NEWSLETTER

VOL 03

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THE THIRD MEETING OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR FORESTRY IN GREATER CENTRAL ASIA

The Third Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Forestry in Greater Central Asia was held from 11-12 September 2023, in Chifeng, China, and attended by ministerial and high-level officials from China, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan in charge of forestry developments.

Around the theme of "Strengthening Forestry Cooperation and Promoting Regional Development", representatives shared their latest developments in laws and policies, priorities, actions, accomplishments, challenges, and gaps, as well as fields where regional exchanges and cooperations are urgently needed.

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In this issue

The meeting was concluded with the Action Plan for Greater Central Asia Forestry Cooperation Mechanism (2023-2025) adopted, with priorities set forth as follows:

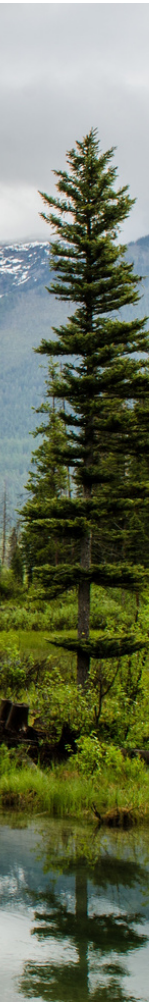
- Vegetation restoration in arid and semi-arid areas,
- Sand-based industry development in the areas affected by desertification, such as agroforestry, pasture and ecotourism, etc.,
- Transboundary cooperation on forest/ grasslands fire prevention and control,
- Conservation and utilization of forest/grasslands genetic resources,
- Promoting capacity building of forestry/grasslands professionals,
- Promoting forestry/grassland scientific research cooperation and exchange,
- Improving the livelihood of the communities in extremely decertified areas by transforming the areas into pastures dotted by clusters of shrubs.

The meeting also appreciated the offer of Mongolia to host the fourth meeting and decided so.

The meeting featured a series of project site visits before and after the indoor session. Representatives went to a larch plantation site for seed cultivation and timber harvesting, an understory mushroom base, a Larch plantation site for large-diameter timber cultivation, and the program sites of desertification control, where representatives planted memorial trees.

CONCEPT NOTES APPRAISAL MEETING

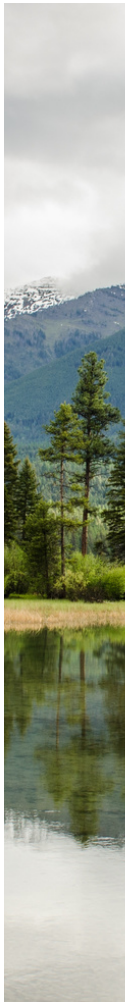
The appraisal meeting for the 2023 Concept Notes (CNs) took place on 4th August. During the meeting, the members of APFNet's Project Appraisal Panel (PAP) reviewed and assessed the CNs, discussing their strengths and weaknesses. Ultimately, they recommended 7 CNs from China, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand for further development as Project Proposals.



The proponents invited for the next stage are required to submit their proposals before mid-November.

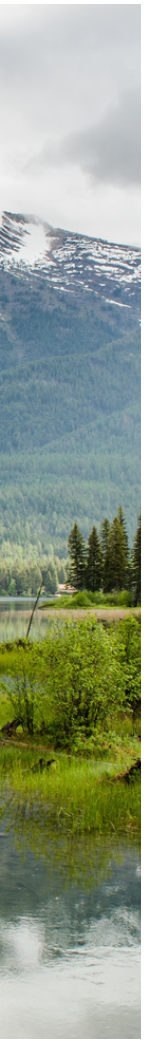
In the 2023 CNs appraisal, 20 Concept Notes were accepted for PAP appraisal, following the updated *Criteria, Indicators, and Processes for Appraising APFNet Projects*. Compared to the previous call, the PAP observed improvements in the overall quality of the Concept Notes. They found that the CNs were more aligned with APFNet's strategic plan and priorities for demonstration projects which should explore successful models of forest restoration and sustainable management, emphasize action-oriented approaches, and value on-the-ground practices. The Panel also emphasized that the intended impact of a project is a key factor in the assessment. The PAP evaluates the value and innovation of proposals and prioritizes those that can drive policy, institutional, and behavioural change, and which have the potential to sustain and scale up. Therefore, project proponents are encouraged to focus on these aspects in their project designs, particularly during the proposal stage.

