Newsletter July 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

PROJECTS

Working to protect Cambodia's forests and wildlife

The Choam Ksant Forest Landscape (CKFL) is in northern Cambodia, sharing a border with Thailand and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. It is part of the Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot, one of the

the designated global diversity hotspots containing the most extensive remaining continuous natural forests. It is of exceptional global importance for biodiversity in Southeast Asia and is one of the most important biodiversity corridors in the Greater Mekong Subregion.

APFNet's Transboundary Wildlife Conservation Initiative (@Wild) explores transboundary wildlife conservation opportunities in the Greater Mekong Subregion. In early 2020, APFNet launched the @Wild small grant grant project "Management and Protection of Choam Ksant Forest Landscape in Cambodia" to assess the status of forests and key wildlife species and investigate the impact of human activities on the forest ecosystem. Implemented by the National Forestry Administration of Cambodia, this one-year project was successfully completed in early 2021. For more details of project, visit www.apfnet.cn

Conserving high value tree species

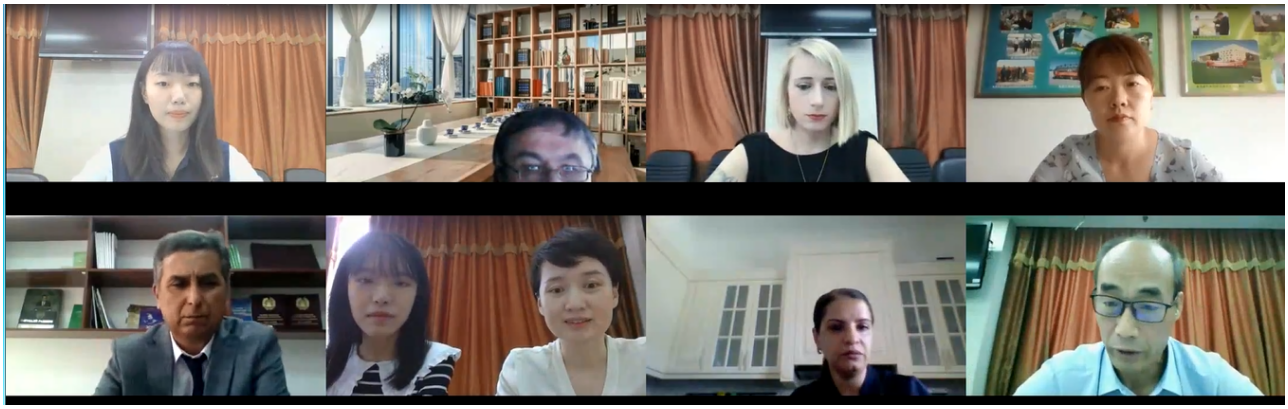
Supported by APFNet, the establishment of a high value tree species breeding centre in Cambodia will support efforts in conserving and developing the genetic resources of rare and endangered tree species in Cambodia.

With a total budget of USD 6,860,904 (APFNet contribution USD 5,492,584), the eight-year project has multiple components. A high value tree species breeding centre will be constructed on the IRD campus in Phnom Penh. Facilities will include a tissue culture and diagnostic laboratory and greenhouses. A 100-ha forest genetic resource conservation garden of valuable trees and a 20-ha eco-forest farm will also be established in the Siem Reap IRD research station. The project will train Cambodian forestry officials, researchers, students and local communities on the conservation of forest genetic resources and forest restoration to promote sustainable economic development in rural areas. Finally, project experiences and lessons learned will be shared in technical manuals, posters, videos and research papers on valuable tree species germplasm, effective propagation and plantations. A book Major Indigenous Valuable Timber Tree Species will be published in Chinese, English and Khmer.

In 2021, the project team will focus on construction of the breeding centre, collection of valuable tree germplasm resources and design of the forest conservation garden and eco-forest farm.

COOPERATION

Strengthening forestry cooperation and action in Greater Central Asia



On 23 June 2021, member economies and partners of the Greater Central Asia Forestry Cooperation Mechanism (GCA FCM) met to review an action plan for cooperation on forestry activities across the region.

Greater Central Asia contains a small percentage of the world's forest area, however the functions of forests – including water and soil conservation and watershed management – are vitally important for all economies. Member economies include China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Organized by the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet), the exchange meeting also updated members on GCA FCM capacity building activities and APFNet projects in the region.

Following an introduction to the 2021-2030 Action Plan for GCA FCM, members provided comments and approved the plan. A consensus was also reached on arrangements for the Third Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Forestry in Greater Central Asia to be held in China in late 2022.

Mongolia and APFNet strengthen cooperation on forest restoration

On 24 June 2021, His Excellency Mr Badral, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mongolia to the People's Republic of China, met with Mr Lu De, Executive Director of APFNet Secretariat, at an official visit to the Embassy of Mongolia in Beijing. They exchanged views on bilateral relations and agreed to expand cooperation on forest restoration to address environmental issues in Greater Central Asia.

