APFNet

Annual Report **2024**

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ABOUT APFNET

MISSION

The Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet) is committed to helping the economies and people of the Asia-Pacific region by promoting and improving sustainable forest management (SFM) and forest rehabilitation.

OBJECTIVES

APFNet aims to:

- Contribute to the efforts of member economies and organisations to substantially increase the area of restored multifunctional forests in line with APFNet's mission and the objectives of its members, and the framework of multilateral aspirations and processes such as the Bonn Challenge, the UN Strategic Plan for Forests, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and the Asia-Pacific Regional Strategy and Action Plan for Forest and Landscape Restoration.
- Help enhance forest carbon stocks and improve forest quality and productivity by promoting the rehabilitation of existing but degraded forests and the reforestation and afforestation of suitable lands in the region.
- Help reduce forest loss, degradation, and associated greenhouse gas emissions by strengthening SFM and enhancing biodiversity conservation.
- Help increase the socio-economic benefits of forests in the region.

PRIORITIES

Priority 1. **Contributing to forest restoration**

Priority 2. **Reducing forest degradation**

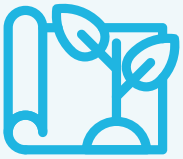
Priority 3. **Enhancing forest ecosystem functions**

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

APFNet pursues its goals and priorities through:

- Capacity building
- Demonstration projects
- Regional policy dialogues
- Communication and information sharing

2024 IN NUMBERS



PROJECTS

Initiated:
2

Completed:
2

Ongoing:
10

Grant distributed:
over USD 1.11 million

In total, since 2010:
over USD 43 million
(not including small projects)

SCHOLARSHIPS

Graduated:
9

Enrolled:
6

Ongoing:
10

Graduated students
since 2010:
167

Awardees
since 2010:
193

117 76

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

With immense pride and gratitude, I present the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet) Annual Report for 2024. This year has been marked by significant strides in our mission to promote sustainable forest management and rehabilitation across the Asia-Pacific region, reflecting our unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship and community empowerment.

This year, we also saw significant progress in collaboration with partners, policy dialogue meetings, and regional partnerships. In December 2024, APFNet was pivotal in launching the "Restoring and Sustaining Landscapes Together (RESULT) Asia-Pacific" framework during the Soil and Water Forum held in Bangkok. This ambitious initiative aims to restore and sustainably manage 100 million hectares of degraded landscapes across 20 Asian and Pacific economies by 2030, underscoring our dedication to large-scale environmental restoration efforts.

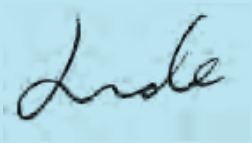
Our projects have consistently focused on restoration, forest rehabilitation, and integrating sustainable forest management with community development. Based on the achievements of the previous phases, we initiated the third phase to continue combatting desertification in Inner Mongolia, China. In Myanmar's Paung Laung watershed, we have implemented initiatives to restore degraded lands while enhancing local communities' capacities and livelihoods. In Fiji, we, in collaboration with Fiji's Ministry of Forestry, initiated the project to promote sustainable production and management of sandalwood. Cambodia's High-value Tree Breeding Centre was established to conserve forest germplasm resources and improve plant breeding capacities and abilities.

Recognising the importance of education, research and knowledge, APFNet continued scholarship programs, including the Visiting Scholar Program for 2024-2025. This program supports young researchers from ASEAN economies in conducting scientific research and academic exchanges in sustainable forest management and rehabilitation, fostering regional collaboration and innovation. While several APFNet Scholarship Program students graduated in 2024, the Gu Jing Gong Lingzhi Scholarship program launched jointly with Southwest Forestry University.

As we reflect on our achievements in 2024, we remain acutely aware of the challenges ahead. Climate change, deforestation, and biodiversity loss continue to pose significant threats. However, this year's experiences reinforce our belief that we can overcome these challenges through collaboration, innovation, and unwavering commitment.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our Board of Directors, Council members, representatives, dedicated team, partners, stakeholders and secretariat staff whose support has been instrumental in APFNet's achievements and successes.

Together, let us continue championing sustainable forest management, ensuring our forests thrive for future generations.



Lu De
APFNet Executive Director

HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR

APFNET CONTRIBUTES TO THE LAUNCH OF RESULT ASIA-PACIFIC FRAMEWORK TO ADVANCE REGIONAL RESTORATION GOALS

The Soil and Water Forum 2024, held from 9 to 11 December in Bangkok, was the platform for launching the "Restoring and Sustaining Landscapes Together (RESULT) Asia-Pacific" framework. This initiative begins a coordinated regional effort to restore and sustainably manage 100 million hectares of degraded landscapes across 20 Asia and Pacific economies by 2030.

The launch of RESULT Asia-Pacific framework. Source: FAO

Source: FAO

As a partner in the RESULT initiative, APFNet actively participated in the launch and subsequent events, contributing its expertise and insights to advance the framework's objectives. During the first RESULT Asia-Pacific Investment Forum, held from 11 December to 12, APFNet shared findings from its APEC 2020 Forest Cover Goal Assessment. This assessment, conducted in partnership with the FAO, highlights how APEC members have, through firm political commitments, practical actions, and collaborative efforts, successfully achieved the aspirational goal of increasing forest cover in the region by at least 20 million hectares of all types of forests by 2020. It also emphasises that, despite these achievements, APEC faces significant challenges ahead in global forest restoration. The lessons learned underscore the necessity of regional cooperation and multi-stakeholder engagement in addressing these challenges and fostering continuous progress. These insights have proven invaluable for implementing the RESULT framework and enhancing regional collaboration.

The RESULT Asia-Pacific framework represents a collective regional response to the urgent need for forest and landscape restoration, aligning with global commitments such as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework, and the Bonn Challenge. Led by the FAO, UNEP, UNDP, ITTO, and IUCN, the framework has mobilised the combined efforts of 38 partners, including APFNet, to transform degraded landscapes into productive, ecologically functional, and resilient systems. It emphasises the critical importance of partnerships, innovative financing, and coordinated regional action in achieving these ambitious objectives and promoting sustainable development across the Asia-Pacific region.

As a vital partner in the RESULT framework, APFNet is committed to enhancing collaboration with regional partners to advance its implementation through technical support, capacity building, and knowledge sharing. By fostering partnerships and aligning efforts, APFNet aims to ensure that restoration initiatives deliver tangible benefits to local communities and ecosystems, contributing to sustainable development in the region.

DEMONSTRATING SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT BY PROJECTS

REALISING THE POTENTIAL OF SANDALWOOD TO BOOST RURAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN FIJI

Project title: Promoting the Sustainable Production of Sandalwood in Fiji

Project ID: 2021P1-FJ

Executing agency: Ministry of Forestry, Fiji

Implementation agency: Silviculture Research Division, Ministry of Forestry, Fiji

APFNet funding (USD): 999, 400

Project duration: 08/2024 – 07/2027

Site location: Matacaucau Village, Viti Levu, Fiji

Native sandalwood *(Santalum yasi)* is an important forest product in Fiji. However, years of overharvesting have seriously depleted this resource.

