



Summary of the First Meeting of Sino-ASEAN Network of Forestry Research Institutes

*28 March 2018
China National Convention Center (CNCC)
Beijing, China*

1. Introduction

As proposed by APFNet, the Sino-ASEAN Network of Forestry Research Institutes (SANFRI) aims to advance forestry research by facilitating collaboration among forestry research institutes to contribute to sustainable forest management among ASEAN economies and China. Since consultation in October 2016 in Beijing and the following consultation recently concluded in October 2017 in Sri Lanka, APFNet further refines the Network framework design, operation modalities and guidelines of separate actions.

During the conference of APFNet's 10th anniversary celebration, SANFRI was formally launched on 26 March, 2018. To make full use of the occasion, APFNet also organized the *First Meeting of Sino-ASEAN Network of Forestry Research Institutes (SANFRI)* to finalize the governance, rules of procedure and specific guidelines to make the network operational.

The Meeting was also the first SANFRI Steering Committee (SC) meeting, attended by 9 SC members and representatives from some Chinese forestry research institutes and International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) as observers. The meeting has achieved its main goal: confirming rules and procedures of SANFRI through the adoption of two documents, namely Draft Framework of SANFRI and Draft Guidelines of the Network's Four Actions.

2. Summary of agenda items

This summary reflects key messages of presentations and discussions of the three agenda items as well as other points raised in the meeting.

Agenda Item 1: Outlook of Yunnan Forestry Academy's Research Cooperation with ASEAN Forestry Research Institutes

Dr Wang Weibin, President of Yunnan Academy Forestry presented the outlook of Yunnan Academy of Forestry (YAF)’s Research cooperation with ASEAN forestry research institutes under SANFRI. He highlighted the following aspects for future collaboration with member institutes under SANFRI: plant germplasm conservation, tree breeding, high value and fast-growing tree plantation, Agarwood plantation and products development, tropical woody oil tree plantation and forest medicinal plants inventory.

He also suggested some approaches for cooperation with member institutes:

- Capacity building: fellowship program, training course, seminar and forum, and web-based information sharing
- International joint research project
- Joint research center, experiment and demonstration base
- Technology transfer and technical consulting

At last, he briefed the Meeting on YAF’s recent international projects implemented in the Greater Mekong Sub-region.

Agenda Item 2: Discussion on SANFRI Framework design

APFNet secretariat briefed the meeting on Draft Framework of SANFRI. Some important elements in the framework include:

- network vision and objectives
- target groups
- operation modality
- steering committee meetings
- steering committee responsibilities and
- the Chairman’s responsibility

The Meeting adopted the Draft Framework of SANFRI (**Annex 1**) with consensus, and elected Dr. Wang Weibin, President of Yunnan Academy Forestry as the Chairman of SANFRI, with a tenure of 2 years.

Agenda Item 3: Discussion on the Guidelines of the Network’s Four Actions

APFNet secretariat briefed the meeting on Draft Guidelines of the Network’s Four Actions (**Annex 2**). The guidelines sets out principles to implement the four specific program actions under SANFRI. It covers therefore the application, selection, awardee reporting and funding of these actions. etc. One precondition in the guidelines is that the research themes of the four specific actions should be able to reflect forestry development trend and conducive to the national forestry development agenda, and more importantly, should be in consistent with APFNet’s three strategic priorities: forest rehabilitation, promoting sustainable forest management (SFM) and livelihood improvement. This precondition was agreed at the meeting.

Then the meeting discussed the guidelines of the specific four actions. The summary of the discussions is as follows:

Action 1: APFNet Conference Attendance Support

Some SC members (Malaysia and Viet Nam) suggested raising candidate age limit of 45 in some exceptional cases if necessary and giving more flexibility to the age limit in candidate selection.

It is also suggested that the applicant should have confirmation from the conference organizer prior to the application for the APFNet Conference Attendance Support.

As other organizations such as International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and IUFRO also provide the similar fund. To avoid duplicated funding of the same person, Dr. Michael Kleine, IUFRO Deputy Executive Director suggested applicants should clarify any kind of funding they received from other sources when they apply for this Support.

The Meeting emphasized that the theme of the conference to be attended by applicants must be in line with APFNet's mission and strategic priorities. Currently there is no limitation of the location of the conference, but priority is given to the Asia Pacific region.

Action 2: APFNet Small Research Grant

To facilitate the small research appraisal, the Meeting suggested APFNet formulating a project proposal and appraisal guideline for the reference of both applicants and the steering committee members. In addition, the appraisal should consider the feasibility, technical innovation, and adaptability of the small research.

