

1. General Description:

ID:CN-24029

Project resulting from this CN: N/A

Note: CNs are developed into project proposals following consultation with donor(s).

1.1 Project Title:

Strengthening best practice through continuous forest education across the tropical world: Alliance for Responsible Forest Management

1.2 Submitting Country/ies:

Costa Rica, Ghana, Thailand

1.3 Specific Location & Country/ies/regions/areas benefitting from the project:

Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean

1.4 Endorsement from ITTO Focal Point:

Letters of support_b_ARFM ITTO Concept Note_231207.pdf

1.5 Intended Project Duration (in months):

24

1.6 Indicative Budget (in US\$):

ITTO	4,294,788
Counterpart	1,000,000
Total	5,294,788

1.7 Programme Line Focus

Emerging Issues and Innovation

1.8 Project Type

Capacity Building/Training, Pilot/demonstration project, Other

Project Type - Other (please explain):

The ARFM fits into all ITTO project type categories, with a focus on sustained and continuous capacity building/training and pilot/demonstration project. We selected 'other' as the project type as ARFM is cross-disciplinary in delivering education in responsible forest management. Forest education encompasses a broad spectrum of critical aspects such as international forest policy, i.e., conventions, articles and initiatives, forest legality, both internationally and domestic, forest management planning such as forest resource assessments (baseline), environmental and social assessments, forest resource planning and accounting, species selection, forest modelling, growth and yield and analysis, including financial projections, technical capacity building in best practice of responsible forest operations, forest monitoring, auditing and evaluation, including forest technologies, systems and tools, including mapping and drone surveillance.

1.9 Proposal Summary:

The Alliance for Responsible Forest Management (ARFM) is an international not-for-profit non-governmental charitable foundation with the goal to accelerate the implementation of responsible forest management across the tropical world. The ARFM aims to create a coordinated global network of training centres to promote and train practitioners on regional best practices in tropical forestry. As an independent organisation and not a standard setting body, the ARFM shall direct over 30 years of peer-reviewed research and applied knowledge to create regionally appropriate best practice material, complemented by training centres for practitioners, certification bodies, auditors, government agencies, private practitioners and communities. Training will consist of classroom-based (virtual / in-person) and on-site practical education in regional training centres in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean. Utilising decades of forest research and practical experience in field implementation, ARFM best-practice materials and regional training centres are subjected to international consultations and do not have influence from specific groups. The creation of an integrated approach with modular training addressing the entire forest management cycle can render a long-term contribution to resolve the gaps in stakeholder awareness, best management practices, operational implementation, and capacity building. The approach comprises a wide range of systems and methods, including forest management planning, field implementation, as well as operational supervision, monitoring, control, and evaluation. ARFM shall incorporate quantifiable metrics to support improvement over time and members are encouraged reporting to focus updates and efforts. The work will consist of two distinct, and inter-related phases of work, each of which will take one year to complete: 1) Drafting the regional-specific best practice material; and, 2. Implementing training and building capacity.

2. Proponent Information:

2.1 Executing Agency Information:

Name of Agency/Organization/Institution:

Alliance for Responsible Forest Management (L) Foundation

Name of main Contact Person:

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2.2 Type of Organization:

Civil Society Organization

2.3 Collaborating Agency/ies:**Name of Agency/Organization/Institution:**

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (CSIR-FORIG)

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2.4 Relevant experience of EA:

Collectively the EA has hundreds of years of experience in tropical forestry, and specific to each region, the Collaborating Agencies have close to half a century of working experience with all receiving ITTO grants in the past. The EA and Collaborating Agencies have various concentrations in tropical forestry allowing for a balanced understanding of issues and concepts. While ARFM has recently been formed, it was done so out of the long standing desire to improve tropical forestry globally.

