



Background paper on the next Forum of the Standing Committee on Finance

Expected actions by the Standing Committee on Finance

The Standing Committee on Finance (SCF) will be invited to take note of the status of preparations of the SCF Forum.

I. Possible actions for consideration by the Standing Committee on Finance

1. The SCF may wish to take note of the status of preparations of the SCF Forum.

A. Background

2. The Conference of Parties (COP) mandated the SCF to organize a forum for the communication and continued exchange of information among bodies and entities dealing with climate finance to promote linkages and coherence. Furthermore, the COP requested the SCF to facilitate participation of the private sector, financial institutions and academia in the Forum, as well as to further strengthen its stakeholder engagement.

3. At SCF 21, the Committee agreed that the theme of its next Forum will be “Finance for Nature-based Solutions,” including on the sub-themes. The COP and the CMA welcomed the decision of the SCF on this topic. During the intersessional period, up to SCF 24, co-facilitators have developed the draft programme outline of the Forum¹, opened a call for inputs from Parties and observers to inform the preparation of the Forum², organized virtual consultations with submitters of the input, and scoped venues and options for holding the Forum in 2021.

4. At SCF 22, SCF considered the draft programme of the Forum and subsequently at SCF 23, provided views on the possible timing and potential hosts for the Forum. The SCF agreed to consider dates and the venue of the Forum at a future meeting, with a view to deciding latest by April or May 2021.

B. Scenarios to hold the SCF Forum

5. The SCF aims to hold a physical Forum and facilitate discussions as meaningfully as possible. Previous fora of the committee have promoted an engaging format whereby participants have deliberated on key questions around mobilizing and accessing climate finance and identified solutions and policy recommendations. The Forum is known for its inclusivity and networking potential and the only platform under the UNFCCC dedicated to convening climate finance stakeholders from all levels.

¹ https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/BN6_SCF22_Forum_0.pdf.

² <https://unfccc.int/topics/climate-finance/events-meetings/scf-forum/the-next-scf-forum-finance-for-nature-based-solutions>.

6. In view of these strong merits of holding a physical Forum, the SCF postponed the Forum on Finance for Nature-based Solutions to 2021. The ongoing pandemic situation has made it challenging to confirm the venue for holding the Forum in its usual capacity of 120–130 participants, however it can be expected that with a gradual roll out of vaccinations and easing of international borders, it might be possible to hold an in-person event in the latter half of the year, prior to COP 26 in Glasgow. The co-facilitators are exploring a few possibilities in this regard as presented in paragraphs 7 and 8.

1. In-person Forum

Bahrain

7. The Kingdom of Bahrain has invited the SCF to organize the Forum in conjunction with the Energy, Water and Climate Change Conference, to be held from 12 to 14 October 2021 under the patronage of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The secretariat has been exchanging information regarding logistical arrangements and travel and health requirements with the organizer.

France

8. The IUCN World Conservation Congress is scheduled to be held from 3 to 11 September 2021 in Marseille, France. The Congress has four components, namely, Forum (4 to 7 September), Exhibition (4 to 9 September), IUCN Members' Assembly (8 to 10 September) and the Nature Generation Areas "Espaces Générations Nature" (4 to 11 September). The Congress will cover seven themes including accelerating climate change mitigation and adaptation. Within this theme, a strong focus will be on nature-based climate mitigation and adaptation efforts as an essential strategy to overcome the challenges posed by a changing climate.³

9. Taking into account the current health situation, the IUCN has decided to organise a "hybrid" Congress, thus allowing those not able to physically attend the event to follow and participate in some parts of the Congress remotely.⁴ The secretariat is communicating with the French Ministry of Ecological Transition regarding possible arrangements in Marseille.

Bonn

10. Bonn as a host city of UN Climate Change conferences and events is another option that may present opportunity, when it is permitted to host international meetings again. Preparations could be advanced relatively quickly as most logistical needs can be catered to within the premises.

11. In the above options presented, a reduced capacity is envisaged with additional features of live broadcast of the Forum and virtual engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, taking into account the COVID19 condition and travel policies of host countries. A smaller group of about 30-50 participants comprising of resource persons, representative groups and SCF members would be more manageable.

12. The SCF may further consider optimizing costs by holding its meeting, prior to, or after the Forum at the chosen venue.

