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01 MAR 2023

MEMORANDUM

FOR/TO : All Undersecretaries
All Assistant Secretaries
All Service Directors
All Bureau Directors
All Regional Executive Directors
All Heads of Attached Agencies

FROM : The OIC Director
Human Resource Development Service

SUBJECT : INVITATION TO NOMINATE A CANDIDATE FOR THE 2023
AFoCO SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EXCHANGE
PARTNERSHIP (STEP) PROGRAM

This refers to the letter dated February 2023 of Mr. Sunpil Jin, Vice Executive Director, Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO), requesting the DENR to disseminate and encourage DENR qualified personnel to apply for the 2023 AFoCO Science and Technology Exchange Partnership (STEP) Program.

An applicant shall possess the following qualification requirements of the DENR:

1. Has held permanent plantilla position for at least two (2) years in the DENR at the time of application;
2. Has obtained performance ratings of at least Very Satisfactory for the last two (2) consecutive rating periods;
3. Has been performing duties and responsibilities relevant to the field of study/travel being applied for;
4. Has no pending administrative case;
5. Has no pending application and nomination for other study and non-study trips;
6. Has not exceeded four (4) official foreign travel within a year;
7. Has submitted all the required reports from previous foreign travels
8. Has rendered the required service obligation for a scholarship previously enjoyed;
9. Must be willing to conduct a master's thesis aligned to the priority programs of the Department or related topics to be identified/approved by the DENR;
10. Must be willing to sign a scholarship service contract and shall serve the DENR with the corresponding period of service obligation;
11. Must not be a delinquent scholar; and
12. In good mental and physical health.

The nominee shall submit the following requirements to Career Development Division-HRDS **on or before 17 March 2023**:


1. Memorandum addressed to the Chair of the Human Resource Development Committee (HRDC), attention HRDC Secretariat to be endorsed by Head of Office and concurred by Supervising Undersecretary and Assistant Secretary;
2. Resolution from HRDC Counterpart recommending the nomination of the applicant;
3. Service Record;
4. Certificate of no pending administrative case;
5. Certification from the Director supervising human resources/Assistant Regional Director for Management Service/Assistant Director (Region/Bureau/Attached Agency) stating that the applicant:
 - a. has no pending scholarship nomination;
 - b. has not been a delinquent scholar from a previous scholarship grant;
 - c. has submitted all the required reports from previous foreign travels.
6. Updated Personal Data Sheet, with Work Experience Sheet, duly signed by authorized person administering oath; and
7. Self Certification of official Travel History for the past 24 months;

The DENR HRDC shall screen and select qualified candidates to the program. Selected candidates will be notified and endorsed to the AFoCo STEP Program, to proceed with the application/admission process.

Attached are the invitation, STEP Program guidelines (tentative) and Concept note for Seed Conservation Promotion Program (KEYS for Future), reported at the 7th Session of the Assembly (A-22-7-10-Annex5), for reference.

Should you need further information about the requirements, please communicate with the HRDC Secretariat at email address: hrdcs2020@gmail.com or telephone: (02) 8927-9107 or VOIP 1063.

For your information and appropriate action.


MIRIAM M. MARCELO

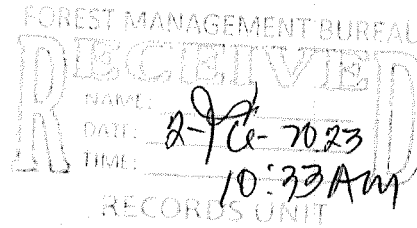
DATE: 2023.02.03

REF.NO.:

CR-20

Representatives of the Parties

cc: National Focal Points



Dear Distinguished Representatives,

Invitation for 2023 AFoCO Science and Technology Exchange Partnership (STEP) Program

Greetings from the Secretariat!

According to the approved 2023 Work Plan at the 7th Session of the Assembly, the Secretariat cordially invites the nomination of candidates for the Science and Technology Exchange Partnership (STEP) program.

