



Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest
Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet)



APFNet Strategic Plan 2026–2030



Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym	Full Form
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AI	Artificial Intelligence
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APFNet	Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation
APFNet-KTC	APFNet Kunming Training Center
AP-FECM	Asia-Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASOF	ASEAN Senior Officials on Forestry
BFU	Beijing Forestry University
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FPN	Forestry Planning Network
GCA	Greater Central Asia
GCA-FCM	Greater Central Asia Forestry Cooperation Mechanism
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework (Kunming–Montreal)
GDI	Global Development Initiative
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GFN	Global Network for Sustainable Forest Management
GIS	Geographic Information System
GMS	Greater Mekong Subregion
ha	Hectare
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting and Verification
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NJFU	Nanjing Forestry University
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
PPP	Public–Private Partnership
RECOFTC	The Center for People and Forests
SANFRI	Sino-ASEAN Network of Forest Research Institutes
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management

SP3	APFNet Third Strategic Plan (2021–2025)
SP4	APFNet Fourth Strategic Plan (2026–2030)
SWFU	Southwest Forestry University
TIF	Trainers in Forestry Network
TOR	Terms of Reference
UBC	University of British Columbia
UN	United Nations
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
USD	United States Dollar
YAFG	Yunnan Academy of Forestry and Grassland
@Wild	APFNet Transboundary Wildlife Conservation Initiative

Executive Summary

The APFNet Strategic Plan 2026–2030 (SP4) defines the organization’s strategic direction for the next five years, guiding its contributions to forest rehabilitation and broader restoration efforts, sustainable forest management (SFM), and regional cooperation across the Asia-Pacific. Building on the achievements and lessons of the APFNet Strategic Plan 2021–2025 (SP3), SP4 reflects the evolving forestry priorities of member economies and addresses global imperatives related to climate response, biodiversity conservation, and inclusive development.

SP4 is structured around APFNet’s four strategic pillars, building on their original formulation of Capacity Building, Demonstration Projects, Policy Dialogue, and Information Sharing, and articulated in SP4 as: Capacity Development and Institutional Strengthening; Field Demonstration and Innovation for SFM; Regional Policy Dialogue and Coordination; and Knowledge Management, Communication, and Outreach. These pillars are reinforced by five cross-cutting enablers: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL); Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI); Innovation and Digital Transformation; Sustainability and Exit Planning; and Financial Resilience and Resource Mobilization. Together, they form an integrated framework that links field-level innovation with institutional strengthening, policy dialogue, and regional learning.

SP4 pursues six mutually reinforcing strategic goals: advancing forest landscape restoration; fostering resilient and inclusive forest-based livelihoods; strengthening forest governance and policy coherence; improving human capital and institutional capacity; promoting regional collaboration, knowledge management, and innovation; and ensuring financial resilience and sustainability. A comprehensive Results Framework, integrated with a robust MEL system, will guide implementation, monitor performance, track results, and foster adaptive learning to strengthen accountability and impact.

SP4 maintains a balanced geographic focus across seven subregions, ensuring that interventions are responsive to diverse ecological contexts and members’ priorities. It emphasizes inclusive engagement and capacity-building support for a wide range of stakeholders, including local communities, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and forestry professionals across member economies.

SP4 aligns with global frameworks, including the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the Paris Agreement and the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). Through its support for nature-based solutions, climate-smart forestry, and biodiversity conservation, APFNet assists member economies in advancing their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), and other multilateral commitments. SP4 also recognizes and leverages positive drivers of change, such as sustainable finance, green supply chains, community incentives, and digital technologies as enablers for reducing deforestation and forest degradation, while enhancing sustainable forest management and forest rehabilitation.

SP4 explicitly aligns with the 2030 Agenda by mapping APFNet's outcomes to specific SDG targets, including 13.2, 15.1, 15.2, and 17.16, thereby demonstrating measurable contributions to climate response, biodiversity conservation, and strategic partnerships.

With a renewed focus on innovation, inclusion, and measurable results, SP4 positions APFNet as a regional leader in forestry cooperation, rehabilitation and broader restoration, and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region.

1 Introduction

The Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet) is a regional organization dedicated to advancing sustainable forest management (SFM) and forest rehabilitation in the Asia-Pacific region. The establishment of APFNet was proposed by China, in cooperation with Australia and the United States, and endorsed by the 15th APEC Leaders' Meeting in September 2007. The formation of APFNet was reflected in the *Sydney Declaration on Climate Change, Energy Security, and Clean Development*, which underscored the importance of promoting sustainable forest management (SFM) and forest rehabilitation across the region. In 2008, APFNet was formally launched as an initiative of APEC economies.

APFNet is open to participation by APEC and non-APEC economies in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as international and regional intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, forestry-related academic and research institutions, civil society organizations, and forestry-related enterprises operating within the Asia-Pacific region. It supports its member economies and organizations in promoting SFM and forest rehabilitation through four core pillars of activity: capacity building, demonstration projects, policy dialogues, and information sharing.

The APFNet Strategic Plan 2026–2030 (SP4) sets the organization's vision and strategic direction for the next five years. Building on past achievements and institutional learning, the Plan aligns APFNet's priorities and interventions with evolving regional and global forestry-related agendas.

2. Strategic Context

2.1 Regional Forestry Landscape

Forests in the Asia-Pacific region underpin ecological stability, sustainable livelihoods, and climate response. However, the region continues to face multiple, interrelated forestry challenges that threaten these vital functions as outlined below.

- **Deforestation and forest degradation.** Ongoing deforestation and forest degradation continue to deplete biodiversity, disrupt ecosystem services, and accelerate soil erosion. The resulting loss of forest cover and decline of forest quality also undermine carbon sequestration, thereby exacerbating climate change.
- **Vulnerability to climate change impacts.** The increasing frequency and intensity of climate-related events, such as forest fires, forest pest and diseases, extreme weather patterns, and prolonged droughts are heightening risks to forest ecosystems, forest-dependent communities, and national economies.

- **Challenges in ensuring equitable forest-based livelihoods and restoration.** Despite diverse development trajectories across the Asia-Pacific region, forests remain an important source of livelihoods for rural, Indigenous, and forest-adjacent communities. This creates persistent pressures to balance economic needs with SFM, restoration, and equitable benefit-sharing.
- **Insufficient digitalization and innovation in forest monitoring.** While digital tools and remote sensing technologies offer significant potential to improve the accuracy and efficiency of forest monitoring, their adoption remains uneven across the region. This limits the availability of timely, consistent, and evidence-based information for forest governance and policy decisions.
- **Fragmented Regional Coordination:** Many forestry initiatives continue to operate in isolation, leading to ineffective collaboration across subregions and insufficient representation of vulnerable economies in regional policy discussions.

Despite these challenges, the region is also experiencing emerging opportunities and positive drivers that can accelerate progress. The global push for forest and landscape restoration, growing commitments to net-zero emissions, and advancements in digital forest monitoring provide a strong basis for regional action. At the same time, increased investment in climate finance, biodiversity offsets, and carbon markets, together with expanding enterprise commitments to sustainable value chains and enhanced regional cooperation, is creating new momentum. Harnessing these opportunities and drivers enables APFNet to play a catalytic role in tackling deforestation and forest degradation while promoting inclusive and sustainable development.

As a regional organization established as an initiative of APEC economies, APFNet is uniquely positioned to foster regional cooperation and accelerate progress toward SFM and rehabilitation, helping member economies respond effectively to these evolving challenges and opportunities.

2.2 Evolving Role of APFNet

Since its official launch in 2008, APFNet has evolved into a responsive and regionally relevant forestry organization. Building on this foundation, the SP4 positions APFNet to strengthen its impact in the following key areas:

- **Technical enabler for innovative forest restoration models:** APFNet will support and implement advanced restoration methodologies, leveraging technologies and community-driven practices to enhance forest recovery and resilience, such as nature-based solutions for degraded landscapes and digitally supported restoration planning, monitoring, and adaptive management approaches.
- **Facilitator of cross-border cooperation:** Recognizing the transboundary nature of forestry challenges, APFNet will serve as a bridge for regional collaboration by fostering

partnerships among governments, research institutions, and development organizations and relevant enterprises.

- **Platform for knowledge exchange and inclusive engagement:** APFNet will provide an accessible and inclusive platform for sharing expertise, best practices, and innovative solutions, ensuring that underrepresented economies, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and youth have a meaningful voice in regional forestry policy discussions.

2.3 Strategic Alignment

SP4 is designed to align with key global and regional forestry agendas, ensuring that APFNet's initiatives contribute effectively to international objectives while responding to specific needs and priorities of its member economies. These strategic alignments reinforce APFNet's role as a key regional platform for advancing SFM and restoration in the Asia-Pacific region.

