

APFNet NEWSLETTER

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APFNet Strategic Plan 2016-2020 officially released

After the incorporation of feedback from APFNet’s Board of Directors, the second APFNet Strategic Plan was officially released in June 2016. It highlights contributing to “the achievement of global goals and targets related to forests” through the organization’s activities across the Asia-Pacific region.



Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest
Management and Rehabilitation



Strategic Plan 2016-2020

Adding Green for Asia and the Pacific

APFNet Strategic plan 2016-2020

The plan prioritizes the restoration of degraded forest land and aligns with forest-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation and SDG 15 involving sustainable forest management. It covers the period of 2016 to 2020.

“The year 2020 will see the deadline of the APEC 2020 Forest Cover Goal and the international climate change agreement coming into force” APFNet’s Board Chair Mr. Zhao Shucong said during the second Board meeting in Cambodia in May 2016.

“It will be a landmark year for the international development community.”

The strategic plan sets out the organization’s principles, priorities and activities under APFNet’s four core activity pillars: capacity building, project implementation, policy dialogues and information sharing.

The plan provides a framework that takes into account the specific development needs of member economies, while emphasizing forest restoration and the comparative strengths of APFNet as a regional organization. It focuses on the following priority areas:

1. Rehabilitating degraded forests and increasing forest cover

- Analyze drivers of deforestation and forest degradation across the region
- Provide a common platform for exchange of knowledge and information on policies, management techniques and latest technologies
- Support economies with capacity-building so that they can access forestry-

2. Promoting sustainable forest management to enhance ecological functions and ecosystem security of forests

- Support economies with integrated watershed management, biodiversity and mitigation and adaptation to climate change
- Strengthen economies' understanding of forest eco-security
- Support activities that transfer sustainable forest management knowledge and techniques, and that provide a platform for regional policy dialogue

3. Enhancing forests' contribution to socio-economic development and to improvement of local livelihoods

- Support economies to deliver sustainable forest products and services
- Help build corporate social responsibility

The plan also outlines seven sub-regions where APFNet will direct its focus and plan its interventions: the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS); Southeast Asia (except GMS); South Asia, Great Central Asia; Pacific Islands; North America and Latin America.

The strategic plan was a near two-year effort involving consultation with APFNet members, partners and donors.

“Astana Declaration” prioritizes cross-border forestry cooperation in Greater Central Asia

Economies in Greater Central Asia are close geographic neighbors with similar topography and natural conditions. Close cooperation moving forward is vital to sustainable economic and social development.



APFNet Executive Director Mr. Qu Guilin addresses participants at the first Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Forestry in Greater Central Asia

At the opening remarks of the first Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Forestry in Greater Central Asia (the Meeting), Mr. Qu Guilin, APFNet's Executive Director, emphasized that "increased cooperation between China, Central Asian economies and Mongolia – the "New Silk Road" – will play a key role in facilitating sustainable social and economic development in the region."

The Meeting took place from 30 to 31 May 2016 in Astana, the capital city of Kazakhstan, and culminated in the adoption of the "Astana Declaration" (the Declaration).

The Declaration recognizes the important contribution of sustainable development and management of forests to social, economic and environmental development in the region. It also emphasizes the need for closer regional cooperation in the conservation, protection and reproduction of forests, and the mitigation of negative impacts of climate change, desertification and land degradation.

The Declaration agrees that cooperation in forestry in the Greater Central Asian region will focus on the following four areas:

1. Taking into account the policies and main activities in the field of forestry of the representatives of participating economies of the first meeting of ministers responsible for forestry.
2. Encouraging forest authorities of the participating economies to increase forest cover in the Greater Central Asia region and to reduce forest fires, forest pests and diseases, illegal logging, and desertification and degradation.
3. Promoting cross-border and regional cooperation, legislative development, joint

programs and projects and research and development. The most promising areas for cooperation include:

- Mitigating the impact of climate change and decline in the health of forests
- Preventing cross-border forest fires
- Combating forest land degradation and desertification
- Promoting development of a regional forest monitoring system
- Promoting biological methods for forest protection
- Promoting development of sustainable forest plantations in desert areas
- Conservation and utilization of forest genetic resources
- Promoting development of methodologies for assessing the value of forest ecosystem services
- Promoting capacity building and training of forestry specialists

4. Ensuring effective regional and cross-border cooperation in the economies of Great Central Asia by:

- Organizing and maintaining interdepartmental relations
- Developing and coordinating mechanisms of interaction between the economies
- Preparing and organizing meetings/conferences for heads and experts of forestry authorities for discussion of major regional forestry issues

A new platform for forestry cooperation in Greater Central Asia

The Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Forestry in Greater Central Asia is the only platform for dialogue and exchange on forestry in the region. This initial meeting marks the first time that forestry ministers in Greater Central Asia have gathered to discuss experiences and know-how.

