

RECOFTC Communication on Engagement (COE) February 2018 – February 2020

Statement of Continued Support by the Executive Director

13 February 2020

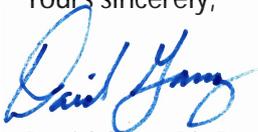
Dear Secretary General,

On behalf of the Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC), I am pleased reaffirm our support and commitment to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption.

RECOFTC works at the forefront of modern global development in the Asia-Pacific region, home to some of the world's most diverse and unique landscapes. As the region grows richer and more economically integrated, great opportunities for communities and countries arise. But they come with potential risks. Forests are being cut, burned, or degraded while the livelihoods of local people are upended. The challenge of balancing development and ensuring sustainability poses an urgent need for innovative solutions. To meet these needs and challenges, RECOFTC collaborates with a wide range of partners and stakeholders to put people at the center of sustainable development and co-create long-lasting, practical solutions – creating the necessary conditions for communities transform their landscapes and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

This is RECOFTC's Communication on Engagement (COE) with the United Nations Global Compact. It describes the actions our organization has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its principles over the last two years.

Yours sincerely,



David Ganz, Ph.D
Executive Director

RECOFTC envisions a world where the people of the Asia-Pacific region live equitably and sustainably, in and alongside thriving forests and healthy, resilient landscapes. Our mission is to enhance capacities for stronger rights, improved governance, and fairer benefits for local people in sustainable forest landscapes in the Asia-Pacific Region. To achieve this mission, RECOFTC embraces a philosophy that remains anchored in lessons learned from its 33 years of experience: local people are the best managers and stewards of forests and their landscapes. Thus, we follow four Guiding Principles that allow us to realize the full potential of our organization's vision and mission:

1. Clear and strong rights are essential
2. Meaningful engagement between communities, the private sector and government is imperative
3. Good governance is the bedrock for the development and implementation of 'community friendly' national forest policies, programs, and regulatory frameworks.
4. A fair share of benefits for local people is needed to help reduce poverty and motivate active participation in forest governance and sustainable management.

Our work and our operational practices therefore directly support the aims of the UN Global Compact and its 10 Principles. RECOFTC's Strategic Plan 2018-2023, titled *Resilient Forest Landscapes: Empowered Communities, Strengthened Institutions, and Shared Prosperity* outlines the various approaches we take to help local people find solutions together with government, the private sector, development partners, local institutes, academia, media and others to meet some of the most pressing development challenges for forested landscapes in the Asia-Pacific region. A brief description of our actions and outcomes is provided in the following sections. For more information on RECOFTC, please visit our website: www.recoftc.org.

Description of Actions

RECOFTC employs a rights-based programmatic and partnerships approach to develop the capacities of the various stakeholders – from communities to governments to non-governmental organizations and the private sector – to improve the policies, institutions and practices for devolved forest management and collaborative landscape management in the Asia-Pacific region. RECOFTC targets its engagement in seven focal countries – Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, and Viet Nam – and as well as at regional levels to promote learning and exchange.

Within the context of the governance and management of forested landscapes, a rights-based approach allows local communities – or others who may be marginalized, excluded or discriminated – (the rights holders) to exercise their rights, particularly for fair benefits, access to resources, secure tenure and gender equity. Rights-based interventions can also address inequities and disparities evident in these communities. Rights-based approaches also push institutions, organizations or other agencies (the duty bearers) to provide support towards equitable and inclusive development programs that benefit rights holders.

Examples of key RECOFTC actions since 2018 include:

1. Enhancing the skills and knowledge of over 7,000 duty bearers and rights holders from over 40 countries through over 300 training events to supporting rights-based collaborative forest and landscape management. At local levels, RECOFTC focused on developing the capacities of women to take on community leadership roles in managing local forest resources.

2. Facilitating or providing key inputs as resource persons at over 350 events and campaigns at local, national, and regional levels, reaching over 10,000 people. Most of the events included facilitating and contributing to multistakeholder forest landscape and governance processes at national and subnational levels in RECOFTC focal countries.
3. Stakeholders reached through all RECOFTC trainings, events, and campaigns represent over 150 institutions/organizations and over 420 local community groups. These include national policymakers, staff from line agencies and civil society organizations, researchers and practitioners, youth groups, local forest managers and users, and staff of private companies.
4. Producing over 130 communications products (including training and research materials, online and social media products, as well as journal articles and op-eds featured in non-RECOFTC publications) promoting rights-based approaches to sustainable forest and landscape management – many of these in the national languages of RECOFTC focal countries (Khmer, Indonesian, Lao, Burmese, Nepalese, Thai, and Vietnamese).
5. Piloting and demonstrating over 40 improved models and best practices for formalizing local people's forest tenure, forest management planning, forest product enterprise development for communities and smallholders. RECOFTC has directly supported over 420 forest user groups FUGs comprising 53,000 households and 361,000 ha of forest land within RECOFTC focal countries since 2018.

Specific RECOFTC actions contributing specifically under the areas of human rights, labor, environment, and anti-corruption include:

1. Participatory action research using value chain analysis and the Green Value tool as well as training and mentoring to help smallholders and community groups identify and maximize returns from forest products they grow and harvest.
2. Facilitating the piloting and demonstration of equitable partnerships between communities/smallholders private sector actors for forest products and services
3. Engagement in policy processes – such as ongoing Forest Law Enforcement, Governance, and Trade (FLEGT) –to enhance rights of local communities, smallholders, and laborers working the forest trader sector of RECOFTC partner countries
4. Engagement in global networks and forums to influence the policies and practices of private sector actors in forest sector. Such networks and forums include the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), the Asian Venture Philanthropist Network (AVPN), the Rights and Resources Initiative, and the Interlaken Group
5. Regular reviews, updates, and re-orientation of staff to our Core Values, Policies and Procedures, and Code of Conduct, particularly in relation to human rights, labor, environment, and anti-corruption.
6. The installation of solar panels on the roof of our Main Office in Bangkok to reduce our dependence on non-renewable energy sources.
7. Engagement in UN Global Compact events in Thailand (where RECOFTC is domiciled).

Measurement of Outcomes

RECOFTC's actions since 2018 have contributed to the following key outcomes:

1. The enactment or revision of over 10 policy and legal instruments related to improving the security for local people to benefit from sustainable forest management, improved natural resource governance, and a fairer share of benefits in RECOFTC focal countries.

2. The establishment and functioning of national multistakeholder working groups for community-based forestry in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar, as well as a regional one within the ASEAN cooperation framework. Member networks for community forestry groups were also established and strengthened in Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam.
3. The uptake of improved models and best practices for formalizing local people's forest tenure, forest management planning, forest product enterprise development for communities and smallholders by CF practitioners in focal countries. Examples include supporting the piloting and demonstration of three multistakeholder forest landscape management plans (in Indonesia, Nepal and Thailand) and six equitable business partnership agreements between forest producer groups/smallholders and private sector actors (in Lao PDR and Myanmar).

RECOFTC's actions and outcomes have contributed to overall positive development for collaborative forest and landscape in the Asia-Pacific region. This is evidenced by the significant increase in forest area formally managed by communities and smallholders (over 2 million hectares added) and the number of people with legal forest tenure rights (400,000 member-households added) across all RECOFTC focal countries between 2018 and 2020.