

Working towards a Greener Asia with the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization



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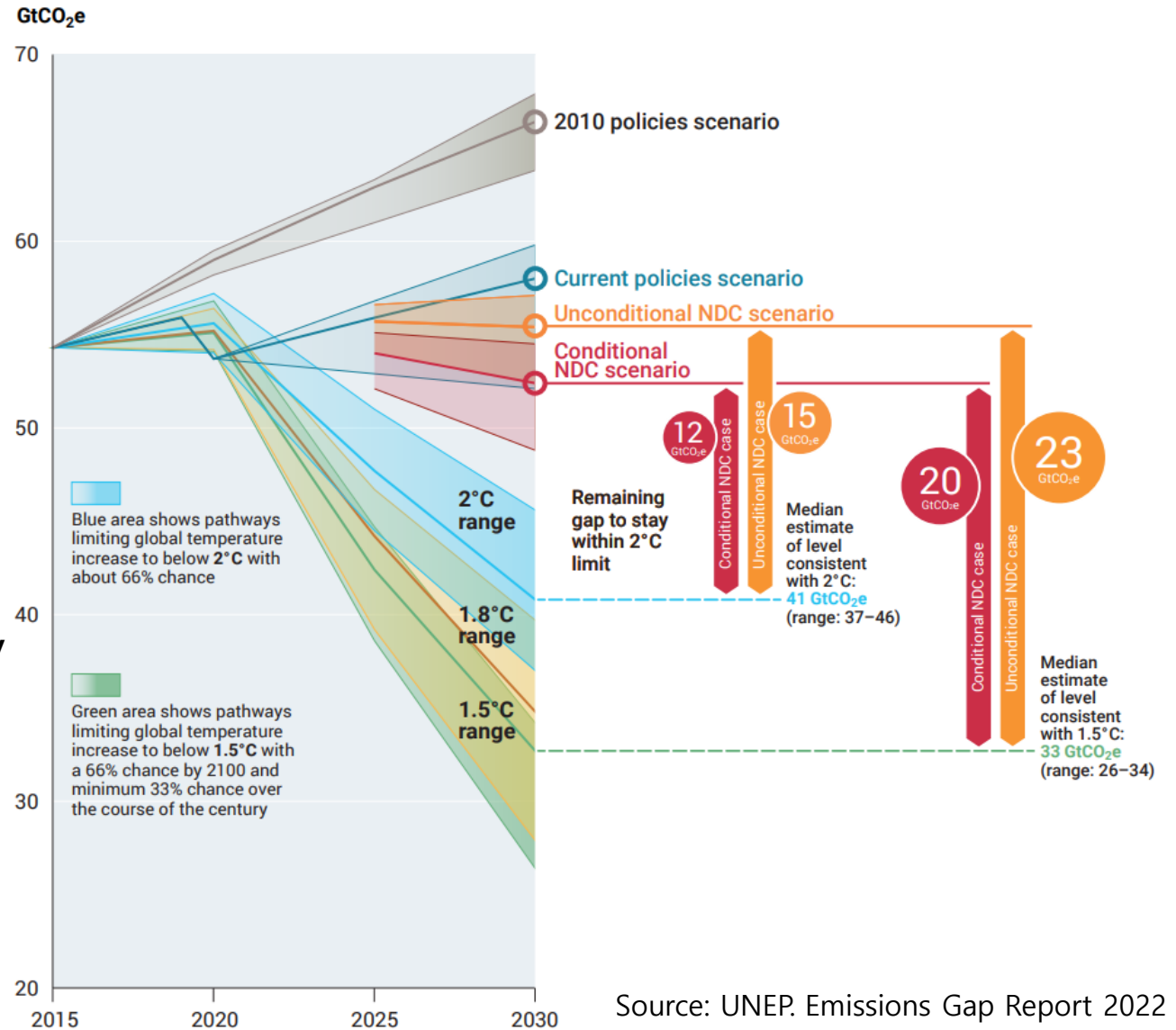
“Today’s IPCC Working Group I report is a **CODE RED** for humanity”

- Secretary-General, António Guterres

Many climate impacts are becoming ‘irreversible’ — we need immediate actions

Lack of progress towards the Paris Agreement — limiting global warming to below 1.5 °C by 2030

Current targets in the NDCs need to be increased by **23GtCO₂e** to achieve the 2030 climate target