Mr. Lu De gave a brief introduction to APFNet activities in Mongolia, including the Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Forestry in Greater Central Asia, APFNet demonstration projects and scholarships. He emphasized that transboundary environmental issues are becoming more critical in Mongolia and other economies in Greater Central Asia. Tackling these ecological challenges will require joint efforts across the region. He also noted that APFNet has always been ready to support and cooperate with organizations, governments and individuals to undertake forest restoration to restore the environment.

H.E. Mr Badral expressed appreciation for APFNet's projects in Mongolia and other work in the region. Noting that economies in the region share common environmental problems such as water scarcity, low soil water retention, sandstorms and severe desertification, he emphasized that the Mongolian Government is eager to work cooperatively on environmental issues in partnership with other organizations.

RESEARCH NEWS

Why there are so many inconsistencies in estimating global forest cover?

Zhang Shiyi, Project Manager, Project Management Division, APFNet

Deforestation and forest degradation can happen rapidly and result in desertification, soil erosion, flooding and loss of crops. To take action on reducing deforestation, we need to know the true extent of tree loss but many public and private institutions have conflicting data on deforestation and its impacts on carbon emissions. These discrepancies make it difficult to set forest restoration targets and prepare sustainable forest management plans. This article outlines four reasons that contribute to the differences in global forest cover estimates. They include the different definitions of 'forest', economies' reluctance to report accurate data, technology limitations and research bias. Some suggestions on reducing data inconsistency in forest cover are provided.

Find out more details here

China has adopted the "Forest Chief" Scheme

The nationwide forest chief scheme aims to protect and develop forest and grassland resources, with government and local Communist Party Committee officials serving as forest chiefs. This new mechanism was adopted following the release of the guidelines *Opinions on Fully Implementing the Forest Chief Scheme* in early 2021.

The National Forestry and Grassland Administration established a working group who issued an action plan to implement the guidelines. The action plan includes tasks and activities to assess forest chief performance at provincial levels. Indicators such as forest coverage, forest stock volumes,grassland-integrated vegetation coverage, wetland protection rates, as well as ecological protection and restoration, forest safeguarding policies, supervision of law enforcement systems and basic infrastructure construction will be monitored.

The National Forestry and Grassland Administration will also develop more targeted indicators and tasks for specific areas, depending on available resources and local conditions. Assessments will be on an annual basis.

To date, ten provincial-level regions, Anhui, Jiangxi, Shandong, Chongqing Municipality, Hainan, Shanxi, Guizhou, Fujian, Xinjiang and Beijing Municipality, have implemented the forest chief scheme. Other provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities are also stepping up relevant work to establish the forest chief scheme at all levels by the end of 2021.

Study shows plantation forests need more management

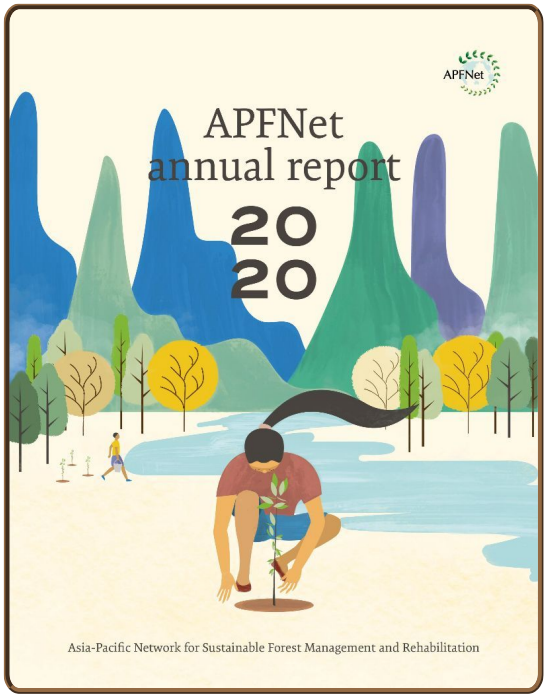
Not only professionals but also many people around the world have become aware that better plans, regulations, and appropriate management to ensure forest quality, growth rate, and productivity are more important than simply telling or letting people plant trees.

Based on the project "Construction of multifunctional forest management demonstration" outcomes of phases I and II, APFNet staff did research on the productivity and profitability of *Larix principis-rupprechtii* and *Pinus tabuliformis* plantation forests. It is found that high initial planting densities without thinning cause high mortality and slow growth rates, leading to an unprofitable outcome. Thinning operations increase both diameter and height growth of the retained trees, boosting the merchantable volume of large-diameter trees and thus the profitability and productivity.

The constraints of government regulation without allowance for thinning to the near-mature stands and increasing the intensity could severely reduce the profitability and productivity.

We believe that this study shows some important and timely implications for improving the plantation performance not only locally but at the regional level to share our research and experiences. To read the full research article visit here.

PUBLICATIONS



UPCOMING EVENTS

Pu'er Sustainable Forest Management Demonstration and Training Base

LAUNCH CEREMONY 27 July 2021

Our mailing address is:
Address: 6th Floor Building A, Baoneng Center,
12 Futong Dongdajie, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100102, P.R. China
Mail: apfnet@apfnet.cn