

APFNet NEWSLETTER

Issue 3, 2016



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Building capacity in the forestry sector: APFNet Trainers in Forestry (TIF) Network prioritizes future activities

Globally, while the vast majority of economies have a forest management plan - 167 economies representing 98 per cent of global forest area [\[1\]](#) - capacity gaps including lack of technical expertise, inadequate training infrastructure and

Asia and the Pacific is covered by 740 million hectares of forests, accounting for 26 percent of the region's land area, and 18 percent of global forest cover. [\[2\]](#)

This is the case in the Asia-Pacific, where topics such as land tenure, forest landscape restoration and technical knowledge regarding GIS and mapping are just some of the issues that economies in the region need to grapple with. A key component of being able to address these issues and others is building capacity of people in the forestry sector.

The APFNet “Asia-Pacific Trainers in Forestry (TIF) Workshop” set out to help do this, and was held from 1-3 December 2016, in follow-up to workshops organised by APFNet in 2014 and 2015 on human resource development.

The workshop gathered participants from across Asia-Pacific to further co-develop the Trainers in Forestry (TIF) Network, a regional program launched by APFNet in 2014 (previously called the “Forestry Human Resource Development Dialogue”). The TIF Network aims to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of forestry training efforts in the Asia-Pacific region through information exchange, capacity building and collaboration.



Participants getting to know each other during an ice-breaker activity on day 1

TIF Workshop Outcomes – Day 1

1. List of major shared challenges on HRD and training development
2. Prioritization of proposed activities
3. Action planning

A key outcome of the first day was economies' joint prioritization of future activities for the TIF Network. Main potential areas of focus identified for the next couple of years include trainings on project management for senior officers, methods of assessing training needs, study tours and staff exchanges, and training on specific technical areas.

There was consensus among participants on the design and relevance of the TIF Network, with high levels of interaction and knowledge sharing among economies.



Ms. Enkhjargal Damdinsuren from Mongolia talks to the group on day 2

The final two days consisted of an intense practical training on participatory training approaches. During the training, participants were introduced to participatory techniques and methods for the development of forestry and forestry-related trainings. Participants will be able to use what they learnt during the practical training in their home economies.

Going forward, the TIF Network will further refine and elaborate on the activities prioritized by participants. In addition to the implementation of trainings on specific areas, the Network will also develop into a platform for economies to share information and knowledge relevant to human capacity building in forestry in the region.

Around 30 participants from more than 15 economies attended the workshop, including trainers, facilitators and high-level decision makers in the forestry sector. The workshop was jointly organised and implemented by APFNet, RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests, the Chinese State Forestry Administration (SFA) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) of Malaysia.

[1] <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4793e.pdf>

[2] <http://www.fao.org/asiapacific/apfc/en/>

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Supporting young forestry researchers - Early Career Academics Program (ECAP) gathers feedback at IUFRO regional congress

Forests and trees play an important economic, social and environmental role in many people's lives across the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

Forest research is a key contributor to the development and management of forest resources, yet is often viewed as being low priority due to resource constraints and a lack of funds. This is particularly the case for early career academics, who can find it difficult to progress their careers due to a competitive environment and limited funding availability.

“...international research support organisations fail to encourage young research officers to participate in international forums...[and] rarely support young researcher[s] from developing [economies]” [3]

While a number of initiatives and programs supporting young forestry researchers do exist [4], there remains a gap between the level of support that young forestry researchers need and what is currently available.

In order to address this, APFNet is currently honing design of its Early Career Academics Program (ECAP), which will support early career academics across the Asia-Pacific.



Participants comment on ECAP's proposed design

A consultation meeting on the design of ECAP was held at the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) Regional Congress for Asia and Oceania in Beijing, China on 25 October 2016.

The purpose of the meeting, held as a parallel session of the Congress, was to present current efforts already targeting young forestry researchers and determine how ECAP could complement these. The meeting also aimed to elicit feedback on the design and future direction of ECAP.

“Researchers need to be able to summarise their work in a succinct way that is useful for policy makers...and communicate research results with the rest of society.”

- Dr. Michael Kleine, Deputy Executive Director of IUFRO Secretariat

Several institutions expressed interest in becoming involved in ECAP, including IUFRO, the Center for International Forestry research (CIFOR) and the Yunnan



Dr. Louis Putzel presents CIFOR's work with early career researchers

ECAP will consist of three main and interconnected components: a research grant, a fellowship and a forestry science forum. These components will be further refined and developed in 2017.

