

APFNet NEWSLETTER

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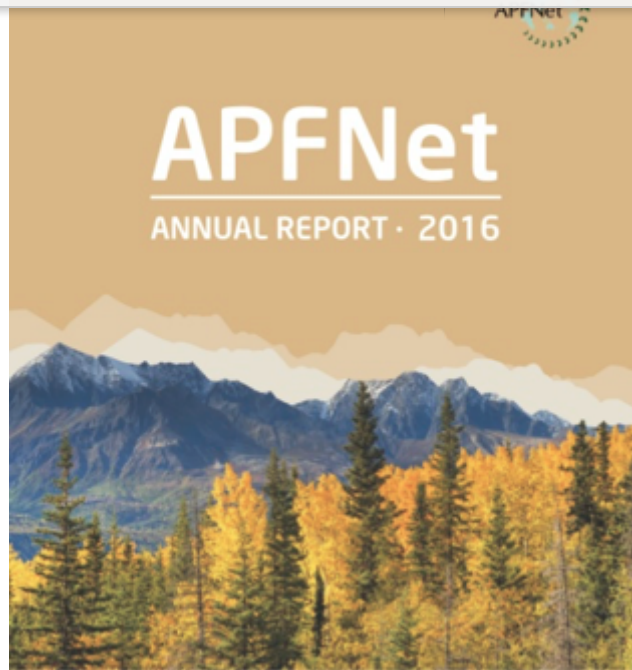


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APFNet Annual Report highlights achievements in 2016

The APFNet Annual Report 2016 was officially released at the APFNet Board and Council meetings in Sri Lanka in March 2017.



The report provides an overview of APFNet's efforts in the past year, with highlights including work focusing on:

- Fostering high-level commitment to forestry in the Greater Central Asia region;
- Utilizing technology to reduce the risk of forest fires in Laos PDR;
- Improving local livelihoods by promoting ecotourism in Thailand;
- Empowering women and marginalized households through forestry entrepreneurship in Nepal; and
- Implementing capacity building and educational programs and activities.

The APFNet Annual Report 2016 will be available online shortly at: www.apfnet.cn.

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APFNet and Asia-Pacific economies initiate the Forestry Planning Network

Forestry strategic planning is an ongoing process, not a one-time exercise. It must be people-focused, learning-centered, and adaptive to external changes to be considered strategic.



Mr. Phouthone Sophathilath, Deputy Director of Planning and Cooperation of the Lao Department of Forestry, highlighted that forestry planning has become increasingly difficult given that the scope of planning has become more complex over time.

These were the overriding sentiments at the Asia-Pacific Forestry Planning Workshop in Bangkok, held from 18 to 19 January by APFNet in partnership with FAO-RAP and the Royal Forestry Department of Thailand.

Twenty-three participants from government forestry planning departments, NGOs and IGOs gathered to analyze and finetune key programmatic elements as part of establishing the APFNet Asia-Pacific Forestry Planning Network (FPN).

The FPN is a newly established, informal network that aims to strengthen economy-level forestry strategic planning processes in the Asia-Pacific region. Knowledge sharing, policy analysis and capacity building are major activities foreseen in the network.

Forestry planning has a long history in the forestry sector, where traditional planning approaches focused on timber production as one of the key objectives.

However, advancements in communications technology, globalization and trade has made socioeconomic development increasingly complex. At the same time, the awareness and demand for forests to contribute to sustainable development is steadily growing at the international level.

For forestry planners to adapt to these changes, the pressure to make forestry



Strategic planning is a deliberate and ongoing decision-making process that stresses knowledge integration and addresses societal needs, according to natural resource policy expert Dr. CTS Nair.

So what differentiates strategic forestry planning from conventional forestry planning?

“Strategic planning results from a deliberate decision-making process and defines where an organization is going,” says natural resource policy expert Dr. CTS Nair.

Dr. Nair has over 20 years of working experience in forestry strategic planning and policy development, and has written over 100 publications on policies, economics and institutional analysis.

What differentiates strategic planning is that it is a “knowledge intensive process”, that involves gathering and analyzing information to understand the present situation, draw up realistic future scenarios, define the goals that need to be accomplished and specify the actions to be taken to accomplish the goals.

Establishing a learning environment that addresses societal needs and encourages flexibility to respond to external changes are also key factors in forestry strategic planning, he added.

But intensive information gathering can be costly for some Asia-Pacific economies, which often face shortages and gaps in resources and capacity.

At the workshop, it was identified that the FPN can play a key role in building a common pool of knowledge, and serve as a valuable information resource to support the strategic planning process.

The workshop assessed and prioritized potential activities for the network in 2017, laying the groundwork for developing next steps and actions. A detailed workplan is currently being developed based on the feedback collected at the workshop.

The idea for establishing a regional network on strategic planning was initiated in two strategic planning-related workshops in November 2013 in Rotorua, New Zealand and December 2014 in Phenom Penh, Cambodia.

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Working together to conserve Bang Kachao

BANG KACHAO

Bang Kachao is an island reserve situated in the heart of Thailand's capital, Bangkok. It covers approximately 5000 acres of land and is encircled by an oxbow curve of the Chao Phraya River.

