APFNet NEWSLETTER

Issue 1,2015

Safeguarding Bangkok's green lung

In this issue

Members of the APFNet Board of Directors are from various member economies and various international forestry organizations.

APFNet's first Board of Directors established in Beijing

On 8 April 2015, APFNet established its initial Board of Directors and successfully convened the first board meeting at the secretariat office in Beijing. Twelve board members from Australia, China, Cambodia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) attended the meeting. Minister of the Chinese State Forestry Administration, Mr. Zhao Shucong, was elected as the Chair of the board.

During the meeting, the board reviewed APFNet's key accomplishments since its establishment, with a focus on its evolving governance structure and notable programs. The board also established its rules and operational procedures, and reviewed various components of APFNet's operational documents, such as reports of APFNet's development, draft framework of administrative and financial regulations, and the draft framework of the 2016 to 2020 strategic plan.

Board directors also agreed on the importance of balancing APFNet's four activity pillars – policy dialogue, demonstration projects, capacity building and information sharing – and the need to further integrate these areas in future project design in order to maximize impact.

The APFNet Board of Directors is the main decision-making body of the network, responsible for the strategic direction of the organization, establishment of operational standards as well as procurement and diversification of funds. It also leads APFNet in realizing its various objectives in promoting sustainable forest restoration, rehabilitation and management.

"APFNet's potential for future development is dependent on its ability to serve common forestry concerns and needs in the Asia-Pacific region. Thus the Board of Directors has the important role of anchoring APFNet's strategy, activities and direction as well as improving the development of APFNet as an organization."

—— Mr. Zhao Shucong, Minister of the Chinese State Forestry Administration and Chair of the board.

Members of the **APFNet Board of Directors**

Mr. Zhao Shucong

Minister, State Forestry Administration, P.R. China

Mr. Patrick Durst

Senior Forestry Officer, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Mr. Stephen Midgley

Director, Salwood Asia Pacific Pty Ltd, Australia

Mr. Jack Hurd

Deputy Director of the Asia-Pacific Region, The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

Mr. Grahame Applegate

Senior Forests and Climate Specialist, Australia

Dr. Rex Victor O. Cruz

Professor and Director of the Environmental Forestry Program, University of the Philippines Los Banos, Philippines

Dr. Ganesh Raj Joshi

Adjunct Professor, Agriculture and Forestry University, Nepal

Dr. Sadanandan Nambiar

Honorary Fellow, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, Ecosystem Sciences, Australia

Mr. Li Qiang

Market and Systems Analyst, International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)

Mdm. Wan Hasmah Wan Mohd

Consultant, SRMJ Agrobase Sdn. Bhd., Malaysia

Mr. Pralong Dumrongthai

Deputy Director General, Royal Forest Department, Thailand

Dr. Chea Sam Ang

Deputy Director General of the Forestry Administration, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Cambodia

Mr. Zhang Yansong

Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Finance, P.R. China

Mr. Qu Guilin

Executive Director of APFNet

Over one million US dollars raised by the APFNet Fund

On 8 April 2015, the APFNet Fund Donation Ceremony in Beijing officially kick-started the APFNet Fund program, a new financing mechanism for the sustainable forest management initiatives of the organization. Twelve members of the APFNet Board of Directors and representatives from donor organizations attended the ceremony.

The fund raised over one million US dollars with contributions from: CITIC Securities Company Limited, the People's Insurance Company (Group) of China Limited, CHIMELONG Company Limited, Nature Home (China) Company Limited, China Forestry Star (Beijing) Company Limited, and Wang Ye Dian Forest Farm.

The APFNet Fund functions as the financing mechanism of APFNet's various programs and policy development activities, and identifies opportunities for corporate social responsibility activities to align with the region's sustainable forest management needs.

Donors included CITIC Securities Company Limited, the People's Insurance Company (Group) of China Limited, CHIMELONG Company Limited, Nature Home (China) Company Limited, China Forestry Star (Beijing) Company Limited, and Wang Ye Dian Forest Farm.