This project aims to protect the endangered native species in Fiji while promoting sustainable economic growth. The project focuses on three main areas:

1. upgrading the sandalwood nursery capacity to produce high-quality seedlings and expand natural stands;
2. establishing sandalwood plantation demonstrations and improving knowledge among landholders on sandalwood propagation and management; and
3. offering training programs for forest technicians and local farmers on sandalwood seedling raising, planting, agroforestry, organic farming, and maintenance.

Unprepared site for the nursery plantation in Suva (@Xin Shuyu)

Project initiation

The project was initiated in September 2024, bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders committed to the sustainable management of Fiji's sandalwood. High-level representatives from Fiji's Ministry of Forestry, local forestry research institutes, universities, participating NGOs, representatives from communities, APFNet, as well as guests from the National Forestry and Grassland Administration of China (NFGA) and the Chinese Embassy in Fiji, participated in the event.

Project inception group photo (@ J. Tuisinu, Ministry of Forestry, Fiji)

Upgrading Fiji's nurseries capacities

Following the project initiation, key activities in 2024 focused on designing two nurseries in Suva and Nadi, totalling 3,500m^2, collecting high-quality sandalwood seeds, and developing a design plan for a demonstration plantation in Matacaucau Village.

The larger of the two nurseries, located in Suva, will feature a 500m^2 greenhouse and a 2,500m^2 sunshade area with a seedling bed and warehouse storage. The nursery in Nadi, with a total area of 500m^2, will be equipped with sunshade structures to regulate sunlight and rainfall, ensuring ideal conditions for seedling growth. These facilities are integral to scaling up sandalwood production and supporting long-term sustainability. Once complete, the nurseries will have a total annual production capacity of 20,000 high-quality seedlings and contribute to enhancing and demonstrating optimal sandalwood silviculture.

"This project is the first to develop large-scale and high-quality production of a native Fijian tree species, and it is a good starting point for the large-scale production of this valuable wood and related products." by Hon. Alitia Bainivalu, the Fijian Minister for Forestry, who addressed the project launch workshop.

Outlook for 2025 and Beyond

With a good start in 2024, the project is on track to meet its goals for 2025. Efforts will continue to construct the two nurseries, finalise the design for the 65 ha sandalwood plantation and the land prepared, and a training course on integrated sandalwood plantation management will be held.

BREEDING HAS BEGUN: SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS THE CONSERVATION OF VULNERABLE AND HIGH-VALUE PLANT SPECIES IN CAMBODIA

Project title: Establishment of high-value tree species breeding centre in Cambodia

Project ID: 2019P3-CAM

Supervisory agency: Forestry Administration, Cambodia

Executing agency: The Institute of Forest and Wildlife Research and Development (IRD), Cambodia

Technical support agency: Yunnan Academy of Forestry and Grassland (YAFG), China

Funding (USD): 6.8m in total/5.49m APFNet fund

Project duration: 01/2020–12/2027

Site location: IRD Campus, Phnom Penh, and IRD Research Station, Siem Reap, Cambodia

Cambodia is rich in biodiversity; however, it is threatened by socio-economic factors that drive deforestation and land degradation, leading to the endangerment and potential extinction of some tree species.

The project marks a critical step for Cambodia in conserving this genetic diversity, mainly through four outputs: constructing a tree species breeding centre and a greenhouse, establishing a forest genetic resource conservation garden, developing an eco-forest farm, and conducting capacity-building programs. Significant achievements and milestones have been made as the project ends its fourth year.

Completion of the high-value tree species breeding centre and greenhouse in Phnom Penh

The centre's construction was completed, and operations began, focusing on seed germination, tissue culture, and wild orchid cultivation. The official inauguration ceremony of the Center took place on 3 July 2024, presided over by H.E. Ung Samarth, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, and welcomed over 200 high-ranking officials, local community leaders and international project partners.

At the ceremony, Mr Keo Omaliss, the former Director General of the Forestry Administration of Cambodia, said: "The project has been contributing to the achievement of the National Agriculture Development Policy (ADP) 2022-2030 by supporting research on species breeding and modernisation of nurseries to promote reforestation, conservation of forest genetic resources, and improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent-people, especially local communities near the Project area".

Ribbon cutting for the Breeding Centre. Photo: IRD.

The breeding centre covers 1,755m^2, and includes:

- an 806m^2 nursery greenhouse built with a modern Venlo construction, electrical sunshade, insect-proof netting, and irrigation systems to ensure a controlled environment for breeding and seedling production.
- A two-storey building was constructed, with auxiliary facilities, including a tissue culture lab, PCR laboratory, and office spaces to support ongoing research and development.

The completed high-value tree species breeding centre building (Top left), greenhouse (Top right), tissue culture lab (lower right) and laboratory devices (lower left) (@ Zhang Shiyi, APFNet)

The Centre is expected to produce over 100,000 seedlings annually and facilitate the collecting and propagating of 100 local species. In addition, it will also serve as a base for scientific research, personnel exchange, and technology development, further enhancing the research and development of genetic conservation in Cambodia's forestry sector.

IRD staff engaged in the exchange study on medium preparation and inoculation techniques at the project's implementing agency, Yunnan Academy of Forestry and Grassland.

Progress in germplasm collection and reproduction

Beyond construction activities, the project prioritised collecting 100 valuable tree germplasm resources. In 2024, the team collected 17 valuable tree species from four provinces, bringing the total collection to 65 species. This initiative is crucial in preserving Cambodia's rare and endangered tree species, ensuring genetic diversity, and supporting long-term reforestation efforts.

			Name of Province and number of mother trees collected			
No	Khmer Name	Tree species	Kompong Thom	Koh Kong	Siem Reap	Pursat
1	**Chres**	*Albizia lebbeck*				4
2	**Chomreak**	*Albizia corniculata*				8
3	**Trosek**	*Peltophorum dasyrrhachis*				7
4	**Dai kla**	*Gardenia angkorensis*				5
5	**Smach Doam**	*Eugenia zeylaca*	3			
6	**Sandan**	*Garcinia cochinchinensis (Sandan)*				3
7	**Jerng Kou**	*Bauhinia variegata*				4
8	**Madeng Prey**	*Madeng Prey*	2			
9	**Douch Chem**	*Heritiera javanica*			4	
10	**Samrong**	*Sterculia plantanifolia*		3		
11	**Chan krasna**	*Aquilaria crassna*		3		
12	**Pong Ror**	*Spanish Lime*				2
13	**La ngeang**		3			
14	**Kro lanh**		4			
15	**Kronhung Sva**	*Dalbergia cultrate*			3	
16	**Ku Muoy**	*Euonymus cochinchinensis*			5	
17	**Merm Thnam Chin**				3	

Figure 1. List of precious tree germplasm resources collected in four provinces in 2024

In addition to seed collection, breeding and seedling production have begun. In 2024, the project team produced 10,800 seedlings of 11 valuable tree species, some of which will be ready for planting in the forest genetic resource conservation garden next year.

Successful adventitious bud multiplication of Afzelia xylocarpa (@IRD)

A new signboard was installed in the conservation garden (@ Zhang Shiyi, APFNet)

Establishing a forest genetic resource conservation garden

The 100-ha forest genetic resource conservation garden has seen good progress with the completion of the education and visitor centre, facilities, and an additional 5 ha of land prepared and five valuable tree species planted. Fruit and valuable trees previously planted were maintained throughout the year.

