



Purpose: Consideration

Fourth Meeting of the APFNet Council

25 March 2018 Beijing, China

APFNet Council's Work and Future Meetings

1. Introduction

The APFNet Council was established in April 2015, in accordance with APFNet's Operational Framework which was ratified in May 2013 and provides the basis for APFNet's institutional arrangements and operations.

The Council's Rules of Procedure govern its operations. Specifically, Rules 2 and 3 state that the responsibilities and powers of members are fulfilled mainly through attending annual meetings and being actively involved between meetings to provide advice on and to act as a forum for the exchange of views on APFNet's activities and development.

Both the Council and the Board noted the desirability to strengthen Council's support to APFNet's decision-making processes and, in this regard, an exchange of ideas took place at the third Council meeting in Sri Lanka in 2017. In addition, the Board suggested to APFNet that it examine ways to make Council meetings more meaningful, including by extending the duration to allow more exchange of information on issues of concern (Decision B. 03/03).

The text below describes follow-up action by the Secretariat to enhance communication with the Council. As part of this exercise and consistent with the Council's roles and responsibilities, it reviewed Council's work and operations to identify areas on which to focus.

This document presents the Secretariat's preliminary findings and provides some discussion points for the Council's consideration.

2. Review of Council's work 2015-17

Responsibilities	Work completed 2015-17
a) Provide advice, feedback, views on thematic priorities to Board	Reviewed and commented on APFNet Strategic Plan 2016-2020 (CM2/3, 2015-16)
b) Present views to the Board and the Secretariat	Council Chair and vice-Chair reported at Board meetings
c) Help to align APFNet's purpose and organizational objectives with those of members	
d) Elect a Chair and Vice-Chair	Chair and Vice-Chair elected in 2015 for a term spanning 2015-17
e) Review Board decisions for transparency & accountability, convey support, pose questions and express concerns	Board decisions distributed to the Council and progress on implementation shared with it via APFNet-Info
f) Review reports of the Executive Director and financial reports	Reports reviewed annually between 2015 and 2017
g) Consider annual work plans and budgets	Documents considered annually between 2015 and 2017 and recommendations made to the Board
h) Nominate candidates for Project Appraisal Panel	Candidates nominated in 2016 for a term spanning 2016-18
i) Coordinate APFNet programs with other relevant regional and global initiatives and events	
j) Perform other functions (as specified in Rule 5 of Council's Rules of Procedure) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update changes of representatives and contact persons - Circulate information - Review and recommend/nominate candidates and project proposals - Help with APFNet promotion efforts - Report on progress and challenges with implementing APFNet programs and activities - Explore potential cooperation with local partners 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Candidates nominated every year to APFNet workshops, scholarship programs, meetings and events 2. Concepts notes reviewed and submitted for PAP appraisals 2015-17 3. Forestry data, information and documents provided, as requested 4. Coordination of APFNet visits, meetings (including high-level) and site visits to projects provided, as requested 5. Ways to collaborate with APFNet proposed 6. Impacts, lessons and experience derived from APFNet-funded projects presented at Council meetings, as invited 7. Local arrangements for hosting APFNet training and meetings coordinated 8. Involvement in implementation or oversight of APFNet-funded projects provided

Powers	Actions
a) Adopt its Rules of Procedure and modify them when necessary	Rules of Procedures adopted in 2015, not yet reviewed or modified
b) Nominate, screen and select directors to fill Board vacancies	1. Procedures to nominate and select Board members reviewed in 2017 2. Nominations collected for decision at CM4 in 2018
c) Alter size of the Board	
d) Review and modify APFNet membership procedures	APFNet membership procedures adopted in 2015, not yet modified
e) Decide on APFNet membership applications	No applications submitted yet
f) Perform other functions	

Conclusions:

