



APRIL 2026

Newsletter

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Highlights

27 March 2026

Promoting Urban Forestry and Green Well-being

APFNet co-hosted the Forum on Nature-Based Garden City and Green Well-being in Beijing, alongside the Beijing Municipal Forestry and Parks Bureau. As part of the 2026 Zhongguancun Forum, the event convened global experts and stakeholders to explore the role of urban forests in enhancing ecological resilience and public well-being.



Opening the forum, Executive Director Dr. Wang Chunfeng emphasized the growing importance of urban forests as essential components of livable cities. Discussions highlighted biodiversity conservation, ecological restoration, and innovative financing for green development.

The forum also resulted in several new partnerships, including initiatives on biodiversity conservation, pet-friendly urban spaces, and the launch of the International Alliance for Urban Forests—further strengthening global collaboration in urban forestry.

19 March 2026

Strengthening Forestry Talent Development



A delegation from Beijing Forestry University (BFU) visited APFNet to deepen cooperation on forestry education and talent development.

As a long-standing partner of the APFNet Scholarship Program (ASP), BFU has supported 70 students from 13 economies since 2010. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to expanding collaboration under APFNet's new strategic framework, with a focus on nurturing the next generation of forestry professionals.

Highlights

9-13 March 2026

Advancing Forest Restoration Practices in China

APFNet conducted field visits to key demonstration projects in Anhui and Hainan provinces. In Anhui, the project on forest restoration in hilly and low mountain areas has shown significant progress, including improvements in forest quality and community livelihoods. APFNet emphasized the importance of developing scalable models—such as the proposed “Qingyang Model”—to replicate success across the region. In Hainan, restoration efforts in tropical forests are exploring the transformation of monoculture plantations into more diverse, natural forest systems. These initiatives contribute to ecological resilience and offer valuable lessons for Southeast Asia. Looking ahead, APFNet will continue enhancing technological innovation, monitoring systems, and knowledge sharing to maximize project impacts.



23-25 February 2026

Participated in the Global Summit on Forest-Based Bioeconomy in Vienna



From 23 to 25 February 2026, APFNet representative attended the Global Summit on “Advancing Sustainable Forest-based Bioeconomy Approaches” in Vienna, Austria. The summit, a Country-Led Initiative in support of UNFF21 and COF028, brought together over 490 participants from more than 60 economies. APFNet actively contributed to thematic discussions on financing opportunities and non-wood forest products. The insights gained, particularly on blended finance and ESG alignment with Chinese enterprises abroad, and on strengthening evidence for non-wood forest products, will inform APFNet’s Fourth Strategic Plan implementation.

Highlights

2-6 February 2026

Facilitating International Knowledge Exchange



APFNet organized a study tour for a delegation from Thailand's Office of the Public Sector Development Commission (OPDC). The programme provided in-depth insights into China's approaches to sustainable forest management, carbon markets, digital forestry, and industrial integration.

Participants highlighted the value of integrated forest economy models and policy-technology-industry coordination, which offer practical references for advancing low-carbon forestry development in Thailand.

29 January 2026

Convened a Workshop on Innovative ESG Partnerships for Chinese Enterprises Abroad

APFNet organized a workshop on "Exploring New Models of Enterprise-International Organization Cooperation: Leveraging Forestry Projects to Support Overseas Chinese Enterprises' ESG Compliance and Diversify APFNet's Financing Channels." The event brought together representatives from leading Chinese ecological foundations and research institutions. Participants agreed that APFNet's technical expertise in sustainable forest management, combined with its regional network, can effectively address the growing ESG compliance needs of Chinese enterprises operating abroad.



Events

APFNet actively engaged in regional meetings



Model Forest Network Advisory Meeting (Bhutan). APFNet shared its experiences in sustainable forest management and extended an invitation for Bhutan to join the network, reinforcing regional cooperation.

