP, ITTO, and other CPF members in jointly organizing CPF’s participation in the HLPF, convention COPs, and SDGs events.

None of the other partner organizations has dedicated staff assigned to the CPF. However, some organizations expressed their willingness to consider this based on a transparent ToR of the required expertise.

The rotating vice-chair system gives other organizations a position to take up shared leadership and has been appreciated and generally supported. Some interviewees indicated this hasn’t worked out to its potential, mainly because not all members have the necessary resources and commitment to implement this role effectively. Also, the role and responsibility of the vice chair should be better defined.

CPF’s workplan

Since 2015, in response to the ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33, CPF has worked on further strengthening its strategic and implementation framework, including.

- Developing and agreeing upon the CPF Policy Document in 2017, which formalizes the CPF mission, functions, membership, delivery mechanisms, and rules of procedures for the first time.
- The CPF Strategic Vision towards 2030, formally approved in January 2020, provides strategic direction to the Partnership’s work and formulates strategic priorities and a framework for its future work plans and activities until 2030. The document (Vision 2030) was developed collectively with input from all CPF member organizations.
- UN Secretary-General’s Executive Committee’s decision to call for “Turning the Tide on Deforestation” led to the adoption of a common message with the publication of the joint statement on “Challenges and Opportunities in Turning the Tide on Deforestation” released at UNFF16.
- Development of CPF Workplan 2017-2020 and the Workplan 2021-2024 (updated in June 2022)

The CPF workplan includes a detailed overview of CPF’s recurrent and current activities, broken down by year and resource implications. The work plans refer to different implementing frameworks, such as CPF’s delivery mechanisms and current and recurrent activities, that are partly overlapping work plans are reviewed annually, providing flexibility to enable CPF to include emerging issues/activities and address challenges as they arise, thereby ensuring the relevance, impact and added value when the Work Plans are implemented.

The assessment shows that, in general, CPF’s recurrent activities are implemented as planned by CPF lead agencies that are usually a subset of the CPF. and this appears to be a challenge for

some CPF members who, through the interviews, have indicated most often than not their contributions are not taken into account in both the design and implementation of the joint initiatives/activities.

Reflections on the workplan include:

- The interviewees indicated that CPF Vision, Policy document, and two work plan cycles contributed toward a more effective CPF.
- The CPF workplan is comprehensive and structured CPF's activities and output but falls short of providing a shared framework for operationalizing the CPF Strategic Vision. It reads more as a compilation of individual members' recurrent activities than providing a framework guiding the development and implementation of joint activities. The added value of CPF as a partnership based on a shared vision and goals is not expressed sufficiently in its work plan. An interviewee explained this by "the partners are pushing in different directions, and the partnership appears to have lost its focus."
- The current set-up of the workplan doesn't establish a link between its activities, expected outputs, and outcomes and how these contribute to the objectives of the IAF and, more specifically, to the GFGs. The lack of quantitative data makes it difficult to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of the planned activities. Furthermore, there is no evidence of reviews on completed CPF Joint initiatives, making it challenging to share lessons learned from implementing the joined activities.
- Many members mentioned the need to include a more effective process for more strategic level agenda setting of the CPF, reflecting the changing context and priorities.

CPF meetings

CPF recurrent meetings are an essential instrument supporting the exchange of information and a certain level of coordination between its member organizations. CPF holds regular meetings, sometimes taking advantage of such arrangements at the margins of the Forum sessions, conferences, or events hosted by CPF members or other forestry-related processes. Between 2016 and 2022 (until November), CPF met at least three times a year, with an exception in 2020 when eight virtual meetings were held. Such meetings would usually provide updates on critical events to be held by members or a subset of members, to discuss CPF contributions to events, preparations for UNFF Sessions or HLPF, sharing information on outcomes of meetings/events (such as CPF participation in COFO, ITTC Sessions, CBD COP, and UNFCCC, etc.), and updates on Joint initiatives from the lead agencies or member organizations. Outcomes of the CPF meetings and their minutes are made public and published on the CPF website, reflecting the desire for transparency by the partnership. CPF also held three meetings (in 2016, 2018, and 2022) with donor countries (Friends of CPF) to attract funding for their joint initiatives and activities.

Feedback from the interviews and surveys related to the set-up and functioning includes:

- Attendance at the meetings since 2018 has been good, though not even in attendance year on year. Some interviewees indicated that, preferably, CPF members should be regularly represented at the highest level of the member organization, strengthening commitment to the CPF goals.
- Outside these regular meetings, there is limited interaction between the organizations, or as stated by an interviewee, "There is not much happening outside the CPF meetings."
- Both CPF member and interested member countries said that resource mobilization efforts need to be strengthened and that CPF could make a stronger case for funding. The donors and the CPF members appreciated the donor meetings organized in 2016 and 2018 and the Friends of the CPF meeting in 2021. However, a limited follow-up from the side of CPF led

to the loss of momentum and limited funds for CPF. There must be an apparent follow-up to the donor meetings

4.2.3 External communication and outreach to promote awareness

This section describes the Partnership's external communications and outreach to promote awareness-raising of the multiple benefits of forests and raise the visibility of the strategic plan and the global forest goals within other forest-related processes. According to its work plan, CPF communication includes its website, CPF side events, dialogues, sessions, joint initiatives, and programming.

Key takeaways

- *CPF has built a strong brand through work of the CPF communicators network on Wangari Maathai Award that recognises the efforts of “forest champions” and its work in developing and recommending the annual themes for the International Day on Forests celebrations and the coordination to related activities.*
- *CPF has different webpages, of which one hosted by FAO and another by UNFFS/UN DESA, what could lead to confusion.*
- *CPF Dialogues provide a platform for coordination and coherence on forest-related issues within and across different sectors, as well as an effective way to raise the profile of forests and draw attention to the role of forests and their multiple values*

CPF website

CPF has a dedicated website hosted by FAO. The [website](#) provides information on, amongst others, the CPF meeting, CPF members, CPF publications the JIs, both current and completed. UNFF/UN DESA hosts a [CPF webpage](#), with an overview of all relevant documents. While the UNFF webpage refers to the FAO-hosted website for more information, there is an overlap of information between the two websites. Several other CPF members also have a dedicated page on CPF on their organization's website. Information on the different webpages of the member organizations is focused more on mandates of the individual members of CPF that are relevant to their respective member organizations' mandates but generally covers some aspects of SFM.

Having different websites with the name Collaborative Partnership on Forests could lead to confusion. CPF should consider one dedicated website for CPF, with the member organizations linking from their respective websites.

Communicators network and Joint Initiatives

Since 2015, CPF, through its communicators network and promotional material, has contributed to raising awareness of forests, helping to attract political commitment and higher visibility on the role of forests in the global development agenda through its publications. The recurrent communication activities of the CPF have emerged as a strong brand for the CPF and forests generally, notably its Wangari Maathai Award and the International Day of Forests (IDF). The Communicators' Network also recommends the annual theme for the celebrations of the IDF held annually on 21st March and undertakes related communication/awareness creation activities. The IDF activities at the global level and its linkage to celebrations at the national level provide an opportunity for implementing the communication-related activities of the CPF at the country level, ultimately enhancing the profile of forests. FAO and UNFFS take leadership in implementing both the Wangari Maathai Award and IDF, which enhances the promotion of the UNSPF, GFGs, and the forest-related targets of the SDGs, including at the country level. The Wangari Maathai Award and the IDF are two critical activities of

the CPF that create visibility for the CPF and provide an opportunity for promoting the UNSPF, GFGs, and the forest-related SDGs. A respondent from a developed country indicated that The Communicators' Network's activity in 2018 on "Working across sectors to halt deforestation and increase forest area: From aspiration to action" was able to convene key actors that may otherwise have worked in silos.

This assessment is supported by comments from the survey responses, such as "CPF has played an important role in raising international and public awareness of the important role of forests in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and made positive contributions to the IAF."

CPF Dialogue

CPF Dialogues are a means to reach out to a wide range of partners and stakeholders to facilitate collaboration and communication between the Partnership and interested parties, such as major groups and other stakeholders. CPF Dialogues have also been used in reaching out to donors and funding organizations to acquire resources (human and financial resources) to advance the work of the CPF. Rule IV of the CPF rules of procedure guides the operations of the CPF Dialogues.

The CPF Dialogue is an effective and efficient way to raise the profile of forests and draw attention to the role of forests and their multiple values through its engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, including at high-level political platforms. Over the past two years, four dialogues have taken place, including the High-Level Dialogue on "Turning the Tide on Deforestation at the UNFCCC COP27 side event on 17th November 2022. Other dialogues organized include:

- 2022: CPF Dialogue on Climate change, conflicts, and food insecurity - forest solutions to tackle effects of crises was held on 2nd May 2022 between the heads of CPF member organizations and representatives of major groups on the margins of the XV WFC held in Seoul, Republic of Korea
- 2021: CPF High-level Dialogue on "Upscaling Actions to Turn the Tide on Deforestation" brought together the heads of CPF member organizations to build momentum on forest-based climate actions under the UN Secretary-General's initiative on Turning the Tide on Deforestation and to explore further options for an UN-system wide response to halt deforestation, building on the existing globally agreed strategies and goals on forests.
- 2020: Partnership dialogue with non-governmental organizations and the private sector Chief Executive Officers.

The dialogues galvanize support for a UN System-wide and beyond response to halting deforestation/forest degradation. Relatively recent, it has effectively garnered attention and political support for forests since its creation in September 2019. Additionally, the CPF Dialogue provides a platform for coordination and coherence on forest-related issues within and across different sectors and major groups. It further provides opportunities for attracting funding to CPF activities, particularly if targeted groups/member states are effectively engaged in the initial stages of developing CPF activities and keeping all interested stakeholders informed.

4.2.4 CPFs Joint Initiatives

As stated in earlier sections, CPF has three main delivery mechanisms: **(A) CPF Dialogues, (B) CPF Focal Agency, and (C) CPF Joint Initiatives**. Where the CPF dialogue is described in 4.2.2, this section of the assessment focuses on the effectiveness, impact, and added value of the Joint Initiatives and the extent to which these activities, as per the CPF Workplan, foster the implementation of the UNSPF 2017-2030 and the achievement of the GFGs and the SDGs. The

section also assesses the impact and value-added of OLIs, CLIs, and MGLIs undertaken in the two plan periods.

