

## ASEAN Working Group on Social Forestry Strategic Response Fund (ASRF) under the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change Phase III

### BACKGROUND

The ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC) supports the ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN), now referred to as the ASEAN Working Group on Social Forestry (AWG-SF), in addressing three interrelated issues confronting the region---food insecurity, poverty, and climate change. This partnership programme, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), aims to integrate social forestry into the climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies of ASEAN and its member states. It promotes the inclusion of communities, women, and vulnerable groups in social forestry and climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.

The pilot phase of the AWG-SF Strategic Response Fund (ASRF) commenced in April 2014 and operated for 35 months until February 2017. During the pilot phase, 19 projects were approved and implemented in eight ASEAN Member States (AMS), namely, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. Majority of these projects involved national and local consultations to enhance policy on Social Forestry (SF), i.e., development of a road map on SF, revisions of existing statutes on SF, among others. Other AMS administered assessment studies that input to policy, and organized study tours to areas where best practices in SF had been proven. The pilot phase demonstrated that there is a demand for this type of grant among the AMS, and this was confirmed during the ASRF Program Steering Committee at the ASFCC Planning Meeting in August 2016.

The ASRF under ASFCC Phase 3 (2017-2020) is redesigned to make it more efficient and effective in responding to the needs of the AMS in the areas of food security, poverty alleviation, and climate change adaptation and mitigation. A sustainability strategy is built in, so that it can become the precursor for the creation of the ASRF Trust Fund.

### KEY FEATURES

The AWG-SF Strategic Response Fund (ASRF) is designed to provide AMS Leaders and Focal Points seed fund to respond to immediate needs or catalyze strategic action to address emerging issues, opportunities or other situations that may not have been anticipated but to which the AMS and AWG-SF's response is critical. Its important features are flexibility, adaptiveness, and timeliness.



### PROJECT PARTNERS



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC

## ABOUT SEARCA

The Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) is one of the 21 regional centers of excellence of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO). Founded on 27 November 1966, SEARCA is mandated to strengthen institutional capacities in agricultural and rural development in Southeast Asia through graduate scholarship, research and development, and knowledge management. It serves 11 SEAMEO member countries, namely: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, and Vietnam. SEARCA is hosted by the Government of the Philippines on the campus of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in Laguna, Philippines. It is supported by donations from SEAMEO member and associate member states, other governments, and various international donor agencies.

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## OBJECTIVES

- To enable the AMS Leaders and Focal Points to quickly respond to emerging issues and challenges and articulate policy recommendations and directions on social forestry as it relates to climate change, food security, and poverty alleviation.
- To support regional/ASEAN-level initiatives of developing policy frameworks and guidelines for cross-sectoral collaboration in support of the ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Framework on Climate Change: Agriculture and Forestry towards Food Security (AFCC) 2016-2025, and the ASEAN Vision of Regional Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry (ASEAN-FAF) 2016-2025.

## MECHANICS

There are two types of grants:

- **Grant I – Reserved Grants for 10 AMS**
  - The activities that will be funded will be within the bounds of the Strategic Plan of Action of the ASEAN Working Group on Social Forestry (SPA of AWG-SF) 2016-2025. The project could be any of the following: quick “turn-around” studies, exploratory reviews, meta-analysis/analytical studies and think pieces, dialogues/roundtable discussions/national and local consultations, and learning exchange activities.
  - There will be profiling of the SF status in each AMS to identify the gaps in achieving their SF goals and strategic interventions that can be funded by ASRF.
  - The project should be completed in a period not exceeding one year and within a maximum budget of USD 25,000 for each of the 10 AMS.
  - Proposals shall be evaluated by experts on SF from the academe, government, NGO, and PMO-SEARCA who will comprise the core group of evaluators.
- **Grant II – Participation to Conferences**
  - There will be six (6) slots for AMS Leaders and Focal Points on SF who wish to present a paper in a conference or forum relevant to their work on SF. The grant amount will be 1,200 US Dollars per proponent.

## SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Another new and important component of the ASRF's next phase is the development of a Business Plan for ASRF. The development of a Business Plan will determine how the fund can grow, analyzing possible fund leverage schemes from international donors and AMS. The Business Plan will also determine the feasibility of ASRF as precursor to an ASRF Trust Fund and the necessary steps and appropriate institutional arrangements for such.

Broad guidelines of the ASRF will be developed by SEARCA, with oversight/inputs from the SDC/ASFCC.

## DURATION

36 Months (March 2017 – February 2020)