



# Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation

## Operational Framework

(Revised and adopted after the Eighth Meeting of the APFNet Board of Directors)

### I. STATUS OF THIS DOCUMENT

1.1 This Operational Framework is based on the Framework Document which was adopted and released when the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (hereinafter referred to as “APFNet”) was launched in September 2008. The document is intended to guide APFNet's future operation and will be revised to reflect future developments, as necessary and appropriate.

1.2 Consistent with APEC terminology, members of APFNet should be referred to as “economy” or “member economy” / “economies” or “member economies”, except in the case of international and non-government organizations, academic institutions and the private sector, in all documents, publications, and activities of APFNet.

### II. ESTABLISHMENT AND ORGANIZATION

2.1 APFNet was proposed and launched as an initiative of APEC economies to enhance building capacity and strengthen information sharing in the forest sector in the Asia-Pacific region.

2.2 Members agree to establish APFNet as a regional organization, with headquarters located in Beijing, People’s Republic of China.

2.3 APFNet may establish branches or offices in other locations within the Asia-Pacific region, as needed, to support its activities.

2.4 In pursuance of its mission, purpose and objectives, APFNet may establish partnerships and enter into cooperative agreements with other organizations, corporations, foundations and institutions.

2.5 In furtherance of its objectives, APFNet holds the following powers:

- a) To receive, acquire or otherwise lawfully obtain from any government authority or from any corporation, association, person, firm, foundation or other entity (whether international, regional or national) such charters, licenses, rights, concessions or similar rights and assistance – financial and otherwise – as are conducive and necessary to attain its objectives;

- b) To receive, acquire or otherwise lawfully obtain from any government authority or from any corporation, association, person, firm, foundation or other entity (whether international, regional or national) by donation, grant, exchange, device, bequest, purchase or lease - either absolutely or in trust - contributions consisting of real, personal or mixed properties, including funds and valuable effects or items, as may be useful or necessary to pursue its objectives and activities and to hold, operate, administer, use, sell, convey, or dispose of the said properties;
- c) To enter into agreements, memoranda of understanding and contracts governed by domestic laws in the host economy and other economies where branch offices are established;
- d) To employ staff according to its own regulations and to relevant laws of the host economy or any other relevant economy where APFNet activities may be implemented, without restriction to place of birth, gender or religion;
- e) To institute and defend legal proceedings; and
- f) To perform all legal acts and functions which may be necessary, expedient, suitable or proper for the furtherance, accomplishment or attainment of any or all of the purposes and activities herein stated or which shall appear, at any time, conducive to or necessary and useful for its objectives and activities.

2.6 No part of the income of APFNet is to benefit or be distributed to its members, directors, officers or other individuals, except for reasonable compensation for services rendered and for lawful payments and distribution to advance its mission, purposes and objectives listed below.

### **III. MISSION, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

3.1 The mission of APFNet is to help promote and improve sustainable forest management and rehabilitation.

3.2 The purpose of APFNet is expanding forest cover and improving forest ecosystem quality in Asia and the Pacific to promote the multiple functions of forests, help mitigate and adapt to climate change and meet the changing socio-economic and environmental needs of the region.

3.3 The objectives of APFNet are to:

- a) Contribute to the achievement of regional and global forest-related goals and those of member economies;
- b) Help to enhance forest carbon stocks and improve forest quality and productivity by promoting rehabilitation of existing but degraded forests and reforestation and afforestation of suitable cleared lands in the region;

- c) Help to reduce forest loss and degradation and their associated emissions of greenhouse gases by strengthening sustainable forest management and enhancing biodiversity conservation; and
- d) Help to increase the socio-economic benefits of forests in the region.