A key component of CPF's delivery mechanisms and activities is its Joint Initiatives as its primary delivery mechanism. Since 2017 CPF has undertaken seventeen Joint Initiatives, of which ten have been completed as of December 2022 (Annex E). Through the interviews and responses to the survey, the following CPF JIs are those that member countries, Major Groups, and other stakeholders are generally familiar with 1) CPF Communicators Network (IDF and WMA), 2) Global Forest Expert Panel, 3) Forest Landscape Restoration and 4) Streamlining Forest reporting; and 6) Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN).

A summary of the Joint Initiatives and the extent to which these JIs have been effective, impactful, and with added value based on a purposive sample³⁴ of JIs over the two plan periods (2017-2020 & 2021-2024) is shown in the table below. A detailed description and assessment of these JIs are provided in Annex F.

³⁴ Purposive samples were used due to the limitation of time for the assessment and the responses from interviews and survey

Table 4: Summary of Effectiveness, Impact, and Added value of JIs

Joint Initiative	Objectives	Lead /collaborating Agency	Effectiveness	Impact and added value
Communicators network	Creating awareness through the International Day of Forests and the Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award	FAO, UNFFS, IUFRO/other CPF member organizations	Messages and events effectively promote the role of forests and their multiple benefits and share best practices on SFM. IDF and the WMA are solid brands for the CPF and its communication-related activities	Increased visibility of the work of the CPF, UNFF, the UNSPF, and the Global Forest Goals. The global, regional, and national levels attracted attention at the highest political level, with Heads of State in many countries being a part of the celebration of the IDF.
Streamlining forest-related reporting	To reduce the forest reporting burden on member states and development of Global core set of Forest indicators	UNFF, FAO/Other CPF member organizations	Contributed to the simplification and harmonization of reporting formats and increased the number of countries submitting their voluntary reports to the Forum	Enhanced the quality of reporting by member countries. Facilitates the assessment of progress made in the implementation of the UNSPF, GFGs, and forest-related SDGs
Forest Landscape Restoration	To enhance coordination among CPF member organizations on FLR	Lead: IUCN Other: CIFOR, FAO, ICRAF, ITTO, IUFRO, UNDP, UNEP, UNFF	Strengthened collaboration among CPF member organizations. Creation of FLR knowledge products/events. Created awareness of FLR and developed an online course on FLR	Promoted knowledge sharing and expertise through the diverse experience of CPF member organizations. Enhancing communication and sharing of lessons learned
Expert Panel (GFEP)	Provides objective and independent scientific assessments of key issues to inform decision-making at regional/global levels	IUFRO	GFEP global reports received considerable media uptake and impacted international forest policies. Effect evidenced by the influence of its work on different conventions and fora. Reports also support member countries of the Forum in making informed decisions. Outcomes of GFEP assessment have provided background information for discussions, a briefing document for delegations/negotiators	The largest global network of researchers in forestry and related disciplines gives CPF member organizations an advantage in accessing information and sharing the latest and most comprehensive knowledge on forests Ability to provide unbiased, science-based advice on forests and their role in the global environment. Developing countries, in response to the survey/interview, acknowledge the impact of GFEP and appreciate the value created in its contribution to expert group meetings of the Forum.

Joint Initiative	Objectives	Lead /collaborating Agency	Effectiveness	Impact and added value
GFFFN	To facilitate access to finance for scaling up sustainable forest management	UNFFS, FAO, GEF, UNDP, UNEP, IUCN, UNCCD,	Effective in providing information on financing sources. Building capacity in member states in developing bankable projects in support of SFM	Positive impact in providing information on financing. Assisted 13 countries in mobilizing resources from different sources. Also been involved in capacity building and trained over 300 government personnel, academia, and CSOs in formulating project proposals on SFM.

Organization Led Initiatives, Country Led Initiatives, and Major Group Led Initiatives

The Organization-led initiatives, Country-led Initiatives, and Major Group-led initiatives have become significant activities in the work of the Forum that contribute towards capacity building in member countries and promoting the work of CPF member organizations. Side events and OLIs have contributed directly to UNFF's deliberations by providing venues for technical discussion and allowing deeper consideration of policy issues. For comparison purposes, we have shown trends in the OLIs, CLIs, and MGLIs comparison purposes, although the discussion focuses on the OLIs.

Table 4 shows OLI, CLI, and MGLI, which have been organized pre-2015 and post-2015, and reviews the trend in these activities.

Table 4 Trend in the organization of OLIs, CLIs, MGLIs

Year	CLI	OLI	MGLI	Total number of events
2000-2003	7			7
2004-2007	9	4		13
2008-2011	8		1	9
2012-2015	2	1	1	4
2016-2019		1		1
2020 -2023 ³⁵		1		1
Total		7	2	35

Source: Blaser et al., 2014 and UNFFS, 2022

Where pre-2015 Country-led Initiatives (26) were the main activities supporting the Forum's work, post-2015 this was Organization Led Initiatives, even when the numbers are low compared to the pre-2015 period. Post-2015, there was the CPF OLI on the Development of the global forest Indicators in support of the UNFF held in Rome from 28-30 November 2016 and the upcoming CPF-led OLI on the Assessment of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests scheduled to be held in Rome from 22-23 February 2023.

4.3 Suitability of Criteria for membership of CPF

The third task of the assessment requires consultants to consider the suitability of establishing criteria for membership in the CPF. This has become more important recently in light of the applications being received by CPF from organizations that seek to join its membership. There are requests for membership by Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO), International Forest Students' Association (IFSA), and Green Climate Fund (GCF). There were earlier applications by CITES and International Bamboo and Rattan Organization (INBAR). CITES was accepted as CPF's fifteenth member, while the request from INBAR was rejected.

³⁵ Organization Led Initiative to be organised by CPF in Rome from 22nd to 23rd February 2023

Key takeaways

- *The CPF policy document specifies criteria for membership sufficiently, including its periodic review based on a gap analysis. This process was last completed in 2018/19.*
- *There is agreement on the current criteria for new members, including a global mandate on forests and added value to CPF. Members don't see a need to establish (additional) membership criteria. Making criteria too prescriptive affects the ability to react on and adapt to upcoming issues, trends etc.*
- *The current approach to review membership periodically based on a gap analysis limits CPFs flexibility and is described as too static.*
- *Many member organisations stressed in addition to its current membership, collaboration with other organizations should not be done solely through membership. It rather requires CPF to further explore and strengthen ways to engage with non-members more effectively in CPF activities in an opportunity-based way.*

The CPF policy document specifies the procedures for the review of membership of the CPF through its Rule II on review of membership:

“The CPF currently consists of fifteen international organizations, institutions, and secretariats with substantial forest programmes. Members have considerable capacity to deliver on CPF’s core functions. It is widely recognized that no single body or organization has the capacity or mandate to respond comprehensively to the multiple demands of forests. Collectively, CPF members, building on their comparative advantages, support sustainable forest management worldwide. The Partnership may periodically review its composition vis a vis its evolving mandate and decide on changes in its membership or establish temporary arrangements for the involvement of third parties to expand its capacities as needed.”

Between 2017 and 2018, the CPF assessed its membership and conducted a gap analysis and capacity mapping exercise of existing CPF member capacities according to the Thematic Areas for Action associated with the UNSPF 2017-2030, Global Forest Goals, and forest-related goals of the SDGs. The key outcomes of the gap analysis capacity mapping exercise are as follows:

- The gap analysis exercise, which was handled internally by the CPF, was suspended pending the assessment of IAF in 2024
- The capacity mapping exercise showed that
 - CPF has strong capacities in most of the thematic areas identified through the UNSPF/GFGs/forest-related SDGs
 - CPF can address current issues however, it was noted that CPFs ability to deliver on current and emerging issues would be dependent on the availability of resources (human and financial)
 - CPF is relatively well equipped with expertise in its areas of work as per the UNSPF and the CPF strategic vision. However, this should not limit the CPF in proactively seeking partnerships beyond the CPF, including exploring the potential to attract resources for the work of the CPF.

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- The outcomes will be considered during the mid-term review of the IAF in 2024. However, given the global mandate of the GCF, this, and their outstanding requests for membership, CPF member organizations may wish to review this request earlier.

Analysis from the interviews and the survey responses show that there is general agreement that the existing criteria for new membership is “fit for purpose.” Members don’t see a need to establish additional membership criteria, and making the criteria too prescriptive would affect the ability of the partnership to react and adapt to emerging issues. The criteria for new members, mentioned by most interviewees, are related to the global scope of the organization and significant forest-related expertise and mandate and an added value to the current membership through expertise, network, and thematic focus.

Many member organizations stressed, in addition to their current membership, the need for CPF strengthening ways to engage with non-members more effectively in CPF activities in an opportunity-based way.

Concerning the period for revising the membership of the CPF, the survey and interviews provided different views, with the member organisations tending to a short period to remain flexible for upcoming opportunities. An example is the applications by AFoCO, GCF, and the IFSA, where the decision for membership is pending, awaiting the outcomes of the IAF mid-term review.

From the interviews, a few different approaches emerge:

- By invitation only: Continue the current approach, based on a periodic review, including a gap analyses vis a vis its evolving mandate and invite potential new members that could fill the gaps to apply for membership. The advantage of this approach is that it is clearly defined and limits the number of applications to be reviewed. The disadvantage is that periodic reviews could be time-consuming. When done every five years, this limits CPF’s flexibility to respond to specific developments or opportunities.
- Call for applications; Open membership through a regular call for applications. The advantage of this approach is that it is a transparent and equal process, and it can be done every two years. The disadvantage is that it can lead to many applications being reviewed and processed. This approach requires a clear set of ‘threshold’ criteria for membership application to be considered by CPF.

