

APFNet Guidelines for the Call for Projects 2026

APFNet is a regional organization dedicated to advancing sustainable forest management (SFM) and forest rehabilitation in the Asia-Pacific region. Since its establishment in 2008, APFNet has been supporting its member economies and partners through capacity building, demonstration projects, policy dialogues and information sharing.

As of April 2026, APFNet has implemented 60 regular demonstration and research projects in collaboration with over 70 forestry authorities, research and education institutions, and forest-related international organizations. These projects have involved 22 member economies across the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), Southeast Asia, South Asia, Greater Central Asia (GCA), Pacific Islands, North America, Latin America and East Asia. Thematic areas include sustainable forest management (SFM), restoration and management of degraded forests, community forestry development, poverty reduction through forest-related actions, forest resource monitoring, forest policy research and transboundary ecosystem security.

APFNet's annual project calls have been suspended since 2022 due to the global pandemic. In 2026, APFNet is pleased to announce the resumption of the Call for Projects, marking the launch of APFNet's Strategic Plan (2026–2030) (hereinafter SP4).

These guidelines provide guidance to potential applicants on the preparation of project concept notes and full project proposals under the APFNet Call for Projects 2026, and should be read alongside SP4. Further guidance and specific instructions are also provided in the annotated document templates.

1. Strategic Alignment

1.1 The proposed project should align with at least one of the six strategic goals defined in SP4

Goal	Description
Goal 1	Advance forest landscape restoration to contribute to regional and global restoration targets, enhance ecosystem resilience, and promote biodiversity conservation
Goal 2	Foster resilient and inclusive forest-based livelihoods by empowering communities, promoting equitable resource management, and strengthening adaptive capacity to climate change
Goal 3	Strengthen forest governance and policy coherence across member economies to support effective implementation of SFM and enhance cross-border cooperation
Goal 4	Improve human capital and institutional capacity by equipping stakeholders with the skills, knowledge, and resources required to address evolving forestry challenges
Goal 5	Promote regional collaboration, knowledge management, and innovation through digital platforms, knowledge exchange, and multi-stakeholder dialogue
Goal 6	Ensure financial resilience and sustainability by diversifying funding sources and cultivating strategic partnerships

1.2 The proposed project should contribute to at least one of the following global frameworks:

UN Strategic Plan for Forests (2017–2030); UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030); Bonn Challenge and New York Declaration on Forests; Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement; Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs); APEC and regional mechanisms.

2. The proposed project should align with one or more of APFNet’s four strategic pillars as follows:

2.1 Capacity building

Projects proposed under this pillar should aim to enhance the knowledge, skills, and institutional capacities required for effective forest management and policy implementation. The priority actions may include: 1) Providing tailored technical assistance to address identified gaps in forest governance, planning, and monitoring; 2) Supporting the implementation of field demonstration and innovation, such as training on restoration ecology, climate-smart forestry and digital forest monitoring; 3) Improving monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) capacities, such as skills in data collection, processing, and analysis; 4) specifically developing the capacity of women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities ; 5) Facilitating regional peer learning.

2.2 Field Demonstration

Projects proposed under this pillar should aim to develop, pilot, and scale up innovative models or best practices for forest restoration, sustainable forest management (SFM) and community-based resource use. The priority actions may include: 1) Supporting the national strategies and forestry priorities of member economies and/or global frameworks, such as NDCs under the Paris Agreement and NBSAPs under the Kunming-Montreal GBF; 2) Promoting multifunctional forest landscape restoration, balancing ecological integrity with social, economic, and environmental benefits; 3) Piloting and scaling up innovative approaches such as close-to-nature forestry, agroforestry systems, and climate-smart forestry; 4) Applying digital technologies such as AI, drones, and remote sensing, for forest monitoring and landscape planning, including risk assessment and mitigation strategies (e.g., fire, pests and diseases).