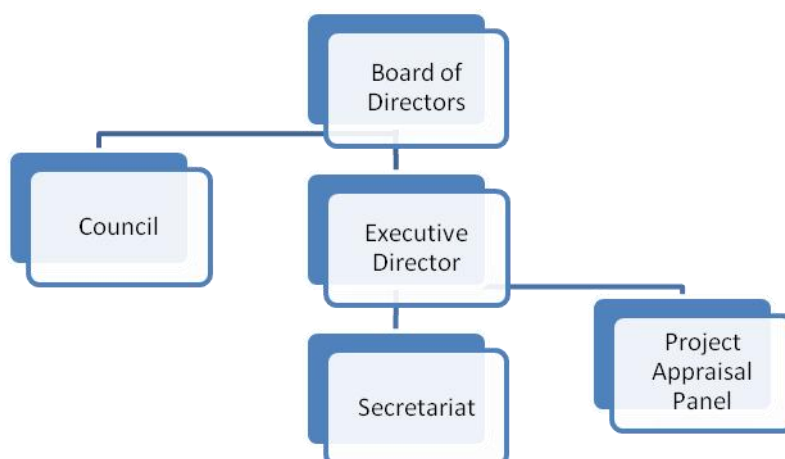
3.4 APFNet should pursue its mission, purpose and objectives through capacity building, information exchange, policy dialogue and pilot projects.

## IV. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

4.1 APFNet includes:

- a) a Board of Directors to provide guidance and decision making;
- b) a Council to provide advice;
- c) an Executive Director and Secretariat to provide administrative services;
- d) a Project Appraisal Panel to screen and appraise project proposals.

The diagram below illustrates the relationship among the subsidiary bodies:



### 4.2 Board of Directors

#### 4.2.1 Composition

The Board should consist of no less than eight and no more than sixteen Directors, as follows:

- a) one ex-officio, non-voting member appointed by the host economy;
- b) the Executive Director of APFNet who serves as an ex-officio, non-voting member and Secretary of the Board; and
- c) a maximum of fourteen other members, selected by a majority support of the Council after consultation with the Board.

When proposing members of the Board, due consideration should be paid to professional experience and qualifications, geographical balance, active involvement in forestry in the Asia-Pacific region, and to economies, international organizations, academic institutions and enterprises who have an interest in and provide substantial support to APFNet.

The host economy will appoint the initial Board members from the candidates nominated by the Interim Steering Committee and APFNet Focal Points.

To maintain continuity, Board members, except the Executive Director, should have staggered terms of three years that can be renewed only once, and the Chair should be elected from the membership. When a member (other than ex-officio, non-voting) vacates the position because of retirement, incapacity or any other reason, his/her replacement should be appointed by a majority support of the Board members but only for the remaining term of the outgoing member. One-third of the initial Board members should serve for one year, and one-third for two years, to initiate the staggering of subsequent three-year Board terms.

#### **4.2.2 Role and responsibilities**

The Board provides general oversight of APFNet operations and makes decisions on major issues. Its mandate includes

- a) defining and revising APFNet strategies, objectives and priorities;
- b) adopting APFNet administrative and financial regulations;
- c) appointing the Executive Director, determining his/her term, assessing performance and terminating employment, if warranted; and
- d) deciding on the organizational framework and the establishment of subsidiary bodies, including branches and offices in the region.

The Board may by consensus assign any of its powers, other than item c) specified in 4.2.2, to the Executive Director, subject to the oversight of the Board.

### **4.3 The Council**

4.3.1 The Council consists of representatives from members of APFNet.

4.3.2 The term of the Chairperson who is elected by Council is three years and can be renewed only once.

4.3.3 The Council provides a forum for APFNet members to:

- a) provide advice to the Board;
- b) facilitate the alignment of APFNet's purpose and objectives with those of members;

- c) review Board decisions with a view to strengthening transparency and accountability;
- d) receive and consider:
  - i) reports of the Executive Director on APFNet activities;
  - ii) annual budget and financial report; and
  - iii) decisions of the Board of Directors;
- e) consider the annual work plan of APFNet, make recommendations, as appropriate, and forward the document to the Board of Directors for approval;
- f) perform other functions, as needed.

4.3.4 The Council normally meets once per year but may hold additional meetings if necessary.

4.3.5 The Council may adopt its own rules of procedure, in line with this Operational Framework.

#### **4.4 The Executive Director and Secretariat**

4.4.1 The Executive Director has a three-year term that can be renewed only once. The host economy makes the first appointment which runs from September 2011 to September 2014.

4.4.2 The Executive Director is responsible for the overall management of APFNet, including the proper pursuit of objectives, implementation of programmes and completion of activities.