4.4 Support of CPF to Forum and member countries and Major Groups

This sub-section assesses the perspectives of the member states, Major Groups, and other stakeholders on support provided by CPF strengthening their implementation of the UN Strategic Plan on Forests, Forum resolutions, and decisions on the ground, including the means to further benefit from the capacities of other international and regional stakeholders and partners. This section

responds to Action 4 of the UNFF17 outcome document. Reference is also made to the text of chapter 4.1.2, describing the progress made in CPF supporting the work of the Forum.

Key takeaways

- *There is a broad acknowledgement of the work of the CPF, especially by member states that get support from CPF members. Countries that financially support the CPF are more critical about its performance and effectiveness.*
- *Some donor member states are not convinced that CPF is delivering against its objectives in the current set-up. This has also to do with the current way of reporting, being mainly qualitative and through the UNFFS to the Forum and member countries.*
- *Some countries mentioned a perceived 'lack of country level support by the CPF', although providing this support is not part of CPF mandate.*
- *There is limited direct interaction between member countries that are interested in the work of CPF and CPF members. These countries would like to be engaged in an earlier stage of planning and developing activities, including options to fund CPF activities.*
- *Member countries and major groups often see CPF events as those of the member organisations rather than that of the CPF. The recent attention to and investments in CPF communication and branding has contributed to greater awareness and visibility of CPF activities.*
- *Developing countries recognised the assistance to member countries either directly or indirectly in the implementation of the UNFI. Developed countries on the other hand appreciate the information, data and assessments provided by CPF to facilitate discussions at the Forum.*
- *Member countries recognize good progress in reducing the reporting burden through the work of the Forum CPFs JI on Monitoring Assessment and Reporting*

4.4.1 Support to the policy development work of the Forum

In the reporting period, the United Nations Forum on Forests has continued to develop its policies through a collaborative and inclusive approach involving its member states, CPF member organizations, major groups, and other stakeholders. CPF is a significant contributor to the policy development work of the Forum. It has produced several insightful background papers for UNFF sessions and events related to its first two functions as set out in ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33. The CPF makes the following contributions to the UNFF in the following ways:

- The CPF provides technical and scientific support to the Forum through its collective expertise and knowledge in various aspects of sustainable forest management, climate change, and sustainable forest-based livelihoods.
- As mentioned elsewhere in the report, the CPF plays a key role through its publications, events, and activities in raising awareness of the importance of forests and their multi-sectoral nature.
- CPF member organizations have supported the UNFF in mobilizing financial resources and technical assistance to implement UNFF policies and programmes.

CPF members, if well-resourced, would be in a stronger position to provide more significant support for the policy development work of the Forum and strengthen member states' capacity for the implementation of the UNSPF, Forum resolutions, and decisions by:

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- Providing the opportunity for CPF members, such as IUFRO and CIFOR-ICRAF, to contribute thematically to UNFF sessions by having them lead in the preparation of official background documents on forest-related scientific knowledge,
 - Inviting scientists from IUFROs and other CPF member organizations' networks to present reports on key scientific issues for discussion at the Forum sessions to enrich discussions and policy formulation.
 - Through stronger policy coordination and coherent decisions by member states in the different forest-related processes involving CPF member organizations, provide clear guidance and allocate the related resources to support the implementation of the UNFF decisions or the UNSPF.
 - Draw on the global network for forest scientists, most of whom would be from member states and their research organizations, to support their implementation of the UNSPF and GFGs.
 - Strengthen scientific and technical cooperation in member states, drawing on expertise and knowledge within the CPF members.
 - CPF members should continue to support the secretariat in preparing joint position papers to inform discussions at the sessions of the Forum. However, this will require commitment by CPF member organizations to work collectively in developing and preparing such joint papers.

These suggestions, when implemented, can go a long way to support policy development and implementation of the resolutions/decisions of the Forum.

4.4.2 CPF Support to member countries

There is recognition by member countries and other stakeholders of the progress made by CPF in its contribution to facilitating the work of member states. However, the effectiveness of this support depends on the availability of resources for CPF member organizations to undertake such joint activities as part of their functions as CPF members. Responses and interviews reflect the appreciation of the contribution of CPF and its impact on countries as follows:

- Both developed and developing countries see progress in reducing the reporting burden by member countries through the work of the Forum, mainly through the JI on Monitoring Assessment and Reporting.
- Developing countries generally appreciate CPF's support in capacity building at the regional, sub-regional, and national levels.
- In response to the questions on CPF's contribution to UNFF and its sessions, 44% of the member countries participating in questionnaires and interviews rated CPF's performance as good to very effective. Four CPF members responding to the questionnaire rated the CPF performance as good to effective. A member country indicated that through the work of the CPF, they are "gaining a better understanding," and CPF "is facilitating discussions at the Forum." However, another member country's response has raised the need for the CPF to "work more as a partnership and change the impression where activities of the CPF are viewed as an activity of the lead agency." Deliberate effort should be made to brand CPF and its work. Another member country indicated in its response to the survey how CPF's inputs to the UNFF16 have contributed to the amendment of legislation

4.4.3 Support of CPF to Major Groups and other stakeholders

This stakeholder category comprises Major Groups (as identified in Agenda 21), regional and sub-regional organizations, and their processes to participate in the Forum's sessions. The Forum's

working modality has been transparent and participatory. It recognizes forest stakeholders' critical role in implementing the UNSPF, the GFGs, and the SDGs. CPF has undertaken the activities in the reporting period to enhance the MGs' capacity and strengthen their capacity to contribute to the work of the Forum. A few examples of CPF support to MGs included the following:

- UNFFS, support major groups in participating in the Forum's preparatory meetings and facilitating their making of proposals for the consideration of the Forum. It included the extent to which value could be added in the “localization on the implementation of the UNSPF and the GFGs at the grassroots level.” The Major Groups find this helpful and enables them to engage constructively in the work of the Forum since it strengthens their capacity to engage constructively in discussions at the Forum.
- As a member of CPF, UNFFS has provided support in realigning the MGIs' strategic plan with the UNSPF, the Quadrennial Programme of Work (2017-2020), and GFGs, thereby strengthening and gaining the commitment of the MGs to enhance their contribution to the implementation of the UNSPF, GFGs, and SDGs and this is a major achievement.
- The capacity of MGs has been developed and enhanced for engagement in publicity and advocacy on the UNSPF and GFGs.
- Through the CPF Dialogue, MGs have been engaged in specific activities. For instance, CPF supported developing individual groups (e.g., Children and Youth group) and consolidating group Strategic Plans drawing on their individual and collective strengths. More recently, in the preparations for the MTR of the IAF, the MGs have been involved in an Expert Group Meeting on “UNFF’s contribution to the 2030 Agenda, Involvement of Regional/Subregional Entities and Involvement of Major Groups and Other Stakeholders” held in Bangkok Thailand from 11-13 January 2023.

4.5 Gaps, strengths, and weaknesses of the CPF

The overall goal of this assessment is to identify progress, gaps, strengths, and weaknesses regarding the CPF. The details of the SWOT Analysis are presented in Annex G. This section explains the summary findings of the assessment in the form SWOT analysis table (Table 5).

Table 5: SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPF brings together the leading global agencies on forest-related issues • Strong knowledge of science and technology related to SFM drawn from CPF members in a broad range of forest-related fields • CPF Joint Initiatives, particularly Communicators, FLR, GFEP, and Streamlining Forest Reporting, are highly valued • CPF provides a platform for its members to build relationships, share info, and coordinate activities • Development of joint statements/professional reports on issues that impact forests, deforestation, climate change, livelihoods, sustainable development, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient resources to manage and implement CPF work • In-depth participation is limited to a few members • Not all member organization’s mandates allow full engagement in CPF or its activities. • Limited resources (financial and non-financial) for CPF coordination and CPF activities. • Resource levels of members are very different • Slow internal decision-making/bureaucratic. • CPF activities are, for most member organizations small part of their overall work • CPF set-up doesn’t take full advantage of the expertise and knowledge of non-CPF members.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse membership, including non-UN bodies/organizations, allows for attracting expertise outside the UN system/public sector 	
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is broad consensus on the crucial role that the CPF membership should play in the future of forests • CPF could play a more substantial role in advising global forest policy development by playing a prominent role in guiding the research agenda on forest-related issues • Explicitly align the CPF mandate with international conventions (like CBD) and process (like the Paris agreement). • CPF to ensure forestry is high on the political agenda at the global, regional, and sub-regional levels through events organized by members of the partnership • Room to improve technical support to member states • Develop mechanisms/networks of member organizations at the country level to provide support for the implementation of UNFF and other forest processes related activities/decisions. • CPF to take advantage of the digital platforms available for communication to create more visibility for the partnership organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current global environment requires partnership to be flexible with the ability to respond to and learn from internal and external development. • There is risk of overlap with other global platforms or mechanisms (climate change, biodiversity) where CPF members organisations coordinate and meet with member states. • Continued competition between CPF members for financial resources from the same sources • Current global crisis impact on resources of member organizations, which further limits their ability to contribute to joint initiatives • No effective mechanism to engage effectively with other knowledge-based organizations

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Summary conclusions

1. Overall, there is broad **recognition of CPF's progress**. CPF has, through its collaborative efforts, in particular its joint statements, reports, publications, and events, contributed to an increased understanding of the multi-sectoral nature of forests and relationships between forests and water, climate, biodiversity, energy, food security, poverty alleviation, and health.
2. While it is likely that CPF's activities contributed to the UNSPF and the GFGs, CPF does not have a framework to measure progress and its contribution against these higher-level objectives. As a result, there are differing perceptions of the extent to which CPF is making sufficient progress.
3. CPF's **strength lies** in its diverse expertise and is recognized individually and collectively for having strong knowledge of science and technology related to sustainable forest management.
4. CPF's **Joint Initiatives** are highly valued and provide visibility to the CPF. A number of CPF's Joint Initiatives constitute a significant vehicle for contributing to the work of the Forum and its member countries. The progress of CPF's Joint Initiatives varies strongly and often depends on resources provided by CPF donor countries.
5. What emerges from the assessment is that many of the issues captured in the key takeaways of the findings section (e.g., lack of a mechanism to evaluate and demonstrate the effectiveness, impact and added value of the collective CPF activities, joint implementation strategies and clear funding mechanism for CPF joint activities/programmes) are not new and already mentioned in earlier reports³⁶ or discussed in its meetings. For various reasons, the partnership has not been able to resolve most of these issues satisfactorily.
6. Although good progress has been made, challenges remain, affecting CPF's effectiveness.
 - a. Limited resources provided by CPF member organizations and, to a lesser extent, external funding by donor member states continue to be a significant challenge; CPF's progress and impact depend on the availability of resources to go beyond the current level.
 - b. The CPF Strategic Vision Policy Document and Workplan contributed to clarifying and better structuring CPF's approach, and ways of working but did not provide sufficient direction for CPF future work. That becomes especially clear in the CPF workplan 2021-2024, which refers to multiple policy frameworks and guiding principles making it more of a compilation of CPF member priorities and activities rather than a joint workplan based on shared objectives and priorities.
 - c. The UNFF guidance is not necessarily aligned with the CPF member organizations priorities and incentives for collaboration. UNFF is guided by the UNSPF and GFGs, while the different CPF member organizations are guided by their strategic/Action Plans and primarily accountable to their Governing Bodies. While that is not necessarily contradictory, there are different views on the extent to which their mandates keep them from engaging effectively in CPF. The same applies to the UNFF guidance to align their strategic plans and work programs with the UNSPF and GFG and promote its usage. There must be clarity about

³⁶ EI-Lakany, Hosny. 2017. Mapping and Gap Analysis of Forest-Related Activities of Members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. PROFOR, Washington D.C.

these points, preferably through practical solutions, preventing these discussions from continuing to influence the partnership's progress.