Capacity-building training on forest species protection and resource management

A significant achievement in 2024 was the successful delivery of a "Forest Species Protection and Resource Management" training session in November at the Chan Sor Forest Genetic Conservation Center in Siem Reap. The training focused on theoretical concepts of forest species protection and resource management and was delivered by Dr. Chen Peng from the Yunnan Academy of Forestry and Grassland (YAFG). Fifteen participants from the Institute of Forest and Wildlife Research and Development, project staff, and IRD staff in Siem Reap Province actively engaged in the sessions. This session provided participants with essential insights and strategies to enhance their conservation efforts, marking a significant step toward sustainable forest management.

Outlook for 2025 and beyond

Now that the breeding centre and greenhouse are in operation, the focus will continue collecting and reproducing plant material, populating the conservation garden and eco-farm, and building capacity to conserve forest genetic resources.

Figure 1 Experts from YAFG are giving guidance for tree species plantation. (@ Zhang Shiyi, APFNet)

ANTI-DESERTIFICATION MEASURES DELIVER ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS IN INNER MONGOLIA

Project title: Demonstration Project of Vegetation Restoration and Management and Utilization of Forest Resources in Greater Central Asia (Phase III)

Project ID: 2024P1-INM

Supervisory agency: Chifeng Municipal Forestry and Grassland Bureau, Inner Mongolia

Implementing agency: Sanyijing Forest Farm, Aohan Banner, Inner Mongolia

Budget in USD (Total/APFNet): 1.48m / 1.13m

Project duration: 1/2024 – 12/2028

Site location: Sanyijing Forest Farm, Aohan Banner, Chifeng City, China

Situated on the southern edge of the warm temperate, semi-arid Horqin Sandy Land, Sanyijing Forest Farm demonstrates how rehabilitating degraded lands can bring new opportunities for Greater Central Asia. Millions of people in this region are directly affected by desertification and land degradation, which are exacerbated by climate change.

Launch of Phase III

In response to the proposal to strengthen the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program of China and to sustain and upscale the achievements of two previous phases, APFNet launched a third phase of this project in April 2024. The key objectives include restoring 47 ha of vegetation in sandy land, improving 40 ha of forest quality in degraded plantation forests, and developing 30.4 ha of multifunctional forests. Additionally, a 2.8-ha environmental education and tourism zone will be established to increase public awareness and foster community engagement.

Demonstration site established from Phase II (@Sanyijing Forest Farm)

From 2017 to 2023, APFNet invested over USD 2.55 million in two phases of the project in Sanyijing Forest Farm to respond to the local situation and regional commitments to combating desertification and restoring landscapes. The first two phases saw the comprehensive management and transformation of over 319 ha of land. This area included planting approximately 230 ha of mixed coniferous and broad-leaved forests, 40 ha of demonstration low-efficiency forest, and forest demonstration sites specifically for economic use, including fruit orchards and the understory planting of flowering plants and medicinal herbs. In addition to land management, the project implementing agencies held 10 technical training workshops, 7 study exchanges, and two international exchanges.

20 ha of land restored with native tree species

In 2024, 20 ha of degraded land was successfully restored across two sites. The first site installed sand barriers in a checkerboard pattern across 11 ha of sandy land to stabilise the sand and promote restoration. These barriers, comprised of straw or living biocomposite materials (such as yellow willow, caragana, elm, sandlive willow and Chinese tamarisk), were manually and mechanically installed in 1m x 1m squares. Mongolian pine and caragana seedlings were planted within these squares to enhance vegetation recovery.

A 9-ha mixed conifer and broadleaf demonstration forest was established at a separate site using Mongolian pine, elm and caragana seedlings. A total of 2,430 seedlings were planted in a random mixed pattern according to the landform and the requirements of the different species.

The project team has continuously maintained and monitored the area of both sites to ensure success throughout the year. A new electromechanical well, drip irrigation tubing, and a gravel road were installed to facilitate irrigation and maintenance. Regular irrigation, weeding and pest control led to impressive survival rates: 95% for the 11 ha site and 94% for the 9 ha site.

Aerial view of the installed gravel road, sand barriers and newly planted seedlings (@Sanyijing Forest Farm)

Vegetation restoration using living biocomposite sand barriers (@Sanyijing Forest Farm)

Improving 30 ha of existing degraded forest

Efforts were made to improve the quality of a 30-ha stand of Mongolian pine initially planted in the 1970s. Thinning, pruning, and removing dead trees, along with year-round maintenance, were carried out. Two monitoring plots were set up to evaluate the effectiveness of the management practices on the forest stand quality.

The mixed conifer and broadleaf demonstration forest site (@Sanyijing Forest Farm)

Building capacity and knowledge sharing

Alongside the practical outputs of this project, sharing knowledge and disseminating the project information was an important objective. One hundred people attended a training event at the forest farm to learn about silviculture technology, pest and disease prevention and control, and tree planting technical regulations. Additionally, the project gained good media attention as the achievements were publicised on forestry authority websites and well-known domestic websites.

Outlook in 2025 and looking ahead

2024 has seen good progress, with many outputs already completed. 2025, the project will further establish vegetation recovery sites to enhance ecological services and promote sandy land tourism to boost socio-economic benefits.

AOHAN PROJECT DRIVES VEGETATION RESTORATION IN GREATER CENTRAL ASIA

Evaluation summary

An independent terminal evaluation of the APFNet-funded project "Demonstration Project of Vegetation Restoration and Management and Utilization of Forest Resources in Greater Central Asia (Phase II) " and its additional activities were conducted by the experts in June 2024. The evaluation concluded that the project successfully met its objectives, completed all planned activities, and delivered the expected outputs efficiently. A comprehensive demonstration base for sand control, vegetation restoration, and resource utilisation was established, contributing to ecological improvements, enhanced forest quality, and local economic development. This project serves as a model for similar initiatives across the Greater Central Asia region while also strengthening the capacity of forest management personnel and introducing new forest management concepts.

Key Findings and Best Practices

1. SELECTION OF TREE AND SHRUB SPECIES

The project successfully identified and planted tree and shrub species that are well-suited to the local sandy environment and have well-balanced ecological and economic benefits. Selected tree species included Sand Spruce, Poplar, Chifeng Poplar, Xinjiang Poplar, Sugar Maple, and Mountain Apricot. Shrub species included Sea Buckthorn, Salix, and Nitraria.

2 INNOVATIVE RESTORATION AND AGROFORESTRY MODELS

- **Agroforestry Management:** A new agroforestry model was developed, integrating crops, flowers, and medicinal herbs with high ecological and economic value under forest canopies. This approach enhances biodiversity and provides sustainable financial returns.

- **Flexible Restoration Approaches:** Various techniques, including mixed-species plantations, block planting, under-canopy planting, and strip planting, were applied to restore different types of degraded forests effectively.
- **High Seedling Survival and Retention Rates:** The survival and retention rates of newly planted trees were high, leading to increased forest cover, improved stability of low-efficiency forests, and enhanced resilience to climate change.
- **Economic Benefits**: Economic forests have started generating returns and supporting local livelihoods.

