



Seventh Meeting of the APFNet Council

26–27 April 2023 | Manila, the Philippines

Terms of Reference of the APFNet Project Appraisal Panel

1 Purpose

1.1 These Terms of Reference are derived from Article 4.5 of APFNet’s Operational Framework which sets out the composition, functions, procedures of meetings and other items of importance to the operation of the Project Appraisal Panel (hereinafter referred to as “Panel”).

2 Composition and Selection of the Project Appraisal Panel

2.1 Members of the Panel should be independent experts, regardless of their professional affiliation and home economy. They should also be familiar with APFNet’s thematic priority areas, as stated in the Strategic Plan then in force, be experienced in project development and management, and be proficient in oral and written English.

2.2 The Panel will consist of no more than 11 members, and no less than six members, who do not sit on APFNet’s Council or Board of Directors. Its composition is as follows:

- a) A Chair nominated by the Executive Director and approved by the Board of Directors; and
- b) Up to ten internationally or regionally recognized specialists appointed by the Board of Directors after reviewing Council recommendations.

2.3 The Council will be informed of the opportunity to recommend qualified persons to the Board for its consideration. The Secretariat may also recommend candidates when the number of nominees proposed by the Council is insufficient in specific forestry areas. The Secretariat will screen suitable candidates to the Panel according to the selection criteria (to be provided by APFNet Secretariat later). The Board will then appoint members from a list of suggested names.

2.4 To ensure the continuity of APFNet activities, Panel members will be appointed for three-year terms and not serve more than two consecutively. (The Operational Framework will be amended to reflect this stipulation.)

3 Functions and Main Task of the Project Appraisal Panel

3.1 The Panel's functions are to:

- a) act as the technical appraisal body of APFNet, reviewing and making recommendations to the Executive Director and the Board on the technical feasibility and suitability of project concept notes and project proposals for donors' decision on APFNet funding; and
- b) provide balanced, technically informed comments and suggestions, to project proponents, through the APFNet Secretariat, to improve their submissions.

3.2 The Panel's main task is to participate in meetings and other activities related to project appraisals, as required.

4 Rules of Procedures

4.1 Meetings of the Panel are convened to assess project concept notes and full project proposals.

4.2 The Chair of the Panel presides over meetings during his/her term. Should the Chair not be able to attend a session, he/she should inform Members of the Panel and the APFNet Secretariat at least two weeks in advance and should designate an alternate Chair.

4.3 The APFNet Secretariat will appoint a secretary to facilitate meetings.

4.4 The Panel will fulfill the following tasks during meetings:

- a) review, grade and rank project concept notes/proposals, based on criteria provided by the APFNet Secretariat in advance of the meetings;
- b) provide comments and suggestions to improve the concept notes/proposals; and
- c) assist the Chair to prepare a report of the Panel's grades, comments and suggestions for submission to the APFNet Secretariat.

4.5 During meetings, the Chair may designate a member to serve as lead reviewer for one or more concept notes/full proposals, according to his/her expertise and workload. The Chair may also establish a sub-committee to consider individual proposals, as necessary. The lead reviewer will facilitate discussions, attempt to reach consensus on the comments and suggestions to be submitted, and sign a written summary of these outputs.

4.6 Members who cannot attend meetings must provide detailed comments and suggestions, in writing, to the Secretariat at least two days in advance.

4.7 APFNet Secretariat will financially support, coordinate and facilitate meetings in terms of providing a preliminary review of project concept notes/full proposals as well as compiling and distributing these documents.

4.8 The APFNet Secretariat will inform project applicants of the appraisal results in a reasonable timeframe.

4.9 APFNet will cover eligible expenses and provide compensation to Panel members for attending meetings, in line with relevant APFNet regulations.

5 Modifications

5.1 Panel Members may modify these Terms of Reference, provided they do so by consensus and the Executive Director endorses them. In addition, proposed modifications must be circulated to Members at least two months in advance.