- d. CPF ways of working are perceived as formal and not flexible enough to make optimal use of the diversity of its membership.
 - e. The voluntary and informal nature of CPF is an essential element of CPFs success that, in the opinion of a majority of the members should be maintained. The informal character makes it difficult, though, to follow up on commitments.
7. Although different interviewees describe the importance of better UN inter-agency policy coordination on forest-related issues, CPF is currently not seen as the platform for higher-level policy and program coordination.
 8. There is the limited direct interaction between member countries that are interested in the work of CPF and CPF members. Especially donor countries would like to be engaged more directly and at an earlier stage of planning and developing activities, including exploring options for funding.
 9. UNFF Member states can contribute directly and indirectly to the effectiveness and impact of the CPF by influencing the UNFF resolutions guiding the CPF work to the Forum. The Forum should encourage CPF member organizations through their governing bodies to review and adjust the mandates of the CPF member organisations and establish more direct interaction between member states and the CPF.

Suitability of membership criteria

10. CPF members don't see a need to establish membership criteria. There is agreement on the criteria currently used, related to the global scope of the organization, a forest-related mandate, and having added value through expertise, networks, and thematic focus. Making criteria too prescriptive affects the ability to react on and adapt to international developments and upcoming issues.
11. While not directly within the scope of this assignment, it emerged from the assessment that there is a need for clarification of the current application process for new members. Also, different members are of the opinion that a membership review every four years, limits CPF's flexibility to respond to developments or upcoming requests.

5.2 Recommendations

12. Early in this report, we identified a series of underlying issues that are likely to influence CPF's effectiveness and impact. Recognizing the wisdom of both sides of each can help point to the way forward, 'potential resolutions' are captured in the green boxes in the figure below.

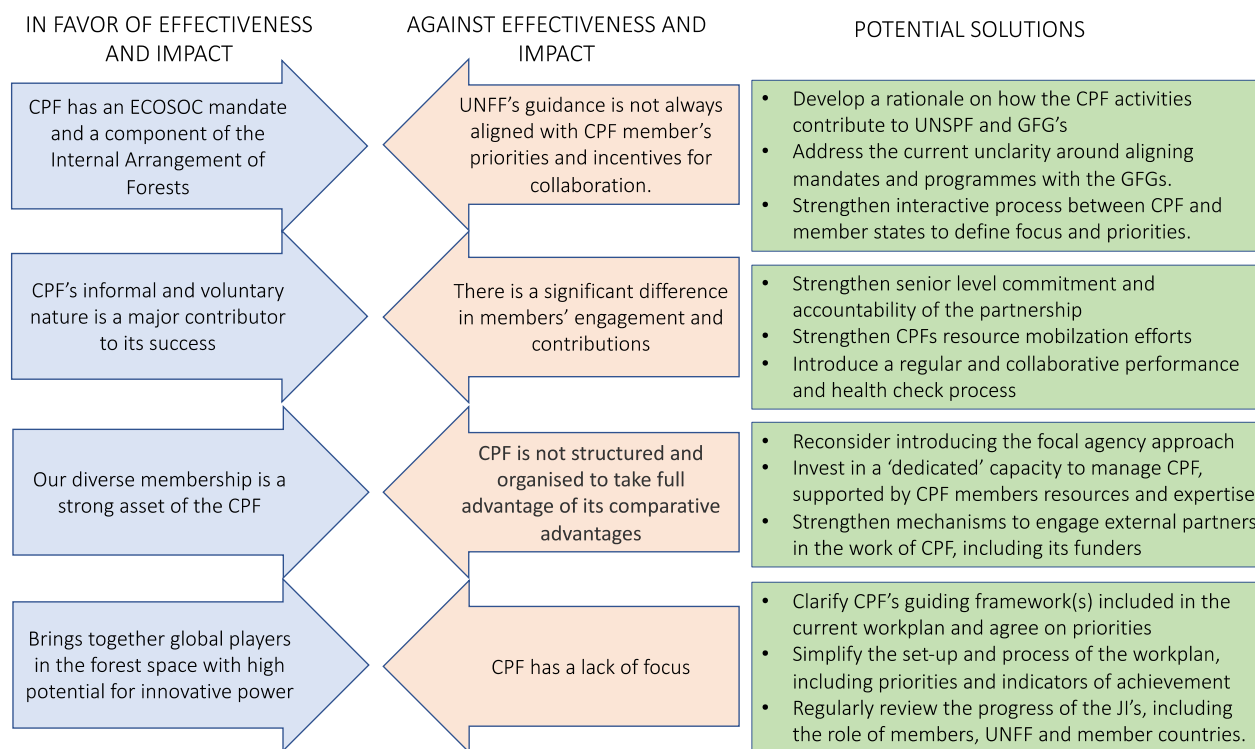


Figure 4: Potential solutions related to underlying issues

The recommendations identify opportunities for increasing the effectiveness, impact, and added value of the CPF, the suitability of establishing criteria for memberships, and how the partnership could provide greater support to the policy development work of the Forum and assist member states'

Collaborative Partnerships on Forests i

The Collaborative partnership on forests is encouraged to consider the following recommendations:

Clarifying its focus, according to its core functions, and added value, including:

- Consider developing a set of coherent CPF partnering principles and values, building on the principles of operations and guiding frameworks formulated in the CPF Strategic Vision, CPF's Policy Document and Work Plan. This will help shift the focus from individual activities to how working together creates additional value, with the overall goal of contribute to the GFGs. There are different examples of global partnerships that successfully developed and implemented such partnering principles.
- In line with that, simplify the set-up and the structure of the workplan to achieve a focused and comprehensive plan that revolves around the UNSPF, the GFGs and other globally agreed forest goals and provides a framework for CPF member activities, with clear priorities, actions undertaken by the members, joint activities, resources, outputs, and indicators of achievement.

-
16. Reconsider and adjust the focal agency mechanism. In addition to CPF's current activity-based approach, consider organizing around selected thematic priorities, related to the GFGs, with an agreed subset of CPF membership coordinating and implementing activities.

Broadening the resource base of the CPF

17. Building on the experience from the donor meetings and the recent Friends of the CPF meeting, strengthen its donor coordination mechanisms and introduce a structured approach to attract funding for the CPF and its related activities. CPF is encouraged to engage with potential donors early in formulating activities and follow up regularly to make a strong case for funding. This includes reviewing the mechanisms to externally fund the activities of the CPF by donor countries.
18. Develop a ToR to facilitate CPF secondments to the CPF Secretariat (UNFF) and/or making available dedicated staff time to the CPF.

Strengthen (senior level) commitment of the CPF members and accountability of the partnership:

19. As an alternative to an MoU type of document, CPF should consider using regular Head of Agencies meetings to review the progress, address challenges, align expectations, and identify member's contributions to the partnership and its planned activities. This helps to 'unpack' terms like members commitments, shared responsibility, accountability, and effectiveness.

Invest in stimulating collaborative ways of working and strong relationships

19. Invest the time to ensure the relationship between CPF members remains healthy, mutual expectations are managed, and actions are taken when things don't work as expected. Considering the limited resources, this could be done in conjunction with already planned CPF meetings, including:
 - a. To support a regular informal interaction and collaborative learning process, CPF should consider introducing regular 'health checks' of CPF and its Joint Initiatives. Consider using a 'partnership health check' tool for this process (for instance, the tools included in the UN SDG Partnership Guidebook) to identify what works well and what should be done differently, and how this could be achieved and supported by all members.
 - b. Undertake a regular assessment of completed JIs to identify challenges and successes and document lessons learned to share with the Forum, member states, and other stakeholders. This assessment could also include the contributions of the JIs to the GFGs.
20. The systematic involvement of major groups in CPF work is very modest so far. In addition, although some CPF member organizations engage with major groups and other stakeholders, it is important that the CPF as a group should strengthen its work with the major groups and other stakeholders.

Suitability of criteria of membership

21. CPF could consider developing a transparent and unambiguous application process, considering different options such as by invitation, and a more rolling application process, including its pros and cons, resource implications etc.
22. Concerning recommendations 14 to 21, this report does not make specific recommendations about the responsibilities of the CPF members, the CPF Chair, and UNFFS. At this stage it seems essential that the conclusions and recommendations are carefully considered by the

Partnership and, where possible, further specified before it can be indicated who do what to progress them.