3. INTRODUCTION OF A MONITORING MECHANISM

For the first time, the project implemented a systematic monitoring mechanism to track changes in soil properties and seedling growth, providing scientific support for project planning. Monitoring results from the project's first phase indicated significant improvements in the project area's environmental and ecological service function. For instance, the mixed forest of Scots Pine and Xinjiang Poplar showed remarkable improvement compared to non-afforested areas. The diversity of perennial plant species from families such as *Leguminosae*, *Asteraceae*, and *Convolvulaceae* increased, while the number of annual plants from families like *Amaranthaceae* decreased. The carbon storage in forest vegetation increased by 807% (27.69 tons CO2/hectare), while soil carbon storage in the 0-60 cm layer rose by 126% (2.16 tons CO2/hectare). Soil bulk density decreased by 8% (0.14g/cm^3), and porosity and capillary porosity increased by 24% and 26%, respectively. The sand loss in soil decreased by 44% (3.04t/ha), and the depth of wind erosion was reduced by 80% (2.08 cm).

4. CAPACITY BUILDING AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The project significantly improved the management skills, technical knowledge, and expertise of forest farm workers and local community members. Also, participation in training and demonstration activities contributed to increased household incomes.

Recommendations for Sustainability

The evaluation highlighted the need for continued post-project maintenance and management to ensure long-term impacts. The ongoing monitoring of vegetation water consumption, long-term ecological effects, and timely forest tending and maintenance are necessary to sustain project benefits.

For more details

Figure 1 Comparison of the Mixed Forest of Scots Pine, Spindle Tree, Prunus Sibirica, Chinese Pine, and Shantung Maple before and after the project

Figure 2 Evaluation expert discussing the growth of the newly planted New Pinghong apples with the forest farm manager, with a promising harvest expected this year.

Figure 3. A mixed protective forest of Scots Pine and Golden Elm planted along both sides of the 4-km sand-crossing road, serving both road protection and landscape enhancement purposes

Figure 4. The project introduced drought-resistant, cold-tolerant, and resilient Chinese Pine and Xanthoceras to improve low-efficiency forest stands through strip renovation, resulting in healthy growth. Participating farmers also applied project training knowledge by voluntarily planting sandy millet in open spaces between trees, further stabilising the forest structure and enhancing both ecological and economic benefits.

Figure 5 Tree management of Phase I-planted Mountain Apricots, with ongoing monitoring of fruit yield.

PROJECT STORY: APFNET PROJECTS HELP IMPROVE MULTI-LEVEL CAPACITIES OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN MYANMAR

Project title: Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management Planning and Demonstration Project in Greater Mekong Subregion (Myanmar)

Project ID: 2018P4-MYR

Supervisory Agency: Forest Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation of Myanmar

Executing Agency: Forest Research Institute (FRI)

Funding (USD): 1.4m total/1.1m APFNet grant

Project duration: 10/2019-10/2024

Site Location: Paung Laung Reserved Forest, Pin Laung Township, Shan State and Forest Research Institute (FRI) Compound, Yezin, Nay Pyi Taw

The Paung Laung watershed is one of the most critical watersheds in Myanmar. Due to the construction of the Paung Laung hydroelectric dam, locals have migrated to higher lands. However, their previous farming techniques, predominantly wetland rice cultivation, were not transferrable to the higher altitude landscape, and many livelihoods have now become forest-dependent. Deforestation accelerated without adequate training in this new landscape, negatively impacting the region's environment and regulatory ecosystem services. This environmental decline has hindered sustainable socio-economic development, so support is needed to restore the ecosystem and find alternative economic opportunities.

This five-year project aims to conserve forest germplasm resources and rehabilitate forest ecological services by establishing an arboretum and developing watershed management capabilities. In addition, the project seeks to support socio-economic development by enhancing the capacity and knowledge of the local community, local government and researchers through capacity-building programs. In 2024, four in-project training sessions have been organized for more than 110 people.

Attendees of NTFP production training workshop and a bamboo processing training workshop (@Ei Ei Swe Hlaing, FRI, Myanmar)

No.	Date	Topic	Trainees	Number
1	January 2024	MAKING BAMBOO GRASS BROOM	Local villagers	30
2	February 2024	BAMBOO SILVICULTURE, PRODUCTION OF PICKLED BAMBOO SHOOTS, BAMBOO SHOOTS, DRIED BAMBOO SHOOTS AND MARKET LINKAGE	Young researchers and local communities	25
3	August 2024	MAINTENANCE OF TIMBER TREES AND FRUIT TREES	Local farmers	20
4	August 2024	WATERSHED MANAGEMENT FOR VILLAGE HEADS	Village heads	25

Capacity building and economic empowerment for local communities

Most of Myanmar's population is in rural regions and highly dependent on natural resources for subsistence. The Pin Laung Township is one of those areas. The project team has trained target communities in agroforestry practices, sustainable harvesting and processing of natural resources, and value chain theory to enable them to be aware of watershed management and environment conservation whilst securing their livelihoods with the production and sales of NTFPs (non-timber forest products).

Bamboo shoot boiling (@Ei Ei Swe Hlaing, FRI, Myanmar)

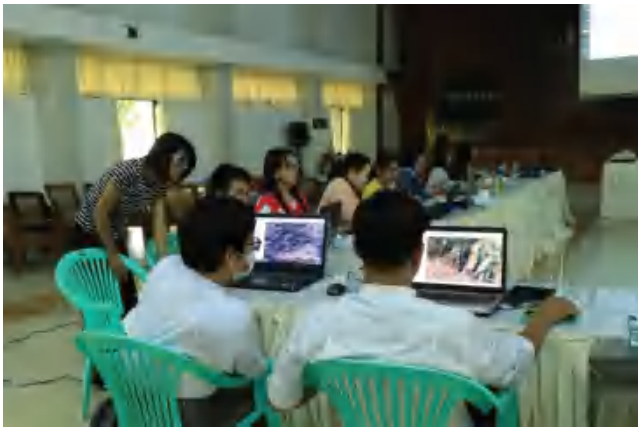
Galvanising local leaders

Village leaders are responsible for mobilising communities and widening participation in multi-level watershed management activities. They play exemplary roles in conserving and managing watersheds and natural resources, and that's why they are targeted trainees for this project. The project training sessions taught them more about watersheds and natural resource management.

Watershed conservation training for village administration members (@Ei Ei Swe Hlaing, FRI, Myanmar)

Upskilling forestry professionals and researchers

Local forest officers and researchers received training in mapping techniques to facilitate the development and implementation of an integrated watershed management plan for Leinli village. The training helps ensure their decision-making, planning, and implementation of agroforestry demonstration sites and conservation actions.



QGIS and 3D mapping training session (@Ei Ei Swe Hlaing, FRI, Myanmar

ADVANCING POLICY DIALOGUES AND REGIONAL SYNERGIES

TURKMENISTAN'S FORESTRY ADMINISTRATION DELEGATION VISITED APFNET

On 8 July 2024, a delegation led by Mr. Shamammet Saryhanov, Head of the Forestry Administration, Ministry of Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan, visited the APFNet Secretariat. The meeting was about pragmatic exchanges on landscape restoration in the Aral Sea region, sand/dune stabilisation along roads, medicinal plant cultivation, tree crop plantings such as almonds and olives, and belt/shelter forest plantation establishment.

The meeting was followed by a study visit from 9-11 July to the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region of China (hereafter referred to as "Ningxia"), where the delegation visited the Ningxia Greening Deserts and Sand Resource-based Industry Development Foundation, the Baijitan Desertification Control Project sites, the Yellow River Desertification Control Project sites, and the Bairuiyuan Wolfberry Production Base, and had the opportunity to meet with Mr Wang Youde, a hero of combating desertification with the national honorary title of "people's role model", whose story of decades in combating desertification are widely shared. The delegation also learned about innovative technologies and achievements in desertification control in Ningxia.