3. Relevance:

3.1 Conformity with ITTO objectives (ITTA, 2006) and priorities (current SAP):

This project enhances understanding and strengthens the capacities of those working in tropical forestry including management, silvicultural, commercialisation and institutional factors affecting forest management of natural, secondary, planted, rehabilitated and conservation forestry, all of which conform to the objectives of ITTA (2006) and ITTO Strategic Action Plan (SAP) (2022-2026). Reference to ITTA (2006), this project addresses Objectives a, c, d, f, j, l, n, o, p, q, r. Reference to SAP, this project specifically addresses Priority 3: Resilience, Restoration and Conservation (targets 12, 13, 14, 18), with support to the objectives of Priority 1: Governance and Investment (targets 3, 5), and Priority 2: Economics and Tropical Timber Trade (targets 9, 10). This project addresses crosscutting targets 22, 23, 25, 34, 38). ARFM improves capacity development and strengthens fundamental foundations of tropical forestry and supports international cooperation and policy development among ITTO Members, allowing enhancement of internal capacity for achieving exports of tropical timber and products from sustainably managed sources. ARFM continually updates the material and supports ITTO Members to improve implementation frameworks, resulting in improved forest management and the conservation and enhance other forest values. ARFM creates best practice material by incorporating techniques and approaches from all stakeholders, including communities. This project supports a compendium of approaches to support and develop reforestation and the rehabilitation of degraded forest lands, incorporating the interest of all stakeholders. Reaffirming the fundamentals of forest mensuration, this project supports ITTO Members strengthen the collection and processing of statistics, including information in the sustainable management of their forests to foster better capacity to improve governance. This work supports ITTO Members engage in additional voluntary mechanisms.

3.2 Relevance to the ITTO Programme Lines:

This project relates closely to ITTO Programme Line 4: Emerging issues and innovation. The impact of this project will generate regionally accepted and multi-stakeholder reviewed, easy to access, information and training material/techniques that will allow stakeholders to understand and improve their work in forestry across the tropical world, towards the implementation of best practice. The project will have a lasting cumulative impact on tropical forestry as the training centres shall become focal points for excellence and a gateway between the international level and local levels of governance and implementation, leading to intimate stakeholder engagement and improved practices. In many respects training centres have been done before and the regionalisation of training, offered in multiple languages used by practitioners, including the longevity of this project, as well as offering Executive Education for Ministerial and upper management, can ensure the centres have the technical and financial support for long-term, continuing education programmes of excellent, needed by the tropical forest industry, to support international environmental conventions and initiatives. Education shall be administered based on ITTO Environmental and Social Guidelines as well as guiding principles of gender equality and empowering women, stemming from the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Forest Goals that are essential for achieving ITTO's core objectives: 1) environmental sustainability; 2) social sustainability; 3) gender equality and empowering women; 4) good governance; and 5) security of tenure to forest land and access to forest resources. This project is considered 'low risk', due to the minimal or non-adverse environmental or social risks or impacts of the proposed education and training project. This project supports the enhancement of gender equality, including the 8 ITTO Policy Guidelines on gender equality and empowering women.

3.3 Relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Forest Goals (GFGs) and other forest related global agenda:

SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (especially where communities co-exists with forest). SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. The production and uptake of renewable and sustainable wood fibre products are vital in achieving SDG 12's ambition of sustainable use and management of natural resources. SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. The responsible use of wood fibre can expand this carbon sink beyond the forests to the products. SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss. Through its influence on forest management practices, the forest sector has the most direct and substantial ability to drive positive change. GFG: 1: Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change. 2: Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people. 3: Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests. 5: Promote governance frameworks to implement sustainable forest management, including through the United Nations forest instrument, and enhance the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 6: Enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels, including within the UN System and across Collaborative Partnership on Forests member organisations, and across sectors and relevant stakeholders.