New APFNet-FAO agreement commits to strengthen regional partnership

At a signing ceremony on 8 April, APFNet Executive Director Mr. Qu Guilin and FAO Representative Mr. Patrick Durst (on behalf of Assistant Director-General Hiroyuki Konuma), signed a memorandum of understanding formalizing a new partnership.

The agreement provides a framework for cooperation with the overall goal of developing sustainable forest management capacity in the region. It will be facilitated through technical cooperation, trainings, information exchange, and policy development and implementation, with a focus on promoting sustainable forest management and reducing poverty.

"Regional and international cooperation are important aspects of synergizing efforts in the Asia-Pacific region" Mr. Qu stated, "in order to ensure the maximum impact of APFNet's activities".

Contributors to the APFNet Fund

中信证券 CITIC SECURITIES

PICC 中国人民保险

CHIMELONG 长隆

Nature 大自然家园

中林信达

旺业甸实验林场

The first APFNet council meeting was hosted by the Myanmar Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry.

APFNet Council established in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

The First Meeting of the APFNet Council was convened during 27 to 28 April in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar to formally establish the Council and conduct its first meeting. The Council was established by combining the previous Interim Steering Committee and the Working Mechanism for APFNet Focal Points. It is composed of the representatives of 31 APFNet Members from 17 member economies and 5 member organizations.

"I am confident that this meeting will provide the impetus to Myanmar and the Asia-Pacific region, to move forward in the implementation of cooperative programmes pertaining to sustainable forest management."

——Mr. U Win Tun,
Union Minister of MOECAF

The Myanmar Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MOECAF) hosted the meeting. Mr. U Win Tun, Union Minister of MOECAF and Mr. Qu Guilin, Executive Director of APFNet, opened the meeting and announced the formal establishment of the APFNet Council.

Mr. Preecha Ongprasert of Thailand's Royal Forest Department and Ms. Magdalene Maihua of the Papua New Guinea Forest Authority were elected as the Chair and Vice-Chair of the council, respectively. Over the two-day meeting, the council made decisions and recommendations related to the Rules of Procedure of the Council, APFNet membership development procedures, amendments to the APFNet Operational Framework, terms of reference of the APFNet Project Appraisal Panel, and framework of APFNet's strategic plan 2016-2020.

The establishment of the council was an integral part of the organization's long-term plan, as envisaged in the APFNet Strategic Plan 2011-2015 and operational framework.

Council Chair Mr. Preecha Ongprasert (right) and Vice-Chair Ms. Magdalene Maihua (left).

Independent assessment conducted on APFNet's first 5-year strategy

In early 2015, APFNet conducted an independent assessment of the current strategic plan (2011 to 2015) as part of the efforts to develop the next strategic plan. The assessment consisted of online surveys, interviews and analyses of records and documents.

In general, APFNet was successful in meeting its targets and implementing most programs and activities efficiently. Stakeholders and member economies agreed on the value of APFNet's support in sustainable forest management and rehabilitation, and are generally satisfied with its performance. The new strategic plan (2016 to 2020) is currently under development.

Achievements and recommendations under APFNet's four activity pillars

1. Capacity building

APFNet thematic trainings and scholarships have supported over 200 participants and 45 students, respectively, in building technical competence and connecting with forest professionals.

Recommendations: Conduct periodic needs assessments to identify training themes and diversify venues across the region; expand the choice of universities in the scholarship program.

2. Demonstration projects

Over USD 12 million granted to 20 projects in the Asia-Pacific region to form partnerships, foster networks, share knowledge and demonstrate good practices.

Recommendations: Stakeholders expressed the need to distribute projects more evenly across the region, and improve transparency during the project evaluation process.

3. Policy dialogue

APFNet started several initiatives to facilitate regional policy dialogue, and formed new partnerships with international and regional organizations.

Recommendations: APFNet must align itself to regional and international efforts, such as the post-2015 new sustainable development goals and climate agreement, to form synergies and avoid duplication.

4. Information sharing

Various initiatives in this area include database creation and maintenance, knowledge exchange and the release of publications.