Given the similarities of climate and landscape conditions in Turkmenistan and Ningxia, Mr Shamammet Saryhanov noted the visit as valuable by presenting ideas that have inspired his work and approaches and practices that could be duplicated in Turkmenistan. He expected more profound exchanges and cooperation with the Chinese counterparts to jointly respond to environmental challenges and safeguard ecosystems in Greater Central Asia.

Dr. Lu De, the Executive Director of APFNet, noted that the remarkable results and impacts of desertification control in Ningxia have garnered international attention and stand as a proven example to demonstrate landscape restoration and sustainable forest management in the Asia-Pacific region. This visit was a concrete step in implementing the Greater Central Asia Forestry Cooperation Mechanism 2023-2025 Action Plan, released at the Third Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Forestry under the GCA Forestry Cooperation Mechanism, to deepen regional exchanges mutual learning, and enhance cooperation.

During the field visit. Photo by Ningxia Forestry Bureau

Dr Lu De and Mr Shamammet Saryhanov. @APFNet

SANFRI KEEP BOOSTING REGIONAL RESEARCH

Under the Sino-ASEAN Network of Forestry Research Institutes (SANFRI) mechanism, six visiting scholars were hosted in 2024, including two from Thailand, one from Laos, and three from Cambodia. APFNet also funded two small research grant projects.

Visiting Scholars Program

The Visiting Scholar Program supported six young researchers, and the Yunnan Academy of Forestry and Grassland hosted them in the APFNet Center for SANFRI Young Scholar Exchange to enhance their skills and further strengthen regional collaboration by providing a comprehensive platform for research and learning.

SANFRI initiatives have strengthened regional ties, promoted innovation, and empowered young scholars to address emerging forestry science and technology challenges. These efforts have had a lasting positive impact on sustainable forest management in the Asia-Pacific region, contributing to global environmental goals and fostering a new generation of forestry leaders.

No	Grant receiver	Economy	Research theme	Visiting period
1	**Anongkhanee Ruantip**	Thailand	Cultivation technology of high-value timber tree species	2024.3.1-2024.5.30
2	**Marasree Kaewpranee**	Thailand	IAWA wood microscopic feature table learning and wood science basic information collection	2024.3.1-2024.5.30
3	**Chhit Sophal**	Cambodia	Tissue Culture of Tropical Wood Species	2023.9.1-2024.2.5
4	**Theng Keovoitey**	Cambodia	Tissue Culture of High-value Tree Species	2023.9.1-2024.2.5
5	**Sengdeuane Keo Oudom**	Laos	Development of Natural Protected Areas and Their Surrounding Communities	2023.8.25-2024.2.5

The outcome of the SANFRI-supported research project

One of two projects, "Tree Seed Supply Management Model and Policy for Supporting Forest and Landscape Restoration in Indonesia", has been extended until 2025, "Research on a revision of policies to promote natural forest restoration towards sustainability in Vietnam and Laos" research project completed and outcomes briefed as follows;

1. Vietnam and Laos have similar natural conditions, featuring extensive and diverse natural forest areas. Although the total area of natural forests has increased, the natural forest ecosystems in both countries have experienced significant declines during specific periods, particularly in terms of quality and biodiversity. In Vietnam, primary forest ecosystems account for only about 10% of the forest area, with more than two-thirds of the natural forest area classified as poor. Laos ranks among the top six countries responsible for 52% of global forest cover loss from 2001 to 2023. Between 2002 and 2023, Laos lost 1.17 million hectares of primary forest, representing approximately 24% of its total forest cover loss.

2. Vietnam and Laos have introduced numerous policies and implemented national programs to improve forest resilience. Initially, efforts in both countries were focused primarily on afforestation programs. However, recognising the severe degradation of natural forests, both governments have issued various regulations and implemented programs specifically targeting natural forest restoration. Vietnam has set goals to improve the quality of 10% of its natural forest area from 2021 to 2025 and 20% from 2026 to 2030 while maintaining forest coverage at 42%. Similarly, Laos aims to increase forest coverage to 70% by 2035 by planting 500,000 hectares of degraded forest for commercial purposes and restoring 1,800,000 hectares of forest naturally by 2025 to regulate forest ecology.

Image of survey in Lao PDR Meeting between Lao PDR and Vietnam

3. Lessons learned from natural forest restoration management in Laos include:

- Conducting forest statistics based on current status, including existing and potential forest areas, helps managers and planners identify priority areas for implementing restoration solutions.
- Promoting the zoning of bare and degraded land areas to apply appropriate restoration measures for forest development.
- Implement policies to strictly manage forest exploitation and ban the export of unfinished wood from natural forests while allowing forest owners to apply technical measures for restoring their forest areas without closing natural forests entirely.

4. Lessons learned from natural forest restoration management in Vietnam include:

- Allocating forests to various entities gives forest owners certain rights to invest in forest restoration and benefit from forests, thereby attracting businesses and individuals to invest in forestry.
- Prioritising policies to expand the implementation of Payment for Forest Environmental Services (PFES), including carbon services, reduces pressure on the government budget.
- Adopting a holistic and sustainable approach to forest management, focusing not only on timber production but also on the multi-use value of forests, including non-timber forest products (NTFPs), medicinal herbs, and ecosystem services such as soil protection, water storage, carbon absorption, and ecotourism. In the context of low investment rates in natural forest restoration, these policies reduce reliance on government funds, alleviate pressure on natural forests, and attract stakeholders and agencies to invest in forest restoration.

TRAINING WORKSHOP BRIDGES SINO-MONGOLIAN COOPERATION ON DESERTIFICATION CONTROL AND FOREST RESTORATION

August 25-29, 2024, the International Training Workshop on "Vegetation Rehabilitation and Sustainable Development in Arid Region of Mongolia" was held at the APFNet Wangyedian SFM Demonstration and Training Base in Inner Mongolia, China. The workshop aimed to enhance collaboration and knowledge sharing between China and Mongolia on vegetation rehabilitation and sustainable development in arid areas. Ten management and forestry technicians from Erdenet Mining Corporation SOE of Mongolia participated in the training, and a team of renowned experts in forestry and desertification control in Inner Mongolia were invited to share their expertise. The indoor session was composed of 7 lectures on

- China's Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program
- Grassland restoration and utilisation
- Typical desertification control models in Chifeng
- Sustainable forest management
- Resource utilisation and industry development in desertified areas
- Successful economic crop plantation models in arid lands
- Measurement and monitoring of forest and grassland carbon storage

Lecturers introduced systematic summarisations of theories and methodologies, policies and strategies, technologies and approaches, program experiences and lessons, supported with many inspiring cases and vivid examples. Extensive discussions were held to explore how these could be adapted and applied in Mongolia.

Participants also visited several field sites to observe hands-on practices in Inner Mongolia, such as shelter forest plantations, multifunctional forest management, ecosystem restoration, tree seedling production systems, and the forest carbon sequestration research sampling site. Participants' enthusiasm was palpable as they witnessed innovative techniques and remarkable accomplishments.