During the facilitated discussion on the program's design, participants emphasized a number of key points, including:

- The importance of further refining eligibility criteria for applicants;
- The benefits of combining both short- and longer-term trainings and fellowships;
- The proven effectiveness of mentoring; and
- The need to incentivize researchers to stay in their home economies.

Over 80 participants from forestry research institutes, universities and international organizations, joined the session. Dr. Michael Kleine, Deputy Executive Director of IUFRO Secretariat and Dr. Louis Putzel, Senior Scientist of CIFOR were invited to share their experience of supporting early career forestry researchers.

[3] <http://www.fao.org/docrep/article/wfc/xii/0092-c1.htm>

[4] For example, see <http://www.cifor.org> and <http://www.iufro.org/science/special/spdc/>

Supporting Community Based Sustainable Forest Management and Economic Empowerment of Women in Central Region of Nepal

Community forestry plays an important role in Nepal's forestry and socio-economic development. After 20 years of development, Nepal's community forest area totals 1.65 million hectares, accounting for about 35% of the national forest area.



APFNet provides forest management tools to 13 communities in Nepal

Currently, community forests are managed by some 19,000 community forest user groups, with more than 2.1 million households benefiting from them.

“Although women’s participation in CFUG executive committees has gradually increased to 31 percent, it has not reached the target of 50 percent set out in the Community Forestry Guidelines (2009).” [5]

However, the development of community forestry still faces low levels of forest management, unsustainable use of forest resources, unbalanced forest management and unequal distribution of income. These challenges hinder the long-term and stable development of community forestry in Nepal.



Mankapur community residents take part in wood handicraft processing training

APFNet launched the “*Supporting Community Based Sustainable Forest Management and Economic Empowerment of Women in Central Region of Nepal*” project in 2014 to achieve sustainable forest management and improve livelihoods of the communities in which the project is located.

Empowering women by:

1. providing alternative and sustainable energy sources, including biogas devices, solar panels and improved cook stoves, to reduce their workload and give them more their time for other activities;
2. supporting the development of three women-led community forest based mini-enterprises – an ecotourism park, wooden handicrafts and an aromatic herb plant – to improve livelihood; and
3. developing a 5-year forest management plan for each CFUG in Kathmandu, the majority of which are run by women, to demonstrate best practices in SFM.

The project aims to demonstrate scientific and practical measures for sustainable forest management in 13 community forest user groups, establishing community-based small and small forest enterprises, promoting the concept of sustainable and efficient use of forest resources, popularizing use of alternative energy equipment and reducing the pressure on local forest resources.

Community Forest User Group: in Nepal, community residents manage community resources through the establishment of community forest user groups. Nepal's Forest Act provides that the Community Forest Users Group is a legitimate body and a democratic independent body of self-government registered with the Regional Forests Office.

Alternative Energy: generally refers to non-traditional energy and energy storage technology, which has a reduced environmental impact. It is a source of fuel that does not exhaust natural resources or harm the environment.



Project Evaluation Specialist (lower right) and Project Executives and members of the Salahi Community Forest Utilization Team

The project targets 135 members of the Forest Users Group. Forest management techniques of the community are developed through the establishment of a community forest management program and by demonstration of different types of forest management techniques.

The next phase of the project will focus on summarizing and promoting technical models applicable to community forest management in Nepal.

[5] <http://www.recoftc.org/policy-briefs/understanding-womens-participation-forestry-nepal>

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Updating machinery to help small community-based forestry enterprises in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS)

Forest-based production contributes about 20% of the total household income of forest-dependent communities worldwide, through harvesting, processing and selling forest products.

In the Great Mekong Subregion (GMS), forest activities, including harvesting, processing and selling forest products such as timber and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) are crucial elements of household livelihood strategies across a variety of settings.



A business representative presents to the group at the recent seminar on community-based forest enterprises in the GMS



Project site: a processing plant at the Lopburi Forest Plantation Cooperative in Thailand

People living in or close to forests earn part of their livelihood through timber and NTFPs, typically through processing and selling them.

However, forestry enterprises in the GMS are faced with many challenges, including a shortage of production technology, outdated equipment and a lack of funds.