The STEP program will be held at the Baekdu Daegan National Arboretum (BDNA, located in northern Gyeongsang province in the Republic of Korea) from 3 to 27 July 2023. Please be informed that the schedule is tentative and subject to change due to COVID-19 circumstances. A total of four (4) technical-level government officials/researchers in the field of forest plan biodiversity from the Parties will be selected. Training objectives and tentative training schedule is described in **Annex-1**.

Each Party is kindly requested to nominate one (1) candidate with his/her curriculum vitae as an attachment no later than 3 April 2023. Program participants will be selected based on the following criteria: work/professional description/background, work experiences and field exposure, English frequency, and health condition. The nominees from the Parties who are interested in depositing seeds to the Baekdudaegan Global Seed Vault (BGSV) will be prioritized in the selection process. Please refer to **Annex-2** for the detailed information.

Upon selection of the participants, our staff from the Secretariat will further approach you on the details of logistical arrangements. The invited participants will be supported by the living allowance, accommodation, and round-trip airfare (economy class) in the Republic of Korea.

Thank you for your cooperation, and I am looking forward to your sustained cooperation in the program and AFoCO activities.

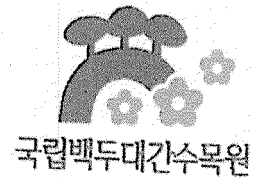
Sincerely,



Sunpil Jin
Vice Executive Director

[Annexes]

- Annex-1. STEP Program guidelines (tentative)
- Annex-2. Concept note for Seed Conservation Promotion Program (KEYS for Future),
reported at the 7th Session of the Assembly (A-22-7-10-Annex5)



**2023 AFoCO Science and Technology Exchange Partnership
(STEP) Program**

Long Term Training Course for Governmental officials on

**“The Role of Arboretums in the
Conservation of Forest Plant Biodiversity”**

COURSE GUIDELINES

3 – 27 July, 2023

Baekdudaegan National Arboretum (BDNA)

Republic of Korea

1. BACKGROUND

Humans are equipped with the materials and shelters necessary to live lives away from biodiversity. Recently, however, biodiversity has been drastically reduced due to population growth, environmental pollution, indiscriminate habitat destruction, global warming, and invasive species. According to the OECD Environmental Outlook to 2050, biodiversity around the world is expected to decline by about 10 percent by 2050, especially in Asia. The importance of plant conservation has emerged and the Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) indicated that botanical gardens (or arboreta) have collectively accumulated centuries of resources and expertise that now play a key role in plant conservation.

Baekdudaegan National Arboretum (BDNA) is an arboretum established to support the conservation biodiversity and the restoration of the ecological system of the Baekdudaegan, the largest and the longest mountain ridge in Korea that connects the Northern and Southern parts of the Korean peninsula. The Baekdudaegan is also the ecological axis of the peninsula. Opened in 2018, the BDNA has been providing, domestically and internationally, omnibus services from seed and genetic resources conservations to application technologies. The AFoCO STEP program with BDNA will cover topics ranging from the design, construction and operation of arboreta to seed collection and reservation technologies, as well as biodiversity conservation strategies.

2. OBJECTIVES

The program objectives are to 1) share comprehensive knowledge, skills and experiences for plant conservation such as classification of diversity of forest plants, seed collection, seed management, tissue culture, seed viability test and propagation; and 2) improve the capacity of officials by providing hands-on experiences related to the landscape design, construction and operation of an arboretum.

3. TARGET PARTICIPANTS

This long term course welcomes technical level researchers with at least a year's experience in the field of forest plant biodiversity. As lectures will be delivered in English, applicants should have a sufficient command of both spoken and written English.

The nominees from the Parties who are willing to deposit seeds to the Baekdu-daegan Global Seed Vault (BGSV) will be prioritized in the selection process, following the request from the BDNA. The BGSV's concept note for the Seed Conservation Promotion Program (Keep Eternally Your Seeds for Future, KEYS for Future) reported at the 7th Session of the Assembly (A-22-7-10-Annex-5) will be promoted during the STEP program to encourage the Member Parties' sustainable biodiversity conservation efforts.

4. DOMESTIC TRANSPORTATION ON 2 – 3 JULY

On the day of arrival (2 July, 2022), participants are expected to travel to Hotel KOBOS (Address: Gukhoe-daero 72-gil, Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 07238 9) on their own. No airport transportation will be provided. Information on the airport limousine can be found at the hotel website (<http://www.koboshotel.com/html/about/location.asp>).