Source: UNEP. Emissions Gap Report 2022

Forest as a Key Solution to Achieve the 1.5°C Climate Goal by 2030

- Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030
- The fastest and cheapest solution to climate change is FOREST
- Boris Johnson (former Prime Minister of UK) at UNFCCC COP 26
- Forests have mitigation potential 8 GtCO₂e/year by 2030 (UNEP, 2022; WEF, 2022)
- Over 80 global companies are investing in 65 countries to achieve their ESG management and corporate net-zero emissions targets (WEF, 2023)





Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO)

- **An Intergovernmental Organization based in Asia**
To strengthen forest cooperation by transforming proven technology and policies into concrete actions in the context of sustainable forest management to address the impact of climate change.
- **ASEAN-ROK Forest Cooperation (2012~2016)**
- **Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (2018.4.27~present)**
- The **Headquarters Agreement** between the Republic of Korea and the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO) entered into force on July 2, 2021 (Treaty no. 2481).

- **16 Member countries:**

- 14 Parties:

- Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam

- 2 Observers:

- Malaysia, Singapore

- **43 projects (32 ongoing, 11 completed) covering restoration, climate adaptation, enhancing resilience to forest disasters, improving livelihoods, and strengthening institutional capabilities**



Accreditations & Partnerships

- 75th UN General Assembly granted observer status to AFoCO on 15 December 2020. ([A/RES/75/149](#))
- 14th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP) accredited AFoCO as a partner international organization on 2 September 2019. ([ICCD/COP\(14\)/15](#))
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) accredited AFoCO on 6 October 2021 for participation at the Conference of the Parties to CBD and related meetings.
- AFoCO has been included in the ODA-eligible international organizations under the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD from 2021 reporting and authorized to undertake fund-raising and receive donations from the ROK.
- UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) admitted AFoCO as Observer Intergovernmental Organization on 6 November 2022 at COP 27. ([FCCC/CP/2022/7](#))
- The Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration granted membership to AFoCO in 2020.
- AFoCO is participating as an Associated Partner of the Forests, Trees, and Agroforestry (FTA) Partnership led by CIFOR-ICRAF.
- AFoCO became an official Supporting Partner of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 and is co-leading the Climate Restoration Challenge.



United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change



Status & Importance of Asian Forests

Loss of Asia's Forests

Between 1990-2020, deforestation rate in Asian tropical forests is 15%

- Global: 4%
- South America: 13%
- Africa: 14%

37.6 million ha or 21% of global forests were lost in Asia's tropical forests over the last 3 decades

Major drivers of forest loss and degradation are anthropogenic, including agricultural conversion, illegal logging, and forest fires

Impact on Forest-dependent People

85.7 million people are living in Asian forests, earn less than US\$1.25/day (UNFF, 2021)

People are struggling with the impacts of COVID-19

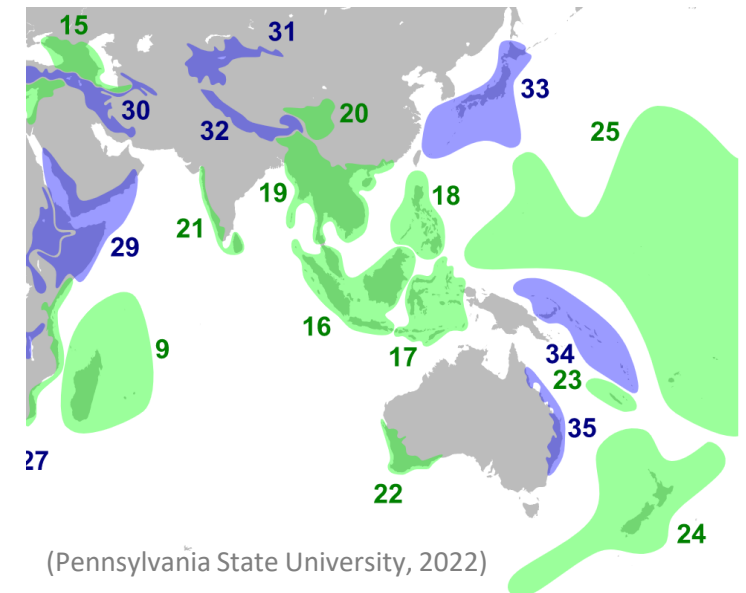
- Forest livelihoods have been severely disrupted
 - Increased pressures on forests
- (FAO, 2022)



Threats to Biodiversity Hotspots

Asia and the Pacific are home to nearly half of the world's biodiversity hotspots

- 17 out of 36 biodiversity hotspots under threat of human activities



Strategic Priorities 2019 - 2023



Initiating customized restoration & reforestation models

- ✓ Establishment of locally customized restoration and reforestation models in target communities;
- ✓ Adoption and application of such models in a balanced and integrated approach of forest landscape restoration for the benefits of target communities, natural habitats, and forest ecosystem.