The meeting proposed the following as the priority research areas under this small grant:

- (i) *Priority 1: forest rehabilitation: wetland and mangrove forest restoration, agroforestry, enrichment planting, biotechnology and assisted natural regeneration, invasive species for specific economies.*
- (ii) *Priority 2: promoting SFM: forest certification, chain of custody, forest silviculture, reduced impact logging, forest and climate change, land use management (human activity reduction), biodiversity, payment for ecosystem services, forest product and processing, forest industries development.*
- (iii) *Priority 3: livelihood improvement: community forestry, non-timber forest products (bamboo, rattan, medicinal plants), marketing*

development, biomass and energy, fuel utilization, multifunctional management of forest (ecotourism, recreation etc.)

On the Small Research funding, The Meeting agreed that 1) the grant should be channeled to the institutes instead of individual researchers for better monitoring and assessment; 2) the funding should also comply with financial rules of APFNet and member research institutes; 3) the grant will be offered to researchers only from SANFRI member institutes at the current stage and welcome joint research projects.

Action 3: APFNet Research Fellowship

The Meeting agreed that the host research institute that is responsible for mentoring fellows during their research should:

- have specialized research disciplines that align with APFNet's priorities
- provide necessary counterpart contribution on laboratory and research equipment, mentorship, accommodation, research sites, visa application support, etc.

On application of fellows, researchers who hold a forestry-related Master's Degree (with at least 3 year's research experience) or Ph.D with great English language ability can apply for this fellowship program. Priority will be given to researchers whose research interests are in alignment with the host institute's core research areas.

On selection of fellows, the Meeting suggested that the host institute provide a short-list after interviewing applicants and submit the short-list to the SC. The SC will then approve the final list of fellows.

Action 4: Early Career Academics Forum

On the forum theme, the Meeting suggested that APFNet should come up with a list of themes and submit the list to SC for discussion and finalization. Some SC members suggested that the decision of the forum theme should be based on research fields of the sponsored actions under SANFRI (namely Conference Attendance Support, Small Research Grant and Research Fellowship) of that year.

On the scale of the forum, SC members agreed to the number of 30 participants at maximum. The participants mainly include representatives from SANFRI member institutes and awardees of SANFRI programs.

On organization of the forum, the Meeting suggested 1) involvement of resource persons in activity design, technical info sharing and output summary from advanced forestry research institutes or international organizations, so that participants could exchange research resources and progress, and acquire up-to-date knowledge and concepts; 2) holding the forum with SC annual meetings together for better efficiency.

Other points raised in the meeting

Besides discussion on the guidelines, some other points were also touched upon under this agenda. Dr. Zhang Jinfeng presented YAF's arrangements of the fellowship program as host institute. According to his presentation, YAF would provide the following in-kind contributions:

- Mentorship
- Selected research projects to be participated in by fellows
- Accommodation (with kitchen)
- Laboratory and research equipment

IUFRO offered to help on capacity building programs to promote science-policy interaction, through which the existing scientific information or research's finding will be analyzed and presented in a manner that can assist policy or decision makers.

The Chair proposed to host the first Forum next year in Yunnan, China with the theme of "Tropical Forest Quality". In view that the forum will be held for one to two days, the Meeting agreed that the forum will be held back to back with the steering committee meeting.

On routine communication, the Meeting suggested that Chairman should be responsible for communication with the steering committee members and APFNet secretariat.

3. Follow up actions and proposed timetable

Actions		Responsibility	Estimated time
1. APFNet Conference Attendance Support	Release the call for application	Chuyu	June 2018
	Prepare supporting materials, eg. agreement template with awardee, the template of conference attending report, etc.	Chuyu	June 2018
	Process applications and promote the program	Chuyu	June-December 2018
2. APFNet Research Fellowship	Submission of the project proposal and budget	Yunnan Academy of Forestry (YAF)	May 2018
	Review and revise the project proposal and budget	Chuyu	June 2018
	Submit the project proposal for approval	Chuyu	June 2018
	Sign Agreement with the host research institute	Chuyu	June 2018
	Follow up with fellow application, selection and research in the host institute	Chuyu	July-December 2018
	Follow up with program outputs and its dissemination	Chuyu	July-December 2018
3. APFNet Small Research Grant	Prepare supporting materials, eg. project abstract template, agreement template with awardee, etc.	Chuyu	June-December 2018
4. Early Career Academics Forum	Prepare list of forum themes	Chuyu	June-December 2018
	Discuss with Chair on organizing the Forum in 2019 in terms of the theme, resource persons, funding, etc.	Chuyu YAF	June-December 2018

Sino-ASEAN Network of Forestry Research Institutes (SANFRI)

Draft Framework

APFNet proposed to launch an Early Career Academics Program (ECAP) in late 2016, which gradually evolved into the current idea of a *Sino-ASEAN Network of Forestry Research Institutes (SANFRI)*. The network was proposed and sponsored by APFNet, but we encourage member research institutes to explore bilateral collaboration and seek more funding through the network.