3.4 Relevance to submitting country's policies:

Costa Rica - The project contributes to Costa Rica's REDD+ strategy: a. Reducing even further the deforestation rate in regenerated and old growth forests; b. Expanding PES coverage; and c. increasing carbon sequestration through the induction of regeneration, establishment of forest plantations, and promotion of wood consumption. The project contributes to five main forest policies of the PNDF 2010-2020: Policy 03: guarantee the sustainable supply of timber and non-timber goods and environmental services, promoting plantations, agroforestry, sustainable management and natural regeneration. Policy 04: guarantee conditions that favour competitiveness in processes, products and services from forest ecosystems. Policy 05: Strengthen competencies of the forestry sector public and private for implementation and evaluation of the policies. Policy 11: promote the generation and use of knowledge focused on meeting the needs of forestry, through applied research, formal and non-formal education. Policy 12: promote the culture of sustainable forest management and its benefits for the inhabitants and the economy of the country. Ghana - The capacity building project contribute to four of the forest Policy guiding principle of Ghana: 6 Integrating traditional and scientific knowledge to promote sustainable forest management; 8 Promoting value addition of timber and non-timber forest resources; 12 Promoting capacity development for stakeholders in the forestry and wildlife sector; 13 Mainstreaming gender and vulnerability issues into forestry development planning and management; Thailand - The 5th strategy of the 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037) environmentally growth for sustainable development—aims to prevent deforestation and increase forest areas to 55% by 2037. The 20-Year Strategic Plan for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (2017-2036) elaborates to protect and conserve for sustainable development of resources and biodiversity, including monitoring.

3.5 Linkages to previous/ongoing ITTO and other projects/activities (if any):

Costa Rica Costa Rica has five past/current projects with ITTO with a value of USD 1,258,754. Costa Rica has numerous 'other' projects on-going with regards to climate change, REDD+, biodiversity offsets, etc. Ghana Ghana has 78 past/current projects with ITTO with a value of USD 26,212,608. Ghana has numerous 'other' projects on-going with regards to climate change, REDD+, biodiversity offsets, etc. Thailand Thailand has 32 past/current projects with ITTO with a value of USD 13,061,649. Thailand has numerous 'other' projects on-going with regards to climate change, REDD+, biodiversity offsets, etc. Projects and initiatives funded by ITTO can be found on the ITTO database: https://www.itto.int/project_search/

4. Project synopsis:

4.1 Objectives (reflecting reference to elements within all ITTO Guidelines as applicable):

ARFM is an international not-for-profit non-governmental charitable foundation with the goal to accelerate the implementation of responsible forest management across the tropical world. The ARFM aims to create a coordinated global network of training centres to promote and train practitioners on regional best practices in tropical forestry. As an independent organisation and not a standard setting body, the ARFM shall direct over 30 years of peer-reviewed research and applied knowledge to create regionally appropriate best practice material, complemented by training centres for practitioners, certification bodies, auditors, government agencies, private practitioners and communities. Training will consist of classroom-based (virtual / in-person) and on-site practical education in regional training centres in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean. All efforts will be undertaken to develop the necessary capacity to remove the current barriers to practicing responsible forest management. Utilising decades of forest research and practical experience in field implementation, best-practice materials and regional training centres are subjected to international consultation and peer-review, and do not have influence from specific groups. The creation of an integrated approach with modular training components addressing the entire forest management cycle can render a long-term contribution to resolve the gaps in stakeholder awareness, best management practices, operational implementation, and capacity building. The approach comprises a wide range of systems and methods, including forest management planning, field implementation, as well as operational supervision, monitoring, control, and evaluation. Adequate knowledge and practical skills are critical to achieve responsible forestry and ARFM shall develop material with quantifiable metrics to support improved training material over time. Members are can establish PSPs to understand gaps and focus needs support

4.2 Key problem(s) to be addressed:

Tropical deforestation and degradation Global trends indicate natural tropical forests are decreasing, with deforestation, severe degradation and land-use change amongst the leading causes. Relative to the duration of time needed to regenerate tropical forests and reverse these changes, immediate, decisive and sustained actions are required. The deforestation drivers are similar in Africa and Asia (agriculture), while degradation drivers are more similar in Latin America and Asia (timber extraction). The impacts of deteriorating forest resources on the hydrological cycle and water retention capacity cause serious threats to tropical forest ecosystems. Market-based forest certifications Forest certifications represent 430 million hectares of certified forests, totalling 11% of the world's 4 billion ha. Despite being around for 30 yrs, there has been, at best, moderate update of certification across the tropical world. Reasons why adoption is low include difficulties in how operations should be implemented and in identifying and measuring appropriate indicators. In most cases, standards require actions to be undertaken yet they are not sufficiently well defined, i.e., RIL, leading to interpretation. With almost all production forests globally harvested at least once in the past 20 years, forest degradation is estimated to continue in this direction unless clear, decisive action is taken. The opportunity cost of not taking action is dire. Issues in global forest education Formal education in forestry is not required in operational settings, resulting in enormous tropical deforestation and degradation, with tremendous climatic and biodiversity impacts over the past 50 years. A global assessment on forest education found insufficient curriculum over a wide-range of forest-related topics including a low diversity of students with females and racial/ethnic minorities included. Easy access to objective, high-quality digestible information is required at scale and pace.