- (1). In accordance with its responsibilities and powers, Council members and contact persons are actively supporting APFNet's work and facilitating cooperation of their economies in an effort to "facilitate the alignment of APFNet's purpose and organizational objectives with those of members (c)" and "coordinate APFNet's programs with other relevant regional and global initiatives and events (i)".
- (2). Between meetings, Council members and contact persons are mostly engaged in routine work to support specific APFNet activities and events, as categorized under "Performing other functions". However, good practices, problems, challenges and issues arising therefrom are seldom shared at Council meetings.
- (3). The review of work and financial reports and of work plans and budgets are key aspects of annual meetings but limited time is available to perform this task before discussions take place. So far, the Council has not been invited to provide inputs when work plans are developed.
- (4). Thematic priorities of APFNet were discussed when its Strategic Plan 2016-20 was being drafted but, since then, they have only been touched upon when information on projects is presented at meetings. No separate session or consultation has been organized to exchange views/provide advice either on these priorities or on issues related to sustainable forest management.
- (5). More effort is required to enhance communication and the flow of information between the Secretariat and the Council. Improvements in these areas will increase the Council's knowledge of APFNet and allow it to better perform its functions.

3. Points for discussion

3.1. Future meetings

To conduct meaningful and solution-oriented meetings:

- 3.1.1. Council's comments and feedback would be sought on decisions of the Board and

on the status of their implementation.

- 3.1.2. Participants would be invited to comment on their work related to APFNet and written reports would be welcome to share good practices, describe challenges/problems and suggest solutions. Members and partners would be encouraged to share their work priorities and new forestry developments to enhance information exchange.
 - 3.1.3. Participants involved in other APFNet initiatives such as TIF and FPN would be invited to report progress.
 - 3.1.4. Thematic sessions during or in the margin of Council meetings would be planned as of 2019 and would relate to the APFNet objectives, pillars and thematic priorities. Identification of topics and resource persons would be either led by the economy hosting the Council meeting (option 1) or by soliciting ideas from members and partners (option 2).
 - 3.1.5. The Council may call for ideas before the agenda of the meeting is developed.
- 3.2. Between meetings, Council members and contact persons would be
- 3.2.1. invited as resource persons to join APFNet project evaluations or other activities;
 - 3.2.2. encouraged to promote APFNet or to speak on behalf of APFNet at international conferences;
 - 3.2.3. encouraged to promote APFNet at high levels in their economies;
 - 3.2.4. again requested to nominate and recommend quality candidates and concept notes, both of which directly affect results and outcomes of APFNet activities and projects.

APFNet may provide funds to cover expenses related to the above-noted activities between meetings.

APFNet's actions to enhance communication with members 2017

Points raised at CM3	APFNet actions
- Distribute newsletters to all members	- 2 APFNet·Info and 3 newsletters issued between April and December
- Send documents well ahead of meetings	- Quality of documents improved and distributed 2 weeks ahead of 4 th Council and Board meetings
- Provide more information on approved projects, including progress and impacts	- Council informed of project appraisals in a timely manner - Details of progress and impacts of projects presented to Council through meeting documents and website
- Email list of upcoming events so Council can become involved	- Listed in APFNet·Info and newsletters
- Schedule time in the margin of meetings for 1 on 1 discussion of proposed work plans	- Planned for meetings in 2018 but will be difficult for meetings outside China
- Use email as the preferred method of communications but consider the social media/E groups as further ways to stay in touch informally with each other	- Skype and WhatsApp used, informal communication enhanced with a number of members
- Copy relevant colleagues on correspondences to facilitate better follow-up	- Colleagues copied but task heavily relies on timely updates from members and partners
- Convene telephone conferences on a regular basis, recognizing this method can prove difficult if large numbers are involved	- Teleconferencing arranged for one-on-one meetings
- Feature projects as part of the calls, including progress, challenges, lessons learned	- Considered for future interventions
- Focus on important issues of communication rather than those of general nature	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize small working groups at meetings to facilitate discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Considered for future meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1-2 page briefs of lessons learned and best practices should be prepared for each project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepared for 2018 meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage colleagues/domestic experts to produce information to share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Considered for future meetings