Recommendations: Continue to scale up knowledge sharing efforts, and ensure that sufficient resources and expertise are available for communication and dissemination.

Safeguarding Bangkok's green lung

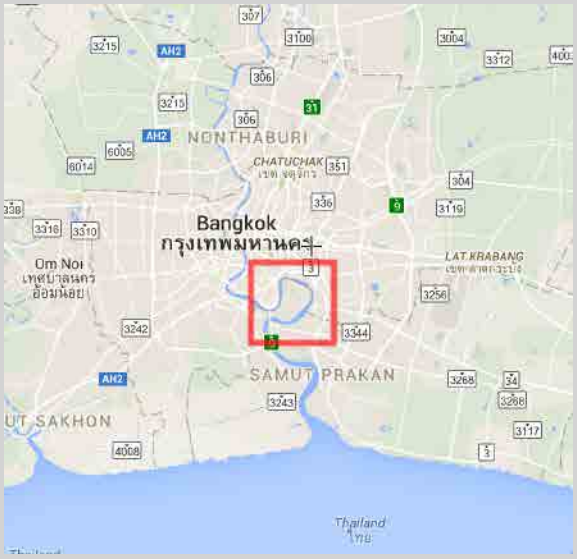
The future of Bang Kachao rests with the next generation

In the heart of Thailand's capital of Bangkok, an urban refuge stands out from the concrete jungle like a giant "green lung". This is the nickname given to Bang Kachao, an island reserve under the supervision of the Thai National Environment Board since 1977.

Voted by Time magazine as the "Best Urban Oasis of Asia" in 2006, Bang Kachao covers approximately 5000 acres of land encircled by an oxbow curve on the Chao Phraya River. A layer of rich flora and fauna make up 80% of the island.

However, increasing industrial development and urbanization pose a risk to the preservation of the island reserve, and key to its survival is the level of environmental awareness and value amongst Bangkok's younger generation.

In 2012, APFNet launched the Demonstration Project on Urban Forestry in Thailand, which established a natural learning center to encourage youth participation in urban forestry, promote ecotourism and direct urban forestry benefits to local communities.



Bang Kachao is an island encircled by an oxbow curve on the Chao Phraya River (shown in red).

▲ Presentations are given to primary and secondary school students on forest ecosystems, sustainable forest management and the public's responsibility to protect natural resources.

◀ Outdoor painting is a popular activity among students.

Students learn about Bang Kachao's wildlife through activities including arts and crafts. ▶

◀ Students can participate in athletic activities at the Bang Kachao natural learning center.

The Bang Kachao Sketch & Snap event featured bicycle riding, photography, tram rides and local art to promote the island's history, culture and ecosystems. ▶

At a glance: new projects in 2015

Community-based sustainable forest management in the Sungai Medihit watershed, Sarawak

Location: Sarawak, Malaysia

Partners: International Tropical Timber Organization and the Forest Department of Sarawak

The Sungai Medihit watershed is home to the Kelabit and Penan indigenous groups, who rely on subsistence farming (shifting cultivation) and forest resources for their livelihoods. Since 1988 however, logging in the catchment area has severely affected the sustainability and availability of forest resources. As such, the indigenous community remains impoverished and live below the state poverty line.

In order to address the above issues, this project will develop a watershed co-management plan using baseline surveys, forest resource mapping, sustainable forest management demonstration, and improve stakeholder participation. Furthermore, the project will pilot fish farming, vegetation cropping, eco-tourism, livestock raising and infrastructure improvement to generate income for communities.

Rehabilitation and management of degraded forests in Beijing's Miyun reservoir watershed

Location: Beijing, China

Partners: Beijing Municipal Bureau of Forestry and Parks and Beijing Forestry Society

While Beijing has significantly upscaled the integration of international good practices and technology in urban water management, these developments have not been able to match the rapid increase of urban population and pressure on water supply. The Miyun Reservoir watershed provides over 60% of Beijing's surface drinking water. Since forests account for 70% of the total watershed area, they are an irreplaceable source of water protection for the city.