The key frameworks and commitments with which APFNet is aligned include:

- **UN Strategic Plan for Forests (2017–2030):** APFNet actively supports global efforts to promote SFM, conservation, and restoration, contributing to the achievement of the UN's global forestry goals.
- **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:** By integrating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 13 (Climate Action), 15 (Life on Land), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) into its programmes, and contributing to related goals such as SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and SDG 1 (No Poverty), APFNet advances environmental sustainability while fostering inclusive and collaborative approaches to forestry challenges.
- **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration:** APFNet contributes to regional efforts to scale up ecosystem restoration, supporting the reversal of forest degradation and strengthening ecological resilience across diverse landscapes in the Asia-Pacific.
- **Bonn Challenge and New York Declaration on Forests:** By aligning its interventions with global commitments to restore degraded forest landscapes and reduce deforestation and forest degradation, APFNet supports climate mitigation objectives through accelerating forest landscape rehabilitation and SFM.
- **Paris Agreement and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):** APFNet supports member economies in implementing their forest-related NDC commitments under the Paris Agreement, including through forest carbon enhancement, climate-smart forestry, and nature-based solutions that contribute to both mitigation and adaptation goals.
- **Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs):** APFNet assists member economies in achieving the GBF's targets, including Target 2 (ecosystem restoration), Target 10 (sustainable management of productive landscapes) and Target 11 (nature-based solutions), by

supporting the implementation of NBSAPs through demonstration projects, capacity building, and policy dialogue.

- **APEC and regional mechanisms:** As an initiative of APEC economies, APFNet reinforces regional forestry priorities through its projects, partnerships, and policy dialogue. It also collaborates with complementary regional frameworks, including ASEAN and its Senior Officials on Forestry (ASOF), and other relevant working groups, to support the implementation of nationally determined commitments, including NDCs, NBSAPs, and SDG action plans.

Through these strategic alignments, APFNet ensures that its interventions not only contribute to global sustainability commitments but also deliver tangible regional benefits, strengthen cooperation, and foster shared responsibility among its members.

3. Mission, Values and Principles

3.1 Mission

APFNet is committed to helping the economies and people of the Asia-Pacific region by promoting and improving SFM and forest rehabilitation. Its mission is reflected in the following key areas of engagement:

- **Expanding Forest Restoration Efforts:** Supporting member economies and organizations in substantially increasing the area of restored multifunctional forests, aligning with regional and global commitments.
- **Enhancing Forest Carbon Stocks and Productivity:** Promoting the rehabilitation of degraded forests, as well as reforestation and afforestation of suitable lands, to improve forest quality, carbon sequestration, and overall productivity.
- **Reducing Forest Loss and Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Strengthening SFM practices to curb deforestation and forest degradation while enhancing biodiversity conservation and climate response.
- **Increasing Socioeconomic Benefits of Forests:** Advancing the sustainable livelihoods and economic opportunities of forest-dependent communities, particularly those vulnerable to climate change through responsible management and conservation initiatives.

3.2 Core Values

APFNet implements all activities in accordance with the following core values:

- **Respect for differences:** APFNet respects the diversity of views, including traditional knowledge and practices and differences in opinions, pathways and approaches that exist for adapting and adopting SFM and effective forest rehabilitation. APFNet will continue to undertake its work on the premise that there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution to achieving SFM in the Asia-Pacific region.
- **Action-oriented:** APFNet seeks to assist its members to accelerate positive change on the ground. Decisions and activities, therefore, will be action-oriented.
- **Innovative thinking:** APFNet will pursue innovative and exploratory approaches. APFNet encourages thinking outside the box and promotes the exploration of new ideas and approaches for addressing forest-related challenges in this region.
- **Member needs-driven:** APFNet is willing to respect its members’ need. The needs and priorities of its members will always be the first consideration when decisions are made about programmes and activities.

3.3 Principles

APFNet’s work is governed by a set of core principles to ensure that stakeholders can effectively participate in its activities. These principles aim to foster cooperation, avoid duplication, ensure

that activities are targeted at the specific needs of its members, and enable the sharing of lessons learned throughout the network. The principles are as follows:

- **Openness and participation:** To be truly responsive to its members and the wider forest community, APFNet is committed to the principles of openness and participation. This ensures transparency and actively engages its members and all other stakeholders in its work.
- **Complementarity:** APFNet builds partnerships and collaborative arrangements on an ongoing basis to pool resources and knowledge from across the region to support its members in addressing the challenges in SFM and forest rehabilitation. Such cooperation will enhance the effectiveness of actions, avoid duplication and overlaps, and streamline mutual learning among partners with similar missions.
- **Member-focused:** APFNet has been established to assist the forest-related activities of its members. Its actions will always be guided by the needs and priorities of its member economies.
- **A focus on learning and leveraging potential:** APFNet taps into the experience and insights of its members and provides funding to support catalytic activities and programmes across its four pillars: 1) capacity development and institutional strengthening; 2) field demonstration and innovation for SFM; 3) regional policy dialogue and coordination; and 4) knowledge management, communication, and outreach. APFNet will always seek to maximize the learning and leverage potential of all supported endeavors.

4. Strategic Goals and Outcomes (2026–2030)

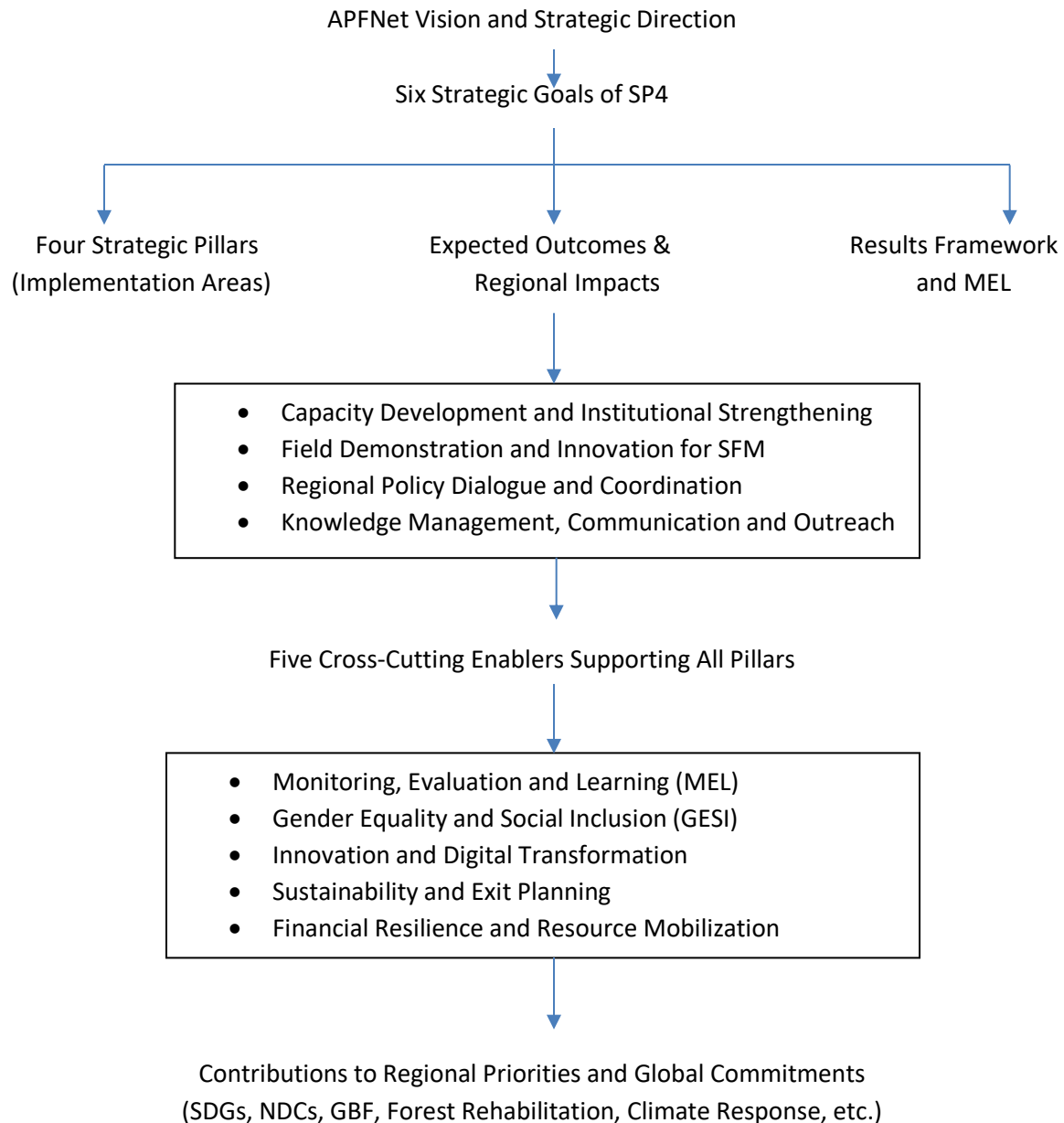
4.1 Strategic Goals

Drawing on the achievements and lessons of previous APFNet Strategic Plans, and aligned with global and regional agendas and commitments, the Fourth Strategic Plan (SP4) pursues six strategic goals to address emerging challenges and opportunities in SFM and forest rehabilitation in the Asia-Pacific region.