United Nations Forum on Forests

23. The Forum may wish to invite CPF members and their governing bodies to consider the following:

- a. Clarify the issues related to the alignment of mandates and programmes of work with the UNSFP and the GFGs. Explore a practical way forward on how the CPF member organizations can demonstrate their alignment with GFGs. One suggestion is that CPF members could agree referring to their collaboration with the CPF in their reports and documents to their respective Governing Bodies or, in the case of Secretariats, its Member States, including the recommendation to allocate resources to the joint activities. It should be noted that CPF should also consider ways to align their mandate with other forest related processes.
- b. Strengthening engagement at the regional and sub-regional levels to ensure forestry is high on the political agenda at these levels and promote the implementation of UNSPF and UNFI.
- c. Provide increased support to the CPF secretariat (UNFFS) to support its work, including its work on major groups and the GFFFN.

Member states

Member states are encouraged to:

23. Member states are encouraged to

- a. Enhance coordination in capitals between UNFF focal points and CPF member organizations that have a presence at the regional, sub-regional, and country level in promoting the implementation of the UNSPF, GFGs.
- b. To actively participate in CPF events, in particular, strengthening its engagement at the national level and the promotion of the IDF and its related activities. Additionally, member states should seek use the IDF as a platform for promoting the UNSPF, GFGs and the forest related goals of the SDGs.
- c. Take advantage of the GFFFN and capacity building and support provided to access finance in support of SFM and related activities.

The medium and longer-term

While reviewing if the partnership structure and set-up are still 'fit-for-purpose,' it became clear that there are different views on the purpose and added value of CPF and related to that, what this means for the future direction of CPFs work. Reflection varied from implementing adjustments to overcoming the main challenges of the current set-up to having a more fundamental discussion about CPFs future role and added value in response to the rapidly changing developments. The consultants believe that after twenty years of successful existence, as every partnership with its ups and down, it is the right moment to consider its way forward critically.

Being intentional about the partnership's primary role(s), or in other words, the mechanisms through which the partnership creates additional value, helps to provide focus and expand partnership effectiveness. Different value-creation mechanism requires different levels of engagement, senior-level commitment, accountability, and resources. For instance, building on CPFs main strength, raising the knowledge, expertise, and capacity related to Sustainable Forest Management may require a lower level of engagement and senior management commitment than

aligning member organizations' mandates, policies, and work programs. At the same, strengthening knowledge exchange and learning between CPF members, non-members and member states will most likely not be possible with the current resources.

Finally, in exploring its way forward, CPF could consider different options, besides implementing improvements to the current partnership as formulated above. One option would be developing towards a platform type of collaboration with a focus on facilitating joint action; creating different opportunities (value propositions) for its members and non-members to interact, exchange, and work together in changing coalitions on specific issues or themes.

Annex A Assessment C: Actions in preparation for the midterm review, in 2024, of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests

C. Actions related to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

1. Assess the progress made by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in carrying out its functions towards the objectives of the international arrangement on forests, as defined in Council resolution 2015/33.
2. Assess the effectiveness, impact and added value of the activities of the Partnership as outlined in its workplan, including with regard to its resources; output delivery; joint initiatives, including how the Forum can provide input thereto; and recurrent activities to foster the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the achievement of the global forest goals and the Sustainable Development Goals.
3. Consider the suitability of establishing criteria for membership in the Partnership.
4. Assess how the Partnership could provide greater support to the policy development work of the Forum and assist countries in strengthening their implementation of the strategic plan, Forum resolutions and decisions on the ground, including the means to further benefit from the capacities of other international and regional stakeholders and partners.
5. Assess the efficacy of internal communications within the Partnership to promote mutual synergies, reduce duplication and enhance the Partnership's communications and outreach externally to promote awareness-raising of the multiple benefits of forests and raise the visibility of the strategic plan and the global forest goals within other forest-related processes.
6. To carry out the above-mentioned tasks, an independent study could be carried out, in consultation with the Partnership and Forum members. The results of the study should be presented at an intersessional meeting to be organized by the Partnership (the organization-led initiative) for discussion, with a view to making proposals regarding the Partnership to the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group referred to in paragraph 30 of the present resolution.

Annex B Overview of most relevant recent developments in the forest sector

- **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030):** Through UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/73/284 invited UN Environment Program (UNEP) and the FAO to lead in the implementation of the UN Decade. The UN Decade seeks the protection and restoration of ecosystems globally for the benefits of people and nature. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is based on strong and transparent partnership structure that has clear roles and responsibilities. It is recognised that the combined impact of thousands of initiatives – from high level policy reforms to local grassroots projects can put the world back on a sustainable track. The UN Decade provides partnership options that enables individuals and organizations within and outside of the UN System to leverage their unique skills and resources to contribute to ecosystem restoration. A framework developed under the UN Decade’s guiding strategy has eight partnership categories
- **The Paris Agreement:** Adopted in on 12th December 2015 by 196 Parties at COP21 and entered into force on 4th November 2016 and its goal is to limit global warming well below 2 but preferably 1.5degrees Celsius. Countries have submitted their nationally determined contributions and a framework for financial, technical, and capacity building to support countries in need.
- **UNFCCC 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26),** can be seen as a turning point, with commitments and pledges, including the Glasgow leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use, signed by 145 countries to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 and backed by public funds for forest conservation and a global roadmap to make 75% of forest commodity supply chains sustainable.
- **UNFCCC Sharm El-Sheikh Climate Change Conference(COP26)** (6-20 November 2022) where countries agreed to recognise the need for finance to respond to “loss and damage” associated with the adverse effects of climate change and to establish a fund and the required funding arrangements and for which details would be worked out over next year.
- **CBD UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15), Montreal,** (3-19 December 2022), where on 19 December 2022 the parties adopted the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework (GBF) that seeks to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. The GBF a successor to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets set in 2010, has four long term goals and twenty-three action oriented global targets to be achieved by 2030³⁷. Through the GBF, biodiversity policy in the coming years will be guided to attain the overarching goals and the set of targets up to 2030. The GBD Framework seeks to protect at least 30% of terrestrial, inland water, costal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed, while recognizing “indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable”. All the four goals and 23 targets of the framework are linked to forests, particularly targets, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10,16, 18, 19, 20 and 21.
- **Post COVID-19,** global discussions on the role of forests on sustainability, climate, and biodiversity is receiving attention given the multi-sectoral nature of forests. Forests have the potential to promote a transition to building a green, healthy, and resilient future and Nature-based Solutions (NbS) can deliver enormous socio-economic benefits. Nature-based

³⁷ Global Biodiversity Framework: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://prod.drupal.www.infra.cbd.int/sites/default/files/2022-12/221222-CBD-PressRelease-COP15-Final.pdf

solutions (NbS) are actions taken to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems while simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits.

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Annex C Questionnaire related to the Assessment of the CPF (Questions C1 to C4)

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 Secretariat at: unff@un.org, with copy to yan.lang@un.org by 30 September 2022.

***Name of the Respondent: _____

Name of country/organization: _____

E-mail: _____

C. Questions related to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

Question C-1: Since 2015 what is your assessment of the extent of progress on CPF's contribution to the IAF objectives as defined in ECOSOC resolution 2015/33?

Question C-2: In the table below kindly indicate your assessment of the effectiveness, impact and add-ed value of the activities, in particular, Joint Initiatives of the CPF as outlined in its workplan (2017-2020).

Item	Key CPF activities as outlined in its 2017-2020 Workplan	In your view what has been the effectiveness of CPF in the following areas (please explain)	In your view what has been the Impact and value-added of the CPF in the following areas (please explain)
1	Contributions to UNFF documents & sessions		
2	Streamlining forest reporting		
3	Global Forest Expert Panel		
4	Global Forest Information Service		
5	CPF meetings, side events & OLI		
7	CPF Communicators network		
8	Forest Landscape Restoration		
10	Forest Finance Facilitation		

.Question C-3: The CPF Policy Document recognises the need for periodic review of its membership given the evolving nature of its mandate. In your view what should be:

- a) the key elements in setting criteria for membership of the CPF (take into account CPF rules of procedure as annexed to the CPF policy document)
- b) the frequency for review of the criteria (e.g., below 5 years; 6-10 years; etc.)
- c) the process for triggering a review of the CPF membership

Question C-4: In your view, how can the CPF provide greater support for policy development and implementation of UNFF resolutions/decisions and in particular assist countries in the implementation of the UNSPF.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION

Annex D : Assessment of most relevant Joint Initiatives

i. CPF Communicators' Network and related activities (IDF and Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award)

These recurrent communication activities of the CPF have emerged as a strong brand for the CPF and forests generally, particularly, its Wangari Maathai Award³⁸ and the International Day of Forests (IDF). The Communicators Network also recommends the annual theme for the celebrations of the IDF held annually on 21st March and undertakes related communication/awareness creation activities. The consultants' assessment of the IDF activities at the global level and its linkage to celebrations at the national level provides an opportunity for implementing the communication related activities of the Forum and the CPF at the country level. This goes a long way to enhance the profile of forests. FAO and UNFFS take leadership in the implementation of both the Wangari Maathai Award and IDF and this enhances the promotion of the UNSPF, GFGs and the forest related targets of the SDGs, including at the country level. The Wangari Maathai Award and the IDF are two key activities of the CPF that have the potential to create and maximize visibility for the CPF and provide an opportunity for promoting the UNSPF, GFGs and the forest-related SDGs.

The annual themes of IDF are very much linked and responsive to emerging issues and the interlinkages between forests and other sectors. This provides opportunities for addressing emerging issues and a platform for creating awareness on these emerging issues at the global, regional, and national levels.