Supporting research & development in climate change adaptation approaches

- ✓ Implementation of scientific studies on forestry adaptation approaches;
- ✓ Policy adoption of vulnerable member countries to apply relevant adaptation methodologies and approaches.



Introducing systematic management on forest-related disasters

- ✓ Establishment of demonstration sites for control and management of forest-related disasters;
- ✓ Application of technology-based perspective and control measures where appropriate.



Local livelihood improvement & community-based small enterprise development

- ✓ Identification and implementation of best practices on payments for ecosystems services, ecotourism, and community-based enterprise development in target areas;
- ✓ Promoting relevant policy adoption in target areas.



Strengthening institutional capabilities, diversifying resources & promoting regional actions

- ✓ Strengthening institutional capabilities to address diverse socio-economic settings among member parties;
- ✓ Expanding collaboration with other organizations.



Our Experiences in Asia

Current Parties and Observers encompasses diverse climatic zones and sub-regions stretching from Northeast Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and Central Asia. Hence, our Programs and Projects cuts across different forest ecosystems and functions.

Tropical to temperate forests



Glaciers & Glacial Lakes



Drylands & Drought-prone areas



Coastal Areas & Mangroves



Peatlands



Saxaul



Total Project Value (USD) **83.6 M**

AFoCO Funding

Funding from the Korea Forest Service
Funding from other donors

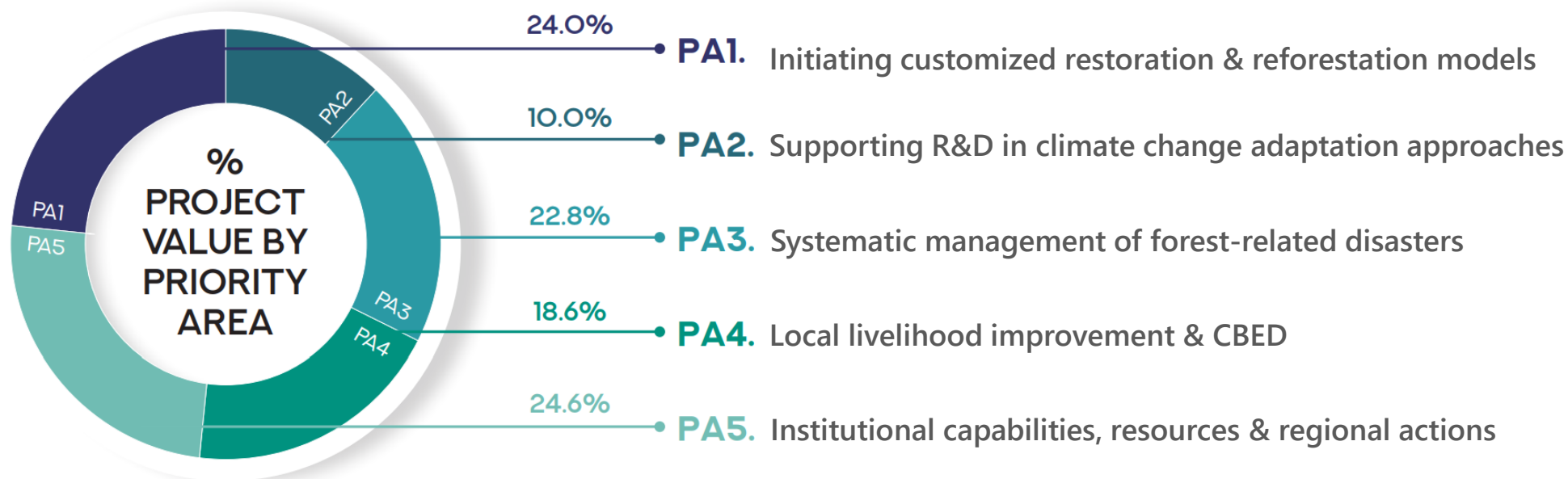
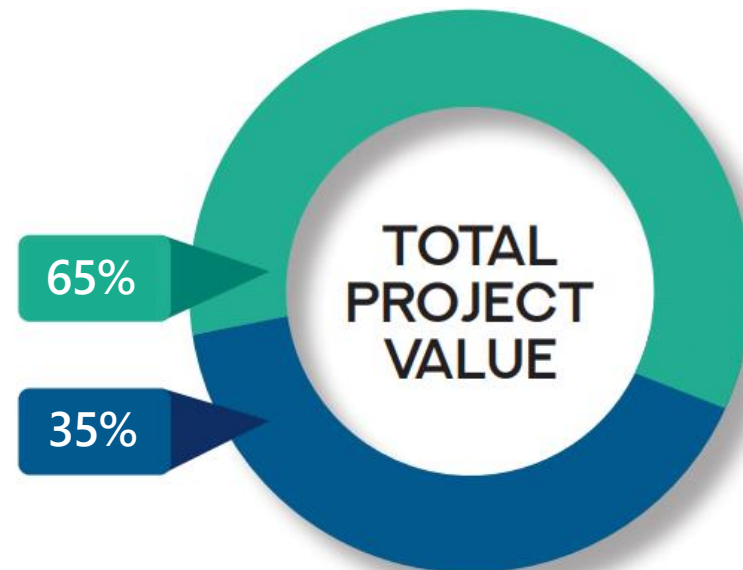
54.3 M