4.4.3 The Executive Director should:

- a) develop annual operational work plans and budgets and review progress on a regular basis, with assistance from the Secretariat;
- b) supervise activities of the Secretariat and ensure efficient and effective programming and implementation of activities;
- c) recruit and provide leadership to Secretariat staff;
- d) raise fund from various resources for the development of APFNet;
- e) keep the Board of Directors and the Council apprised of APFNet matters of consequence; and
- f) perform such other functions as the Board of Directors may assign.

4.4.4 The Executive Director is the legal representative of APFNet and is authorized to sign all deeds, contracts, agreements and other formal documents which are necessary to APFNet operations. Contracts and agreements which affect the governance, objectives, location, expansion or dissolution of APFNet; involve major financial commitments; or could significantly affect relations with the host economy are subject to the approval of the Board of Directors.

4.4.5 The initial location of the Executive Director and the Secretariat is Beijing, China.

4.4.6 The Secretariat, headed by the Executive Director, should consist of the minimum number of staff necessary to provide technical and administrative support, within available budgetary resources.

4.4.7 Under the direction of the Board and the supervision of the Executive Director, the Secretariat is expected to:

- a) facilitate and support the work of the Board of Directors;
- b) provide administrative services for the effective functioning of the Council and other APFNet advisory groups;
- c) assist the work of the Executive Director;
- d) manage the process for receiving and approving project proposals, including the call and independent technical appraisal by the Project Appraisal Panel;
- e) monitor the implementation of projects which APFNet supports;
- f) encourage the participation of APEC and non-APEC economies and other key stakeholders as part of APFNet's development;
- g) develop and maintain APFNet communications;
- h) provide administrative assistance to manage human resources, finances, partnership agreements, project disbursements and travel; and
- i) ensure the completion of financial audits and the production of annual reports.

4.4.8 The Executive Director will appoint Secretariat staff in accordance with the policies approved by the Board of Directors.

4.4.9 The Secretariat should consist of both professional and support staff. The former may come from any economy in the Asia-Pacific region which participates in the work of APFNet while the latter should primarily be permanent residents of the host economy.

The paramount consideration in the employment of staff and in the determination of the conditions of service is to secure the highest standards of quality, efficiency, competence and integrity. Salary scales, insurance, pension schemes and any other terms of employment should be laid down in staff regulations.

## **4.5 The Project Appraisal Panel**

4.5.1 The Project Appraisal Panel, which appraises project proposals, should consist of no more than 11 members who do not sit on the Board of Directors or the Council. Composition of the Panel should be as follows:

- a) A Chair nominated by the Executive Director and approved by the Board of Directors; and
- b) Up to ten internationally recognized specialists in sustainable forest management and rehabilitation or related fields appointed by the Board of Directors after review of Council recommendations.

4.5.2 Panel members will be appointed for terms of three years, and not serve more than two consecutive terms.

4.5.3 The Panel's functions are to:

- a) act as the technical appraisal body of APFNet, reviewing and making recommendations to the Executive Director and the Board on the technical feasibility and suitability of project concept notes and project proposals for donors' decision on APFNet funding; and
- b) provide balanced, technically informed comments to project proponents, through the Secretariat, to improve their submissions.

4.5.4 The Project Appraisal Panel should follow internationally recognized best practices for project appraisal and evaluation.

## **V. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

5.1 Expenses to carry out APFNet activities will be met through voluntary contributions from members, partners and donors.

5.2 The Board of Directors should decide the start date of APFNet's fiscal year and conduct financial matters according to the standard practice of an international organization.

5.3 The financial operations of APFNet should be governed by internationally acceptable accounting standards approved by the Board of Directors.

5.4 A full financial audit of APFNet operations should be conducted on an annual basis by an independent international accounting agency appointed by the Board of Directors.

5.5 The Board may inspect APFNet records and accounts and impose reasonable restrictions based on recommendations contained in the audit or on other information brought to the attention of the Board, members and donors.

## **VI. MODIFICATIONS AND PROVISIONS FOR SUBSIDIARY BODIES**

6.1 The Council should review proposed modifications to this Operational Framework and, if such changes are deemed advisable, seek approval from the Board

of Directors. Members of the Board should receive due notification and the full text of any change in advance of meetings unless they all waive this condition. Three-fourths of voting members of the Board should be in favour of the modifications for them to be adopted.

6.2 This Operational Framework should be complemented by provisions [drafted by the Secretariat, considered by the Council and approved by the Board] applicable to the subsidiary bodies of APFNet.