Group Photo at the Opening Ceremony

In-door Lectures during the Training

During the field trips Photos by FGA and Forestry Academy of Inner Mongolia

MORE TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING FOR FORESTRY TALENTS

THE FIRST STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING: VITAL FOR THE SUSTAINED OPERATION OF THE PRESIDENTS' FORUM

The Presidents' Forum of Forestry Universities and Institutes in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) is an international platform to promote sub-regional cooperation in sustainable forest management and forestry development. Its primary goal is to encourage inter-university collaboration and advance forestry higher education and scientific research in the Lancang-Mekong River Basin. During the First Presidents' Forum, establishing a Forum Steering Committee (FSC) was proposed as the key decision-making body to ensure the institutionalised operation of the biennial Presidents' Forum.

On 19 November 2024, the First Steering Committee Meeting of the Presidents' Forum was held in Kunming, China. Representatives of six Lancang-Mekong forestry universities from Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam deliberated on regional cooperation in higher education and talent development in forestry. Southwest Forestry University (SWFU) was elected as the first chair during the meeting and appointed the Forum's permanent Liaison Office.

The successful convening of the Presidents' Forum in 2023 has created a new situation of inter-university cooperation regarding forestry higher education in the Greater Mekong Sub-region. To further deepen inter-university collaboration, establishing the "Steering Committee of the President's Forum" will lay a solid foundation to ensure the long-term operation of the Forum.

Group Photo: Photo by SWFU

UNDERGRADUATES SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM OF FORESTRY UNIVERSITIES IN GMS

Two follow-up activities were proposed as the mechanism activities within the First Presidents' Forum framework.

Recognising the significance and urgent need to strengthen capacity building for youth and promote collaboration in forestry education within the Greater Mekong Sub-region, in September 2024, SWFU and the APFNet Kunming Center (APFNet-KTC) were tasked with implementing the Undergraduate Summer Camp Program for Forestry Universities in the Greater Mekong Sub-region.

As the host, SWFU invited 24 faculty members and students from the Royal University of Agriculture (Cambodia), the National University of Laos, the Forestry and Environmental University of Myanmar, Kasetsart University (Thailand), and the Vietnam National University of Forestry. The summer camp, featuring lectures, field trips, and various activities, aimed to provide forestry students with a more direct understanding of regional forestry conditions, foster dialogue with forestry professionals, and strengthen inter-university learning and communication. Designed specifically for undergraduate students from participating GMS universities, the program aims to promote knowledge-sharing in forestry higher education, offer valuable learning opportunities, and provide an international study tour experience that stands out from traditional classroom activities.

The faculty members and students said the summer camp was an unforgettable experience. Sreang Soklin, a student from the Royal University of Agriculture in Cambodia, remarked that the summer camp helped him fill in the gaps in his professional knowledge and gain friendships through mutual learning and exchange. Mr. Kyaw Sann Linn from the Forestry and Environmental University of Myanmar said that the event gave him a direct glimpse into China's practical achievements in biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management, which he found beneficial.

A survey on national demonstration spots to showcase Chinese Medicinal Materials (Dendrobium) in-forest planting. Picture source: APFNet-KTC

Students visited a local ecological tea garden. Picture source: APFNet-KTC

Group photo of the closing ceremony. Picture source: APFNet-KTC

REGIONAL TEA FARMER FIELD TRAINING OPENS CROSS-BORDER EXCHANGES AND COOPERATION

Tea cultivation in the Lancang-Mekong River Basin has a long history as a vital contributor to the local economy and livelihoods. Over time, tea farmers have developed diverse varieties well-suited to the region's unique soils, climates, and terrains. Despite its significance for local livelihoods, traditional tea cultivation and production in the region face several challenges. These include outdated cultivation techniques, insufficient field management inputs, limited market access, and low product competitiveness. This initiative aims to enhance tea farmers' skills and management capabilities in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand while promoting international cooperation and knowledge exchange.

From 28th to 31st October 2024, the first Tea Farmer Training in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) was held in Pu'er City, China. A total of 7 Lao participants, including one official representative from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and six representatives of tea farmers, participated as the first batch of trainees. This mix of expertise and backgrounds facilitated rich discussions and collaborative efforts, contributing to the sustainable development of the tea industry.

Lao representatives visited several tea gardens, renowned enterprises, and the Pu'er international tea market. This allowed them to understand better China's tea industry chain, including various seed selection and source control methods, planting and processing techniques and marketing models.

Yunnan's tea industry development and high-level technology standards greatly impressed the Lao representatives. They noted that the field training offered them valuable technical experiences, which broadened their vision for transforming the Lao tea industry and outlined a roadmap for its future development.

Tea farmers exchanged their experiences with Yunnan tea planting and picking technology.

Lao representatives studied local tea tree seed selection and methods of quality control.

Lao representatives learned Chinese tea culture and Chinese character culture.

Lao representatives visited the local tea germplasm resources nursery. Photos by APFNet-KTC

UPDATES FROM AP-FECM

High-quality education resources must be promoted and shared to address the differences in forest management knowledge and the effectiveness of current management strategies. This is especially crucial between forest-rich areas and those facing severe deforestation, climate change, and biodiversity loss.

During the 26th IUFRO World Congress, the Executive Office of AP - FECM organised an "Initiatives and Equity for Forest Education in a New Era" session. The session aimed to share insights regarding the development of forest education, including platform sharing and integration, faculty and student exchange, and mutual course articulation and recognition. These efforts can enhance the initiatives and equity of forest education in a new era.

AP-FECM at Forestry Education Technical Session. Picture source: UBC Forestry

AP-FECM 2024 Steering Committee Meeting

The Steering Committee Meeting was held in a hybrid format. The AP-FECM Steering Committee members, including representatives from the University of British Columbia, Southwest Forestry University, Beijing Forestry University, Nanjing Forestry University, Melbourne University, Chittagong University, and APFNet, participated in the meeting in person. Members of the Steering Committee from the Pontifical Catholic University, La Molina National Agrarian University, the University of the Philippines Los Baños, and Kasetsart University joined the meeting online.

The Executive Office of AP-FECM first presented an overview of the annual work from last year. A discussion of proposed topics followed this. The Steering Committee agreed to revise the AP-FECM Rules and Procedures further, seek funding for the development of an online SFM course, hold a seminar on the application of AI in Forestry, promote the international master's program for AP-FECM members, explore more funding resources, and promote student mobility and research cooperation.

A total of 11 AP-FECM Steering Committee members participated in the meeting with an in-person venue in Stockholm and online via Zoom Meeting. Picture source: the Executive Office of AP-FECM

AP-FECM monthly webinar series

The Executive Office of the AP-FECM, the current host, the University of British Columbia, has been organising a series of webinars since January 2024 to engage more regional stakeholders in advancing innovation in forestry education and keeping communication regular.

Scan here for full list
January 2024 - December 2024

TRAINING WORKSHOP ENHANCES MUTUAL LEARNING ON FOREST RESTORATION

In a significant move to accelerate forest restoration in the Asia-Pacific, the APFNet Workshop on Rehabilitation and Management of Degraded Forests was held from 18 August to 27 2024. The event brought together 13 forestry officials and researchers from 10 economies from the Asia-Pacific region. Through the workshop, APFNet aimed to enhance technical skills for forest policymakers, practitioners, and management officials with expert lectures, case studies, group work, and field visits.