4.3 Main stakeholders and beneficiaries:

ARFM offers objective structured technical training to: a) forest practitioners; b) certification bodies and auditors; c) staff of forest-related government agencies; d) civil society; and e) communities. Training consists of classroom-based and on-site practical education administered through two approaches: 1. On-site at a specific concession when ARFM receives a request to provide area-specific training; and, 2. Regional Training Centres with training consisting of ~20 participants per class. The creation of best practice material can provide great benefits to multiple stakeholders across the governance paradigm, from strengthening forest education to Ministers, Directorship and members of government, to the private sector, civil society and communities. The framework of integrating all knowledge from all stakeholders is an incredible approach to scale up beneficiaries at the local and regional level. Not only does this include the academic sector but supports the body of knowledge and brings it up to date with current trends and approaches to forestry. For too long, manuals and material on forest related issues were published at the discrepancy of research institutes, international organisations, civil society or simply based on funding decisions from donors, leading to large gaps between versions, iterations or updates, if they are updated at all. The ARFM addresses these gaps by providing up to date best practice material developed by consensus involving all stakeholders, which are continuously periodically updated in a prescribed manner. Not only will the ARFM material benefit international, regional, national, sub-national, private, civil and community actors, it supports keeping the body of knowledge up to date in a transparent and ethical manner, satisfying educational needs, and societal trends towards improved environmental stewardship of our natural resources, which is also a primary function of donors to international organisations such as ITTO.

4.4 Key activities:

Phase 1: Drafting the regional-specific best practice material Work will assemble regional technical drafting groups (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean) consisting of recognised regional specialists covering all aspects of tropical forestry. Regional technical drafting groups will consist of one coordinator, five technical consultants and one post-doc, with expert personnel representing government, private and community sectors. The importance of including all sectors is to incorporate regional best practice, both in theory and in practice, including gender-specific awareness, approaches and application. The drafting groups shall physically meet two times over an eight month period to develop the first draft of the best practice material. The first regional stakeholder consultation will be conducted via the ARFM website for stakeholders to comment and will be open for one month. The regional technical drafting group will review the comments and prepare a second draft of the best practice material and will take one month. A second regional stakeholder consultation will take place for comments over a one month period and the final draft of best practice material will be developed thereafter. The material will be published in electronic format and may be printed, depending on budget.

Phase 2: Implementing training and building capacity (both in theory and practice) ARFM shall apply the best practice material and develop teaching modules for each region, i.e., Policy, conventions and agreements, stakeholders in forestry, forest management planning, forest operations, monitoring, auditing and evaluation, forest technologies, systems and tools. For this project, ARFM shall deliver training in a graduated manner, starting with 10 and finishing with 20 participants per month in each region. This will help to critique and improve the delivery of training over the one year period.

4.5 Expected outcomes and impacts, including innovation/transformation:

The drafting of region-specific best practice material supports continuing education and extension training to public and private practitioners, civil society and communities covering aspects of regional-specific tropical forest policy, management, silviculture, wood processing, environment, social, economic, planning, monitoring, trade, etc. to improve sustainable livelihoods, strengthened local institutions and communities as well as enhance opportunities for women and youth leadership. Continuous forest education supports legal and sustainable supply chains for tropical forest products, supports the conservation of tropical forest biodiversity and ecosystem services at all levels, i.e., from government to community, encourages tropical forest landscape restoration and resilient livelihoods through improved understanding and education, and supports emerging issues and innovation, such as wood and non-timber forest products processing and value adding, marketing and commercialisation, incentives and new opportunities. Inception training shall focus on participants in a position to be a 'trainer of trainers', to maximise the impact of strengthening best practice in each region. ARFM aims to conduct training for 'trainers of trainers', from government, civil, private and communities, and estimates to train 398 participants over three regions over the year. Training will be conducted in languages specific to the needs of the participants to maximise impact. Easy access to objective, high-quality information on forest education and learning materials, including through digital platforms, tools, and field-based practical training centres, is essential to strengthen responsible forest management across the tropical world. This work improves quality of life, foster enhanced education, supporting those working and living in and near to forests,, including gender, to address deforestation, degradation, biodiversity, and those that rely on natural resource management.