The vision, goal, objectives and general activities of the Network are outlined as follows:

Vision: To advance forestry research by strengthening cooperation and facilitating collaborative actions that contribute to furthering sustainable forest management (SFM) in Asia and the Pacific.

Goal: To strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of forestry research in ASEAN economies and China through information exchange, capacity development and collaboration.

Objectives:

- Objective 1. Provide a **platform** for forestry research institutes to exchange research information and share research resources.
- Objective 2. **Support the capacity development** of forestry researchers.
- Objective 3. Help forestry researchers translate their idea into concrete **research projects**.

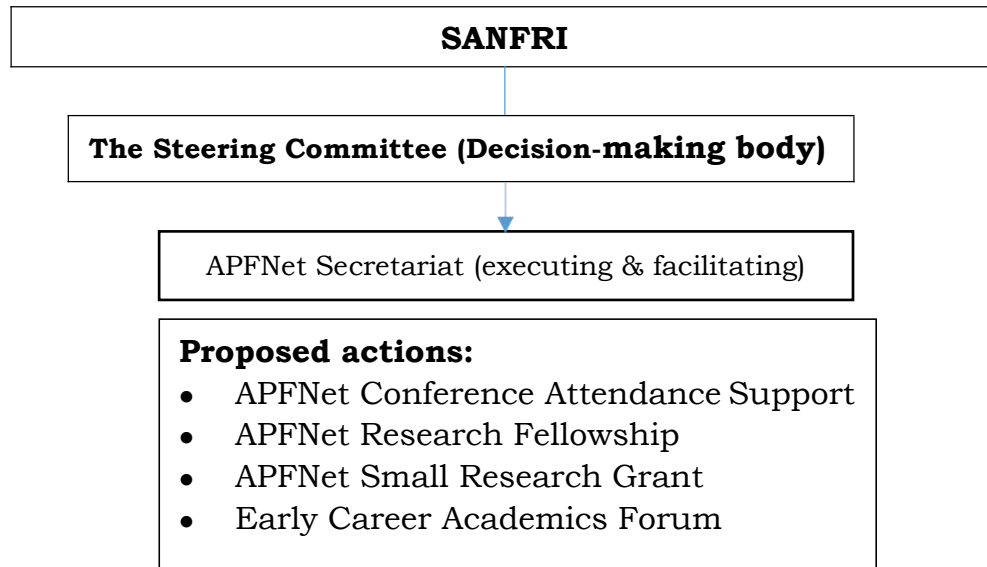
Expected Outputs:

- Output 1. Regular exchange on the research status, priority and challenges among regional institutes.
- Output 2. Increased capacity, knowledge and skills of forestry researchers through the fellowship program and sponsoring researchers to attend international research conferences and meetings.
- Output 3. Conduction of small-scale research projects.

Target Groups:

Forestry scientists and researchers among forestry research institutes in Southeast Asia.

Operation Modality:



Steering Committee:

A Steering Committee will be established as the decision-making body to discuss operation procedures of actions to be carried out under this network and oversee operations of the network.

The Steering Committee members shall be represented by designated persons who should have the authority to speak on behalf of the member. The person shall normally be the head of the research institute in ASEAN economies and China.

New members can join the Steering Committee on the recommendation and agreement of the majority of the Steering Committee members.

Responsibilities of the Steering Committee:

As a decision-making body, the Steering Committee is responsible for refining the procedures of program actions under the network before the launch of the network, guiding the operation of the actions, and connecting research institutes with APFNet secretariat. Specifically, its responsibilities include:

1. Review and make recommendations on the adoption or modification of the network's strategic plan, policies and procedures
2. Approve its regulations and rules
3. Identify the priorities for mechanism engagement and program development;

4. Guide and direct the implementation of its programs, including screening and selecting applicants for those program actions, recommending the theme and organization of the Early Career Academics Forum
5. Review the composition of the Steering Committee regularly to ensure active participation of its members
6. Elect a Chair
7. Fulfil any other functions conducive to the achievement of the objectives of SANFRI
8. Connect the regional forestry research institutes with the APFNet secretariat
9. Disseminate announcement of the program actions in each forestry research institute and recommend research fellows for the APFNet Research Fellowship Program
10. Communicate the network to related institutes and agencies internationally
11. Fundraising for potential programs

Election of the Chair of the Steering Committee:

A Chair will be elected during the Steering Committee meeting and will serve a non-consecutive term of 2 years. The Chair is an institution, rather than a particular person, so a representative may change during the Chair's tenure.