One of main issues in the forest sector for many economies in the region is the conflict between use of forest resources by local communities and the needs of governments to protect forests.

More than ten representatives from Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar and other regional economies and businesses attended the APFNet *Seminar on the development status and trends of small community-based forestry enterprises in the Greater Mekong Subregion* in Nanning, China on 13 September 2016.

The seminar provided participants with the opportunity to share the status of development of small forest enterprises in their economies, while also hearing from the Chinese manufacturer of machinery and equipment for the project.

Key points from the seminar

During the seminar, participants highlighted:

1. The importance of after-sales support;
2. The need for assistance in developing marketing and management plans for enterprises;
3. The usefulness of study tours, to view the machinery and to see how other economies in the region are using it; and
4. The need for a flexible definition of community forestry, to allow for the characteristics of each economy.

The seminar was held under APFNet's "GMS Project for the Greater Mekong Subregion", which has been in operation since 2014. The project aims to address challenges that small community-based forest enterprises face, and improve forest management in the region by providing them with wood processing and furniture production technologies and equipment.

So far, technology and support has been provided to Laos and Thailand, and will be extended to other economies in the region going forward.

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Deepening China-ASEAN forestry cooperation in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 aims to “protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land

Forests help reduce the risk of a number of environmental disasters, mitigate against climate change, provide people with a livelihood, and are rich and biologically diverse-ecosystems.

While in the past forests have been managed on more of a national level, there is increasing realisation that economies need to work together to tackle the issues that they are faced with.

China and ASEAN economies have deep experience in forest management, and can significantly contribute to the successful achievement of SDG 15 through increased cooperation.

All of the ASEAN economies are members of APFNet, and the majority of APFNet's projects to-date have been implemented in the ASEAN region. APFNet facilitates experience exchange and knowledge-sharing between China and ASEAN through thematic trainings, dialogue mechanisms and a range of targeted workshops.



Mr. Qu Guilin addresses the forum

The China - ASEAN Forestry Cooperation Forum took place Nanning, China from the 11 to 12 December 2016, with the theme of "safeguarding forest ecological security and improving national green welfare".

Nearly 200 government officials, experts and entrepreneurs from China and ASEAN economies discussed issues related to China-ASEAN forestry cooperation, forest resource protection and utilization, forestry innovation, and strengthening protection of biological diversity in border areas.

“Since its establishment, APFNet has funded 12 forestry projects in ASEAN economies. Project areas include restoration of degraded forest land, sustainable forest use, river basin management, how forestry can respond to climate change, forestry education and policy research.”

- Mr. Qu Guilin, Executive Director of APFNet

There are a great many opportunities for forestry development and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. With sustainable forest management being included as one of the 17 objectives of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, APFNet will continue to promote and support regional cooperation in forestry going forward.

[6] <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/forests>

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Developing standing-tree carbon equations to improve the accuracy of forest cover carbon stock estimates in Thailand

“Global estimates of forest emission trends show that total emissions have decreased by over 25 percent between the period 2001–2010 and the period 2011–2015. FAO data show that the decrease is due to a decline in deforestation rates globally. They also reveal that emissions from forest degradation, estimated for the first time, are increasing over time and represent one-quarter of total emissions.” [7]