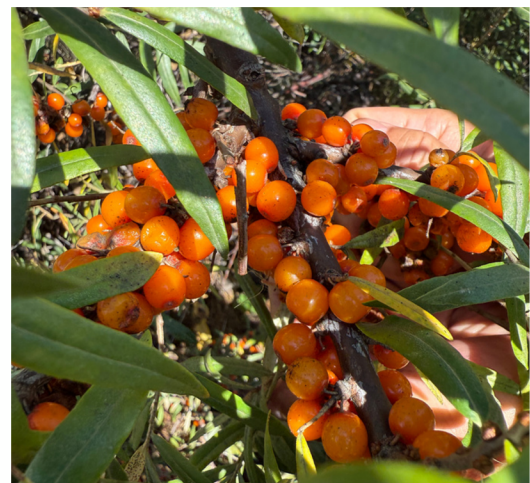


29th APEC EGILAT Plenary. APFNet presented its work in combating illegal logging through policy dialogue, capacity building, and demonstration projects, emphasizing sustainable forest management as a fundamental solution.

Project

Seabuckthorn Baseline Survey Project Kicks Off

The project "Survey on the Current Status of Seabuckthorn Resources and Industrial Development Needs in Greater Central Asia" officially commenced following the signing of the project agreement. The project is executed by the Management Center for Seabuckthorn Development (Plant Development Center for Soil and Water Conservation), Ministry of Water Resources of China, with APFNet support. The project team is currently developing detailed survey plans and questionnaires, and is actively reaching out to relevant economies in the Greater Central Asia region to establish a solid baseline for seabuckthorn resources and industrial development.



Knowledge Products



Sino-ASEAN Network of Forestry Research Institutes (SANFRI)

Report of the Fifth Steering Committee Meeting

3-5 December 2025 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Overview

The Sino-ASEAN Network of Forestry Research Institutes (SANFRI) mechanism was formally launched by APFNet in 2018 to enhance collaborative forestry research and promote sustainable forest management among ASEAN economies and China. In line with the SANFRI framework, the Fifth Steering Committee meeting was held on 3 December 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Co-organized by the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet), and the Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutes (APAFRI). The meeting brought together nine Steering Committee member organizations to review SANFRI activities, discuss program priorities, and further explore regional collaboration opportunities.

The meeting has achieved its main goals: (1) Conducted the SANFRI leadership election for 2026-2027, selecting the Chair institution (National Research and Innovation Agency of Indonesia) and Vice-Chair institution (Royal Forest Department of Thailand); (2) Reviewed progress on SANFRI activities during 2024-2025; (3) Discussed and adopted the 2026-2027 Work Plan and revised the guidelines of Small Research Grant program; and (4) Planned for the 6th SANFRI Steering Committee Meeting.



Figure 1 Group Photo of the 5th SANFRI Steering Committee Meeting



Sino-ASEAN Network of Forestry Research Institutes (SANFRI)

Report of the Fourth Early Career Academics Forum

3-5 December 2025 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Overview

Geographically neighboring and sharing similarities in natural resources, ASEAN economies and China possess a strong foundation for collaboration in sustainable forest management. Recognizing the vital role of scientific research and the substantial potential for forestry capacity building, APFNet established the Sino-ASEAN Network of Forestry Research Institutes (SANFRI) to strengthen institutional cooperation and support sustainable forest management in the region. Through its Early Career Academics Forum, SANFRI specifically aims to create a platform for young forestry scholars from ASEAN countries and China to share research findings and foster mutual learning. Since its establishment in 2018, thanks to the dedicated efforts of the SANFRI Steering Committee, the SANFRI Coordination Office (SCO), and the Young Scholar Team, three forums have been successfully held, facilitating meaningful exchanges in forestry research, strengthening professional networks among young scholars, and supporting the translation of innovative ideas into concrete research projects.