## **VII. ACCEPTANCE OF THE OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK**

7.1 This Operational Framework shall require acceptance of more than half of the APFNet members.

### **APFNet Membership Procedures**

*formerly known as “Procedures for the Development of APFNet Membership”  
(revised at the First Meeting of the APFNet Council, April 2015)*

The establishment of the Board of Directors and the Council in 2015 completes the permanent governance structure of APFNet which is envisioned in the Operational Framework. Given this development, it is appropriate that the interim transitional Procedures for the Development of APFNet Membership, an annex to the Operational Framework, be formalized. This document reflects the comments and suggestions of the Board and the Council and is based on the principle of each member’s voluntary participation in APFNet.

#### **I. Membership eligibility**

APFNet members must belong to one of the following groups:

- a) APEC economies;
- b) non-APEC economies in the Asia-Pacific region;
- c) international/regional intergovernmental organizations and international /regional non-governmental organizations operating in the Asia-Pacific region;
- d) domestic forestry-related academic institutions and domestic non-governmental organizations in the Asia-Pacific region;
- e) forests and forestry related enterprises operating in the Asia-Pacific region.

If more than one group from the same economy is a member of the Council, they shall decide amongst themselves who will occupy the one seat available to them.



## **II. Conditions of membership**

In addition to Section I, an applicant must:

- accept and support the vision, mission and objectives of APFNet;
- commit to the principles of openness, consensus-based decision-making and mutual respect among members;
- undertake activities that further sustainable forest management and rehabilitation.

Entities that fall under groups d) and e) shall seek the endorsement of their economy before submitting an application for APFNet membership.

## **III. Rights and obligations**

APFNet membership is on a voluntary basis and members have the following rights and obligations:

Members have the right, inter alia, to:

- participate in meetings of the APFNet Council;
- nominate candidates for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council;
- express views on membership applications;
- nominate candidates for vacant seats on the Board of Directors;
- receive APFNet progress reports, annual financial statements, work plans, annual budgets and publications;
- receive regular updates on APFNet activities;
- make suggestions on APFNet policies as well as those of its subsidiary bodies.

Members have the obligation, inter alia, to:

- designate a representative to the Council and provide contact person(s) for regular communication, if a member belongs to groups a), b) and c);
- provide the name of a contact person only if a member belongs to groups d) and e) ;
- support/facilitate APFNet's objectives, activities and program implementation;
- update the Secretariat on activities and progress related to APFNet's programs, projects and initiatives;
- maintain respectful relations with the Secretariat and other APFNet members.

## **IV. Membership dues**

Membership dues are not required but members are encouraged to provide financial, in-kind or technical support to APFNet on a voluntary basis, including seconding staff to the Secretariat.

## **V. Application and admission**

Economies and international/regional organizations that became members of APFNet during the transitional period need not reapply for membership.

Candidates in groups a), b) and c) must submit the following documents to the Secretariat when applying for APFNet membership:

- a signed “Confirmation of Accepting the APFNet Operational Framework”;
- a letter of intent which outlines how the requirements in Section II have been met and provisionally designates a Council representative and contact person(s), as per Section III.

Candidates in groups d) and e), must submit the following documents to the Secretariat when applying for APFNet membership:

- proof that the economy where the applicant is headquartered has endorsed their application, as stated in Section II;
- a signed “Confirmation of Accepting the APFNet Operational Framework”;
- a letter of intent which outlines how the requirements in Section II have been met and provisionally designates a contact person.

New applications must be sent to the Secretariat at least three months prior to a Council meeting to allow for timely distribution and review. Once per year, at its annual meeting, Council will assess requests according to the criteria contained in this document and make decisions on that basis.

## **VI. Withdrawal and suspension**

A member may withdraw from APFNet after providing written notice to the Secretariat three months in advance.

A member who fails to attend two consecutive Council meetings, or does not appoint a representative to the Council (if required according to Section III) or does not update information regarding their Council representative and/or contact person(s) will be considered inactive. (Participation could be either in person, through electronic means or through the submission of written comments on meeting documents. However, face-to-face participation is strongly urged.)

Inactive members will have their rights suspended until such time as they inform the Secretariat that they wish to resume active membership and take the steps required to do so.