46.0 M
8.3 M

National Contributions

*including cash and in-kind contributions;
excluding projects without confirmed national contributions

29.3 M



AFoCO/035/2022

Improved local community livelihoods through increased benefits from NTFPS: Modeling scalable community-based enterprises in Asia – *Mongolia component*

2022~2026 / USD 199,996

Implemented by National Forest Agency of Mongolia

OBJECTIVES

- Promote nature-based solutions for climate change adaptation and local livelihoods through scalable Community-based NTFP Enterprise (CBNE) Models and Capacity Building.
- Enhance community income from NTFPs through research, value-addition, standards, certification, and market access.
- Ensure sustainable NTFP resource management and utilization. Create an enabling environment for CBNEs by institutionalizing CBNE Development Extension support, capacity building for government support providers, knowledge exchange, and policy recommendations.
- NTFP Products: Pine nut and herbal tea

AFoCO/039/2023

Forest Restoration Demonstration through High Capacity Tree Nursery and Capacity Building in Support of the “1 Billion Tree” Campaign in Mongolia

2023~2025 / USD 999,656

Implemented by National Forest Agency of Mongolia

OBJECTIVES

- Establish mechanized nurseries to produce/increase seedling production in existing nurseries
- Build capacities of frontline forestry staff and communities on forest restoration (seedling production, tree planting, forest cleaning and forest protection measures to improve the survival and growth performance of plantations)
- Develop forest restoration plans to restore and reforest Ereen Mountain Range (100 ha) and Deendiin Valley (20 ha)
- Manage soil erosion and conserve water while contributing to income generation of participating communities

REDD+ FS

REDD+ Feasibility Study (REDD+ FS) in Mandal soum, Mongolia

June 2022 / ~USD 33,000

Implemented by AFoCO & Mongolian Forest Research Association (MFRA) with private sector support (Yuhan-Kimberly)

