



## **Sixth Meeting of the APFNet Board of Directors**

25 August 2022 | Online meeting

### **Implementation of the APFNet work plan 2021**

#### **1 Introduction**

The APFNet Secretariat prepared this document to summarize the implementation of the 2021 annual work plan, which was reviewed by the Council and approved by the Board of Directors.

In response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, many APFNet activities were completed online or by alternative means in 2021 to achieve expected outcomes, and some activities were postponed due to ongoing lockdowns and international travel restrictions.

#### **2 Highlights of activities by pillars/implementation tools**

##### **2.1 Capacity building**

According to the *APFNet Strategic Plan 2021–2025*, one of APFNet’s objectives is to help build the capacity of forestry officers and professionals in the Asia-Pacific region. In 2021, APFNet focused on addressing challenges presented by the pandemic by strengthening the APFNet Scholarship Program (ASP) and convening two training workshops.

##### ***1) APFNet Scholarship Program***

- APFNet strengthened its support for master’s and PhD programmes in specializations related to sustainable forest management (SFM) and forest restoration with the aim of contributing to the development of human resources in member economies. ASP sponsored 37 awardees in 2021, of whom 11 students graduated in July, earning master’s degrees in forestry-related majors; the other 26 students continued their online studies in the autumn semester. APFNet’s four partner universities – Beijing Forestry

University, Nanjing Forestry University, Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University, and Chulalongkorn University – gradually adopted the online teaching model, overcoming difficulties such as poor internet connections and differing time zones.

- To promote information sharing among ASP alumni, the APFNet Alumni Network broadened its online presence in 2021 through social media channels. It also released and disseminated three editions of a newsletter and operated the APFNet Alumni Network online portal, which was up and running with 190 registered alumni.

## **2) *APFNet forestry trainings***

The main objective of APFNet forestry training is to provide training programmes to equip policymakers and practitioners with adequate knowledge and skill in multifunctional forest restoration, thus contributing to human resource development in the region. APFNet has organized two international forestry training courses annually since 2007. The regular training courses were suspended in 2021, however, because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, APFNet organized two workshops on forest carbon, as follows:

- To help grassroots-level forestry officials grasp the concepts and learn about the implementation of carbon neutrality, APFNet cooperated with the Chifeng Forestry and Grassland Administration to convene a training workshop on forest carbon sinks, carbon neutrality and forest carbon accounting methodology in Inner Mongolia, China, in September 2021. About 100 local forestry officials and technicians participated in the workshop, which was also a response to China's pledge to have carbon dioxide emissions peak before 2030 and to achieve carbon neutrality before 2060.
- A workshop titled *Holding Forests Accountable – APFNet Forest Carbon Accounting Zoom Webinar* was conducted online in December 2021 to provide a platform on which APFNet project partners could share carbon-related project knowledge and to enable experts and practitioners in relevant fields to exchange experiences in forest carbon measurement. More than 50 people in the region attended the webinar.

## **2.2 Projects**

### **1) *Projects Proposal formulation and new project appraisal***

Five project concept notes – from Fiji, Mexico, Nepal, Tajikistan and Viet Nam – were received in 2021. Given that the projects approved in 2020 had not yet been launched and project

feasibility studies could not be carried out in 2021 due to travel restrictions, the usual annual process for project concept note appraisal was not conducted as planned in 2021. The received concept notes and new submissions will be considered in the next round of concept note appraisal.

Progress was made via remote communication in revising proposals for four projects, as shown in the table below.

<b>Title of project proposal</b>	<b>Year of appraisal</b>	<b>Status</b>
Promoting the sustainable production of sandalwood in <b>Fiji</b>	2018	Approved
Rehabilitation of arid ecosystems and wastelands through agroforestry systems on the southern coast of <b>Peru</b>	2020	Approved
Development of a business model for enrichment planting, including carbon values, in <b>Viet Nam</b>	2020	Under revision
Promoting community-based restoration, sustainable management and livelihood development using bamboo resources in the Bago Yoma region of <b>Myanmar</b>	2020	Under revision

## ***2) Project implementation***

In 2021, 23 projects were implemented successfully, comprising three newly launched projects, five projects completed in 2021, and 15 ongoing projects. A total of USD 2,094,781 was distributed in 2021 for project implementation. Despite the pandemic, most projects were implemented effectively according to their respective goals, objectives and expected outputs, although a few projects experienced delays or had to be modified. Annex 1 lists the 23 projects, and details of project implementation are presented below.