THE SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY EDUCATION COORDINATION MECHANISM (AP-FECM)



The sixth AP-FECM General Assembly was held in Kunming from 15-17 August 2023, with team support from APFNet, UBC AP-FECM Executive Office and Southwest Forestry University. Over 50 guests from 34 regional economies and institutions joined the General Assembly, including university presidents, deans, professors, and directors of international offices. The objectives of the General Assembly were to envision the future development of the AP-FECM, enhance the effective and efficient communication and partnership among AP-FECM members, and promote and improve forest education and research in the Asia Pacific region. The main activities included:

1. The Asia Pacific Forestry Education Forum with the theme: Opportunities, challenges and solutions of online education and AI technology for forestry education in the post-pandemic era
2. Overview and planning of the online program “Innovative Sustainable Forest Management Education in the Asia-Pacific Region”
3. AP-FECM work report and award ceremony recognizing outstanding contributions over the past 10 years
4. Election of AP-FECM Steering Committee Chair, and Co-Chairs.



PRESIDENTS' FORUM OF FORESTRY UNIVERSITY/INSTITUTE IN THE GREATER MEKONG SUB-REGION (GMS)

The First Presidents' Forum of Forestry University/Institute in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) was jointly organized by the APFNet and Southwest Forestry University (SWFU) from 4-8 September 2023 in Kunming City of Yunnan Province, China. The main purpose of the forum was to promote cooperation and development of higher forestry education in the GMS, with the theme of "Deepening cooperation and seeking green and beautiful Greater Mekong". A total of 160 guests from 14 regional universities, presidents of forestry research institutes, experts and scholars, forestry government officials, and relevant international organizations from 6 economies in the Greater Mekong River Basin, including Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam, and China, gathered together to discuss hot topics in forestry education and research in the basin and seek future cooperation.

Universities and institutions have offered special capacity-building programs that could be applied in the region and pointed out that there is a need to incorporate and apply technology and innovation such as online learning programs into their regular programs of forestry study.

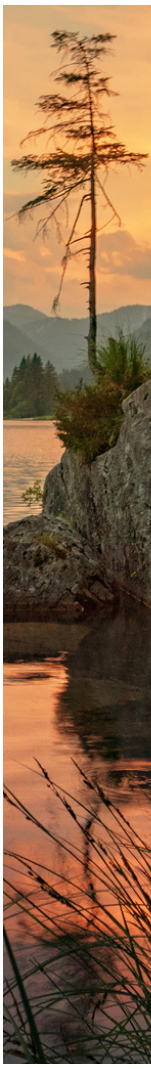
SANFRI EMBRACES NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Hanoi, Viet Nam witnessed the successful organization of the Fourth Steering Committee Meeting of SANFRI and the Third Early Career Academics Forum on 19th September 2023, by joint efforts of APFNet, Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences (VAFS) and SANFRI Coordination Office (SCO) hosted by Yunnan Academy of Forestry and Grassland (YAFG). Representatives from eight SANFRI member institutes and 24 young scholars attended the events.

SANFRI Committee updated SANFRI guidelines, reviewed SANFRI work and activities during 2022-2023, and adopted the work plan for 2024-2025 through active discussion and upon consensus among all members.

Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) and the Research Center for Plant Conservation, Botanical Gardens and Forestry, BRIN of Indonesia were elected as the new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee and expressed their dedication to SANFRI activities during their term with APFNet support.