OBJECTIVES

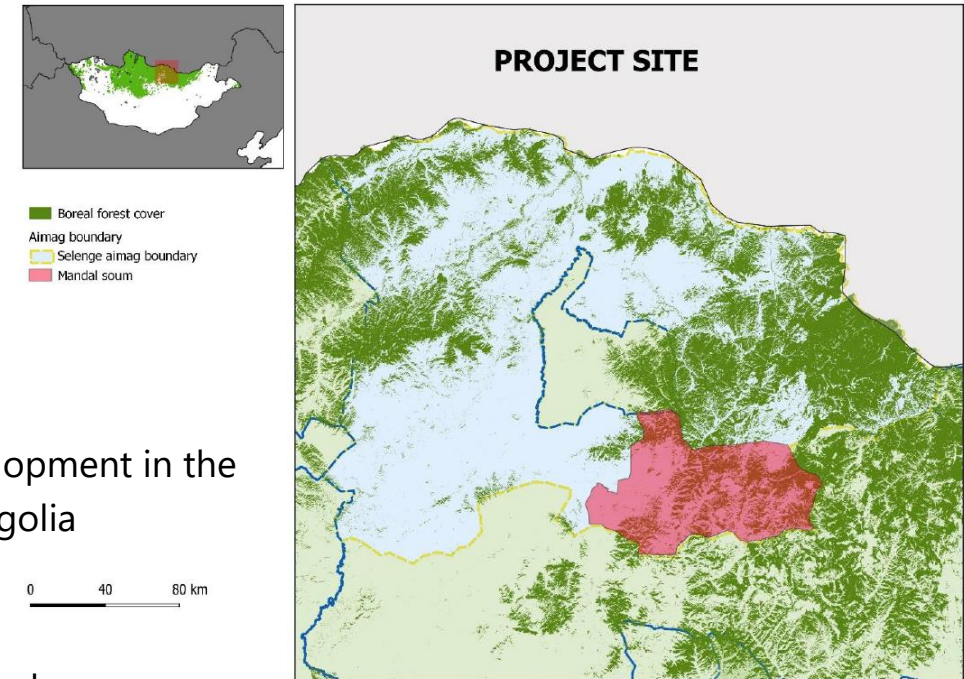
The REDD+ FS aims to contribute to the promotion measures of sustainable development in the local region and develop future Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ Projects in Mongolia

FINDINGS

Based on the site study, the drivers of deforestation and land degradation are:

- **Forest fires:** From 1992 to 2000, forest degradation occurred within the forested areas. Forests were left to regenerate naturally (instead of artificial reforestation), but only limited forest recovery has been observed. Monitoring checkpoints were established along seven major roads to prevent forest fires, but there is no allocated budget for proactive forest fire management. Active afforestation and forest management are necessary.
- **Forest pests and diseases** have contributed directly/indirectly to forest degradation, with substantial damage by the Siberian Moth.
- **Grazing** causes damage to buds or leaves, hindering natural recovery and regeneration. Protective measures for buds are necessary to reduce damage until they can grow sufficiently. Silvopasture application may also be considered.

Surveys among members of local communities revealed that the major direct drivers of deforestation and land degradation are forest fires, forest pests and diseases, and illegal logging.



Proposal submitted to CTCN

Promoting biochar production utilizing timber infected by pests and underutilized forest biomass

1-year project / ~USD 180,000

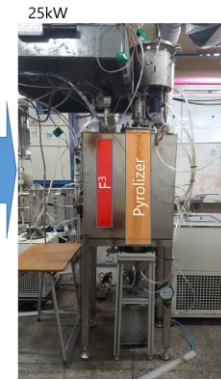
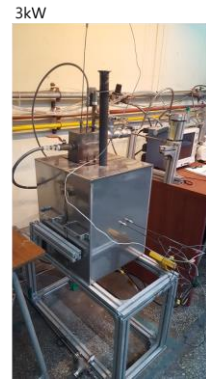
Implementers:

Renewable Energy Research Lab, Kookmin University;
National Forest Agency; 'Erdenet Mining Corporation'
state-owned enterprises - forest genetic resources center

OBJECTIVES

The project will target an area heavily affected by pests in the Mandal soum region

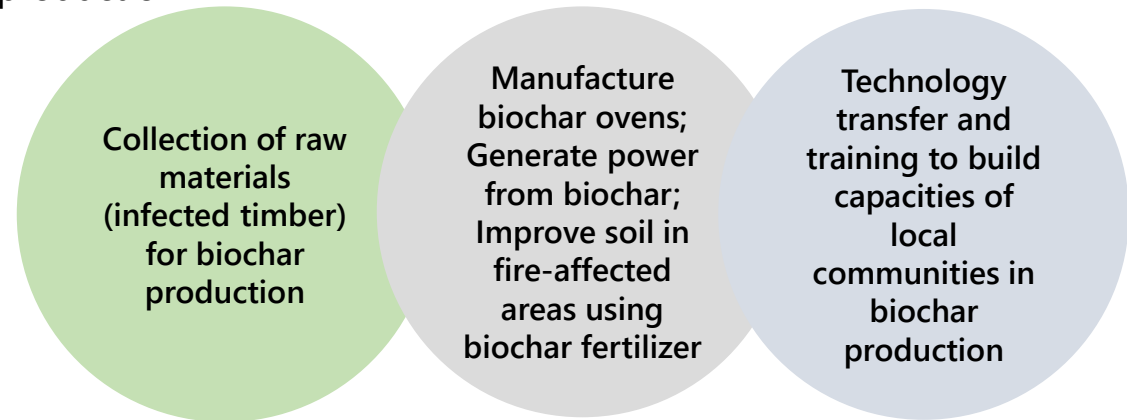
- Value-added utilization of underutilized biomass through biochar processing.
- Contribution to the restoration of fire-affected areas through biochar production
- Utilization of biochar as fertilizer and feed to improve the living environments of nearby local communities and increase job opportunities
- Contribution to the realization of Mongolia's NDCs