Keynote speaker Mr. Wasantha Dissanayake, a senior forestry policy consultant, addressed critical issues such as forest degradation, deforestation, and restoration commitments in the region. He analysed existing forestry policy systems, identified gaps in policy formulation, and provided actionable recommendations. Additional presentations focused on forestry carbon sinks and successful forest restoration practices in China.

Participants actively shared their restoration experiences, challenges, and conflicts and explored policy solutions through SWOT analysis. Divided into groups representing forest authorities, local community organisations, and corporate partners, they identified strengths and opportunities for collaborative efforts in forest rehabilitation.

Participants' group work. Picture source: APFNet-KTC

Highly valued for its learning opportunities, skill updates, and networking, the workshop saw participants calling for more initiatives to promote experience sharing and joint research projects. Moreover, it significantly enhanced participants' knowledge and skills, fostered cross-regional communication, and laid the groundwork for future collaborative forest restoration efforts across the AP region.

Forest tending and upgrading demonstration for young-middle-aged Pinus kesiya at the demonstration project site is a typical teaching case of APFNet thematic workshops on Degraded Forest Rehabilitation and Management. Picture source: APFNet-KTC

Outdoor sessions and field trips. Picture source: APFNet-KTC

APFNET SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM 9 STUDENTS GRADUATED IN 2024

The APFNet Scholarship Program (ASP) significantly promotes professional growth in the Asia-Pacific forestry industry. In 2024, 9 students (four master's and five doctoral candidates) graduated from 3 host universities, including Beijing Forestry University (BFU), Nanjing Forestry University (NJFU), and Northwest A&F University (NWAFU). Four of them are female. These students, coming from Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, earned their master's and doctoral degrees in fields such as Forestry, Forest Management, Plant Nutrition, Silviculture, and Soil and Water Conservation and Desertification Control (SWCDC).

Graduation Pic, NWAFU. Aye Chan Chan, Myanmar (3rd, right)

Graduation Pic, NWAFU. Aye Chan Chan, Myanmar (2nd, left)

APFNET JOINS HANDS WITH ITS PARTNERS TO HELP CULTIVATE FORESTRY TALENTS

In June 2024, APFNet, Gujing Gong Lingzhi Ltd., Hainan Nature Foundation and Southwest Forestry University jointly launched the APFNet - Gu Jing Gong Lingzhi Scholarship Program. The program mainly supports forestry officials and young scholars from Cambodia and Laos who are coming to China to pursue postgraduate degrees in forestry at Southwest Forestry University (SWFU). Currently, six students have started their studies at the hosting university.

This program is one of the achievements of the action plan of the First Pu'er Forum. The Forum was initiated by APFNet in 2023, aiming to build a regional exchange platform. This platform promotes regional cooperation and facilitates the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and related processes.

The first six awardees embark on their higher education studies in China. Picture source: SWFU

Mr. Maleli, in the field practice. Picture source: SWFU

His presentation won applause at the International Symposium on Traditional Utilization and Conservation of Community Forest Resources. Picture source: SWFU

INTRODUCING MR MALELI, ONE OF THE FIRST SIX STUDENTS OF APFNET - GU JING GONG LINZHI SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Mr Maleli Belo Nakasava serves as the Principal Forestry Officer for the Northern Division in Fiji, where he plays a pivotal role in managing the region's forests and overseeing sustainable forestry operations. Driven by a deep commitment to environmental conservation and community development, he works to ensure the sustainable use of forest resources while balancing the needs of local communities.

Mr. Maleli is pursuing a two-year Master's in Forestry at SWFU. Thanks to the APFNet - Gu Jing Gong Lingzhi Scholarship Program, the first enterprise-funded initiative of its kind, he has an opportunity to enhance his forestry knowledge.

His academic focus is Community Urban Forestry. He explores integrating green spaces into urban areas to tackle urbanisation, deforestation, and climate change. His research aims to boost sustainable land use and urban resilience through public engagement.

Professionally, he oversees reforestation, conservation, and sustainable resource management in Fiji's Northern Division, and he promotes eco-friendly practices, protecting and responsibly using natural resources. He also fosters stakeholder collaboration for policies that support the environment and the economy and advocates for policies benefiting both the environment and forest-dwelling communities. His vision for Community Urban Forestry emphasises how urban green spaces can create healthier, more resilient communities with benefits like better air quality and biodiversity.

INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

THE EIGHTH MEETINGS OF APFNET COUNCIL AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

15-17 May 2024 Phuket, Thailand

Board and Council meeting group photo by APFNet

The Eighth Meetings of the APFNet Council and Board of Directors were held in Phuket, Thailand, from 15-17 May 2024. The events, held in a hybrid format, were hosted by the Royal Forest Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand.

Representatives from 17 member economies and organisations attended the Council Meeting. Mr. Nishatha Edirisinghe, Sri Lanka, was elected vice chair to support the Council's work. The Council heard the Secretariat's report of APFNet's work for 2023 and work plan for 2024, agreed on the amendment of the APFNet Operational Framework, and endorsed the renewal of the Project Appraisal Panel for 2024-2026.

At the Meeting of the APFNet Board of Directors, the Board membership for Ms Margaret M. Calderon and Ms Novia Widyaningtyas was extended to 2027, and Mr. Di Donghui, China, was introduced as a new Board member appointed by the host economy of APFNet. The meeting was concluded with the Board's approval of (1) the proposed APFNet work plan and budget for 2024; (2) amendment of Article 3.3 (a) of the APFNet Operational Framework to "Contribute to the achievement of regional and global forest-related goals and those of its member economies," to enable APFNet's long-term objective adaptive to changing contexts; (3) renewal of APFNet Project Appraisal Panel 2024–2026; and (4) modification the Procedures for Selection and Appointment of APFNet Executive Director.

Upon the offer from Vietnam, the Ninth Meetings of the Council and Board of Directors will be held in 2025, to be hosted by the Forest Department of Vietnam.

ENHANCED PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION

MOU RENEWED BETWEEN APFNET AND IUCN

Ms Munkhzul Tsend-Ayush, APFNet (L) and Dr Dindo Campilan, IUCN (R) at MoU signing

The MoU was renewed for another five years, marking the continuation of their partnership in shared priorities of

1. addressing forest loss and degradation, including by promoting sustainable forest management;
2. accelerating forest landscape restoration (FLR) as a prime example of Nature-based Solutions (NbS);
3. enhancing forest ecosystems and their services for the benefit of people in the context of climate change; and
4. improving forest governance and forest policy development and implementation processes.

As mentioned by both sides, a long-time partnership between the two organisations started in the early 2010s regarding personnel exchanges and event and project cooperation, and both expected more forest-based joint actions and fruitful collaboration that would bring impacts and changes to the region.

EXPERIENCE SHARED FOR REGIONAL CONSERVATION EFFORTS: APFNET AT THE 8TH IUCN ASIA REGIONAL CONSERVATION FORUM

The 8th IUCN Asia Regional Conservation Forum (RCF) was held from 3-5 September in Bangkok, Thailand, bringing more than 600 participants across the region, with the theme of 'Reimagining Conservation in Asia: A Nature Positive Future' to assess conservation progress, revisit IUCN priority goals, and propose strategic directions to effectively address environmental and biodiversity challenges over the next 20 years.