4.6 Existing funding for (related) initiative(s)/established contacts to potential donors:

All work is currently funded by Climate Forestry Limited, a private company registered in Malaysia by the Founder, Secretary-General of ARFM, Dr Michael Galante. ARFM recognises the significant in-kind contribution from all Institutional Partners and Members of the ARFM Executive Board.

4.7 Any other information deemed necessary/important:

Complete collaborating agencies representing Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean (respectfully) Africa The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (CSIR-FORIG) Dr Daniel Ofori Director Email: dofori@csir-forig.org.gh Phone: +233-(0)3220-60123/60373 Fax: +233-(0)3220-60121 URL: <https://csir-forig.org.gh> Asia-Pacific Royal Forest Department of Thailand Dr Preecha Ongprasert Director, Forestry Foreign Affairs Office Email: ongprasertpreecha@gmail.com Phone: +66 02 561 4292-3 ext 5035 Fax: - URL: www.forest.go.th/home/ Latin America and the Caribbean The Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) Dr Carlos Araya Director of Business Development, Resource Mobilisation and Strategic Partnerships Email: Carlos.Araya@catie.ac.cr Phone: +1 506 2558 2214 Fax: - URL: www.catie.ac.cr

4.8 Risk mitigation measures:

Material Risk Management, i.e., impact assessment, assignment of scope, probability, financial and mitigation management, is an integral part of the overall approach of ARFM with three main components: 1) Strategic: ensuring sustainability of ARFM and its partners; 2) Wellbeing and successful education experiences for other stakeholders; 3) Environmental, i.e., Free Informed Prior Consent) with local communities to jointly manage shared resources such as landscapes, catchments and vulnerable biodiversity) as well as hazard mitigation and avoidance in this era of anthropogenic climate change. Risk management is essential to achieve the educational benefits of UNSDG 4. Aspects of risk management are an essential part of ARFM and expected to be planned, budgeted and managed with consistent reporting metrics. Environmental and Social aspects are a vital part of risk management. General aspects of risk management are introduced, with specific points of the processes and practices, from key stakeholder perspectives. ARFM will implement a specific policy requirement that all ARFM projects and partners will ensure, prior to project approval, all practicable steps must be taken to manage or mitigate reasonably known risks by presenting a completed Project Risk Management process. For new or complex situations, a detailed action plan is required whereas for straightforward routine tasks, a standard checklist will suffice. Project activities and tasks shall be undertaken via a defined process. The plan shall be practicable and feasible, i.e., viable with procedures including health and safety, clearly communicated to the relevant parties. Included in the Risk Management would be the means for relevant stakeholders to provide feedback and any course reviews will document any such shortcomings together with the steps taken to avoid in future.

5. Indicative Budget (in US\$):

Indicative Budget (in US\$):

Description	ITTO	Counterpart	Total
Personnel	2,687,068	720,000	3,407,068
Sub-contracts	0	0	0
Travel and DSA	451,844	0	451,844
Capital Items	193,000	0	193,000
Consumables	318,920	0	318,920
Publication / Dissemination	90,000	180,000	270,000
Miscellaneous	38,800	100,000	138,800
Total	3,779,632	1,000,000	4,779,632

ITTO Project Monitoring & Review	20,000	-	20,000
Annual/Final Audit	20,000	-	20,000
ITTO Programme Support	460,156	-	460,156
ITTO Ex-post Evaluation	15,000	-	15,000
GRAND TOTAL	4,294,788	1,000,000	5,294,788