Responsibilities of the Chair:

1. Preside over each Steering Committee meetings
2. Develop the agenda of Steering Committee meetings after consultation with APFNet secretariat and other committee members
3. Serve as the channel of communication between members of the network, Steering Committee and APFNet
4. Ensure observance of these rules

Steering Committee Meetings:

1. The SC meeting will be held at least once every 2 years. APFNet secretariat will propose the time and venue.
2. The following issues can be discussed in a SC meeting
 - Strategic direction of the network framework and each of the program under the network
 - Screening and selecting research grants applications
 - Problems in operation of any of the program under SANFRI

Exploration of collaboration opportunities among SC members

- Regional trending issues that SANFRI should focus on
3. Each SC member can designate a contact person for operation of specific matters.

SANFRI membership:

- Institute of Forest and Wildlife Research and Development of Cambodia
- Yunnan Academy of Forestry of China
- Secretariat of Forestry and Environment Research Development and Innovation Agency (FOERDIA) of Indonesia

- National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) of Laos
- Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM)
- Forest Research Institute of Myanmar
- Silvicultural Research Division, Forest Research and Development Bureau of Thailand
- Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences (VAFS)

SASNFRI Steering Committee members:

- **Dr. Chhang Phourin**, Deputy Director of Institute of Forest and Wildlife Research and Development of Cambodia
- **Dr. Wang Weibin**, President of Yunnan Academy of Forestry of China
- **Mr. Jonny Holbert Panjaitan, M.Sc**, Deputy Director of Program and Cooperation Division, FOERDIA
- **Dr. Vongvilay Vongkhamsoo**, Director of Forestry Research Centre, NAFRI
- **Dato' Dr. Abd. Latif bin Mohmod**, Director General of FRIM
- **Dr. Ismail Parlan** (alternative member), Head of Natural Forest Program of FRIM
- **Dr. Thaung Naing Oo**, Director of Forest Research Institute of Myanmar
- **Dr. Suwan Tangmitcharoen**, Director of Silvicultural Research Division, Forest Research and Development Bureau of Thailand
- **Dr. Vo Dai Hai**, President of VAFS
- **APFNet**

Proposed Actions:

- **Action 1. APFNet Conference Attendance Support**
The APFNet Conference Attendance Support recognizes innovative research in forestry and related fields by young researchers that have brought impact on the ground. The support includes a small amount of funding for the young researchers to participate in international forestry related research conferences.
- **Action 2. APFNet Research Fellowship**
The APFNet Research Fellowship aims to provide opportunities for researchers to be involved in a research program of a host research institute.
- **Action 3. APFNet Small Research Grant**
The APFNet Small Research Grant is set up to encourage young forestry research professionals to translate their innovative research ideas into concrete research products.

- Action 4. Early Career Academics Forum

This Forum will invite those funded researchers, and also representatives from other fields, such as policy makers, and private sector leaders, to promote the interaction between academics and other groups, and improve the understanding of the impact of research.

Sino-ASEAN Network of Forestry Research Institutes (SANFRI)

General Guidelines for actions under the Network (draft)

Research themes in our specific actions under the network should be able to reflect global forestry development trend and conducive to national forestry development agenda, meanwhile consistent with APFNet's strategic priorities, *inter alia*:

- *Priority 1*: Rehabilitating degraded forests and increasing forest cover
- *Priority 2*: Promoting sustainable forest management to enhance ecological functions and ecosystem security of forests
- *Priority 3*: Enhancing forests' contribution to socio-economic development and to improvement of local livelihoods

[APFNet Conference Attendance Support](#)

What is our goal?

The support aims to help young researchers (≤ 45 years of old) in ASEAN developing economies and China who have innovative research ideas or concrete research findings to spread out their achievements and also bring new research findings back to their economy.

Who do we support?

The support targets researchers who have a scientific paper accepted by an international forestry research-related conference and will deliver a presentation/poster. Priority will be given to researchers from SANFRI member institutes.

Which fields of research does our support focus on?