### ***a New projects***

Three new projects proposed by Canada and China were initiated in 2021 covering climate-change adaptation, carbon accounting and forest resource monitoring, forest restoration, and

capacity building. The three projects are:

**i Adaptation of Asia-Pacific Forestry to Climate Change Phase III [ID: 2020P4-UBC]**

The two-year project, which is being implemented by the University of British Columbia (UBC), is the third phase of a project with the same title. The aim of this third phase is to update and promote the tools developed in the previous two phases (i.e. ClimateAP and Climate niche models) to assist climate-change adaption in forests. It is expected that, through the project, these tools will be used more frequently and effectively by foresters and policymakers to develop climate-change adaption strategies in the Asia-Pacific region to improve the health and productivity of forest ecosystems and increase resilience to climate change. The total budget for the third phase is USD 164,100, of which USD 135,000 is funded by APFNet.

**ii Study on forest carbon storage and carbon sink potential of Wangyedian Forest Farm [ID: 2021P2-INM]**

The one-year project is being implemented by Wangyedian Forest Farm with technical support from the Chinese Academy of Forestry. The aim is to accurately and efficiently quantify forest carbon stocks and estimate forest carbon carrying capacity at the level of a forest management unit. An inventory-based carbon estimation methodology was applied in 2021, with 7,996 field sample plots set up and monitored at Wangyedian Forest Farm (25,000 ha). The total project budget is USD 169,558.82, all of which is funded by APFNet.

**iii Construction of Multi-Functional Forest Management Demonstration Sites – Phase III [ID: 2020P2-INM]**

The project, which is the third phase of a longer project, is being implemented by Wangyedian Forest Farm under the supervision of the Chifeng Forestry and Grassland Bureau. The project is continuing the demonstration of multifunctional forest management in Wangyedian Forest Farm via optimized forest management in both commercial and ecological forests. Additional facilities for the *APFNet Multifunctional Forest Management Training Base* will be constructed, including an environmental education camping ground and other necessary facilities. The base has been operating well since its launch in 2019. Several themed trainings, such as on environmental education and forest carbon accounting, were held at the base in 2021. The total project grant is USD 2,503,676, of which USD 2,132,529 is funded by APFNet.

***b Completed/closed projects***

Although the completion of several projects was delayed due to the pandemic, five projects (in Canada, China and Mongolia) were completed in 2021. The main achievements of these projects are described below.

#### **i Improving land productivity and profitability through innovative forest restoration in the mountainous areas of southern China**

Many forests in the mountainous areas of southern China are severely degraded and vulnerable to soil erosion. To address this issue, the project *Demonstration on Sustainable Forest Management and Restoration in Hilly and Low Mountain Areas of Southern China [ID: 2016P2-CAF]* was initiated in 2016 to showcase innovative forest restoration models focusing on ecological restoration and local livelihood improvement. The following five restoration models were demonstrated in 150 ha of degraded forests: 1) enrichment planting of valuable species in stony mountain areas (for example *Pteroceltis tatarinowii* can be used to produce Chinese art paper and help control soil erosion); 2) close-to-nature forest management of Chinese fir, which transformed planted Chinese fir forests into high-productivity mixed forests; 3) intensive farming of bamboo forests to increase the production of bamboo poles and bamboo shoots; 4) the multipurpose restoration of *Torreya grandis*; and 5) agroforestry to enrich hickory forests with Chinese medical herbs. The knowledge gained in these demonstration areas will be relevant to mountainous areas across southern China and perhaps even beyond.