2. Forum in two parts

13. Cognizant of the situation and expectations that the SCF deliver the COP mandate, the committee may consider organizing the Forum in two parts, whereby the first part is held virtually in 2021 and a second part is held in-person the following year. The virtual part would be a stand-alone event timed to avoid overlaps with other related fora. The outcomes of the virtual part would inform the in-person part in 2022, the venue and timing of which would be determined by the committee at a future meeting. Finance for nature-based solutions is expected to remain relevant in

³ See <https://www.iucncongress2020.org/programme/congress-themes/climate-change>.

⁴ See <https://iucncongress2020.org/newsroom/information-congress-preparations>.

the coming years as countries refer to them in their latest and previous nationally determined contributions.^{5,6}

14. The draft programme of the Forum would need to be adjusted to this scenario and the co-facilitators would design the virtual programme as a shorter focused event on select topics from the draft Forum programme and those raised in the submissions and consultations with members and stakeholders. The physical event to be organized in 2022 would be informed by part 1, address remaining key topics and focus on the break-out group discussions. The physical event could take advantage of using the second day of the Forum for a project site-visit to witness initiatives on nature-based solutions and hear first-hand experiences from project developers.

15. In terms of reporting outcomes, the SCF may wish to use the outcomes of the discussions in the virtual event for an update at COP 26 and submit a detailed summary emanating from both parts at COP 27.

3. Virtual Forum

16. A fully virtual Forum in 2021 would be an approach the committee may wish to consider, should it not wish to pursue other scenarios, and would be able to report on the outcomes and potential recommendations at COP 26. Several high-level events held since the start of the pandemic have used the virtual platform and there are lessons learned on optimizing the virtual media.

17. A fully virtual event could be organized stand-alone preferably over a shorter duration to suit different time zones. In terms of the platform, the secretariat does not have a ready solution conducive to hosting highly interactive and networking-based events, therefore the planning and budget would include vendor research and anticipated costs for procurement.

II. Way forward

18. The co-facilitators with the support of the secretariat would continue discussing the details of the offer received from Bahrain and the possibility of holding the Forum in conjunction with events in France or alternatively in Bonn. The co-facilitators will also explore the other scenarios contained in the note taking into account views expressed by members at SCF 24. A final proposal would be presented for intersessional decision-making in June 2021.

19. Under the guidance of the co-facilitators, a synthesis paper will be produced by the secretariat on key findings from the submissions and in time for the Forum to be held in any format.

20. Co-facilitators will refine the Forum programme to suit the agreed format of the Forum by the SCF, considering submissions, members' comments and outcomes of the virtual consultations. An updated Forum programme will be available for consideration by the SCF intersessionally and as soon as possible. During the intersessional period, expert organizations, Parties and other stakeholders will be contacted as needed to further develop the agenda and identify resource persons. A revised indicative timeline of activities leading up to COP 26 is contained in the annex.

⁵ See Synthesis Report by the secretariat: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2021_02E.pdf.

⁶ See IUCN report <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2019-030-En.pdf>.

Annex

Revised indicative timeline and milestones for preparation of the Forum (Virtual or in-person in 2021)

Working Draft

Milestones and indicative timeline					
Activities and deliverables	2020	2021			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Developing the draft programme					
Objectives, sessions, sub-themes					
Call for public inputs					
Open call period					
Call related outreach					
Analysis of submissions					
Preparation of Technical Paper					
Forum venue and timing^a					
Venue options, legal assessment, MoU					
SCF agreement on venue and timing			Intersessional		
Logistical arrangements					
Bookings, visas, travel etc. (in-person)				July–Aug	
Virtual platform procurement (fully virtual)				July–Aug	
Fund-raising					
Finalizing programme					
Annotate sessions, identify resource persons				July–Aug	
Receive feedback from SCF				Intersessional	
Organize Forum					
Scenario: In-person				Sep (France/Bonn)	Oct (Bahrain)
Scenario: Part 1 virtual or Fully virtual				Sep	
Outreach					
Outreach within and outside UNFCCC					COP26
Forum report					
Develop draft Forum report				Sep	Oct
Finalize report including recommendations				SCF25/SCF26	SCF25/SCF26

^a If SCF decides to hold the Forum in 2022, the timeline of activities will be adjusted accordingly.