- 1) **Advance forest landscape restoration** to contribute to regional and global restoration targets, enhance ecosystem resilience, and promote biodiversity conservation.
- 2) **Foster resilient and inclusive forest-based livelihoods** by empowering communities, promoting equitable and effective resource management, and strengthening adaptive capacity to climate change.
- 3) **Strengthen forest governance and policy coherence** across member economies to support effective implementation of SFM and enhance cross-border cooperation and collaboration.
- 4) **Improve human capital and institutional capacity** by equipping stakeholders with the skills, knowledge, and resources required to address evolving forestry challenges.
- 5) **Promote regional collaboration, knowledge management, and innovation** through digital platforms, knowledge exchange and sharing, and multi-stakeholder dialogue, including strengthened mechanisms for community-based forest-fire management and capacity building of forestry professionals in the use of digital tools for forest management.
- 6) **Ensure financial resilience and sustainability** by diversifying funding sources and cultivating strategic partnerships to support the long-term scalability and stability of forestry initiatives.

Figure 1 illustrates the interrelationship among the strategic goals, implementation pillars, cross-cutting enablers, expected outcomes, and broader regional contributions under SP4.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of APFNet SP4 (2026–2030)



4.2 Expected Outcomes

By 2030, APFNet aims to demonstrate measurable regional outcomes across the six strategic goals set out in Section 4.1, achieved through synergistic action under four strategic pillars and five cross-cutting enablers. These outcomes reflect the combined effects of APFNet’s programmes, partnerships, and policy engagement in advancing forest restoration, livelihood

resilience, institutional capacity, innovation, and financial sustainability across the Asia-Pacific region.

Outcome 1- Increased area and quality of restored and sustainably managed forest landscapes

APFNet-supported demonstration projects and scalable restoration models will strengthen capacities and promote approaches for expanding the area and quality of restored and sustainably managed forest landscapes across member economies. These interventions will support biodiversity conservation, climate-smart and nature-based solutions, and contribute to regional and global restoration and carbon-neutrality efforts.

Outcome 2 - Enhanced community participation, diversified incomes, and improved resilience of forest-dependent households

APFNet-supported initiatives will strengthen inclusive participation in restoration and sustainable forest-based enterprises, contributing to more diversified and resilient livelihoods in forest-dependent communities. These interventions will support green jobs, empowerment of women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples, and improved access to renewable energy and sustainable value chains.

Outcome 3 - Improved cross-border collaboration and integration of sustainable forest management into national and regional policies

Regional cooperation and policy coherence will be strengthened as more economies integrate SFM principles into national frameworks and participate in structured regional dialogues, policy exchanges, and technical processes supported by APFNet, resulting in actionable commitments and partnerships.

Outcome 4 - Strengthened institutional performance and enhanced professional competencies across forestry sectors

Forestry professionals and institutions across the region will demonstrate enhanced competencies and improved organizational performance. APFNet's training, scholarship, and institutional-support programmes will strengthen knowledge application, improve governance systems, and foster data-driven and inclusive decision-making.

Outcome 5 - Increased adoption of smart forestry tools, digital learning, and regional peer learning platforms

The adoption of smart forestry tools, digital platforms, and knowledge-sharing networks will enhance regional learning and cooperation. Through the application of AI, GIS, and remote-sensing technologies, APFNet will promote innovation, improve forest monitoring, and strengthen evidence-based policy and practice across its member economies.

Outcome 6 – Ensured Financial Resilience and Strategic Partnerships

A diversified and resilient financing base will underpin APFNet's operations. Through strategic partnerships and co-financing arrangements, the organization will mobilize new resources,

enhance institutional sustainability, and expand multi-stakeholder collaboration beyond individual project cycles, ensuring that APFNet’s institutional model remains financially resilient and adaptable to evolving regional priorities.

Across all goals, APFNet will embed five cross-cutting enablers to reinforce the quality, inclusivity, and impact of its activities:

- **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL):** Strengthening evidence-based planning, performance tracking, and adaptive management.
- **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI):** Ensuring meaningful participation and equitable benefit-sharing for women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples.
- **Innovation and Digital Transformation:** Expanding the use of digital technologies for forest monitoring, learning, and outreach in support of SFM and forest rehabilitation.
- **Sustainability and Exit Planning:** Securing local ownership and continuity of the positive results achieved beyond APFNet support.
- **Resource Mobilization and Financial Resilience:** Diversifying funding sources and cultivating long-term partnerships.

Detailed outcomes, indicators, and 2030 targets are presented in Annex II: Results Framework.

4.3 Geographic Focus

APFNet will adopt a collaborative and balanced approach to respond to the diverse needs of member economies across different geographic and ecological regions and subregions. To ensure relevance and inclusivity, SP4 interventions will continue to be strategically focused across the following seven subregions:

- Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS)
- Southeast Asia (except GMS)
- South Asia
- Greater Central Asia (GCA)
- Pacific Islands
- North America
- Latin America.

This geographic distribution will ensure equitable engagement, facilitate regional knowledge exchange, and strengthen capacity-building efforts across diverse ecosystems and member priorities, while reinforcing APFNet’s role as a regional organization aligned with global forest-related agendas and commitments.

5. Strategic Pillars and Priority Areas

The SP4 is structured around four interlinked strategic pillars. These pillars reflect the comparative strengths of APFNet, respond to the evolving needs of its member economies, and position the organization to deliver deeper, more regionally relevant impact. These pillars are reinforced by five cross-cutting enablers. Together, they form an integrated framework for achieving the six strategic goals of SP4.

Pillar 1: Capacity Development and Institutional Strengthening

Objective: Enhance the knowledge, skills, and institutional capacities required for effective forest management and policy implementation across the Asia-Pacific region.

Key Actions:

- **Expand training and scholarship programmes:** Broaden the scope of thematic training to include emerging fields such as restoration ecology, forest-climate linkages, smart forestry, and digital forest monitoring. Strengthen the scholarship programme to enhance accessibility and integrate multidisciplinary approaches. Promote blended learning by combining in-person and online modalities to reach a wider and more diverse audience.
- **Strengthen forestry education and research networks.** Enhance collaboration through platforms such as AP-FECM and SANFRI, to support curriculum development, faculty exchanges, and joint research. Support interdisciplinary research that links forestry with climate change, biodiversity conservation, and socio-economic development. Establish cross-institutional knowledge-sharing mechanisms to ensure member economies benefit from the latest research outputs, tools, and best practices.
- **Provide targeted institutional support.** Conduct organizational assessments to identify capacity gaps in forest governance, policy-making, and institutional performance across member economies. Offer tailored technical assistance and co-develop improvement plans to strengthen governance structures, strategic planning, and monitoring systems. Support institutions in adopting science-based, effective, and inclusive forestry policies.
- **Facilitate regional peer learning and capacity exchange.** Organize peer learning exchanges focused on institutional challenges such as institutional planning, project implementation, regulatory enforcement, and stakeholder engagement. Convene regional forums to discuss best practices in forest governance, encouraging member economies to adopt more effective and adaptable management frameworks and good practices. Foster cross-border collaboration through structured knowledge-exchange, enabling member institutions to learn mutually from successful forest management and restoration models across the region.

- **Promote inclusive and gender-responsive capacity development.** Ensure that training approaches, learning materials, participation opportunities, and evaluation processes are responsive to the needs and participation of women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples across APFNet-supported capacity-building activities.

Emerging Focus Areas:

- Digital forestry and AI applications.
- Inclusive leadership and capacity-building approaches.
- Integration of climate change perspectives into forestry curricula.
- Institutional resilience to climate-related risks and external shocks.

Pillar 2: Field Demonstration and Innovation for SFM

Objective: Develop, pilot, and support the replication and scaling-up of innovative models for forest restoration, SFM, and community-based resource use, enhancing their relevance, adaptability, and long-term impact across APFNet’s seven priority subregions.

Key Actions:

- **Support high-quality demonstration projects.** Ensure that demonstration projects align with and reinforce forest priorities of member economies, enhancing policy relevance and ecological appropriateness. Prioritize ecological restoration, SFM, and livelihood integration to foster resilience and economic empowerment among forest-dependent communities. Establish best practice models that can be adapted, replicated, and scaled by member economies and partners across diverse ecosystems in the Asia-Pacific region.
- **Promote multifunctional forest landscapes.** Integrate approaches that balance ecological integrity with social and economic benefits to achieve long-term sustainability. Develop land-use strategies that support biodiversity conservation while enabling responsible resource utilization. Encourage community engagement to strengthen forest-based economies without compromising environmental health.
- **Pilot, disseminate, and support the replication of innovative approaches.** Apply adaptive forest management techniques to address climate change impacts and forest ecosystem variability and vulnerability. Promote close-to-nature forestry by fostering natural regeneration processes while sustaining economic viability. Expand agroforestry systems and under-forest economic activities to support livelihood diversification and strengthen food security and nutrition outcomes.
- **Strengthen project design and implementation.** Apply multi-year planning frameworks to ensure continuity and long-term impact. Foster participatory monitoring mechanisms by actively engaging stakeholders in tracking progress and adapting strategies. Embed sustainability and exit strategies into project design to ensure projects remain effective beyond initial funding cycles.