#### **ii Developing an online, digital and technology-based forestry education platform**

APFNet has funded two phases of the project *Innovative Sustainable Forest Management Education in the Asia-Pacific Region* since 2016 to develop a comprehensive online learning programme for SFM under the Asia-Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism (AP-FECM). The project was conducted in cooperation with universities that play leading roles in forestry education, including UBC, Beijing Forestry University, the University of Melbourne and the University of Putra Malaysia. A total of 15 high-quality courses were developed, and the second phase of the project emphasized tropical forests, covering topics such as forest measurement, forest planning and climate-change adaptation for community forestry and local livelihoods. The courses provide learners with a systematic knowledge base and skillset for understanding SFM in a global context. The project won the *Global Competition on Best Practices in Forest Education – Top 2* award issued by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO). It provided immense support to students in the Asia-Pacific region during the pandemic by providing free online forestry education; participants in the AP-FECM Certification Course can obtain certification by completing the courses, thus increasing their credentials and contributing to career development.

### **iii Building a botanic park in the National Garden Park of Mongolia**

APFNet and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia launched the project *Construction of a Mini Botanic Park within the National Garden Park of Mongolia [Project ID: 2016P4-MN]* in 2016 to construct an 8.4 ha botanical garden in Mongolia's National Garden Park as a site where people can experience forests in an urban area. The project has been credited as an integral part of the Mongolian Green Wall – a long-term national programme to combat desertification and reduce deforestation. The project was completed in December 2020 but was not closed immediately pending submission of several financial reports (the reports were submitted in late 2021). APFNet will provide the project partner with USD 10,000 annually for three years, starting in 2021, to maintain the established plants.

### **c Ongoing projects**

As of the end of 2021, 15 projects (not including the three new projects) were under implementation in 11 APFNet member economies – six Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) economies as well as Canada, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and the United States. The projects cover diverse fields, including forest restoration, forest ecosystem management, watershed management, multifunctional forestry, desertification control, forest resource monitoring, and climate change. Good progress was made in most projects in 2021, although several experienced delays or had to be modified due to the pandemic. The progress made can be categorized into four thematic fields, as described below.

#### **i Forest restoration**

APFNet continues to align its work with existing international, regional and national processes for advancing forest restoration and thereby enabling forests to regain their health and capacity to provide ecosystem services while also benefiting local livelihoods. For instance, the project *Sustainable Forest Management in Northern Provinces of Lao PDR* demonstrated forest restoration practices in subtropical areas, where plants were established in existing forests to produce non-timber forest products as a means for supporting local livelihoods. The project *Development of Participatory Management for a Micro Catchment at the Bengawan Solo Upper Watershed Phase II* demonstrated how to address soil erosion by using agroforestry for forest restoration in Indonesia.

#### **ii Multifunctional forest management**

Multifunctional forest management is an increasing focus of APFNet's work and is incorporated in the *APFNet Strategic Plan 2021–2025*. Many APFNet projects, such as several

in Pu'er and Wangyedian, China, and Cambodia, are maintaining established demonstration sites using multifunctional forest management principles.

### **iii Carbon accounting**

In response to the escalating climate crisis, new commitments by several economies to reach carbon neutrality, and the ambition of many economies to improve their carbon reporting, APFNet supported projects in Inner Mongolia, Anhui, Zhejiang and Yunnan, China, as well as in other economies, such as Indonesia, to test and demonstrate various carbon accounting approaches. In some cases the work was pioneering, such as the project *Improving Capacities towards Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Peat Swamp Forest Fires in Indonesia*, which developed a methodology for the measurement of peatland-fire emissions that is enabling Indonesia to improve its formal reporting to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

### **iv Construction of forest infrastructure**

The establishment of facilities was a key focus of APFNet's work in 2021, including greenhouses and an arboretum in Myanmar, a high-value tree species breeding centre in Cambodia, and the APFNet Pu'er Sustainable Forest Management Demonstration and Training Base in Yunnan, China. These facilities will serve the core needs of members and provide them with new opportunities. For example, the Cambodia tree-breeding centre (the designs of which were approved and the purchase of materials started in 2021) will be the first such facility in Cambodia with the capacity for tissue-culture breeding. The completion and formal opening of the APFNet Pu'er Sustainable Forest Management Demonstration and Training Base in July 2021 marks a special moment for APFNet – the organization now has training bases covering the temperate, boreal, subtropical and tropical forests.