This project aims to address the long-standing water supply challenges in the capital by tackling forest degradation, and enhancing the strategic use of forest resources in the Miyun Reservoir watershed. It will develop three demonstration sites across 280 hectares of degraded forestland, raise forest management awareness and knowledge amongst local communities, and implement sustainable community development initiatives to improve local livelihoods.

Landscape approach to sustainable forest management in the Prek Thnot watershed

Location: Prek Thnot watershed, Cambodia

Partners: Institute of Forest and Wildlife Research

The Prek Thnot watershed in the province of Kampong Speu, Cambodia is highly valuable for natural disaster mitigation, water supply and natural resources.

Early efforts to promote economic development have neglected the ecological wellbeing of the watershed. Deforestation, land use change and decrease in upstream forest cover have led to significant soil erosion and destabilization of the watershed's water filtration potential.

Following a feasibility study on adopting a landscape approach to sustainable water management in the Prek Thnot watershed, APFNet will contribute approximately USD 500,000 to a field project, to build capacity and raise awareness on the concept of integrated watershed planning for central and local stakeholders. The project also aims to improve community livelihood by promoting agroforestry and establishing community-based enterprises.

Pilot and research project produces innovative tools for climate change adaptation in the Asia-Pacific region

Under a changing global climate, forest resources cannot be properly managed without up-to-date knowledge and tools. The Asia-Pacific region consists of 20% of the world's forests, and holds invaluable ecosystems and large numbers of forest dependent communities. While efforts to understand climate impacts have been made in the past, an ongoing lack of knowledge and technology pose uncertainty over the correct forest policies to handle climate change.

To address these gaps, APFNet recently completed the Adaptation of Asia-Pacific Forests to Climate Change project. It connected a network of scientists, policy makers, foresters and local communities from Australia, Canada, China and the US.

Study areas are enclosed in black rectangles, red pins indicate experimental sites and partners.

This international collaboration produced a large body of scientific knowledge, models and management tools about climate change in Asia-Pacific forests. We sat down with Prof. John Innes (JI), Project Leader and Faculty of Forestry Dean at the University of British Colombia, who told us more about the project.

Q: What were you trying to achieve with this project?

JI: Until this project, there was insufficient information available to policy makers and resource managers to develop science-based strategies that will enable forests and forest-dependent communities to adapt to climate change.

This project aimed to improve scientific knowledge about climate change, develop forest-oriented climate models at the regional level, and produce management tools to support decision-making.

Q: What are some of your findings from the science review?

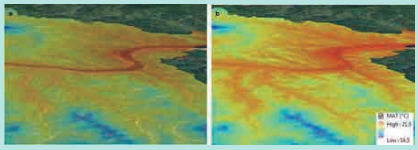
John Innes, Project Leader

JI: The review revealed unique patterns of climate change and varying impacts across the region, such as temperature and precipitation pattern changes, forest species movement, and changes in the magnitude and frequency of abiotic disturbances. For example, we found that climate change in China and North America will tend to shift forest species northward with latitude and upward with altitude, and that carbon stores decline with the number of single species rotations and increase with species diversity.

Q: One major model produced in this project is ClimateAP. Can you tell us more about what the model does?

JI: ClimateAP is a high-resolution climate model developed specifically for the Asia-Pacific region. It is a computer application that extracts existing data from reliable sources and calculates seasonal and annual climate variables for specific locations based on latitude, longitude and elevation.

The model's predictions of tree health and productivity are more accurate than previous ones. Since it has a straightforward, user-friendly interface, and requires no installation or mapping programs and abilities, ClimateAP is accessible to people of various levels of climate modeling knowledge. It is so far the easiest tool for generating high-resolution climate data.

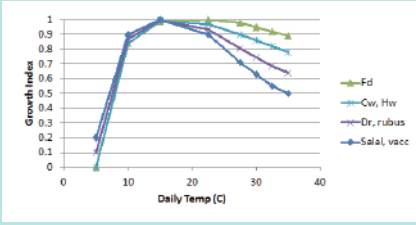


Climate data generated by ClimateAP at a site in Fujian, China for the reference period (1961-1990) (left) and a future period (2050s) (right) in Celsius.