Assessment of effectiveness

In respect of the effectiveness of CPF Communicators Network and its related activities, in particular its flagship activities (IDF & Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award) both developed and developing countries' responses to the survey show that the Communicators' Network has been effective in organizing IDF since 2015 and has played a key role in the determination of the themes and communication products for the IDF. The consultants take note of messages and events organized and assess these as being effective in promoting the role of forests, its multiple benefits, sharing best practices related to sustainable forest management (SFM) and contributing to achieving the goals set out in the UNSPF, GFGs and the Agenda 2030 SDGs. These JIs implemented through the CPF Communicators' Network is effective and appreciated by member countries, CPF member organizations, MGs, and other stakeholders. For instance, the IDF which raises awareness of the importance of all types of forests, promotes the organization of events/activities at the local, national, and international levels in commemoration of the IDF. The network of communicators makes it possible for messages on IDF and forests, those of the UNPSF, GFGs and SDGs to reach the local/community levels through events and activities of the Communicators Network. However, a challenge to the effectiveness of the Communicators Network could be the different CPF members, particularly FAO and UNFFS each having dedicated websites on the IDF. It is important that going forward, there is the need to move towards branding a CPF website for the IDF and other related communications material is owned by the CPF rather than the individual CPF members organizations as currently reflected in the FAO IDF website and the UNDESA/UNFFS websites. Also, for effective communication and avoidance of confusion on CPF and its activities CPF website should be integrated, and links made to the individual CPF member organization websites and vice

³⁸ The Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award recognizes outstanding contributions to the preservation, restoration, and sustainable management of forests and raises awareness of the key role that forests play in supporting local communities, rural livelihoods, women, and the environment.

versa to ensure consistency of messages. Currently, FAO, UNFFS/UNDESA, UNEP, IUFRO, GEF, ITTO, CIFOR, etc. have websites in relation to the CPF with different logos, messages, and structure.

Assessment of impact and value-added

These two recurrent JIs under the Communicators Network, namely the IDF and Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award have been instrumental in increasing the visibility of the work of CPF and UNFF, the GFGs and the UN Strategic Plan for Forests. These two JIs have also raised the profile of forests and its related issues globally and attracted the attention at the highest political level for forests including its inclusion in the SDGs. A respondent from a developed country indicated that The Communicators Network activity in 2018 on “Working across sectors to halt deforestation and increase forest area: From aspiration to action” was able to convene key actors that may otherwise have worked in silos. However, some CPF members would like to see much stronger engagement and involvement in the work of these JIs of the Communicators Network, especially at the initial stages of developing programmes/events/JI’s.

ii. Streamlining forest-related reporting

This is an activity that was started in 2002 through guidance from the Forum for the CPF Task Force to work towards reducing the forest-related reporting burden on member countries. As at that time countries reported to various bodies on progress in the implementation of agreed actions. For example, different reports were made to FAO, UNECE, EUROSTAT, ITTO, UNCCD, CSD, CBD, UNFCCC, etc. The request for reports were usually similar but in different reporting formats. It was expected that the harmonisation of reporting among the agencies would result in a reduction in the reporting requirements and hence a reduction in the reporting burden. This could be achieved through the reduction and streamlining reporting requests, synchronising reporting cycles and harmonising data collection methods by the forest related organizations. Streamlining forest reporting seeks to improve the accuracy and consistency and comparability of forest data across countries. This can assist and provide support for tracking the progress made on sustainable management of all types of forests.

Several respondents to the survey and persons interviewed see this activity as major achievement of the CPF, particularly through activities and effort of UNFFS and FAO. The consultant’s assessment of reports to the Forum, interviews and survey responses shows that CPF has played an important role in simplifying forest reporting over the years through its joint questionnaire that allows member countries in different processes to report to several agencies with the same form. Additionally, coordination with FAO in its FRA is reported to have significantly reduced the reporting burden of Member countries.

Also through this process, CPF IN 2016 organised and OLI to promote discussions on a “common and concise set of global forest indicators supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UNSPF of the International Arrangement on Forests. The OLI among other sort to:

- “propose a common and concise set of global indicators for monitoring progress in achieving the forest-related targets of the SDGs and relevant goals and targets of other forest-related global processes;
- provide inputs to the development of a proposal on cycle and format for reporting

-
- provide inputs and guidance to the process of developing FRA 2020 in order to ensure its continued relevance as a global source of forest information³⁹.”

In 2019 under this JI an expert workshop on streamlining forest-related reporting was held in Rome from 22-24 October, The workshop took stock of progress made in the Global Core Set of forest indicators and further improved the methodology and data availability of selected indicators.

Assessment of Effectiveness

The CPF has contributed, particularly with the UNFF Secretariat, ITTO and FAO, to the simplification of reporting formats, which has resulted in an increasing number of countries submitting their voluntary reports to the Forum although this is still low compared to membership of the Forum.

Regards the impact of this JI, CPF's input into the voluntary national reports has created a comprehensive template focused on its GFGs. The coordination with FAO and its work on FRA has prevented overlaps with reduced reporting burden on Members. Going forward the CPF can continue to play an important role in simplifying forest reporting.

The various expert group meetings, FRA Expert consultations, training activities and capacity building towards reporting has improved the quality and capacity for reporting on forest related activities. A respondent from a developing country has indicated that “they have even managed to undertake our country's forest resource assessment due to improved capacity in the country”. A respondent from a developed country rated this JI as relatively effective and had found the framework for reporting to have been simplified through coordination with FRA and the development of the Global Core Set (GCS) of forest-related indicators. However, from the assessment and interviews member countries would still want to see further simplification of the format and for CPF to continue its work on the GCS.

Assessment of Impact and value added

The Forest Resource Assessment process has been at the core of FAO processes and has enhanced the quality of reporting by member countries while reducing the reporting burden. CPF can continue to play an important role in the simplification of forest reporting. A developed country respondent sums the impact and value added as “CPF input into the voluntary national reports has created a comprehensive template focused on its GFGs and qualitative data niche. The coordination with FAO has prevented overlap with existing reporting and reduced reporting burden on Members.” The streamlining of the reporting will also facilitate the assessment of progress made in the implementation of the UNSPF and meeting the GFGs and the SDGs.

iii. Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR)

This JI's activities are consistent with CPF's mission to restore degraded and deforested lands. CPF approved this JI in 2017 and developed it into a GEF supported project “Fostering Partnership to build coherence and support for Forest Landscape Restoration”. The project was approved by GEF in 2018. The activities are key in addressing the Secretary-General's initiative to turn the tide on deforestation and in the implementation of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The project was funded through a GEF Project Grant of USD 625,000 and co-financing of USD 981,850. This project was global in scope and is implemented by IUCN. Eleven CPF member organizations are the Executing Agencies. The project was implemented from July 2018 to May 2022 and the final report was presented in September 2022 and therefore considered closed.

³⁹ [Organization-Led Initiative on Development of Global Forest Indicators \(fao.org\)](https://www.fao.org/organization-led-initiative-on-development-of-global-forest-indicators/)

The project objective is “To enhance synergies in the global FLR process and assist countries and stakeholders to scale up and strengthen implementation of FLR at national and sub-national levels”. The project supported the development and dissemination of a range of knowledge products and tools, undertook baseline studies to support the development of FLR projects. The project developed several papers and organized events to create awareness and understanding on FLR and related activities including investment opportunities in this regard. Some key achievements of the project included:

- Organized a digital Global Landscape Forum on “Nature-based Solutions, how restoration Can Support a Healthy Climate, Economy, and Planet to increase understanding on the contribution of restoration in addressing climate change, job creation and reducing threats to biodiversity. Viewers from 100 countries participated in the live-streamed event.
- Publication of Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics to serve as an international level reference document for development and improvement of national and sub-national guidelines on FLR in the tropics. The lead agency was the ITTO.
- Development and dissemination of FAO guide on “Developing bankable business plans: a learning guide for forest producers and their organizations. This targeted SMSE to facilitate their access to private investments and finance for sustainable forest-based businesses. The model is being piloted with a tree grower association in Kenya.
- UNFF supported the Government of Thailand in developing and adopting a national forest financing strategy and similar activity with the Government of Guinea Bissau
- UNFF supported Governments of Thailand and Guinea Bissau in developing 2 GEF project proposals on FLR.
- ITTO and IUFRO jointly developed for FLR learning modules.

IICRAF presented the workshop Enhancing Knowledge and Collaboration for Restoration in Kenya, in Kisumu Kenya July 30-31, 2019. The workshop was attended by stakeholders from 18 government and leading NGO institutions in Kenya and facilitated the enhancement of collaboration and knowledge sharing on FLR experiences in Kenya.

Assessment of effectiveness

This JI/Project was effective in providing a means for direct collaboration among CPF member organization in the creation of FLR-linked knowledge products and events. This may not have happened but for the GEF sponsored FLR project. Activities where joint efforts involving two or more CPF members were involved resulted in the cross collaboration. The project evaluation report of this JI rated the overall development and implementation as Satisfactory. The project was evaluated as effective in providing a means of direct collaboration among CPF members in the creation of FLR-Linked knowledge products and events.⁴⁰ Some areas of effectiveness included:

- Creating awareness on FLR through several initiatives and events on FLR e.g., ITTO-led project on “Voluntary guidelines for the design and implementation of successful FLR initiatives in the tropics”

⁴⁰ See GEF Monitoring Report 2021 for a description of the methodology and meaning of PIR ratings: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/EN_GEF.C.61.03_The_GEF_Monitoring_Report_2021.pdf

-
- Knowledge sharing workshop on “best practices for implementing FLR that was held in South-East Asia”
 - Development of online production course on FLR for 30 young professionals from Latin American countries (Development of 4 FLR learning module on FLR). This is produced with the collaborative work in partnership with the ITTO.

Some key challenges to the project implementation and effectiveness are:

- The large number of executing agencies required to implement the project and this provided challenges in respect to the different mandates and legal requirements of the different CPF member organizations. This slowed down the implementation and therefore delays in the time for project completion.
- Respondents and persons interviewed on the CPF Joint Initiatives have indicated they find Forest Landscape Restoration related activities effective since it shows tangible outcomes on the ground in beneficiary/member countries. From the survey responses and interviews the consultant assess that FLR is one of the interventions that can make a difference on the ground at the regional, sub-regional and national levels. From the responses submitted, it is noted that developed countries assess the FLR JI as having made immense achievements regards work on the ground. However, the developing countries on the other hand see it as a means of strengthening their capacity and assisting such countries to develop projects for approval by GEF and subsequent implementation.

Assessment of impact and added value

A respondent summed up the impact and value added as “The activities are key in addressing the Secretary-General’s initiative to turn the tide and in the implementation of the UN Decade on Ecosystem restoration, two signature programmes of the current period.” Forest landscape restoration (FLR) has made a significant number of positive impacts and value-added benefits. For the JI implemented through the project the following are the positive impacts and value-added:

- Promotes the sharing of knowledge and expertise through the diverse experience of CPF member organizations and enhancing communication and sharing lessons learned with the different stakeholder groups

Good collaboration in pursuing the outputs of the initiative/project though funding was uneven amongst CPF members

The initiative contributed to enhancing synergies in the global FLR process.