At the side event "Strengthening landscape approaches in Asia: Restoring and conserving ecosystems, reducing risks, and empowering communities", APFNet was invited together with AFoCO, RECOFTC, and Coorg Wildlife Society, to showcase the contributions of landscape approaches, including FLR, to addressing environmental and social challenges in Asia.

Panellists shared best practices, lessons learned, and challenges from implementing landscape projects under regional initiatives like Regional Model Forest Network-Asia (RMFN), opportunities for scaling up successful landscape models, and the importance of strengthening partnerships and networks for more effective collaboration and impact at the regional level.

APFNet has made a great effort to promote sustainable forest management (SFM) in Asia through demonstration projects, and the Lin'an Model Forest project, on which APFNet collaborated with RMFN from 2017-2021, was shared as a good example of combining SFM and livelihood improvement. Mr Liu Wenzhe said, "The project aimed to demonstrate forest ecosystem restoration in Lin'an and Qingyang of Southern China, where it is known for planting and processing bamboo shoots and under-forest medicine herbs, respectively. With the project support, participating communities in Linan and Qingyang introduced their leading practices and models to each other through training and field visits. Highly motivated by what they saw in the fields, farmers introduced new practices and models with enthusiasm for forest restoration. They were voluntarily involved in forest management to ensure reasonable income from bamboo shoots and herb harvesting and produce."

Mr Liu Wenzhe (M), APFNet Project manager, sharing APFNet project experiences

APFNet booth attracted visitors.

APFNet met many new and old friends, partners and individuals at the booth exhibition, along with 20 + exhibitors. Visitors were interested in APFNet's activities, projects, scholarship and research programmes, and publication materials and brochures were handed out. To expand the network, upscale projects and impacts in the region, APFNet displayed an overall introduction of the organisation, implementation tools and shared contact information for further cooperation.

APPRECIATION TO THE PARTNERS

APFNet thanks the partners who support APFNet's work through cash and in-kind contributions:

Aohanqi Sanyijing Forest Farm

COSTA VERDE, Peru

Forest Research Institute of Myanmar

Hainan Nature Foundation, China

Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region Forestry and Grassland Bureau, China

Inner Mongolia Academy of Forestry Sciences, China

Institute of Forest and Wildlife Research and Development, Cambodia

Jianfeng Experimental Station, China

Lexiang Nature Education Research Center, Ledong Li Autonomous County, Hainan, China

Research Institute of Tropical Forestry, Chinese Academy of Forestry, China

University of British Columbia, Canada

Wangyedian Nature Education Center, China

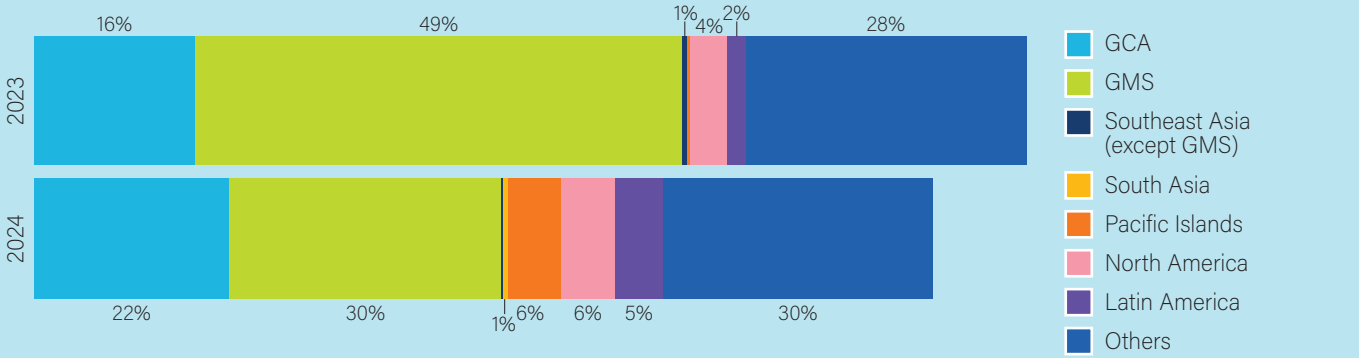
Yunnan Academy of Forestry and Grassland, China

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

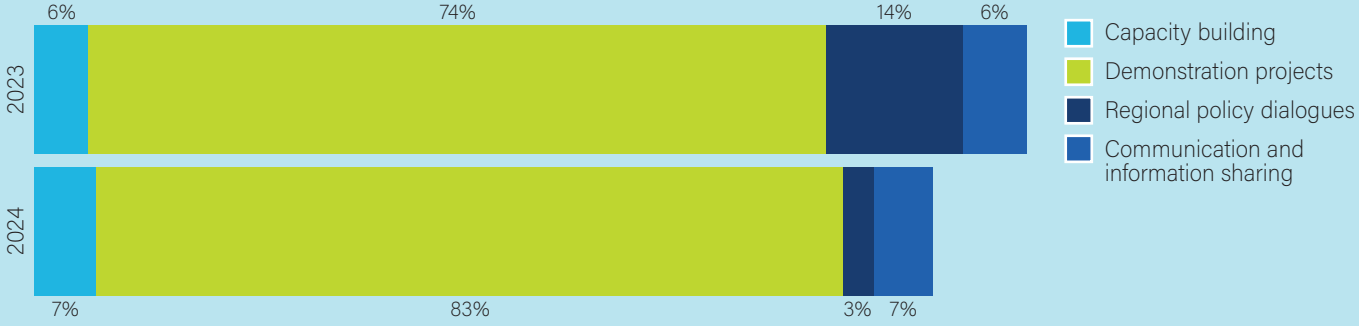
Income and Expenses statement for the year ended 31 December 2024(USD)

	2023	2024
INCOME		
Home economy donation	4,790,349.93	4,575,833.33
Other income (interest)	3,589.45	3,737.35
TOTAL INCOME	**4,793,939.38**	**4,579,570.68**
EXPENSES		
(1) Program expenses	2,509,400.98	2,272,137.48
(2) Management expenses	2,142,650.89	2,198,169.97
(3) Financial expenses	10,459.74	15,808.90
TOTAL EXPENSES	**4,662,511.61**	**4,486,116.35**
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	**131,427.77**	**93,454.3**

Program Expenses by subregion (USD)



Program Expenses by four implementing tools (USD)



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADP	Agriculture Development Policy
AFoCo	Asian Forest Cooperation Organization
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AP	Asia-Pacific
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
AP-FECM	Asia-Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism
APFNet	Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FRI	Forest Research Institute
FLR	Forest Landscape Restoration
FSC	Forum Steering Committee
GCA	Greater Central Asia
GMS	Greater Mekong Subregion
IRD	Institute of Forest and Wildlife Research and Development
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUFRO	International Union of Forest Research Organizations
KTC	Kunming Training Center
NbS	Nature-based Solution
NFGA	National Forestry and Grassland Administration
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NTFP	Non-timber Forest Product
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction
QGIS	Quantum Geographic Information System
RECOFTC	Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific
RESULT	Restoring and Sustaining Landscapes Together
SANFRI	Sino-ASEAN Network of Forestry Research Institutes
RCF	Regional Conservation Forum
RMFN	Regional Model Forest Network
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SFM	Sustainable Forest management
SWFU	Southwest Forestry University
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
USD	United States dollar(s)
YAFG	Yunnan Academy of Forestry and Grassland

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