The Early Career Academics Forum featured mutual, inspiration, network sharing and cooperation among young forestry researchers. Presentations were made to share projects funded by APFNet Small Research Grant in 2023, i.e., a joint Research on Policies to Promote Natural Forest Restoration Towards Sustainability in Vietnam and Lao PDR, Tree Seed Supply Management Model and Policy for Supporting Forest and Landscape Restoration in Indonesia, and Documenting the insect natural enemies of insect pests in ex-situ germplasm conservation of *Aquilaria malaccensis*. This was followed by ten presenters who shared information about their institutes, key research areas and working partners, their research insights etc.



THE EVALUATION SHOWS MICRO-CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT IMPROVED IN CENTRAL JAVA OF INDONESIA

To demonstrate watershed management through conservation farming and landscape rehabilitation practices, APFNet supported the implementation of a 2-phase project entitled Development Participatory Management of Micro Catchment at the Bengawan Solo Upper Watershed in Indonesia.

An evaluation was conducted shortly after the closure of project phase II in July 2023, to assess performance, outcomes, impacts and sustainability of the project. The project outcomes are satisfactorily achieved, with the main findings as follows:

1. Project sustainability observed

- Most participatory agroforestry demonstration plots of conservation farming and watershed rehabilitation were established with seasonal crops inter-planted with tree seedlings. The crops and seedlings are in good growth condition and are likely to be sustained without additional support.
- All gully control facilities, including gabion head structures, bamboo and cemented-stone gully plugs and a small cemented-stone check dam were built up in high quality, and have retained the eroded sediments, stabilized the gullies and prevented further bank erosion. These gully control structures are very likely to be sustained for a reasonable period.

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2. Good capacity building
This project has significantly raised awareness and understanding of the importance of managing and conserving natural resources among the targeted communities through training in coffee cultivation and post-harvest processing, avocado cultivation and grafting, as well as management of household and agricultural wastes.

3. Good demonstration effects and possible practice/model expansion

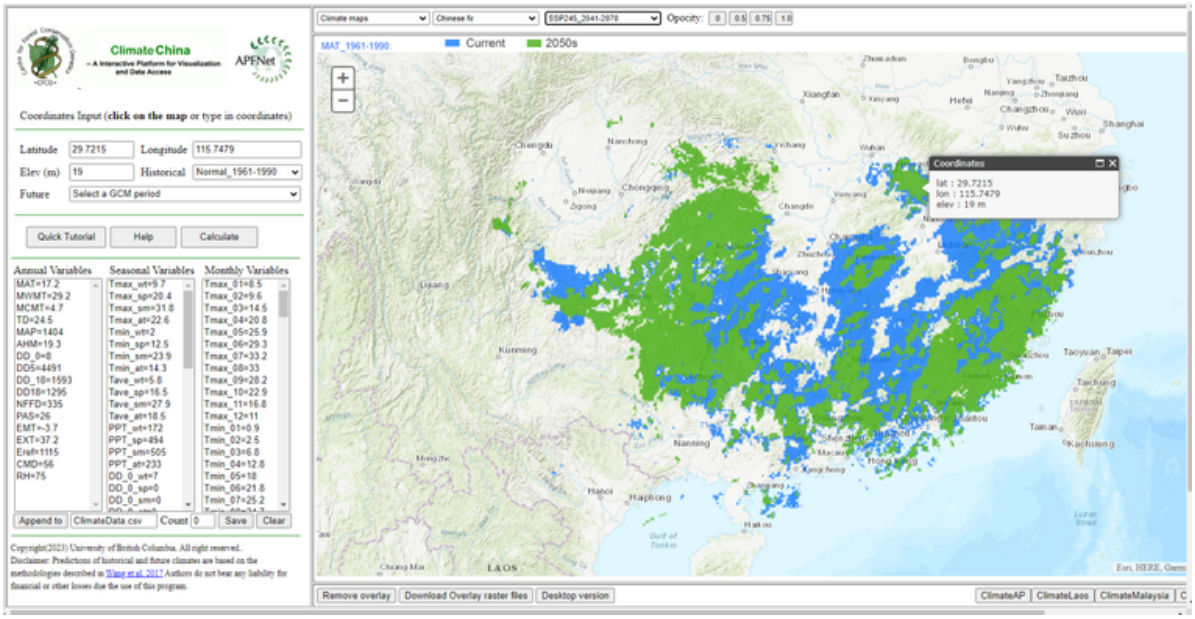
- Agroforestry plot development activities have improved land cover and controlled erosions, and have generated extra income for households through wood production and fruit harvesting.
- Some community members have already replicated bamboo-based gully control structures on their landholdings.
- Most of the demonstration plots are along the roads to ensure easy access and good model/practice demonstration effects for visitors and neighbouring community members.