Building on this progress, the Fourth Early Career Academics Forum was successfully held from December 3 to 5, 2025, in Malaysia. The Forum was co-organized by the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet), and the Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutes (APAFRI). It was designed to strengthen regional research synergy by facilitating structured knowledge sharing on emerging forestry topics and showcasing expertise from participating institutions. A core objective was to accelerate youth-led collaboration by transforming innovative ideas into actionable initiatives, with the potential to develop joint research proposals for the 2026-2027 funding cycle.

Structured over three days to maximize engagement and outcomes, the forum commenced with an indoor session focused on research and collaboration showcases, including presentations from APFNet's Small Research Grant projects and reports delivered by young scholars, followed by an interactive member institutes and youth voices session aimed at identifying priority cross-border cooperation opportunities. The following days featured field visits to the Matang Mangrove Forest Reserve, charcoal and coffee processing facilities, etc., providing practical insights into local conservation and sustainable management practices.

APFNet released several key reports this quarter, including:

- In the report, APFNet outlines the 2026–2027 work plan for SANFRI. It details the mechanism's progress in advancing its core programs—including the Visiting Scholar Program and Small Research Grants—and reaffirms member institutes' commitment to strengthening regional institutional cooperation and sustainable forest management.
- In the Report of the 4th SANFRI Early Career Academics Forum, APFNet highlights the mechanism's commitment to fostering regional research capacity, facilitating youth-led innovation, and identifying cross-border collaboration opportunities among young forestry scholars from ASEAN economies and China.
- In a keynote report produced for the Second Pu'er Forum on Asia-Pacific Forests, APFNet provides a comprehensive analysis of the forces currently influencing the forestry sector. By examining twelve interrelated trends—ranging from forest restoration and climate change to digital transformation and trade dynamics—the report offers critical insights to help policymakers and stakeholders navigate an increasingly complex regional and global landscape.

Announcements

APFNet Scholarship Program 2026

APFNet has officially opened the call for applications for its 2026 Scholarship Program (ASP), continuing its 15-year commitment to cultivating young forestry professionals and researchers from member economies.

A new partner, Zhejiang A&F University (ZAFU), joins Nanjing Forestry University (NJFU) and Southwest Forestry University (SWFU) in offering master's programs in forestry and related fields.

University	Fields of Study
Nanjing Forestry University (NJFU)	1.Forestry 2.Resources and Environment
Zhejiang A&F University (ZAFU)	Forestry (Bamboo Cultivation, Management and Ecology)
Southwest Forestry University (SWFU)	Forestry

SANFRI Opportunities for Young Researchers

10 March 2026: *SANFRI 2026 – 2027 APFNet Visiting Scholar Program Announcement*
Supports young researchers from SANFRI member institutes to undertake 3–6-month research exchanges at YAFG, promoting scientific research and academic exchange in sustainable forest management and rehabilitation.

These initiatives aim to continuously foster regional collaboration, strengthen research capacity, and provide young professionals with opportunities for academic exchange and professional development.

In the first quarter of 2026, activities under the SANFRI mechanism progressed steadily through a series of calls for applications launched to capacity building, international engagement and support research of early-career forestry professionals in ASEAN economies and China.

17 March 2026: *SANFRI 2026 APFNet Conference Attendance Support Announcement*
Supports young researchers from the SANFRI Young Scholar Team to participate in international conferences, enhancing their professional development and promoting regional academic collaboration.

31 March 2026: *SANFRI 2026 Small Research Grant Announcement*
Supports SANFRI Young Scholar Team members in translating their innovative research ideas into concrete research activities.

Upcoming

APFNet Board and Council meeting, 22-24 April 2026, Hangzhou, China

UNFF21, 11-15 May 2026, UN Headquarters, New York, USA

SEAP Forests IP Annual Conference and Technical Advisory Group Meeting,
18-10 May 2026, Luang Prabang, Lao PDR

RECOFTC Community forests for a biodiverse future, 25-29 May 2026,
Luang Prabang, Lao PDR

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and opportunities to collaborate.**

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