200kW (50kg/hr)



- It has been tested that all kinds of input waste can be fed into the oven
- High energy efficiency when dried because of reduced weight
- Chlorine content in biomass controlled in post-treatment facility



Drylands and dry forests represent 41% of the world's land area and are inhabited by 2.5 billion people; Asia has the largest share of the world's drylands. Degraded land areas in 6 countries total more than 200 million hectares, with restoration targets of ~17 million hectares* — there is a huge gap between the extent of degraded land areas against restoration targets. Given the extent of drylands, specifically Asian drylands, a targeted initiative for restoring drylands is needed to support national and international goals on sustainable development.

Survey data collected in November 2020
 *Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Kazakhstan



Restoring Dry Lands and Drought-Prone Areas

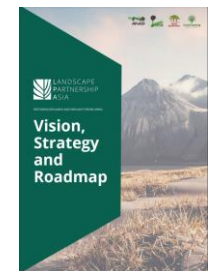
A dryland-focused landscape restoration initiative

- **VISION:** Contribute to national and international targets in the restoration of dry forests, agricultural drylands, and drought-prone areas in Central, East, South and Southeast Asia, with an initial 10 million hectares brought under integrated dryland and drought management by 2032.
- **SCOPE:** Selected drylands in Central, East, South and Southeast Asia classified by the UNCCD and nationally-defined drylands and drought-prone areas
- 14 countries have signified their commitment to engage in the Partnership



A dryland-focused landscape restoration initiative

- ACTIVITIES:** Expanding the scale of proven restoration approaches; training and capacity building; expand the scale of financial mechanisms; small-grant schemes to assess financial mechanisms; enable policy and mainstreaming; knowledge management and M&E



Read the LPA Roadmap here: <https://afocosec.org/programs-projects/programs/lpa/>



AFOCO SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY EXCHANGE PARTNERSHIP (STEP) Program

31 GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM



27 RECIPIENTS: 17 MSc, 10 PhD SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (2015 – 2023)



10,748 PARTICIPANT DAYS in 109 TRAINING COURSES (2014 – 2022)



AFoCO-RECOFTC Joint Capacity Building Training for “**Developing Data Portals for Community Forest Data in ASEAN Member States** (December 5-16, 2022)”, funded by Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)

Recommended interventions that should be prioritized for future collaboration with ASEAN and prospective partners in 2023 and beyond:

- Explore how CF data and decision-support capabilities can contribute to national-level carbon reduction, sequestration, and neutrality targets.
- Expand the program scope to include AFoCO member countries in North-east and Central Asian regions, and seek its relevant partners for resource mobilization.



In response to the climate crisis and in recognition of the critical role of forests in mitigating the crisis, AFoCO is pursuing a 10-year Climate Action Plan as a program under our new Strategic Plan (2024–2030).



Forest restoration & rehabilitation

Restore or rehabilitate damaged forests from natural disasters & human-induced activities (such as forest fires) to increase carbon removals with multiple co-benefits

- 100,000 ha of forests restored
- 100,000 ha of forests rehabilitated



Community solutions

Reverse forest loss and help meet Member Countries' achievement of the SDGs, particularly goals 1 and 8

- 100 forest-related community business models
- 20 'green'/sustainable villages



Digital innovations

Transfer technology while building capacities to effectively use and deploy advanced technologies and approaches, such as drone mapping and monitoring, satellite and early warning systems, risk mapping and strengthened MRV systems (AFoCO IDP Development)

THANK YOU

www.afocosec.org