2.3 Policy Dialogue

Projects proposed under this pillar should aim to foster shared understanding, policy harmonization, and cross-border cooperation to address evolving forestry challenges. The priority actions may include: 1) Facilitating policy exchanges and peer learning on sustainable land use, restoration strategies, climate adaptation, and transboundary cooperation; 2) Advancing policy research and technical assistance on emerging issues such as transboundary forest fire management and wildlife conservation; 3) Integrating forestry into broader sustainability frameworks, including climate change, biodiversity, sustainable development, and green economy, and supporting member economies in aligning NDCs, NBSAPs, and SDG action plans.

2.4 Information sharing

Projects proposed under this pillar should aim to enhance the accessibility, relevance, and impact of forestry knowledge through targeted communication and learning mechanisms. The priority actions may include: 1) Strengthening regional knowledge sharing through digital platforms and repositories, such as the establishment of a regional knowledge hub and digital library; 2)

Synthesizing project experiences, outcomes, and best practices, and prioritizing their dissemination and knowledge sharing through APFNet’s established platforms and mechanisms; 3) Sharing cutting-edge forestry knowledge, such as the selection of suitable tree species and silviculture methods under future climate change scenarios, biodiversity conservation and biodiversity credits, forest fire management, pest and disease management, as well as forest resource monitoring and management technologies (e.g., AI and modeling).

3. Project Category

Category	Funding Amount	Duration	Reviewing Body
Small-size Project	Below USD 100,000	≤24 months	APFNet Secretariat
Regular (Full-size) Project	Above USD 100,000	Typically 24–48 months	Project Appraisal Panel

4 Eligible Applicants

This call for projects is open to member economies, observer economies and partners of APFNet.

5 How to apply

There are 2 stages to the application process.

The Stage 1 Concept Note is mandatory for all applicants and submissions must be accompanied by an official endorsement letter signed by the appropriate APFNet Council Representative(s), proving the consistency of the project ideas with the priorities of the targeted economy(ies).

If a proposed project covers two or more member economies, the application must include an endorsement letter from the Council Representative of each economy. In cases where it is impractical to obtain all endorsements before the concept note submission deadline, the applicant must at least provide the endorsement letter from the Council Representative of the economy where the lead executing agency is located, together with a written explanation of the status of endorsements from other target economies. Full endorsements from all target economies must be submitted by Stage 2 (Full Proposal as described in Section 5.1) at the latest. The Secretariat may, on a case-by-case basis, grant an extension for submitting outstanding endorsements.

When a partner, such as an international organization member of APFNet, submits a project application, the endorsement letter may be signed by an authorized representative of the applicant organization instead of an economy’s Council Representative. The applicant shall clearly indicate its APFNet membership category in the application.

Stage 2 Full Project Proposal is required by invitation only.

5.1 Application Procedures

Stage	Description	Submission Deadline
Stage 1: Concept	This document is mandatory for all applicants. It should be	July 5, 2026

Stage	Description	Submission Deadline
Note	<p>concise (<15 pages) and outline the project rationale, specific problem statement, alignment with SP4 strategic goals and pillars, SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) project objectives, key activities/actions, expected outcomes, and a preliminary budget estimate.</p> <p>Template: [Concept Note Template with annotations] [Concept Note Template]</p>	
Stage 2: Full Project Proposal	<p>After shortlisting, selected projects will be invited to complete the Full Project Proposal.</p> <p>The detailed proposal must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A comprehensive work plan covering pre- implementation, implementation, and post- implementation phases. 2. A detailed budget. 3. A sustainability strategy addressing the following aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Financial sustainability: post- project funding sources (e.g., government budget, carbon credits, revolving funds, enterprise co- financing). *Institutional sustainability: handover arrangements, local ownership, and the capacity of local institutions to continue activities. *Social sustainability: community- led governance, benefit- sharing mechanisms, continued engagement of local stakeholders, and full integration of GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion) and climate- biodiversity- livelihood nexus considerations. <p>Proponents are also encouraged to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Environmental sustainability: integration of sustainability principles and frameworks (e.g., sustainable procurement and resource management). <p>APFNet will provide the Full Project Proposal Template and comprehensive guidelines to the invited applicants later to help them develop their proposals .</p>	September 30, 2026

5.2 Submission Procedure

The completed Concept Note, official endorsement letter(s) and other supporting material must

be prepared in English and sent to the APFNet Secretariat by email to projectsubmission@apfnet.cn