The leaders of seven forestry bureaus and over 40 officials from China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia attended the meeting. The meeting is a joint-initiative of the State Forestry Administration of China and APFNet, and was sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan.



First Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Forestry in Greater Central Asia

The conference aimed to strengthen commitment to forestry, identify opportunities for cooperation and promote the coordinated development of forestry in the region, in line with the “One Belt, One Road” initiative - a means of promoting closer financial, cultural and academic cooperation across Eurasia.

Ministers discussed the economics of forest development, forestry priorities and other important issues affecting forestry in the region. APFNet has singled out the Greater Central Asian region as one of its key areas of focus in its 2016-2020 Strategic Plan and will work closely with economies in the region to tailor activities to their specific needs and requirements.

The opening Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Forestry in Greater Central Asia marked an important first step in promoting regional forestry cooperation. It was agreed that APFNet will organize the second Ministerial Meeting in 2018 to build upon the initial commitments made under the Astana Declaration.

Second APFNet Board and Council Meetings



Second APFNet Board Meeting, 12 May 2016

The second APFNet Board and Council Meetings were held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, from the 10 to 12 May 2016. The meetings were attended by representatives from the 26 economies and five international organizations that make up APFNet's members. All 14 of the Board of Directors also attended.



Second APFNet Council Meeting, 10 May 2016

In addition to adopting the second APFNet Strategic Plan in principle, later officially released in June, the two meetings adopted APFNet's work plans, budgets and operational documents, and appointed the Project Appraisal Panel for 2016-2018. The next Board and Council meetings are set to be held in Sri Lanka in 2017.

APFNet co-organized workshop supports

China's forestry reforms

Catastrophic flooding of the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers in Central China in 1998 were some of the major natural disasters that pushed the government to initiate wide-ranging reforms to combat deforestation and enhance ecological security.

China's Natural Forest Protection Program (NFPP) was launched in 2000 to mitigate deforestation and restore protective watersheds in the economy. Since the program was initiated, there have been reduced levels of logging in key state-owned natural forests in north-eastern China.

More recently, a trial ban of commercial logging in state-owned forests in Heilongjiang, which has historically produced over thirty percent of China's domestic timber supply, was initiated in April 2014.



State-owned forests account for approximately 40% of total forest area in China

In February 2015, the State Council of China issued the *Reform Plan and Guidelines for State-run Forest Farms*. The regulation covers 25.98 million hectares, equivalent to 12.49% of China's forested area. It emphasizes the importance of ecological security, the need for innovative administration of state-owned forest farms, stopping commercial logging of natural forests and improving people's livelihoods.

China extended the trial ban on commercial logging in state-owned forests to cover the whole of Northeast China and Inner Mongolia in April 2015.

Building local governance capacity

In order to support local Forest Bureau directors effectively carry out the reforms, a

“Workshop on Reforms on Key State-run Forest Areas” was held by the Human Resource Department of the State Forestry Administration (SFA), SFA Resource Management Department and APFNet from 21 to 24 June 2016.

“All officials need to help with the transition from a development model focused on timber production to one that prioritizes ecological rehabilitation. Profiting from forest resources needs to be replaced with forest protection and ecological service provision”, stated Mr. Liu Dongsheng, Vice Administrator of SFA.



Mr. Liu Dongsheng stressed the importance of forest resource protecting in forestry economic development



The “Workshop on Reforms on Key State-run forest areas” engaged with more than 100 forestry officials responsible for governing state-owned forests across three provinces

To better understand international approaches to managing state-run forests, APFNet invited Mr. Doug Konkin, the former Deputy Minister of Forests for British Columbia, Canada to speak at the workshop.

Mr. Konkin stressed the importance of adopting a broad governance approach, the role of independent science and the need for cross-sector policy alignment.

“Forest management is complex. No single action can improve everything, so we need to try different things, monitor results and be open to

Around 100 local Forest Bureau directors from Heilongjiang Province, Jilin Province and Inner Mongolia attended the workshop to learn about ecological construction, restructuring of governance agencies, forest resource management, related fiscal and financial policies, and to discuss common challenges encountered during the reforms.

The workshop acted as a platform for discussion about China's forestry reform process. It also helped build awareness on how to prevent deforestation through improved governance structures while prioritizing ecological rehabilitation over profit.