Q: The FORECAST model was created to support decision makers in managing forests facing climate change. What does it do and how will it provide support?

JI: The Forestry and Environmental Change Assessment (FORECAST) model simulates the impacts of climate change on the growth and development of a species at the stand level. Used with another landscape-level model, it can evaluate the potential impacts of alternative management strategies. Standardized management indicators such as harvest volume and soil fertility are individually scored, which are then used to calculate an overall score for each management strategy.

FORECAST allows forest managers to determine which strategy is best based on the importance of indicators according to their forest management purpose. This will allow managers to develop strategies tailored to their specific needs.



Modeling the impact of daily temperature on tree growth using the FORECAST model. For this particular study area, growth increases with daily temperature until it is eventually limited, with growth rates slowing at very high temperatures.

Q: What long-term impacts are you hoping for from this project?

JI: Overall, the outcomes of this project should contribute to increasing the climate change resilience of natural forests, plantations, and forest-dependent communities. This will be essential for the socio-economic and environmental stability of the Asia-Pacific region. I hope that the project can act as a model for future projects in APFNet.

Upcoming events

- APFNet thematic training on forest governance and timber legality, 2 to 13 July 2015 in Kunming, China
- Second regional workshop on strategic forestry cooperation in Greater Central Asia, 15 to 17 July, 2015 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia,
- APFNet exhibition at the World Forestry Congress, 7 to 11 September 2015 in Durban, South Africa
- World Forestry Congress side event on forest transition in the Asia-Pacific region, 18:15 to 19:30 on 9 September 2015 in Durban, South Africa
- APFNet thematic training, 1 to 14 November 2015 in Kunming, China

Community forest project in Cambodia builds capacity to safeguard local livelihood

Forests cover more than half of Cambodia and are vital in providing firewood, building materials, export earnings and local livelihood. However, the majority of forests are severely degraded from overexploitation, encroachment and illegal logging. In the early 2000' s, the Tbeng Lech and O Soam community forests were established in the provinces of Siem Reap and Kampong Thom, respectively. Despite limited protection activities, much of the forests remain degraded and in need of rehabilitation.

In late 2011, APFNet launched the project: "Multi-Function Forest Rehabilitation and Management of Degraded Forest Areas in Cambodia" to address the gaps between the current state of community forests and future conditions needed to maintain livelihood in local communities. The project was completed in early 2015.

Approximate community forest locations of Tbeng Lech (left) and O Soam (right)

The project established one nursery in each community forest and provided hands-on training to community members and local foresters on seed collection, treatment, growth and forest restoration. In turn, local beneficiaries shared their newfound knowledge with members of other nearby community forests.

The role of non-timber forest products

Rural communities depend heavily on non-timber forest products for their livelihoods. This includes wild fruits, edible insects, fuel wood, resins, vegetables and thatching materials.

Income from edible spiders

Mr. Chhin Sath collects mushrooms, wild fruits, fuel wood and spiders from the O Soam community forest. Most of the spiders are sold to a local dealer. He collects about 120 spiders and earns about USD 75 per season.

Income from wild fruits

Ms. Khim Phien collects wild fruits, such as “kuy”, which is abundant in the O Soam community forest. She earns approximately USD 7.5 from the fruits each season. “Wild fruits are more abundant today compared to three or four years ago because the forests are now better protected,” she said.

In order to diverfity income sources and increase income to local communities, the project recommended for forest restoration activities to continue, while exploring untapped income sources. This includes ecotourism in Theng Lech due to its proximity to the UNESCO site of the Angkor Wat temple, and rattan harvesting and development in O Soam.

Show your support to community forestry - seeds and seedlings are available for sale at the nurseries of O Soam and Tbeng Lech. For more information, contact:

Mr. Mao Nga, Tel: 097 9 124 265 (Tbeng Lech community forest)
Ms. Sar Sopheap, Tel: 097 9 724 761 (O Soam community forest)

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