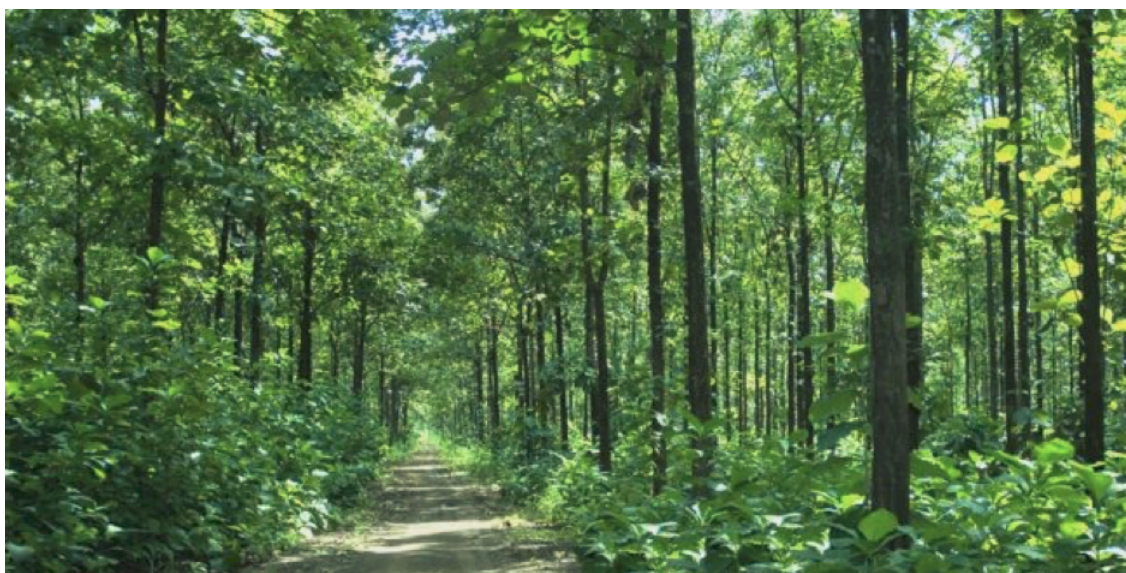
Thailand’s carbon stock estimates are based on equations that were developed for one local area in northern Thailand, using a small sample of trees. They are inaccurate as the equations have a tendency to over- or under-estimate tree

The APFNet funded project “To demonstrate the development and application of standing-tree carbon equations to improve the accuracy of forest-cover carbon stock estimates in Thailand” aims to address this.

“The project will strengthen Thailand’s ability to monitor, assess and report on its carbon stocks for better policy decision making and balanced public debate on climate change mitigation and adaptation in Thailand.”

- Mr. Xia Jun, Assistant Executive Director of APFNet

The project focuses on developing accurate standing-tree carbon equations and their application to the preparation of a forest-cover carbon stock map in the Ngao Demonstration Forest in Thailand’s northern Lampang Province.





Project site in Ngao Demonstration Forest, Lampang Province

Ngao Demonstration Forest is Thailand's only designated demonstration forest for testing and experimentation. The project will focus on the major specie groups in the area, and field data will be collected for developing and pilot-testing the new tree carbon equations.

The project inception workshop took place on 13 December 2016. The 2-year project will start in January 2017, with APFNet contributing USD 199,045 through an agreement with Kasetsart University.

[7] <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4470e.pdf>

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Mini botanical garden park in Mongolia officially opens

The mini botanical garden park in the Mongolian National Garden Park, funded by APFNet and the State Forestry of Administration of China, officially opened to the public on 27 October 2016.



Opening ceremony of the mini botanical garden park in Mongolia

Construction work began in March 2015, and set out to establish an 8.4 hectare mini botanical park within the National Garden Park in Ulaanbaatar through the planting of flowers, trees and shrubs.

This demonstration project is the first of its kind supported by APFNet in the Greater Central Asia region, and the park's completion marks a significant milestone in cooperation efforts between APFNet and economies in the region.

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APFNet Scholarship students participate in IUFRO-AO Pre-Congress training

From the 21 to 23 October 2016, APFNet scholarship students participated in a training workshop on “Science-Policy Interactions: Making Science Work for Forest Landscape Restoration” in Beijing, China.

“The real need for improved communication and meaningful dialogue with relevant stakeholders, decision makers, and scientific groups was shown...[the workshop] gives a practical scope of the real situation and needs in the science-policy interface as well as



Students have a group discussion during the training [9]

The workshop, organized by IUFRO in collaboration with APFNet, highlighted the importance of the interactions between science and policy, and helped students build their skills in communicating scientific facts to policy makers.

The 27 students are currently studying their Masters degrees at Beijing Forestry University (BJFU) and Nanjing Forestry University (NJFU), China. They come from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

[8] For more feedback from students see: <http://www.iufro.org/science/special/spdc/actproj/twsbeijing16/feedback/>

[9] For more photos of the training see: http://www.apfnet.cn/index.php?option=com_phocagallery&view=category&id=68&Itemid=144

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Memorandum of Understanding signed with IUFRO

APFNet recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the

International Union of Forest Research Institutions (IUFRO). The MoU highlights forest and landscape restoration, forest and water interactions, forest and non-wood forest products for a greener future, and forest education and development of capacities of early-career researchers and officials as the main priority areas of cooperation.

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