Emerging Focus Areas:

- Forest carbon and ecosystem services valuation in support of nature-based solutions.
- Application of digital technologies (AI, drones, remote sensing) for smart forest monitoring, landscape planning, risk assessment, and reporting.
- Regional upscaling of field models via South–South exchange.

Pillar 3: Regional Policy Dialogue and Coordination

Objective: Foster shared understanding, policy harmonization, and cross-border cooperation to address evolving forestry challenges and co-develop effective solutions.

Key Actions:

- **Strengthen regional platforms for dialogue and action.** Strengthen and expand regional platforms to convene policymakers, practitioners, and experts for sustained dialogue and collaboration on forestry priorities across the Asia-Pacific. Enhance knowledge-sharing mechanisms that facilitate coordinated action, policy alignment, and strategic partnerships among member economies. Promote annual or biennial high-level forestry policy dialogues to advance regional forestry governance and address emerging challenges.
- **Facilitate policy exchanges and peer-learning.** Organize targeted policy exchanges, including thematic roundtables and bilateral dialogues, to address specific forestry challenges such as sustainable land use, restoration strategies, and climate adaptation. Disseminate best practices through regional workshops that support peer learning and capacity building efforts among forestry institutions and local communities. Promote cross-border collaboration to enhance collective resilience and foster greater coherence in forestry policies across the region.
- **Advance policy research and technical assistance.** Conduct strategic research on emerging forestry policy issues identified through regional dialogue processes, including transboundary forest fire management and wildlife conservation. Provide technical assistance and advisory support to member economies in designing and implementing evidence-based forestry policies drawing on data, pilot experiences, and regional best practices. Develop practical policy tools and digital resources to support adaptive governance and strengthen regional cooperation.
- **Integrate forestry into broader sustainability frameworks.** Strengthen the integration of forestry policies within climate change, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development frameworks. Ensure alignment with relevant international and regional forestry-related commitments. Enhance cross-sectoral coordination to ensure forestry is recognized as a key pillar of economic development, climate resilience, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

Emerging Focus Areas:

- Transboundary forest landscape governance, ecological corridors, and forest fire management.
- Forest-based climate adaptation and mitigation synergies.
- Inclusive governance and tenure security.
- Digital transformation in forest policy and enforcement.

Pillar 4: Knowledge Management, Communication, and Outreach

Objective: Enhance the accessibility, relevance, and impact of forestry knowledge through targeted communication and learning mechanisms.

Key Actions:

- **Establish a regional knowledge hub and digital library.** Develop a centralized digital repository to consolidate training materials, project outputs, policy tools, and best practices to ensure streamlined and equitable access for stakeholders. Implement user-friendly interfaces with improved navigation and usability to enable forestry professionals, policymakers, and communities to efficiently access relevant resources. Encourage regular contributions from members to maintain a dynamic and continuously updated repository.
- **Enhance digital communication and outreach.** Upgrade APFNet’s website and social media platforms by integrating interactive features to improve user engagement and accessibility. Develop targeted outreach campaigns to foster dialogue among forestry experts, policymakers, and the wider public. Utilize multimedia formats, including webinars, podcasts, and video storytelling, to disseminate knowledge effectively and broaden the reach of forestry initiatives.
- **Strengthen regional centers and alumni networks.** Expand localized learning hubs that support professional development and respond to the specific forestry challenges of individual member economies. Facilitate South–South knowledge exchange through joint programmes and training initiatives to strengthen collaboration among developing economies. Promote sustained peer learning and mentorship by encouraging alumni engagement in field-based research and decision-making processes.
- **Foster two-way learning and knowledge dissemination.** Institutionalize structured feedback mechanisms to ensure meaningful contributions from communities, researchers, and policymakers in refining forestry strategies and interventions. Showcase community-driven solutions and alumni contributions to elevate local perspectives and innovations in forestry management. Disseminate best practices, case studies, synthesis reports, and lessons learned to provide actionable insights for effective policy implementation and forest restoration efforts.

Emerging Focus Areas:

- Digital transformation in forestry education and outreach.
- Micro-certification and modular learning.
- Inclusive communication strategies for youth, Indigenous Peoples, and other marginalized groups.

6 Cross-Cutting Enablers

To enhance coherence, scalability, and sustainability across its strategic interventions, APFNet will integrate a set of cross-cutting enablers throughout all phases of SP4 implementation. These enablers are vital for the effective planning, execution, monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive management across all strategic pillars.

6.1 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

Objective: Strengthen performance tracking, adaptive learning, and evidence-based decision-making across all strategic pillars.

Key Actions:

- **Establish a results-based MEL framework.** Develop a comprehensive MEL system with clearly defined indicators, baselines, and targets aligned with SP4 strategic goals and expected outcomes. Ensure that measurement tools capture both quantitative and qualitative outcomes and reflect the full impact of APFNet interventions, while taking into account technical capacity and economic feasibility across subregions to support context-appropriate and resource-efficient implementation.
- **Strengthen monitoring as a management tool.** Position monitoring as a continuous process of data collection and analysis led by implementing teams. Monitoring will provide timely information to support decision-making, adaptive management, and systematic progress tracking throughout the implementation cycle.
- **Institutionalize a comprehensive evaluation system.** Establish a structured evaluation system combining independent assessments, and multi-level reviews. Evaluations will be conducted periodically and systematically, drawing on monitoring data to assess performance, outcomes, and impacts. In line with the APFNet Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (2022), SP4 will undertake evaluations at multiple levels, including Strategic Plan implementation, programme and mechanism reviews, thematic assessments, and project-level evaluations. Evaluations will apply internationally recognized OECD DAC criteria, including relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, to ensure quality and comparability. Internal evaluations will be organized by the highest management level within the intervention structure, while external evaluations will be commissioned to independent experts or third-party organizations. A balanced mix of mid-term, terminal, and ex-post evaluations will ensure accountability, capture long-term impacts, identify scalable models, and enhance regional learning.
- **Foster a learning-oriented culture.** Promote continuous learning through internal reflection sessions and encourage teams to analyze successes, challenges, and emerging trends. Facilitate cross-project knowledge exchanges to enable best-practice sharing and collaborative learning across APFNet interventions. Establish structured stakeholder

feedback mechanisms to ensure that local communities, policymakers, and implementing partners contribute to MEL-driven improvements.

- **Leverage digital MEL tools.** Explore and pilot the integration of GIS platforms for spatial monitoring of forest restoration and conservation activities. Utilize dashboards and mobile data collection tools to enhance data quality, accessibility, and timeliness in reporting. Explore the application of AI-driven analytics to process large datasets, generate actionable insights, and optimize decision-making.

6.2 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

Objective: Ensure inclusive participation and equitable benefits for women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and other underrepresented groups across all APFNet activities.

Key Actions:

- **Develop a dedicated GESI Strategy.** Establish a structured GESI framework with clearly defined roles, indicators, and monitoring tools to guide institutional efforts. This strategy will serve as the foundation for integrating and mainstreaming GESI principles across all APFNet activities. Apply results-based tracking mechanisms to monitor progress on inclusion, assess outcomes, and strengthen accountability across programmes and partnerships.
- **Integrate and mainstream GESI principles across programme design, implementation, policy engagement, and MEL.** Embed gender-responsive and socially inclusive approaches in projects and initiatives to ensure equity considerations are systematically addressed across all strategic pillars and activities. Incorporate diverse stakeholder perspectives into training, policy dialogue, and decision-making processes to reflect local contexts and needs.
- **Expand access to scholarships, training, and leadership opportunities.** Broaden educational and professional development opportunities for underrepresented groups to promote equal access to forestry knowledge and skills. Strengthen mentorship and capacity-building pathways to empower women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples in local communities for their leadership roles.
- **Promote inclusive communication and learning.** Develop culturally appropriate and accessible communication and learning materials that reflect diverse linguistic and social backgrounds. Establish interactive platforms that encourage broad participation and ensure equitable knowledge-sharing engagement among diverse stakeholders.
- **Foster youth engagement through nature-based education.** Promote hands-on experiential learning programmes that connect young people, particularly school students, with forests, biodiversity, and ecosystem services. Partner with schools and youth organizations to integrate forestry and environmental themes into curricula and extracurricular activities. Organize youth camps, field visits, and forestry clubs at APFNet Forest Experience bases to inspire environmental stewardship and cultivate future forestry leaders.