On 3 July, 2022, participants are expected to gather at the hotel lobby at 09:00AM. A staff member of

the AFoCO Secretariat will bring the participants to the Secretariat Office for a meeting. At the end of the meeting, participants will move to the BDNA. They will be accompanied by some staffs of the BDNA. It will takes about 3 hours by bus from the AFoCO Secretariat to the BDNA.

Remind that it is tentative and we can take a different route depending on the situation.

5. AIR TICKETS

Should participants be able to provide a preferred flight schedule, the Secretariat will purchase the flight tickets on behalf of the participants.

6. TRAINING SCHEDULE (tentative and will be updated)

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
7/2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Arrival in Korea Move to Hotel KOBOS Yeouido	PCR Test at the Yeongdeungpo Public Health Service Center Visit to office of AFoCO secretariat Move to BDNA Welcome Ceremony in BDNA	Orientation Seed Vault - Seed collection practice - Making herbarium specimens	Seed Vault - Seed collection lecture - Making herbarium specimens	Seed Vault - Seed management lecture - Seed cleaning	Seed Vault - Seed viability test lecture - Seed viability test practice - X-ray analysis	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Gardens management - Current state of gardens - Maintenance management plan - mid-, long-term planning	Gardens management - Management of creating gardens	Gardens management - Management of creating gardens	Program at NNIBR (Nakdonggang National Institute of Biological Resources)	Program at NIE (National Institute of Ecology)	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	Seed Vault (KEYS program)	Plant Propagation - Facilities, equipment for tissue culture - Tissue culture theory - Making medium	Plant Propagation - Tissue culture theory - Callus induction practice - Making medium	Plant Propagation - Tissue culture theory - Making medium	Gardens management - Garden photography Pine forest road tracking	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	Seed Vault (KEYS program)	Program at SJNA (Sejong National Arboretum)	Resting program at forest road Seed Vault - Seed Vault and seed storage COVID-19 test (if needed)	Completion Ceremony in BDNA Rapid Antigen Test at Local Public Health (if needed) Move to Seoul	Departure from Korea	

7. VISA APPLICATION

All participants are expected to apply for a visa to travel to stay in Korea for at least 35 days. The application process for visas differs depending on whether the passport is an Ordinary passport or an Official passport. Participants should visit the relevant website of embassies to check the visa requirements of their respective countries.

8. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The AFoCO Secretariat and BDNA will cover participation costs as stated in the table below. During the training course, reimbursements will be given personally to the participants in Korean Won.

Item	Amount (US\$)	Remarks
Airfares	-	- The Secretariat will arrange the economy class flight
Living Allowance	KRW1.5 M per person (Fixed Cost)	- To cover local transportation, meals, personal expenses, and other incidentals from the departing day of his/her own country to the arrival day of his/her own country
Accommodation	-	- The Secretariat will reserve the hotel in Seoul - The participants will stay in the BDNA dormitory rooms (single room per participant)
Visa / Travel Insurance	Actual cost with a receipt	- Visa fee and travel insurance will be reimbursed when a proper receipt is submitted * <u>The Secretariat will cover only travel insurance including the COVID-19 quarantine, not other medical insurances</u> * <u>Any other medical costs or items that are not covered by the travel insurance will not be covered by the Secretariat</u>
COVID-19 test fees	Actual cost with a receipt	- Test fees occurred inside of Korea will be reimbursed upon submission of receipt
Others	-	- Any other items not listed in this table will not be supported in principle

9. CURRENCY & CREDIT CARDS

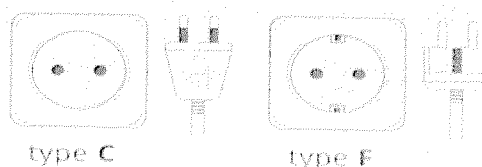
The currency in Republic of Korea is Korean Won (KRW).

Foreign currencies are accepted at bank branches and money exchangers located within the Incheon International Airport (<https://www.airport.kr/ap/en/svc/getFacilityMain.do>). Please note that there are no money exchangers near the BDNA. As such, participants are strongly advised to exchange the money at the International Airport. Using cash or credit card for transactions is recommended.

10. ELECTRICITY

The standard voltage in Republic of Korea is 220 V, 60 Hz and plugs with round 2 pins are generally used. Plug adapters can be purchased from local stores in Republic of Korea.

* BDNA do not provide any adapter.



11. LOCAL TIME

Republic of Korea is 9:00 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+9:00).

12. ATTIRE

The hot summers in Republic of Korea starts from late May up to August, with an average monthly temperature of 27°C(22°C~30°C). Participants should note it can rain frequently in July, so they are kindly requested to prepare raincoats, umbrellas, and casual clothes.

13. COVID-19 INSTRUCTION

Before entry: The overseas entrant shall use the Advance Input System for Quarantine Information to proceed with the advance input before the entry (Q-Code) from here: <https://cov19ent.kdca.go.kr/cpassportal/biz/befatstmnt/main.do?lang=en>.

In Korea: Anyone showing signs of a fever (37.5 °C or higher), coughing, difficulty in breathing, and/or other possible signs of COVID-19 must visit the nearest local public health service center to take the RAT. When s/he gets positive result, the person must take the RT-PCR test immediately. Those who are infected with COVID-19 upon arrival in Korea will be taken to a government designated quarantine facility for 7 days and the payment will be covered by the insurance.

14. GENERAL ENQUIRIES / EMERGENCY CONTACT

Addresses:

- AFoCO Secretariat (<https://afocosec.org/>): 8F, 9 Gukhoe-daero 62-gil, Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea 07236
- BDNA (<https://www.bdna.or.kr/eng/>): 1501, Chunyang-ro, Chunyang-myeon, Bonghwa-gun, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Republic of Korea 36209

For more information or in the case of emergencies, please contact:

<p>Soozin RYANG Program Officer, Capacity Building and Evaluation Team, Project and Program Division soozin.ryang@afocosec.org T. +82-2-785-899</p>	<p>Min Gyu KO Assistant Manager, Education Service Division, BDNA mkko@koagi.or.kr T. +82-54-679-0546</p>
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Concept Note (draft)

Seed Conservation Promotion Program

“Keep Eternally Your Seeds for Future (KEYS for Future)”

with the Baekdudaegan Global Seed Vault (BGSV)

Background

Seeds are considered as the most efficient means for *ex-situ* conservation of plants under the steady biodiversity losses caused by deforestation and climate change. The Seed Conservation Promotion Program “Keep Eternally Your Seeds for Future (KEYS for Future)” serves the said concept as enhancing the genetic resource capacity of the member countries vigorously.

The uniqueness of the program is to store seed in the Baekdudaegan Global Seed Vault (BGSV), which is the only permanent storage facility in the world for wild plant seeds to stand natural and man-made disasters. The BGSV is a commemorative outcome of the Korea Forest Service (KFS) to express gratitude towards the global society for their aids for the last decades to the Republic of Korea (ROK). The ROK received aids from many countries, including the Asian countries, as the country was devastated during 1950s and 1960s by the Korean War and land use change for industrialization. During the era, these aids made the KFS's devotion more valuable, hence the forest of Korea was greened at a rapid pace.

The ROK, through the BGSV, has now a will to support the global society to cooperate in mitigating such consequences through joint efforts toward climate change and biodiversity. The BGSV is regarded as an ultimate insurance policy for world's wild plants supply, provisions for future generations to avoid ecological crises, and it will contribute to overcome the challenges to climate change and disasters. As storing seeds in the BGSV, the depositing organization or country have a full authority to utilize the seeds. Likewise, countries can jointly secure millions of seeds representing wild natural species available in the world today for centuries.

Benefits to AFoCO Member Countries

The member country can store the seeds in the BGSV to conserve the diversity of wild plants and to make a backup copy of the seeds. For the country that deposited the seeds in the BGSV, the BDNA can share opportunities as follows:

Firstly, various scientific and technical training will be provided including knowledge exchange with the BGSV in the future through the AFoCO STEP Program. Secondly, various seed studies that contained the quality, ability of seeds can be conducted using BDNA's state-of-the-art seed research facilities. In addition, the country will be favorably invited to workshops and symposia organized by the BDNA or BGSV.

About the Beakdudaegan National Arboretum (BDNA) and the BGSV

The BDNA is one of the AFoCO's partner organizations and currently cooperate with AFoCO in terms of conducting the Science and Technology Exchange Partnership (STEP) Program. The BDNA was established by KFS to operate the BGSV for a long-term seed storage and short- & mid-term seed bank for research of wild plant seeds.

The objectives of the BGSV can be summarized as follows: to conserve and protect the plant genetic resources sustainably and to have permanent security of seeds as source for regeneration and restoration of endangered, vulnerable or lost plant species in the world. BGSV has visions to become a leading seed storage facility in the world and to have storage of 10,000 species of wild plant seed by 2030.

BGSV is the second future-proofed seed storage facility in the world. Nevertheless, it is the first repository for wild plant resources (seeds). And it is the largest repository in Asia, with an area of 2,100 square meters, capable of storing more than two million accessions of seeds.

As located at an altitude of 600 m or higher, it is not affected by sea level rise which is the effect of the climate crisis. The storage is located deep underground and is protected from external physical shocks and reckless access. The storage is also built-in case of earthquakes. This special facility has been designated as an important facility of Korea and is being managed by the government, so it can be responsible for safety and security.

All seeds are always stored at minus 20 degrees and 40 percent relative humidity. Of course, this storage condition is checked every day and the stability of the storage is guaranteed through a close inspection twice a year. Your seeds will be always stored into the future under uniform conditions.

Qualification for Storing Seeds

No qualifications are required to store seeds.

Seed Types

All seeds of domestic wild plants that can be stored by an institute or seed bank in the country.

Costs or Fees

Free of charge policy for storing and protecting the seeds in the BGSV will be applied. The BGSV will provide all equipment for storing seeds such as the black box, bags, sealed labels, and others, including shipping costs.

Procedures for Seed Storing to the BGSV

STEP-1. Application for Seed Deposit

- Let us know your institutional or national intention of storing seeds in the BGSV by phone or e-mail to the AFoCO Secretariat.

STEP-2. Mutual Confirmation on Seed Inventory

- BGSV will provide a 'Seed Inventory Form' for storing seeds. The country should fill out the form and send to BGSV.
- BGSV will do a preliminary check of the seed inventory by quarantine list of the Korean government.
** Plants (or seeds) that are currently prohibited to be brought into Korea cannot be brought in. The BGSV are trying to solve the quarantine issues so that all plant seeds can be brought into Korea.*
- BGSV will inform the country about the list of seeds that can be stored in the Seed Vault accordingly, which has been confirmed for preliminary review.
- The researcher may carry out quarantine according to the sending country's quarantine laws against this list and secure documents.
**The number of seeds that can be stored in the seed vault may be limited subject to the capacity of the seed vault.*
- The country should send BGSV a 'Seed Deposit Request' for the seed list with 'Quarantine Result Certificate'.
**If necessary, BGSV can provide the 'Seed Deposit Request' form to the country.*

STEP-3. Transport of Seeds Using a Black Box

- BGSV will send the country all items of the black box for storing seeds. The country should pack the seeds in a black box. A separate guideline on how to use the black box will be provided.
- Shipping the black box to BGSV.
**At this time, the black box must be sealed, and the quarantine certificate issued in your country must be attached on the black box.*

- As BGSV receive the black box from the Korean Quarantine Headquarters, then BGSV will immediately proceed with the storage procedure for the seed vault.

STEP-4. Seed Conservation in the Seed Vault

- BGSV will determine the storage numbering and storage location of the black box. And your black box will be stored in the seed vault permanently.
- Once the seed has conserved in the seed vault, BGSV will issue the 'Seed Conservation Deposit Certificate' with all storage information. The certificate will be sent to the country by e-mail and postal mail.

Further Consideration for Capacity Building

The AFoCO can bridge the proposed seed storage program of "Keep Eternally Your Seed for Future (KEYS for Future)" to the STEP Program upon the wishes of the member countries who want to access the BGSV for capacity building.