The support may focus on trending issues that lack of funding within the scope of APFNet strategic priorities of forest rehabilitation, SFM, and livelihoods.

What do we fund?

We only fund round-trip international travel (the most direct route and in economy class) and DSA and no other expenses.

Who selects the applicants?

As the application is open all year round, the applicants can be selected by APFNet secretariat directly.

[APFNet Small Research Grant](#)

What is our goal?

The Grant is set up to encourage young researchers (≤ 45 years of old) in ASEAN developing economies and China to do a small research project.

Who do we support?

We support researchers with a forestry-related Ph.D or Master's Degree under age of 45 in ASEAN economies and China.

What activities does our Grant support?

Research themes of the Grant must fall under one of the following APFNet strategic priorities: forest rehabilitation, SFM, and livelihoods. (We can discuss priority areas of research under each theme.)

What are our funding restrictions?

- The maximum funding for each small research grant is limited to \$15,000.
- The duration of the project should be within a year.
- The grant will not support attending and organizing conferences, workshops, travel to scientific meetings, salaries, overhead costs, and costly laboratory equipment.
- One researcher can only receive the Grant once within 5 years.

Who selects the grant applicants and how?

SANFRI Steering Committee (SC) selects the applicants by grading the proposals. Proposals will be evaluated competitively, based on: (we can refine the standards)

- Background and rationale of the research
- Clarification of research goals and objectives
- Research methodologies (procedures and data analysis)
- Contribution to goal and objectives and its research theme

2 of the rotating SC members pre-screen and grade the proposals and submit the results to the SC meeting for final decision making.

What is the grant implementation timeline?

The period of implementation of the research will be one year at maximum.

Grant Name	Call for application	Deadline	Selection	Implementation date	Submission of the final research report
APFNet Small Research Grant	January	March	April-May	June-June	June

APFNet Research Fellowship

What is the goal of the program?

The Fellowship aims to provide opportunities for researchers to be involved in a research program of a host research institute. The program will not only allow the fellow to apply acquired skills and knowledge in their own job in their respective institute, but has the potential to strengthen ties between two research institutes.

Who can apply for the Fellowship?

The researchers should be citizens of ASEAN economies and China, and hold a forestry-related Master's Degree (with at least 3 year's research experience) or Ph.D with great English language ability. Priority will be given to researchers whose research interests are in alignment with the host institute's core research areas.

How to apply for the Fellowship?

The steering committee is the single channel to recommend fellows, and SC members will recommend fellows from their own research institute. Eligible researchers can apply for their interested mentors and programs from the host institutes directly.

What can be expected from a host research institute?

The host research institute is responsible for mentoring fellows during their research in a fellow's chosen research topic. It should:

- have specialized research disciplines that align with APFNet's priorities
- provide necessary counterpart contribution on laboratory and research equipment, mentorship, accommodation, research sites, visa support, etc.

Any interested research institute in ASEAN or China could approach APFNet to discuss the potential cooperation to be a partner.

What supports does the fellow's original institute can provide?

SC members could help to coordinate their own research institutes to provide favorable conditions for researchers who apply for the fellowship program, such as keeping their original job, pay the original salary, etc.

Early Career Academics Forum

What is the theme of the forum?

The theme should revolve around sustainable forest management (SFM), and follow the hot issues of forestry research in the Asia Pacific region. The SC discusses possible themes in the SC meeting and submits the final 2 choices to APFNet for selection.

What is the content of the forum?

The following content can be shared and discussed in the forum:

- Research trends or hot issues in the Asia Pacific region
- Paper from a member research institute
- Collaboration opportunities among member research institutes
- Outputs/experience of SANFRI funded programs: paper from the Conference Attendance Support, research results from the Small Research Grant, fellowship experience from the Research Fellowship

What is the scale of the forum?

The Forum is set to be a small-scale one, which accommodates around 30 people. The participants include representatives from SANFRI member institutes, awardees of SANFRI programs, APFNet scholarship students, the private sector interested in forestry research.

Who can sponsor the forum?

APFNet will sponsor the forum, but we also encourage member institutes to seek for extra funding, or private sector to contribute somehow.

Who can host the forum?

Any interested member institute can apply to host the forum or the forum can be held at the sidelines of an international forestry gathering every two years.

Who can be the resource persons for the forum organization?

Resource persons should be able to provide technical support in terms of proposing proper forum themes, guiding the forum design, facilitating forum activities and summarizing the outputs and deliverables. They can be invited from international forestry organizations or forestry research institutes/universities.