6.3 Innovation and Digital Transformation

Objective: Promote the strategic use of emerging technologies and innovative approaches to enhance the quality, reach, and sustainability of APFNet’s interventions.

Key Actions:

- **Support digital forestry applications in member economies.** Expand the use of remote sensing and satellite-based monitoring to improve forest assessment. Strengthen forest information systems through AI-supported analytics, enabling efficient data collection and predictive modeling for forest conservation. Implement AI-enabled monitoring to automate early detection of deforestation, forest degradation, wildfires, and biodiversity change.
- **Pilot smart forest demonstration sites.** Establish experimental forest sites in selected member economies to test and showcase innovative restoration techniques and smart technologies for SFM. Support the development and deployment of forest carbon monitoring systems to quantify carbon sequestration outcomes from SFM and forest rehabilitation. Promote the application of ecosystem service valuation methods to assess the economic and environmental benefits of sustainable forestry interventions.
- **Develop online learning and collaboration platforms.** Design interactive and selectively multilingual online training programmes to ensure wider accessibility and cost-effective knowledge delivery. Foster virtual collaboration platforms that connect forestry experts, policymakers, practitioners, and community stakeholders across the Asia-Pacific region. Utilize AI-driven learning tools to personalize educational experiences and enhance engagement in forest management training.
- **Strengthen technological partnerships.** Collaborate with leading academic institutions, research centers, and tech innovators to co-develop and pilot advanced forestry solutions. Facilitate cross-disciplinary cooperation to integrate emerging technological innovations into forest governance, planning, and policy frameworks. Expand joint research initiatives and AI technologies for forestry data management, decision support, and planning for SFM and forest landscape restoration.

6.4 Sustainability and Exit Planning

Objective: Ensure the continuity, local ownership, and long-term benefits of APFNet-supported initiatives beyond the period of direct project support.

Key Actions:

- **Integrate sustainability and exit strategies into project design.** Embed post-project transition plans that include long-term financing, institutional integration, and maintenance frameworks. Develop scalability and replication models to enable successful interventions to be expanded regionally or be replicated in similar ecological and socio-economic contexts.

- **Build local capacity and leadership.** Engage local communities and institutions throughout the project lifecycle and strengthen them with skills and resources needed to sustain and scale up successful practices. Foster community-led and locally anchored governance structures to ensure sustained engagement and decision-making during and beyond the implementation of APFNet’s interventions.
- **Promote co-financing and cost-sharing frameworks.** Encourage shared investment models by involving government, enterprise and civil society partners to reduce reliance on donor funding. Support the development of innovative financing mechanisms, such as matching or counterpart funds, revolving funds, and sustainable business models to enhance financial viability and long-term sustainability.
- **Facilitate knowledge transfer and institutional uptake.** Document and disseminate best practices, lessons learned, and case studies to inform future initiatives and policy development. Facilitate the integration of effective policies and successful methodologies developed through the implementation of APFNet interventions into forestry frameworks of member economies. Provide targeted non-financial follow-up support and technical assistance to maintain project momentum and foster long-term success.

6.5 Financial Resilience and Resource Mobilization

Objective: Strengthen the financial base of APFNet by diversifying funding streams, mobilizing co-financing, and securing long-term partnerships that enhance institutional resilience and reduce dependency on core contributions.

Key Actions:

- **Develop a resource mobilization strategy.** Establish structured approaches to engage bilateral donors, international organizations, philanthropic foundations, and enterprise partners in order to diversify funding streams. Create targeted investment opportunities by aligning APFNet’s interventions and relevant initiatives with global sustainability, climate, and development priorities.
- **Strengthen partnerships for joint project development.** Expand collaboration with regional platforms and development agencies to co-develop and co-finance initiatives, maximizing impact and resource efficiency. Develop joint project proposals that encourage multi-stakeholder investment, shared ownership, and longer-term engagement of forest restoration and SFM programmes.
- **Promote cost-sharing models.** Encourage member economies and implementing partners to provide counterpart contributions through co-financing arrangements. Promote innovative financial instruments, including blended finance mechanisms, and public-private partnerships (PPPs) to leverage additional resources and reduce reliance on external donor funding.
- **Enhance visibility and investment appeal.** Strengthen APFNet’s institutional visibility and value proposition by showcasing measurable impacts and success stories. Develop

data-driven reports, case studies, and communication products that demonstrate the economic returns, ecological benefits, and socio-economic outcomes generated through APFNet-supported initiatives, thereby attracting strategic investors and partners.

7. Stakeholder Engagement and Strategic Partnerships

Effective stakeholder engagement and strategic partnerships are central to APFNet’s ability to deliver results, mobilize knowledge, and catalyze SFM across the Asia-Pacific region. As a regional organization, APFNet builds purposeful collaborations that enhance impact, strengthen learning networks, and promote shared responsibility for sustainable forestry development. Under SP4, APFNet will deepen its commitment to inclusive, collaborative, and purpose-driven engagement models that foster local ownership, build synergies, and enhance regional collaboration.

Within this context, APFNet will leverage its institutional affiliation with the APEC framework to connect forestry initiatives with broader regional economic and environmental agendas. Through engagement with APEC working groups and cross-sectoral platforms, SP4 will position forestry as an integral component of sustainable and inclusive growth in the Asia-Pacific region.

In addition, APFNet’s partnerships will be aligned with UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, ensuring that regional collaboration contributes tangibly to global goals related to climate action, biodiversity conservation, and inclusive growth. This approach reinforces the global relevance of APFNet’s engagement and demonstrates how regional forestry action can be translated into measurable contributions to global sustainability targets. *(A detailed mapping of SP4’s contributions to the SDGs is provided in Annex V.)*

7.1 Principles of Engagement

Stakeholder engagement across SP4 will be guided by the following principles:

- **Inclusiveness:** Ensure that stakeholders from diverse geographies, institutional levels, and social backgrounds are equitably represented.
- **Transparency:** Maintain open communication and clearly defining roles, responsibilities, and expectations throughout all stages of engagement.
- **Mutual Benefit:** Foster partnerships that generate shared value and promote the co-creation and sharing of knowledge, best practices, and sustainable solutions.
- **Sustained Dialogue:** Facilitate continuous and structured engagement through formal mechanisms that extend beyond individual project cycles and support long-term collaboration.

7.2 Key Stakeholder Groups and Roles

Stakeholder Group	Role in SP4 Implementation
Member Economies	Policy dialogue participation, focal point coordination, policy guidance, project oversight
Academic, Educational and Research Institutions	Technical support, training delivery, scholarship and visiting scholar hosting, joint research
Project Implementing Partners	Design and execution of projects, community engagement, reporting and knowledge sharing
Alumni and Forestry Professionals	Peer learning, training delivery, local expertise, regional network building
Civil Society and Local Communities	Ground-level implementation, feedback provision, forest user participation
Youth and Emerging Leaders	Drive innovation, leadership development, cross-economy collaboration
Enterprises and Philanthropy	Co-financing, innovation partnerships, sustainable supply chain integration
Regional/International Organizations	Joint initiatives, technical guidance, best practice sharing, funding partnerships

7.3 Implementation Platforms and Mechanisms

To institutionalize stakeholder engagement and facilitate effective delivery, APFNet will strengthen the following platforms and mechanisms. While these platforms and mechanisms serve different thematic, geographic, and institutional functions, they are intended to operate in a complementary and mutually reinforcing manner under the broader framework of SP4. APFNet will promote stronger coordination, knowledge exchange, and strategic linkages among these mechanisms, where appropriate, to enhance synergies, avoid duplication, and strengthen regional collaboration, learning, and innovation across the Asia-Pacific region.

Pu'er Forum. High-level dialogue platform that facilitates knowledge exchange, policy harmonization, dissemination of results, and promotion of innovations to influence regional forestry agendas. APFNet will further enhance forum's convening role and expand its reach to address emerging regional forestry challenges.

Asia-Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism (AP-FECM). Platform connecting forestry universities and institutions to promote educational and academic collaboration, joint curriculum development, online course delivery, and innovation in forestry education across the Asia-Pacific. APFNet will strengthen this mechanism by integrating digital learning and encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration.

Sino-ASEAN Network of Forest Research Institutes (SANFRI). Regional network enhancing forestry research collaboration between ASEAN economies and China through joint research initiatives, capacity development programmes, and academic exchanges, with a focus on supporting young researchers and promoting good practices on SFM and rehabilitation. SANFRI will be leveraged to expand research partnerships and enhance regional knowledge-sharing on forest science and governance.

Presidents' Forum of Forestry Universities and Institutes in the Greater Mekong Subregion. Platform for enhancing regional cooperation in forestry higher education and talent development, focusing on collaborative training mechanisms and scientific exchanges. Future efforts will focus on strengthening student exchange and collaborative research programmes.

Forestry Planning Network (FPN). A regional platform established to strengthen forestry planning processes across Asia-Pacific economies by building a vibrant network of strategic planners and policymakers. FPN enhances networking, knowledge exchange, and communication among planners, with the goal of making forestry planning more evidence-based, forward-looking, and responsive to global, regional, and local developments. Moving forward, FPN will continue to support members through case studies, best practice summaries, planning guidelines, and targeted training.

Trainers in Forestry Network (TIF). Network aimed at enhancing the capacity of forestry trainers through knowledge exchange, training programmes, and the development of training materials to support SFM practices. APFNet will update training content and expand digital access.

Greater Central Asia Forestry Cooperation Mechanism (GCA-FCM). High-level dialogue mechanism focusing on promoting regional cooperation in SFM, forest rehabilitation, and combating desertification in the Greater Central Asia region. APFNet will prioritize the use of this platform to address transboundary landscape challenges and climate risks.

APFNet Transboundary Wildlife Conservation Initiative (@Wild). An initiative aimed at strengthening transboundary cooperation on wildlife conservation in the Lancang-Mekong region, with a focus on restoring and sustainably managing critical wildlife habitats. By facilitating policy dialogue, cross-sectoral collaboration, and experience sharing among government agencies and protected area managers, the initiative promotes integrated approaches that balance habitat conservation, local livelihoods, and wildlife protection. @Wild also supports the development of replicable conservation models and regional partnerships to address habitat fragmentation and degradation.

Kunming Training Center (KTC). Regional training hub delivering thematic learning and capacity strengthening across forestry disciplines. KTC will diversify its thematic coverage, enhance blended learning modalities, and serve as a testing ground for training innovations.

Alumni and Practitioner Networks. Establishment of regional alumni associations to foster professional ties, local mentorship, and field-level knowledge exchange. Future efforts will focus on formalizing networks, supporting peer learning, and encouraging practitioner-led innovation sharing.

Global Network for SFM (GFN). Initiated by the Government of China under the Global Development Initiative and entrusted to APFNet to implement as a programme, the GFN promotes international cooperation on SFM in support of the UN 2030 Agenda. The GFN will

facilitate policy exchange, demonstration projects, information sharing, and capacity building among economies and international organizations by strengthening its strategic direction, expanding global partnerships and mobilizing resources to scale up sustainable forestry efforts worldwide.

7.4 Enhancing Stakeholder Ownership

To improve the uptake, effectiveness, and long-term sustainability of APFNet supported interventions, stakeholders will be encouraged to engage across all stages of the project lifecycle, including planning and design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Local partners will be supported to assume greater ownership of interventions, including through co-financing agreements where feasible.

Structured feedback mechanisms such as post-training surveys, alumni platforms, and project reflection sessions will be institutionalized to promote continuous learning, adaptation, and responsiveness to stakeholder needs.

7.5 Strengthening Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

APFNet will strengthen cross-sector partnerships and promote inclusive engagement to advance sustainable forestry solutions, amplify collective impact, and enhance policy coherence across the Asia-Pacific region.

- **Public-Private Engagement:** Foster partnerships with private forestry companies and relevant enterprises, forest producer organizations, forestry-related industry associations, and green finance actors to scale up investment and innovation in SFM and restoration. Explore green financing models and investment opportunities that support environmentally and socially responsible forestry practices.
- **Youth & Women's Participation:** Increase the representation of youth and women in policy dialogues, training programmes, and field initiatives through targeted outreach, capacity development, and leadership support.
- **Regional Alignment:** Leverage joint initiatives with regional and international platforms such as ASEAN, APEC, and UNFF to strengthen policy coherence, enhance complementarities, and avoid duplication of efforts.

7.6 Partnership Strategy and Management

As a regional organization, APFNet will continue to foster and strengthen strategic partnerships that enhance knowledge exchange, innovation, and resource mobilization. Partnerships will be pursued based on their alignment with SP4 priorities, demonstrated technical capacity, and commitment to inclusive and results-driven collaboration.

Engage high-potential partners. APFNet will engage with partners whose missions and capabilities align with its strategic goals, particularly in areas such as SFM, restoration, digital innovation, and capacity development. Priority will be given to partnerships that demonstrate a strong commitment to equity, transparency, and measurable results.

Formalize engagement frameworks. Partnerships will be formalized through memoranda of understanding (MOUs), project agreements, or joint work plans with clearly defined roles, deliverables, and resource contributions. These frameworks will establish mutual accountability mechanisms and promote shared ownership among participating economies.

Leverage effective coordination and adaptive collaboration. APFNet will maintain regular coordination and joint review processes, including progress assessments, learning exchanges, and feedback loops, to respond to evolving needs and opportunities. A culture of open communication and co-creation will be fostered, enabling partners to contribute meaningfully to project design, implementation, and learning.

Strengthen performance-based partnership management. To maximize value and strategic alignment, partnerships will be periodically reviewed based on their contributions to strategic outcomes, implementation effectiveness, resource mobilization, and inclusivity. High-performing partnerships will be prioritized for scaling and long-term engagement.

8 Implementation Arrangements

The successful execution of SP4 will require clearly defined institutional roles, effective coordination mechanisms, and strong internal systems. Drawing on lessons learned from previous strategic plans, APFNet will refine its governance structures and operational modalities to deliver more integrated, agile, and results-oriented programming.

8.1 Coordination and Internal Integration

To enhance synergy and coherence across APFNet’s strategic pillars and cross-cutting enablers, and to minimize unnecessary duplication of activities, SP4 will strengthen internal coordination, collaboration, and adaptive management through the following measures:

- **Integrated work planning:** Align annual work plans across all strategic pillars, ensuring systematic integration of cross-cutting priorities such as MEL, GESI, and innovation.
- **Inter-division task teams:** Establish cross-divisional task teams to jointly manage complex, multi-dimensional initiatives involving multiple stakeholders and thematic areas.
- **Periodic learning retreats and review mechanisms:** Conduct regular internal learning retreats and review sessions to facilitate reflection on implementation progress, promote internal knowledge exchange, and inform adaptive planning and implementation.

8.2 Risk Management and Adaptive Strategy

The implementation of SP4 will take place in a dynamic regional context characterized by financial, institutional, geopolitical, and climate-related uncertainties. Building on lessons from the implementation of SP3, APFNet will adopt a proactive and structured approach to risk identification, mitigation, and strategic adaptation to safeguard implementation continuity, institutional stability, and results delivery. Key risk categories and corresponding response strategies include:

Risk Category	Response Strategy
Funding volatility	Diversify funding sources, strengthen reserve mechanisms, and pursue long-term co-financing arrangements.
Institutional turnover	Enhance knowledge management systems, strengthen onboarding processes, and implement succession planning within the Secretariat.
Geopolitical disruptions	Maintain institutional neutrality, prioritize technical cooperation, and foster cross-economy partnerships to sustain engagement.
Climate and disaster risks	Integrate climate resilience and disaster risk reduction measures into the design and implementation of all activities.

In addition, APFNet will apply adaptive management principles by periodically adjusting strategies based on monitoring results, contextual changes, and stakeholder feedback. This approach will ensure that SP4 implementation remains responsive, relevant, and effective in the face of evolving regional conditions.

8.3 Communications and Outreach

APFNet will strengthen its strategic communications by embedding proactive engagement, enhanced visibility, and systematic knowledge-sharing into the implementation of SP4. Key measures will include:

- **Regular stakeholder updates:** Disseminate timely information through newsletters, social media platforms, and the APFNet’s website to share progress, key initiatives, and major achievements.
- **Interactive engagement mechanisms:** Utilize online forums, webinars, and virtual events to encourage dialogue, peer learning, and active participation among members, partners, and forestry professionals.
- **Field-level visibility:** Employ storytelling, short videos, and photo documentation to showcase practical experiences and success stories from restoration efforts and SFM practices.
- **Knowledge product dissemination:** Produce and distribute knowledge products in accessible and multilingual formats to inform practice and policy development, support capacity building, and promote evidence-based practices across the region.

9. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Framework

A robust Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system is central to achieving the objectives of SP4. APFNet will adopt a results-based MEL approach that supports performance tracking, fosters adaptive management, and generates evidence to inform strategic decisions and strengthen credibility and trust among members and partners.

A key principle of the SP4 MEL system is to promote meaningful assessment and learning rather than simple activity-based compliance monitoring. The MEL framework will therefore go beyond tracking outputs and will place greater emphasis on assessing the quality, relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, and broader outcomes of APFNet-supported interventions. This includes consideration of factors such as stakeholder participation, knowledge application, institutional uptake, ecological effectiveness, biodiversity benefits, livelihood impacts, and longer-term contributions to regional forestry objectives. The MEL system will be designed to generate practical and actionable insights that support adaptive management, continuous improvement, strategic decision-making, and organizational learning, rather than serving as an administrative or compliance-based burden.

The MEL system under SP4 will function across three interconnected levels:

Level	Focus
Strategic (Plan-level)	Assessment of progress toward SP4's overarching goals and strategic outcomes.
Thematic (Pillar-level)	Monitoring of results under each strategic pillar and cross-cutting enabler.
Intervention-level	Tracking of inputs, outputs, and immediate outcomes from individual interventions, including field activities, capacity building efforts, and policy initiatives.

APFNet will promote a learning-oriented culture by systematically translating monitoring and evaluation findings into strategic and operational improvements. Learning loops will be embedded in the MEL system to ensure that data and evaluation results from implemented interventions inform planning, decision-making, policy engagement on a continuous basis.

Cross-project knowledge sharing will be strengthened to support replication, upscaling, and innovation, while periodic reflection processes will enable adjustments to strategies, work plans, and delivery models in response to emerging evidence and stakeholder feedback.

Further details of the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Framework, including indicators, methodologies, and reporting mechanisms, are provided in Annex IV.

10. Annexes

Annex	Contents
Annex I: Strategic Planning Process	Summary of consultations, interviews, survey findings, and workshop outcomes
Annex II: Results Framework	Detailed matrix of outcomes, indicators, baselines, targets, and assumptions
Annex III: Risk management Strategy and Register	Risk categories, mitigation strategies, and contingency plans
Annex IV: MEL Framework	Description of MEL architecture, including key tools and instruments, performance, and reporting mechanisms.
Annex V: SDG Mapping	Detailed mapping of SP4 contributions to the SDGs

Annex I: Strategic Planning Process

The formulation of the APFNet Strategic Plan 2026–2030 (SP4) was guided by a comprehensive, participatory, and evidence-based process. The objective was to ensure that the new plan reflects the evolving priorities of member economies, builds on institutional learning, and aligns with global and regional forestry-related agendas and commitments.

1. Process Structure

The strategic planning process followed a phased approach between mid-2024 and mid-2025, comprising four main stages:

Stage	Activities
Stage 1: Planning Workshops	- Strategic Planning Consultation Workshop (Nov 2024) - APFNet Secretariat retreat discussions and internal analysis
Stage 2: SP3 Implementation Review	- Pillar-by-pillar performance assessment - Stakeholder surveys and field consultations - APFNet Secretariat feedback and synthesis reporting
Stage 3: Stakeholder Engagement	- 35 responses to structured stakeholder surveys - 10+ in-depth interviews with partners, alumni, universities, and project implementers
Stage 4: Framework Development and Approval	- Draft framework outline reviewed by APFNet Board and Council (April 2025) - Endorsed without major changes; basis for full plan development
Stage 5: Formulation of Strategic Plan	- Develop the full strategic plan following the framework outline endorsed - Submit the strategic plan to APFNet

2. Data Sources Reviewed

- **Strategic Documents:**
 - APFNet Strategic Plans 2011–2015, 2016–2020, and 2021–2025
 - SP3 Final Implementation Review Report (2025)
 - Summary/reports of the policy dialogue workshops
 - MOU with key partners such as ITTO and RECOFTC.
- **Consultations and Interviews:**
 - Universities (NJFU, SWFU, UBC, BFU)
 - Project partners (e.g., Cambodia, Inner Mongolia)
 - Scholarship alumni and students
 - Institutional partners (e.g., YAFG, KTC)

- **Workshops and Reports:**
 - Strategic Planning Consultation Workshop (Dec 2024)
 - KTC and YAFG consultation reports
 - Secretariat internal reports and TORs
 - Annual Progress Reports

3. Stakeholder Representation

The process engaged a diverse group of stakeholders, including:

- Government focal points from member economies
- Academic institutions and APFNet scholarship hosts
- Project implementing partners across multiple demonstration sites
- Forestry professionals and alumni engaged in policy and practice
- Secretariat divisions and technical units involved in SP3 implementation

4. Key Lessons Incorporated into SP4

- Sustainability requires early planning and institutional integration (from project feedback and division input).
- Scholarship and training programmes must evolve to reflect technological advances and regional development needs (from academic interviews).
- Demonstration projects need clearer exit strategies and expanded local ownership (from project site consultations).
- Regional platforms like SANFRI and AP-FECM are valued, but require scaling and broader participation (from YAFG and UBC feedback).
- MEL and GESI integration were underdeveloped in SP3 and have been prioritized for strengthening in SP4.

Annex II: Results Framework

This Results Framework provides the foundation for tracking the performance of the APFNet Fourth Strategic Plan (2026–2030). It defines strategic outcomes, indicators, and targets that reflect the intended changes and effects of APFNet’s interventions at the regional level, and is aligned with the six Strategic Goals, four Strategic Pillars, and five Cross-Cutting Enablers, supporting results-based monitoring, evaluation, and learning. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) contributions are indicated for each goal to highlight APFNet’s alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The framework combines outcome-level indicators with selected output-level indicators to capture both measurable development changes and key deliverables that contribute to those changes, taking into account data availability, institutional capacity, and practical monitoring considerations across member economies.

During implementation, the Results Framework will be further operationalized and technically refined, including the establishment of baselines and indicator methodologies, to ensure continued relevance, feasibility, and data quality.

1. Structure of the Results Framework

Level	Definition
Goal	High-level result or long-term change to which APFNet contributes at the regional level.
Outcome	Measurable effect of APFNet’s strategies and interventions.
Output	Immediate, tangible products or services delivered through APFNet programmes and activities.
Indicator	Quantitative or qualitative measure used to track progress toward a result.

2. Strategic Goals and Outcome Matrix

Strategic Goal	Outcome	Key Indicators	Target (2030)	SDG Contribution
1. Accelerate forest and landscape restoration	Increased area and quality of restored and sustainably managed forest landscapes.	Area (ha) of degraded land and forest restored	≥300 ha	SDG 15.2, 15.3
		Area (ha) of land under sustainable management plans	≥5,000 ha	SDG 15.2, 13.2
		Number of restoration	≥10 models	SDG 15.1, 17.6

		or SFM models demonstrated and scaled regionally	demonstrated (including ≥ 3 scaled regionally)	
		Number of APFNet-supported projects contributing to biodiversity conservation	≥ 1 project	SDG 15.1, 15.5
		Number of projects with explicit climate change mitigation and/or adaptation objectives demonstrated through climate-smart or nature-based solutions.	≥ 2 projects	SDG 13.1, 13.2, 15.3
2. Strengthen forest-based livelihoods and community resilience	Enhanced community participation, diversified incomes, and improved resilience of forest-dependent households.	Number of community-based restoration or livelihood projects supported	≥ 5 projects	SDG 1.2, 8.9, 15.3
		Number of projects supporting women and/or youth empowerment and income diversification for forest dependent communities	≥ 2 projects	SDG 1.4, 5.5, 8.3
		Number of jobs created through APFNet supported activities	≥ 300 jobs	SDG 8.5, 9.3
		Number of projects introducing renewable or clean energy options	≥ 1 project	SDG 7.2, 13.2
3. Enhance forest governance and policy alignment	Improved cross-border collaboration and integration of sustainable forest management into national	Number of regional policy dialogue-oriented international conferences organized/co-organized	≥ 5 conferences	SDG 17.16, 17.17
		Number of actionable outcome documents	≥ 4 documents	SDG 13.2, 15.2

	and regional policies.	released post-conference (e.g., action plans, joint statements, policy recommendation briefs)		
		Number of economies participating in policy dialogues (per conference/mechanism)	Average ≥ 6 economies per event	SDG 17.14, 17.16
		Number of policy advisory/technical support sessions provided to member economies (follow-up based on conference consensus)	≥ 4 sessions	SDG 16.6, 17.14
4. Build human capital and institutional capacities	Strengthened institutional performance and enhanced professional competencies across forestry sectors.	Percentage of trained individuals applying new knowledge and skills	$\geq 65\%$ knowledge-application rate	SDG 4.4, 5.5
		Number of forestry institutions applying or integrating new planning, monitoring, or governance tools and approaches supported by APFNet.	≥ 10 institutions	SDG 17.9
5. Promote regional collaboration, knowledge management, and digital innovation	Increased adoption of smart forestry tools, digital learning, and regional peer learning platforms.	Number of digital forestry pilot projects applying AI, GIS, or remote-sensing tools	≥ 1 digital pilot	SDG 9.5, 13.1
		Number of regional peer-learning and knowledge exchange events organized	≥ 10 events	SDG 17.6, 17.17
		Number of regional knowledge platforms established and operational	≥ 1 platform	SDG 9.5, 17.8
		Evidence of digital solutions replicated or	≥ 3 economies	SDG 17.8, 17.16

		scaled by member economies		
6. Ensure financial resilience and strategic partnerships	Diversified and sustainable financing base supported by long-term, multi-stakeholder partnerships.	Percentage of annual budget sourced from non-core contributions	10-20%	SDG 17.3, 17.17
		Value of non-core funds mobilized	≥USD 5 million	SDG 17.17, 17.3
		Percentage of total project financing mobilized from partner contributions (cash and in-kind)	≥15-20%	SDG 17.16, 17.17
		Number of formalized strategic partnerships	≥20 partnerships	SDG 17.16, 17.17
		Evidence of sustained collaboration or joint activities beyond project cycles	≥5 cases of sustained collaboration	SDG 17.16, 17.17

3. Cross-Cutting Enabler Indicators

Enabler	Key Indicators	Target (2030)	SDG Links
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)	Percentage of projects with established baselines and end-line or equivalent results assessments, proportionate to project scope and scale	50%	SDG 12.2, 13.2,
	Percentage of evaluations whose findings are used to inform adaptive management or policy improvement	≥75%	SDG 16.6, 17.16
	Percentage of APFNet-supported initiatives with fit-for-purpose monitoring systems generating verifiable ecological and/or social outcome data, appropriate to initiative type and timeframe	≥80%	SDG 12.2, 16.6
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)	Percentage of projects integrating GESI in design, implementation, and reporting	≥50%	SDG 5.5, 10.2
	Percentage of women and youth	≥40%	SDG 5.5,

	participation in all APFNet activities		10.2
	Evidence of enhanced leadership roles for women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples (qualitative assessment)	≥5 cases documented	SDG 5.5, 10.2
Innovation and Digital Transformation	Percentage of projects applying geospatial, AI, or digital tools for monitoring or decision-making	≥30%	SDG 9.5, 17.6
	Number of new digital learning resources developed and actively used	≥10 resources	SDG 17.8, 17.17
	Evidence of innovation or technology scaled up in member economies (qualitative assessment)	≥3 cases documented	SDG 17.8, 17.17
Sustainability and Exit Planning	Percentage of projects integrating sustainability or exit strategies at design stage	≥80%	SDG 12.2, 15.1
	Percentage of projects that establish at least one locally led governance structure and/or sustainable financing mechanism for post-project continuation	≥60%	SDG 16.7, 17.17
	Evidence of project results sustained or scaled beyond APFNet support (qualitative assessment)	≥5 cases documented	SDG 12.2, 15.2
Resource Mobilization and Financial Resilience	Number of strategic partnerships for co-financing or technical collaboration	≥20 partnerships	SDG 17.16, 17.17
	Value of additional non-core funds mobilized	≥USD 5 million	SDG 17.1, 17.3
	Evidence of diversified and stable funding sources supporting institutional resilience	≥5 cases documented	SDG 17.3, 17.16

Annex III: Risk Management Strategy and Register

The Risk Register serves as a forward-looking tool to anticipate, monitor, and mitigate risks that could impede the effective implementation of SP4. It covers strategic, operational, institutional, environmental, and financial risks based on past experience and stakeholder feedback.

1. Risk Categories and Mitigation Strategies

Risk Category	Risk Description	Potential Impact	Mitigation Measures
Strategic Alignment	Misalignment between SP4 goals and evolving priorities of member economies	Reduced ownership or uptake of APFNet interventions	Regular stakeholder consultation; adaptive programming; alignment with regional frameworks
Financial Volatility	Reduced core funding or delayed disbursements	Delays in implementation, reduced programme scale	Diversified funding strategy; contingency planning; promotion of co-financing
Institutional Turnover	High staff turnover at the Secretariat or partner institutions	Loss of institutional knowledge and delays in delivery	Succession planning; documentation of procedures; strengthened onboarding mechanisms
Partner Capacity Gaps	Insufficient local institutional or technical capacity among implementing partners	Implementation delays or quality concerns	Partner assessments; phased support; targeted capacity-building activities
Political or Geopolitical Instability	Shifts in political priorities, regional tensions, or cross-border restrictions	Disruption to regional collaboration and dialogue	Maintain neutrality; foster regional alliances; use digital platforms for engagement
Environmental Risks	Climate-related disasters or forest fires affecting project areas	Destruction of restoration and SFM work or site access issues	Integrate resilience and risk reduction into project design; promote climate-smart practices
Reputational Risk	Perception of inefficiency, limited impact, or inequity in programme delivery	Loss of stakeholder trust and funding confidence	Transparent MEL system; proactive communications; prompt response to concerns
Monitoring and Evaluation Gaps	Inadequate data systems or lack of	Weak performance tracking and reduced	Investment in MEL platform; training for

	evaluation expertise	learning	partners; external evaluator engagement
Inclusion and Participation Gaps	Underrepresentation of women, youth, or marginalized groups in APFNet activities	Inequitable outcomes and missed innovation opportunities	Integration of GESI requirements into project protocols; inclusive design; disaggregated data monitoring

Annex IV: MEL Architecture

1. MEL Objectives

The MEL framework aims to:

- Track progress toward strategic goals, outcomes, and outputs in a systematic and timely manner.
- Assess the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and sustainability of interventions.
- Facilitate learning and improvement through data-driven insights and stakeholder feedback.
- Communicate results clearly to stakeholders, partners, and governance bodies.

2 Key Tools and Instruments

The MEL system will be supported by a set of integrated tools and processes to ensure robust tracking, evaluation, and learning:

- **Results Framework:** A strategic-level matrix outlining baselines, indicators, targets, outputs and expected outcomes. While building on the logical framework (logframe) approach used in demonstration projects, it is intended to apply consistently across all intervention types, including capacity building, policy dialogue, and knowledge-sharing. During SP4 operationalization, indicators will be further refined to ensure clarity and consistency across the Plan.
- **Annual Work Plans and Progress Reports:** Annual work plans will translate the Results Framework into milestones and outputs, with clear responsibilities and timelines. Progress reports will track achievements against indicators, highlight challenges, and capture lessons learned to strengthen accountability and support adaptive management.
- **Mid-Term and Final Evaluations:** Mid-term and final evaluations may be conducted for the Strategic Plan and selected interventions, as appropriate and subject to budget availability. These evaluations will adopt internationally recognized evaluation criteria including relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, to provide a comprehensive and holistic assessment of performance, outcomes, and long-term impacts.
- **Learning Reviews:** Regular learning reviews will combine internal reflection with active two-way exchange. In addition to structured sessions within APFNet, the process will involve regularly organizing and participating in stakeholder workshops, policy dialogues, and regional events. This engagement will foster adaptive insights, including lessons learned, feedback on performance, and emerging risks or opportunities, facilitate cross-stakeholder learning, and support evidence-based adjustments through inclusive dialogue and collaboration.

- **Digital MEL System:** A centralized digital MEL system will enable viable data collection, indicator tracking, visualization, and reporting across all intervention types. It will integrate GIS for demonstration projects and standardized templates for other activities, with future upgrades to improve data quality and decision-making.

3 Roles and Responsibilities in MEL

Clear roles and responsibilities will ensure accountability, consistency, and quality across all levels of the MEL system:

Entity	Responsibilities
Secretariat MEL Lead	Design and maintain the overall MEL system; coordinate strategic evaluations; ensure consistency across reporting and learning processes.
Secretariat Divisions	Collect and validate data; monitor performance indicators within their respective areas; contribute to analysis and organizational learning.
Project and Implementation Partners	Execute MEL activities at the field level, including data collection, baseline assessments, outcome tracking, and reporting.
Independent Evaluators	Carry out mid-term and final evaluations of strategic and field initiatives, ensuring impartiality, methodological rigor, and credibility of findings.

Annex V: Mapping of SP4 Contributions to the SDGs

This annex provides a concise overview of how APFNet’s Fourth Strategic Plan (2026–2030) contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 highlight the strategic alignment at a high level, this annex presents a pillar-by-pillar breakdown. It illustrates how APFNet’s work supports both directly related SDGs (e.g., SDG 13, SDG 15, SDG 17) and interconnected goals (e.g., SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 12, SDG 16).

SP4 Pillar	Main Contributions to SDGs	Examples of Alignment
1. Capacity Development and Institutional Strengthening	SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth), SDG 17 (Partnerships)	Forestry education programmes, gender-inclusive training, skills for green jobs, academic collaboration mechanisms
2. Field Demonstration & Innovation for SFM	SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption & Production)	Climate-smart forestry models, biodiversity conservation, livelihood improvements, green value chains, forest carbon readiness and MRV pilots
3. Regional Policy Dialogues and Coordination	SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions), SDG 17 (Partnerships)	Forest–climate–finance policy integration, biodiversity corridor governance, inclusive policy dialogues, APEC engagement
4. Knowledge Management Communication & Outreach	SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption & Production), SDG 17 (Partnerships)	Digital knowledge platforms, inclusive access to forestry knowledge, dissemination of sustainable practices, global and regional networks