The evaluator emphasized the good collaboration of all project partners, which continues after project completion, and helped to overcome many challenges posed by the complex institutional and legislative watershed management system in Indonesia.

For more about the projects, please see here.

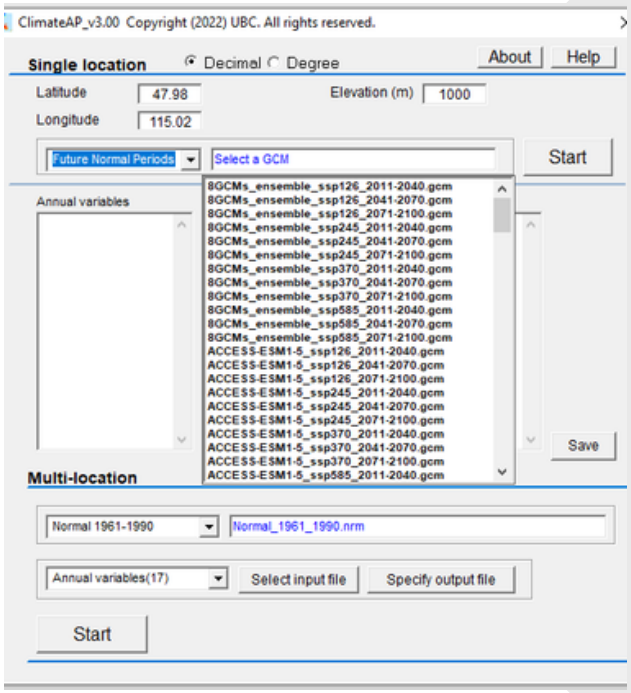
APFNET'S RESEARCH ON CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON CRITICAL TREE SPECIES AND ECOSYSTEMS IN ASIA-PACIFIC

The third phase of the APFNet project "Adaptation of Asia-Pacific Forestry to Climate Change –Phase III Synopsis, updating and Extension of Forest Adaptation Tools" has been successfully and smoothly implemented by the University of British Columbia for 21 months since its initiation in December 2021. The third phase has updated and improved the forest adaptation tools developed in Phase I and Phase II of this project, including a scale-free climate model called ClimateAP, climate niche models for 15 tree species and 4 forest ecosystems, FORECAST models, and a web platform (climateap.net) to facilitate easy access to climate data and spatial visualization of climate data and species distributions.

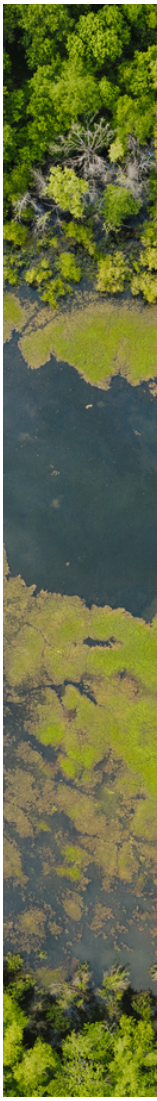


By August this year, the Climate niche models for the 15 tree species have been rebuilt and projected for the future periods 2011-2040, 2041-2070, and 2071-2100 with newly updated climate change scenarios.