The Global Forest Expert Panel (GFEP)

The IUFRO led GFEP initiative is a science-policy mechanism that effectively promotes informed decision-making. It builds on the political recognition provided by the United Nations Forum on Forests (ECOSOC Resolution 2006/49) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD Decision IX/16). Figure A1 provides a schematic diagram of the GFEP programme.

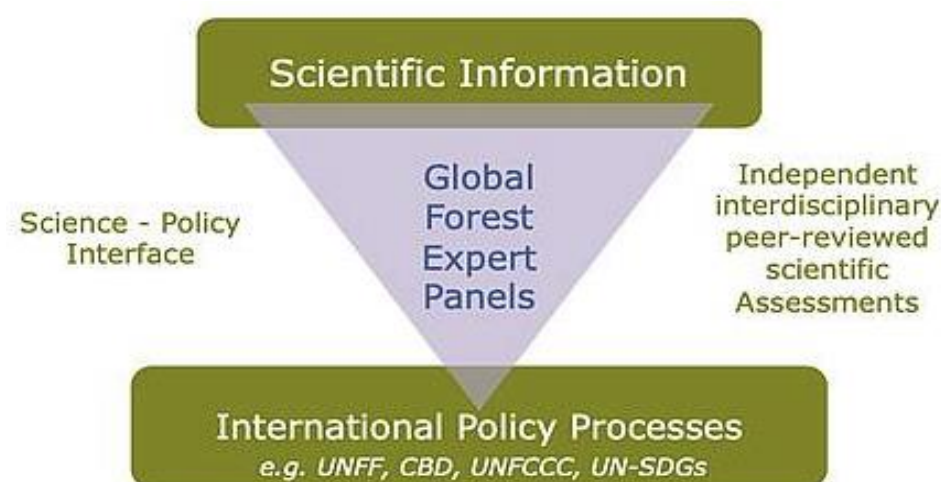


Figure A1 The GFEP Programme

Source: IUFRO

Since the establishment of the GFEP Programme seven thematic scientific GFEP assessments have been completed, all addressing most relevant forest related topics of the sustainable development agenda

Table A1 GFEP Assessments

Year	Thematic Report
2009	Adaptation of Forests and People to Climate Change
2011	International Forest Governance
2012	Biodiversity, Forest Management, and REDD+
2015	Forests and Food Security
2016	Illegal Timber Trade
2018	Forests and Water
2020	Forests and Poverty

The GFEP eighth assessment on Forests and Human Health is informed by the outbreak of COVID-19 and other zoonotic diseases. It is currently being undertaken and expected to be published in 2023. It is worth noting that in the assessment period four GFEP assessments have been undertaken as against three that were undertaken before 2015.

The GFEP initiative has regularly shared scientific information and expertise with member countries and CPF members through UNFF sessions and other high-level briefings and meetings, including HLPF. CPF members have provided valuable input to the background consultations and scoping

meetings for all GFEP reports. The CPF member organizations also endorse the topic and terms of reference of each GFEP assessment. GFEP has supported the development of several tools and frameworks to assist countries assess the status and trends of their forests as well as track progress towards sustainable forest management.

Assessment of Effectiveness

All the GFEP global reports have received considerable media uptake and have had significant impact on international forest policies. The effectiveness of the GFEP can be seen in the various initiatives and policy decisions that have been influenced by its work in the different conventions and fora. The outcomes of GFEP assessments have served as background information for discussions, briefing documents for delegations and negotiators in forest related political processes, as well as guidance for strategic policy development (including for GEF and national governments). The comprehensive interdisciplinary GFEP reports successfully support member countries and stakeholders in making informed science-based decisions and identifying emerging issues related to forests. GFEP provides a mechanism for effectively linking the information requirements of intergovernmental processes related to forests and trees with the best existing scientific expertise.

Assessment of Impact and value-added

With the largest global network of researchers in forestry and related disciplines, CPF member organizations, collectively have a huge advantage in accessing and sharing the latest and most comprehensive knowledge on forests. The science-policy interface is important to many UNFF members countries, and GFEP helps member countries make science-based decisions in support of policy development and in identifying emerging issues on forests.

GFEP through its reporting and peer review of reports and documents has made significant contributions to the expert panels on forests and food security, illegal timber trade and forests and water linkages. An example of value-added stated by a respondent is the GFEP publication titled, "Forests, Trees and the Eradication of Poverty: Potential and Limitations" published by IUFRO and funded by Germany, Finland, Austria, and the United States. The respondent goes further to report that "This was cited by the CITES Secretariat in their decision-making and background documents"

The value added by GFEP is its ability to provide unbiased, science-based advice on forests and their role in the global environment. GFEPs expertise and recommendations have helped inform policy decisions and support for sustainable management of all types of forests at the global level. Developing countries in their response generally acknowledge the impact of GFEP and appreciate value created in its contribution to Expert Group meetings on key and emerging issues in the forest sector as well as the technical support and assistance provided through expert meetings and workshops. This is important for capacity building in member countries, with major groups and other stakeholders. This enables the different groups to engage more effectively and to be better informed when they engage in discussions and work of the Forum.

i. Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN)

The **GFFFN is covered under Assessment D** and details on the functioning of the GFFFN should refer to the report of Assessment D. Established in 2015 as part of the guidance provided to the Forum under ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33 to facilitate access to and effective use of forest finance, share data and best practices in forest finance, and contribute to the GFGs and UNSPF 2017-2030. The GFFFN provides special dispensation to the needs and circumstances of Africa, least developed countries, and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as well as countries in transition, in accessing

finance. The functions of the GFFFN were modified in 2017 with the adoption of the UNSPF. GFFFN core functions were also modified as follows:

- The Facilitation of access to financial resources was expanded to all sources.
- The GFFFN would also contribute to the achievement of the Global Forest Goals and targets as well as priorities contained in the Forum's Quadrennial Programme of Work.

This JI is reported by some member countries to have played a positive role in providing financing information. Despite this positive role there is the suggestion from member countries that it can assume a much larger role in facilitating access of developing countries to financial resources.

Some member countries view CPF developments on forest finance facilitation as a prominent achievement of CPF joint initiatives. Building upon FAO's SFM toolkit, the CPF provides key data and information for the GFFFN Clearinghouse databases providing valuable information requested by member countries. For instance, the support provided to Jamaica allowed it to leverage financing options. CPF members provide valuable information and identifying data sources and financing flows for Phase II of the GFFFN database. In the reporting period CPF members have assisted some 13 countries in accessing GFFFN resources to support forestry related projects in their countries

Assessment of Effectiveness

GFFFN has been effective in providing information on financing sources. Both developed and developing countries both see the GFFFN as having made a positive impact in providing information on financing. The GFFFN has at the national level assisted 13 countries to mobilise resources from different sources. GFFFN has organised training workshops and has trained over 300 government personnel, academia and CSO in formulating project proposals on SFM. However, despite the recognition of the success of the GFFFN, member countries would like to see an increase in the awareness of the GFFFN, particularly at the regional and national levels.

Assessment of Impact and value added

CPF members such as the World Bank, GEF and UNDP are acting as financial intermediaries and providing support to member countries given their knowledge of financing information and requirements. CPF members are now able to access funding through the work of the GFFFN. Member countries are now able to develop bankable projects in the forest sector. Member countries also appreciate the technical assistance provided by the CPF in developing projects and accessing funding.

Annex E List of Interviewees

A. List of CPF Members interviewed

Organization	Name of Interviewee	Contact
CBD	Jamal Annagylyjov	jamal.annagylyjova@cbd.int
CIFOR	Robert Nasi	
CITES	Maria Isabel Camare	Isabel.camarena@cites.org
FAO	Tiina Vähänen	Tina.vahanen@fao.org
FAO	Malgorzata Buszko-Briggs	Malgorzata.buszkobriggs@fao.org
GEF	Pascal Martinez	pmartinez2@thegef.org
ITTO	Sheam Satkuru	satkuru@itto.int
IUFRO	Alexander Buck and Andre Puret	buck@iufro.org
UNDP	Tim Scott	tim.scot@undp.org
UNEP	Mario Boccucci	Mario.Boccucci@un-redd.org
UNFCCC	Jenny Wong	jwong@unfccc.int
UNFFS	Hossein Moeini-Meybodi	Moeini-meybodi@un.org
UNFFS	Ryo Nakamura	nakamura@un.org

B. List of Forum members interviewed:

Country/Group	Name of Interviewee	Contact
Australia	Katie Stokes	Katie.stokes@agriculture.gov.au
Canada	Maureen Whelan	Maureen.whelan@nrca-nrcan.gc.ca
Eswatini		
Finland	Teema Seppa	Teemu.seppa@gov.fi
Japan	Naoki Hayasaka	naoki_hayasaka020@maff.go.jp
Germany	Matthias Schwoerer	Matthias.schwoer@bmel.bund.de
Netherlands	Rob Busink	r.l.busink@minlnv.nl
Russia	Maria Sokolenko	mashchic@mail.ru
Senegal		
Slovakia	Boris Greguska	Boris.greguska@land.gov.sk
Sweden	Mia Crawford	mia.crawford@lrf.se
Uganda		
United States of America	Catherine Karr-Colque Alica Grimes Aysha Ghadiali	karr-colqueci@state.gov agrimes@usaid.gov Aysha.Ghadiali@usda.gov

C. List of Major Groups and other stakeholders

Major Group/Other stakeholder	Name	Contact
Scientific and Technological community	Joseph Cobbinah	joecobbinah@ymail.com
Children and Youth	Joshua E. Amaitum	Joshua.amaitum@ifsa.net
International Forest Policy Consultant	Hosny El-Lakany,	

Annex F A SWOT Analysis of the CPF

The SWOT analysis in this annex presents details of the analysis used in developing the SWOT Analysis Table (Table 5) on CPF to identify gaps, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats by reviewing CPF Policy documents, CPF Strategic Plan 2030 and other relevant documents/reports. The SWOT Analysis also considered responses from the survey and interviews that were held with UNFF Focal Points, CPF member organisations and other stakeholders.

The interviews enhanced the SWOT analysis and facilitated the identification of issues that could potentially impact on the CPF, its partnership and its continued contribution to the work Forum.

Strengths

Following the SWOT Analysis undertaken, the consultants assessed that CPF strengths lie in the partnership of 15 organisations with diverse expertise in different aspects related to forests, agriculture, climate, development, and the environment. CPF consist of the leading global agencies on forest related issues. CPF is recognised individually and collectively to have strong knowledge of science and technology related to sustainable forest management. This is supported by outcomes of interviews with national focal points and, CPF member organisation personnel. In this regard CPF is assessed to be well positioned to exchange and disseminate knowledge across disciplines. For instance, CPF generally issues statements on emerging issues. In 2021 the CPF published a joint statement on “Challenges and Opportunities in Turning the Tide on deforestation. This Joint Statement of the CPF presents sound scientific data around the status of deforestation and the multidimensional services provided by forests”. During COVID-19 period CPF issued a Joint statement on “Forests Towards Sustainability: forest solutions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic” Several of CPF members also individually published policy briefs and reports/articles on COVID-19 in line with their mandates. For instance, individual CPF members published several articles on COVID-19 and Forests. Examples of such publications/articles include (i) FAO: “Impacts of COVID-19 on wood value chains and Forest sector response: Results from a global survey 2020”. (ii) UNEP Statement on COVID-19 and (iii) CITES: CITES Secretariats ‘s statement in relation to COVID-19, etc. Through the development of Joint Statements, professional reports, etc. on issues that impact on forests, climate change, livelihoods, sustainable development and the interlinkages between forests and different sectors, the CPF draws attention to the role and contribution of forests. CPF also contributes to discussions in other forest related processes such as UNFCCC, CBD, etc.

However, going forward, it might be useful for CPF members to keep a balance between its joint statements and individual statements by their respective organisation and ensure that the joint statements are also strongly promoted by links to their individual websites and CPF website using appropriate communication tools and outlets.

The CPF Joint Initiatives, are a major delivery mechanism for CPF and important vehicles for strengthening collaboration within and beyond the Partnership while mobilizing political technical and financial support. The JIs particularly the Forest Landscape restoration (FLR), Global Forest Expert Panel (GFEP), Communicators Network, Streamlining forest-related reporting, Sustainable Wood for Sustainable World, etc. Other strengths of the CPF as captured from the survey and interviews with member countries, key informants and other stakeholders are:

- Preparing relevant policy and background documents for the work of the Forum
- Provision of scientific and technical advice to the Forum
- Support for the implementation of the activities of the Forum

-
- Undertaking significant strategic and analytical work to inform the Forum on policy options.

The CPF through its composition generally provides leadership in other forest related global processes such as in fora of UNFCCC, UNEP, ITTO, etc.

CPF through the GFFFN provides information on sources of funding on forest related activities and support member states, particularly developing countries in developing countries in developing national forest financing strategies and as a clearing house on existing and new financing of forest related activities.

Weakness

In the consultant's assessment through the review of reports, interviews, and responses from survey that in-depth participation in activities of CPF is limited to a few members. There is also limited direct interaction between member countries with interest in the work of CPF. National Focal Points interviewed indicate they would like to be engaged in an earlier stage of planning and development of the CPF activities, including access to information on funding of CPF activities to support its work.

Although collaboration between FAO and UNFF is strong that does not generally seem to be the case with other CPF members. This is evident when one reviews the JIs for lead and collaborating agencies. It is likely that there could be challenges for some member organisations due to their respective mandates that does not allow them to be fully engaged in the activities of the CPF. Also, resources (financial and human resources) limit the level of CPF coordination and participation in the CPF work/activities. Financial resource levels and needs of CPF member organisations vary making it difficult for some members to allocate or contribute funds to the CPF events and activities given the demand on their own resource needs.

Generally, from the interviews some personnel from the CPF member organisations, recall with nostalgia of the earlier days when CPF member organisations seconded staff to the UNFFS to cater for the human resource needs of the organisation. The UNFFS is still lean on staff but with heavier responsibilities from the Forum through its decisions, resolutions, and guidance.

There is also evidence from the interviews held with some staff of CPF member organisations and collaborated by minutes of CPF meetings that there is an increasing lower-level participation in CPF meetings. This slows down decision making and sometimes the quality of participation in the CPF meetings.

At the country level there is low visibility of CPF and its activities. Member countries, and major groups see CPF events as those of the member organisations rather than that of the CPF. There is a perceived weakness in the internal communication with members of the CPF.

A respondent stated that CPFs weakness lies in the lack of engagement at the grassroots level, in particular forest communities, women, and indigenous groups. These groups require support but not usually considered in the implementation of CPF activities and therefore presents a gap in the work of the CPF. The consultants acknowledge this challenge but of the view that this could be attributed to the availability of resources and the lack of its presence at the regional, sub-regional and national levels. Obviously, CPF does not have structures or networks in place at the local level and therefore not able to provide support services to member countries, major groups, and key stakeholders on the ground in the respective member countries. CPF could consider building on the presence of FAO regional offices in leveraging their resources for work at the regional, sub-regional and national levels. This may however require additional resources for FAO and should be brought to the attention of the Forum and the governing bodies of the CPF members.

The Focal Agency mechanism that was meant to promote the engagement of CPF members in its activities have not worked out and therefore resulting in lower engagement of some CPF members in its activities and programmes.

Furthermore, CPF activities are a small part of its member organization's work programmes and therefore receives little attention

Opportunities

There is broad consensus including recognition through engagements at the HLPF that there is a future role the CPF should continue to play, through their work in providing scientific and technical advice to the Forum and governing bodies of the CPF members at their request. CPF should take advantage of this interest to ensure forestry is high on the political agenda at the global, regional, and sub-regional levels through events organised by CPF member organisations.

The consultants assess that there is the opportunity to formalise the reporting of the work of the CPF to the Forum to inform policy work. There is merit in involving all members the CPF in the initial stages of development of, programmes, events, activities, reports of the Forum, joint statements, etc. This would ensure ownership and buy-in as well as take advantage of the diverse expertise of the CPF in providing advice to the Forum. Through the interviews some CPF member organisations appear to be surprised at documents released in the name of CPF.

There is high interest in the work CPF among member countries, major groups and other stakeholders, and there are opportunities to strengthen this interest through enhanced internal communication with member organisations and external communication with member countries, major groups, and other stakeholders. CPF should take advantage of the digital platforms available for communication to create more visibility for the partnership and strengthen its internal and external communications.

Paragraph 6(d) of the ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33 offers opportunities for the CPF to participate in a partnership forum "involving the heads of member organizations of the CPF and leaders from the private sector, philanthropic and civil society organization and other major groups". This further emphasizes the need for an approach that goes beyond partnerships within the UN system and an opportunity for the CPF to draw on the lessons from the UN Water Partnership in strengthening partnership of CPF and in addition drawing on resources of potential partners in support of the work of the CPF and the Forum. Some CPF members (e.g., UNEP, World Bank) are already members of this UN Water Partnership. Furthermore, as guidance is provided by EOCOSOC Resolution 2015/33, CPF members should consider holding meetings of their heads at least once a year to promote coordination and collaboration. This meeting need not be physical given the lessons learned from COVID-19 on virtual hosting of meetings and facilities now available for holding of such meetings.

There are opportunities for improving technical support to member countries in the work of the Forum, in implementing the programmes and activities in the UNSPF and the GFGs. This will require additional resources and the Forum will have to consider options and suggestions put forward by the CPF in ensuring that it has resources to cover its work programmes.

Threats

The current global environment requires flexibility and the ability to respond to internal and external development, however because of the voluntary nature of the fifteen organisations in the CPF this can be challenging.

Also given the limited source of financing of the work of the CPF and their parent organisations there is the threat of possible competition between CPF members for financial resources from the same source.

Furthermore, the current global crisis from COVID-19, energy, climate change etc is impacting on availability of resources to the CPF member organisations thereby limiting their ability to contribute to joint initiatives and activities. This could result in reduced engagement and support to UNFF major groups and other stakeholders thereby impacting on the perception of governance within the CPF.

CPF existing membership criteria has limitations and does not have a good mechanism to work with non-members. Its engagement is limited to its membership. Perhaps going forward CPF should explore the opportunities to bring in non-members, non-UN organizations and a strong private sector engagement.

Annex G Annex 4: List of CPF Joint Initiatives undertaken since 2017

1. JI on Communicators' Network.
2. JI on Forest Landscape Restoration.
3. JI on Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network.
4. JI on Global Forest Expert
5. JI on Global Forest Information Service.
6. JI on Green Finance for Sustainable Landscapes.
7. JI on Streamlining global forest-related reporting.
8. JI on Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World.
9. JI on Wangari Maathai Forest Champion Award.
10. JI on Forest education.
11. JI on Policy learning initiative.
12. planned JI on Turning the Tide on Deforestation.
13. International Conference "Working across sectors to halt deforestation and increase
14. forest area: from aspiration to action".
15. joint statement on the COVID-19 pandemic "Towards sustainability: forest
16. solutions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic"; and
17. joint statement on "Challenges and Opportunities in Turning the Tide on Deforestation"

Annex H Completed initiatives

- Forests and climate change
- Forest finance
- Forest degradation
- Global Forest Information Service
- Harmonizing forest-related definitions
- Organization-Led Initiative on Development of Global Forest Indicators
- Organization-Led Initiative on Forest Financing
- Sourcebook on funding for sustainable forest management
- Working across sectors to halt deforestation and increase forest area
- Working group on sustainable forest management

On-going JI's

- There are currently the following nine JI's operational. These are listed below and can be accessed through the links. However, summaries of the JI's are in Annex XXX
- Forest landscape restoration
- Global Forest Expert Panels (GFEP)
- Communicator's Network including IDF
- Streamlining forest-related reporting
- Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World
- Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award
- The Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN)
- Green finance for sustainable landscapes (GF4SL)
- Global Forest Education Initiative