APFNet launched the *Strengthening Urban Forestry Demonstration Site of Bang Kachao (Thailand) for Biodiversity Conservation and Natural Learning Center* project in order to preserve the island reserve against increasing industrial development and urbanization, and selected Ms. Prempreet Trairat as the as one of the project's coordinators.



Ms Prempree Trairat, APFNet Project Coordinator and Chair of the urban community forest in Bang Kachao

Prempree's story

After being neglected for a number of years, Bang Kachao's land deteriorated into a combination of dense jungles and dumping sites for garbage, encouraging the proliferation of mosquitoes and poisonous snakes.

Ms Prempree Trairat, Chair of the "Suan Pa Ket Nom Klao Urban Community Forest" within Bang Kachao, recognized that without intervention the land would continue to degrade, with the associated problems worsening over time. As a result, she decided to work with her local community to tidy the affected areas up.

Prempree helped conserve the area on a voluntary basis right up until 2007, when her proposal to use it as a pilot site for the Royal Forest Department's (RFD) urban community forestry programme was put into action.

Prempree's initial efforts and the RFD's subsequent forestry programme have brought significant benefits to the area. However, limited on-site facilities meant that its potential as an attraction and as a means of increasing local inhabitant's livelihoods was not being fully realized.

In 2012, APFNet launched an urban community demonstration project in Thailand, with the project officially commencing the following year. The "Suan Pa Ket Nom Klao Urban Community Forest" was chosen as an important learning site for members of the community and for visitors, and Prempree was selected as one of the project's coordinators.

The project's activities include the installation of signposts, establishment of

“It is delightful for a little lady to be able to be a small part of conserving this green area, helping deliver clean air to tens of thousands of people.”

- Ms. Prempree Trairat

The forest has seen a tenfold increase in visitors since the project's outset, with people of all ages coming to visit the area to relax, learn about the environment and taste authentic Thai dishes prepared by the local women's group.

These days, Prempree devotes her time to leading a volunteer group made up of community members who look after the forest through a range of activities, including conserving rare species of local flora and fauna, providing seedlings for visitors to plant within the community, and encouraging younger generations to become more involved in the conservation of the area.

Planned project activities for 2017



Implementing a natural conservation and urban forestry program as part of the curriculum of local schoolchildren



Encouraging local volunteers and youth groups to become involved in education programs forms a key part of the project's activities

In 2017, the project will implement a teaching plan that was developed under a previous phase of the project. The teaching plan will ultimately culminate in a local curriculum for children in Bang Kachao.

The project will also specifically support disadvantaged students through different activities including bird watching and biodiversity story learning.

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Third Board and Council meetings



The third APFNet Council and Board meetings were held in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, on 23 and 26 March 2017 respectively.

Serving as the advisory body of APFNet and a platform for information exchange, the Council reviewed APFNet's progress over the last year and the proposed workplan for 2017.

The five Greater Central Asian economies of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were approved to attend future

The Board approved the APFNet annual work plan for 2017 based on the Council's recommendations and suggestions. They emphasized that APFNet should enhance its regional presence by collaborating with partners in order to increase the quality of its activities.

The fourth Board and Council meetings will take place in early 2018 in China.

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Call for project proposals 2017

The APFNet call for project proposals for 2017 is currently open.

APFNet provides grants for demonstration projects, research or policy development projects, and capacity building projects, up to a maximum value of USD 500 000.

Projects should align with APFNet's priority areas and be targeted to the actual needs of project areas on-the-ground in terms of forest management and contribution to social-economic development.

In order to be considered for APFNet funding, applicants must submit a concept note to the APFNet Secretariat in both PDF **and** hard copy by **17:00 Beijing time, 30 April 2017**.

For further information, including grant policy and all related annexes please refer to: http://www.apfnet.cn/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1026&Itemid=116.

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APFNet Scholarship Program extends support to Greater Central Asia



The Greater Central Asia region is made up of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and North-Western China. The landscape in these economies is characterized by desert and semi-desert valleys, plateaus and highlands. Although the region is sparsely forested, its forests perform important protective, water-saving, sanitary and hygienic, oxygen generating, climate regulation and health improving functions.^[1]

^[1]Image credit: Dead desert poplar by james j8246 (modified image, original available at: <http://bit.ly/2nEag!0>).

APFNet is pleased to announce the expansion of its Scholarship Program in 2017 to include the Inner Mongolia Agriculture University and the Northwest A&F University, situated in China's Inner Mongolia and Shaanxi provinces respectively.

The two new universities on the program specifically target non-Chinese citizens from the following economies in Greater Central Asia: Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Benefits of the program include highly experienced professional forestry faculty, sponsorship of tuition fees and expenses, small class sizes, a diverse and motivated student cohort, field trips, workshops, and exposure to Chinese language and culture.

Inner Mongolia Agriculture University

- Soil and Water Conservation and Desertification Control

Northwest A&F University

- Forestry Protection
- Soil and Water Conservation and Desertification Control

For more information on the application criteria for the APFNet Scholarship Program and how to apply, please visit: http://apfnet.cn/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=983&Itemid=128.

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