The ClimateAP v3.00 has been updated by including the recent two years (2020 and 2021) climate data and replacing CMIP5 GCMs from IPCC AR5 with CMIP6 GCMs from IPCC AR6. Now A new version of ClimateAP has been realized via https://climateap.net/Default.aspx.
A new version of ClimateAP developed has the following new features:



- Relative humidity (RH) has been added to the list of derived climate variables;
- Multiple GCMs/periods are allowed in a single run for multi-location processes;
- More options have been added in the variable selection dropdown box, including monthly climate variables, and annual and seasonal climate variables.

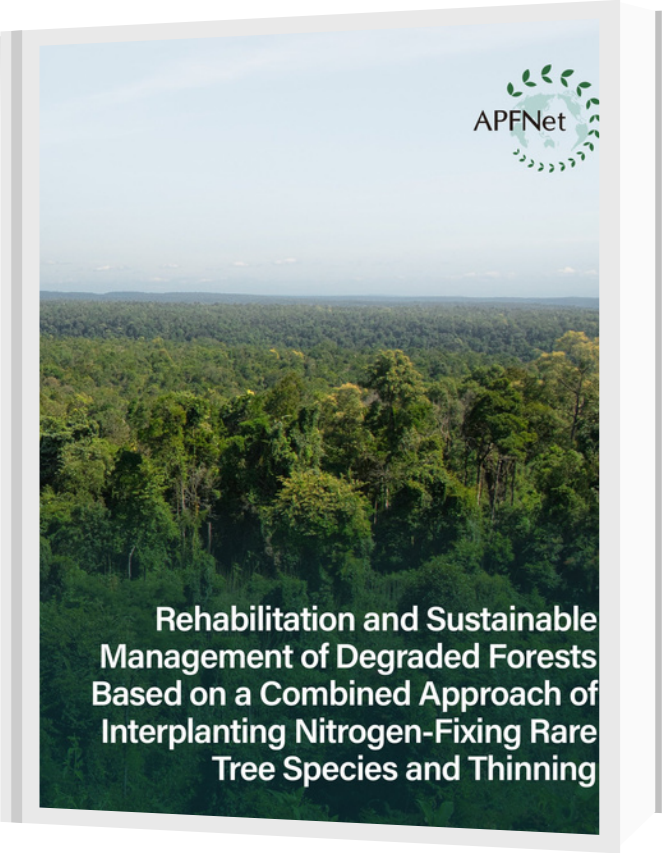


As the project team attempts to develop a species selection tool for a changing climate, the number of species may be too small by just including the 15 species. The project aims to expand the number of species to 100 to a wider user base by proving its superiority compared to other climate tools like WorldClim.
Besides, the third phase also successfully held five consultation meetings with stakeholders and potential users of forest adaptation tools that were developed in this project, and conducted field trips to validate our climate niche model predictions, because the climate of typical forested areas in mountains varies considerably.

NEW PUBLICATION

Between January 2019 and June 2022, the APFNet project "Rehabilitation and Sustainable Management of Degraded Forests Based on a Combined Approach of Interplanting Nitrogen-Fixing Rare Tree Species and Thinning" executed by ECTF and IRD, commenced in Bos Thom Village, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia, by designating a part of the local community forest (CF) as a demonstration forest.

For the full report >>>




>>> NEWSLETTER <<<

APFNet ALUMNI

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE APFNet ALUMNI NETWORK

TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH

SAVING FORESTS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

READ MORE

These days, one might think understanding the importance of forests for our planet should be easy - even a fifth grader knows that forests are the lungs of the Earth. Yet despite this common knowledge, the world's forest area continues to decrease at an alarming rate due to the expansion of agriculture, timber production, urbanization, and road construction.

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APFNet alumni must inspire and motivate THE young generation to conserve the earth and environment! - Page 8

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER 12TH EDITION

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2008-2023

Asia-Pacific Network for
Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation