

Global Dialogue Facilitator

Through timber construction, there is a future in which forests can support cities and, in return, cities can support forests. As the global population increases, particularly in cities, the construction sector is expected to exponentially grow in order to accommodate the demand for housing and other infrastructure. Current construction techniques are a significant contributor to the global climate crisis and urgently need to be transformed. By substituting the carbon-intensive materials commonly used in construction with forest economy biomaterials, such as wood and bamboo which sequester carbon, we can create buildings with reduced carbon emissions. However, this timber construction industry is still in its nascency and there is a need to address its market gaps and leverage opportunities to accelerate its development and increase its uptake.

These interventions for the mass timber construction industry can be segmented into seven main categories of solutions that affect the value chain and enablers of the ecosystem. Through various internal and external discussions, Climate Smart Forest Economy Program (CSFEP) has categorized potential solutions as relating to i) Finance and insurance; ii) Product and process certifications; iii) Communication and awareness building; iv) Timber knowledge ecosystem; v) Forest management and timber policies; vi) Value chain linkages; and vii) Timber-based real estate. The proposed solutions can be executed as for-profit, philanthropic, or blended ventures, with the services developed as individual offerings or paired with complementary services in a single offering. Additionally, while some solutions may be set up as a free-standing entity, other solutions may be similar to services provided by existing actors in or adjacent to the CSFE sector. In the case of the latter, it may make sense to approach these existing providers as potential partners to find a suitable and effective home for needed services.

COMMUNICATIONS AND AWARENESS BUILDING

A challenge faced in building the global climate-smart forest economy (CSFE), which includes mass timber construction, is the lack of sector-wide consistency and alignment and limited opportunities for peer-to-peer learning between actors. Active stakeholders find it difficult to form networks that strengthen value chains and, in showcasing activities and successes, serve as platforms to demonstrate use cases for other ecosystem players. There are also varying opinions on the best ways to realize CSFEs and non-particularly actors face challenges in engaging the sector and finding opportunities to either invest, support, or participate in CSFE activities. Outside of the misconceptions often held about the forest economy, there are also diverging interests around land use and the low prioritization of forest economies, impacting the participation of key decision-makers who have the power to catalyze the industry. These challenges impact the global, regional and local development of the mass timber industry and other CSFEs. There is a sector-wide need to develop cohesion, knowledge-sharing, and mechanisms for networking to support and catalyze mass timber building in the global CSFE.

A Global Dialogue Facilitator can support sector alignment by bringing together stakeholders who otherwise would not connect with each other, highlighting opportunities, and creating consensus around key topic areas. This community will consist of key stakeholders, practitioners, and interested and non-participatory actors to address this gap in the global CSFE. This Global Dialogue Facilitator will aim to:

- Foster discussions around key topic areas within the CSFE
- Enable networking and relationship building between i) Active and non-participatory CSFE actors; and ii) Actors across the value chain

- Provide updates on sector progress and developments to sector stakeholders and practitioners, as well as interested actors and the general public
- Coalesce key voices in the industry for advocacy efforts to change public perceptions and influence policy and regulatory change.

With similar objectives, the Forests Dialogues conducted by the Climate Smart Forest Economy Program (CSFEP) have built understanding and agreement amongst CSFE stakeholders around the opportunities, challenges, and knowledge gaps faced in the forest economy. Participants have gained rich insights into the needs, perspectives, and opportunities of the industry for varied topics and among multiple stakeholders in the industry. They have also indicated additional demand outside of the program for these opportunities to discuss the industry's development. Overall, these dialogues have been shown to build a collective understanding of stakeholder perspectives and concerns, knowledge and research gaps; priorities related to using mass timber construction practices to mitigate climate change; and have fostered collaboration and learning among stakeholders in the industry. This demonstrates the impact these dialogues can have, and knowledge-sharing organizations in the ecosystem could incorporate them into their operations, or ecosystem actors could collaborate to design a new Global Dialogue Facilitator platform.

In order to meet its objectives, the Global Dialogue Facilitator will have three main functions targeting various stakeholders that address the key challenges identified. Firstly, they will facilitate regular convenings with stakeholders and interested groups at global (particularly in the Global South), regional, and local levels to enable network building by organizing activities such as conferences, workshops, seminars, and webinars. Secondly, they will develop advocacy material with the backing of community members to influence change. This will consist of material such as government white papers, petitions, and reports targeted at various groups within the ecosystem. And lastly, they will enable a forum to share best practices and learnings between actors, facilitating the connection of actors at both similar and varying stages of development and connecting initiatives to a pool of experts who can serve as mentors on specific subject matters.

There are many varied actors needed to realize the Global Dialogue Facilitator entity. In order to obtain global buy-in and maintain cohesion and transparency, the community will need voices from across the world. And in order to gain depth, ensuring that the developments made by the Facilitator are adopted on the ground, the body will also need to involve actors of various sizes and in various functions across CSFE value chains. And lastly, gaining enabling and adjacent industry actors involved would help the Global Dialogue Facilitator develop broad reach and influence to catalyze systematic change.

If you would like to know more about dialogues, you can reach out to [The Forests Dialogue](#).