As China's forestry reforms gather pace, APFNet will continue to support forestry officials by providing technical and capacity related trainings and workshops.

Innovative Sustainable Forest Management Education project wins the 2016 CNIE-RCIE Award

The APFNet-funded "Asia-Pacific Forestry Innovation Education Project" has received the Canadian Network of Educational Innovation's (CNIE-RCIE) "Excellence & Innovation in the Integration of Technology in Educational Practices/Collaboration" award.



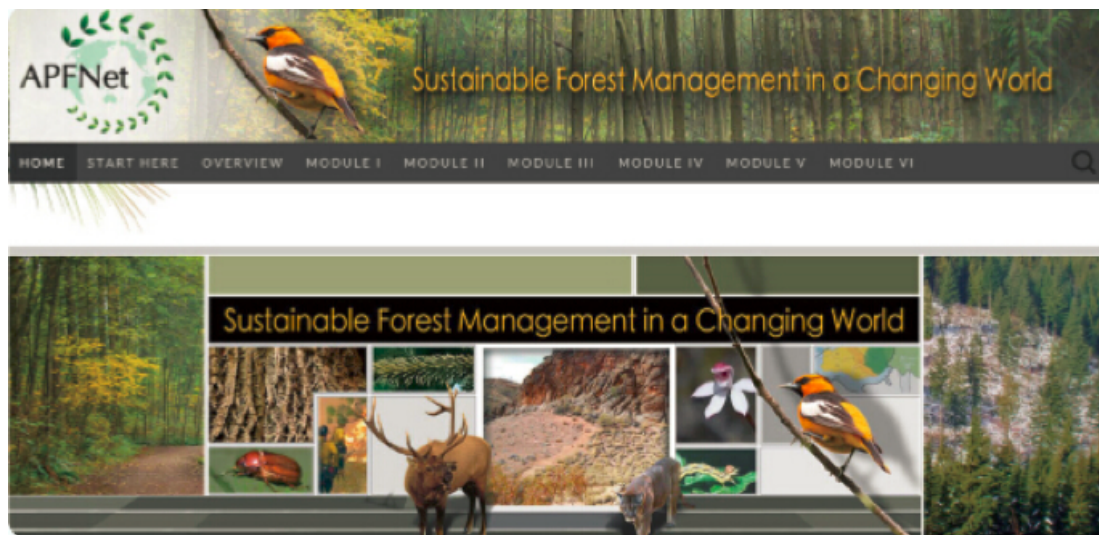
Excellence & Innovation in the Integration of Technology in Educational Practices/Collaboration Award

The CNIE-RCIE is an independent committee of professional peers whose awards recognize excellence in the use of technology, dialogue and cooperation in the development of innovative educational practices.

The “Asia-Pacific Forestry Innovation Education Project”, officially launched in November 2013, created a series of advanced online courses on sustainable forest management. The online learning platform allows students to access content 24 hours a day and acts as a forum for discussion.

The project is a collaborative effort between APFNet, Beijing Forestry University, University of British Columbia, University of Melbourne, University of the Philippines Los Banos College and Putra University of Malaysia.

The next stage of the project will further explore ways of combining the traditional classroom environment with interactive online course content.



Course One: Sustainable Forest Management in a Changing World

The online course can be accessed at: <http://apfecm.forestry.ubc.ca/sfm-online-courses/>

Over 30 applications received in APFNet 2016 call for proposals

The 2016 APFNet call for proposals was launched in February, with a submission deadline of the end of April for project concept notes. A total of 31 project concept notes were received from 13 economies, covering areas including the rehabilitation of degraded forest land, community forestry and rural development, biodiversity conservation, climate change and forestry education.

The APFNet Project Appraisal Panel reviews "regular projects" - concept notes and proposals that request a grant of more than USD 100,000. The Panel evaluated the 22 regular project concept notes received on 29 June 2016, seven of which were selected for the development of full proposals with a deadline of 30 September 2016. In the next phase, the Panel will review the final project proposals before making a decision on which are to be funded.

APFNet Scholarship Program graduations

On 24 June 2016, nine students from Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Mongolia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea and Pakistan graduated from the APFNet Scholarship Program (ASP) at Nanjing Forestry University. They majored in a variety of subjects, including Forestry and Environmental Science.

They were followed by seven more students who graduated from the ASP at Beijing Forestry University (BFU) on 29 June 2016. The students at BFU majored in Forestry Economics and Management and came from Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Mongolia and Nepal.





Graduates of the APFNet Scholarship Program

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