### ***d Project monitoring***

Monitoring is a key tool for providing data on APFNet demonstrations of SFM and forest restoration, and it is also a key area for improvement identified in the Ten-year Review. APFNet increased its focus on improving monitoring in 2021. New comprehensive monitoring plans were developed and additional monitoring sites were established in a wide range of projects, including in Wangyedian, Pu'er and Aohanqi in China and in Viet Nam and Cambodia. New monitoring reports were closely reviewed. For projects that have ended, additional funds have been allocated for long-term monitoring, often as explicit budget items in later project phases. A wide range of experts were consulted in the process of improving project monitoring, and

APFNet is now confident it can support its ideas with data derived from its demonstration sites.

### **3) *Project evaluation***

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, APFNet strived to deliver evaluative knowledge while ensuring the safety of staff, evaluators and partners. In 2021, three projects received mid-term evaluations and two projects were subject to terminal evaluations. All evaluated projects – covering the areas of forest carbon, forest ecotourism development, desertification control, forest rehabilitation and sustainable management, and forestry education – received overall positive feedback from the independent evaluators. The results of the evaluations showed that SFM was effectively demonstrated and promoted through the projects, as described below.

#### ***a Mid-term evaluation***

Three projects received mid-term evaluations in 2021; the purpose of these is to check project performance and provide guidance and recommendations for the remaining project activities.

##### **i Regional Forest Observations for Sustainable Forest Management [2018P2-CAF]**

The project is examining how to monitor forest resources effectively on a large scale and supporting the development of strategies for SFM and climate-change adaptation in the GMS and Malaysia. A mid-term project evaluation conducted in January 2021, involving a desk review of project documents, stakeholder interviews, and an online project progress review meeting and discussion, found that the project was technically sound and would contribute significantly to improving forest monitoring in the GMS and Malaysia by developing methods and guidelines for forest-cover and carbon-stock mapping. For further improvement, it was recommended that the project consider harmonizing land-use classification systems in the GMS and Malaysia and encourage all implementing agencies to complete accuracy assessments of the maps produced.

##### **ii Demonstration of Sustainable Forest Management and Establishment of APFNet Pu'er Training Base [2020P1-PE]**

The aim of the project is to provide a platform for SFM capacity building, information sharing and scientific research in the GMS by building a training base covering subtropical and tropical forest ecosystem types. A mid-term project evaluation conducted in July 2021 involving a desk review of project documents, stakeholder interviews, and a field visit to the project site at Wanzhangshan Forest Farm, Pu'er City, Yunnan Province, China, found that base construction



had been completed and 580 ha of forest had been allocated for demonstrating selective cutting in degraded planted forests and secondary forests. Additionally, various models for thinning, assisted natural regeneration and enrichment planting were being applied in planted Simao pine forests. For further improvement, the evaluation recommended developing long-term management and monitoring plans for the demonstration sites, further developing supporting infrastructure, and improving base operation management capacity.

### **iii Demonstration Project of Vegetation Restoration and Management and Utilization of Forest Resources in Greater Central Asia Phase II (Chifeng sites) [2019P4-INM]**

The aim of the project is to improve the quality of sandy forest ecosystems by demonstrating models for SFM and forest restoration and rehabilitation. A mid-term project evaluation conducted in September 2021, which involved a review of project documents, stakeholder interviews, and a field visit to the project site at Sanyijing Forest Farm, Aohan Banner, Chifeng City, Inner Mongolia, China, found the following: the early stages of vegetation (forest) restoration involving (among other things) new combinations of tree species and mixed methods on sandy land were observed to be effective, with improvements in the health of degraded poplar forest at the demonstration sites and good seedling survival rates (86–90 percent), tree growth and biomass; and the involvement of farmers in project activities and benefit-sharing among the project and farmer cooperatives will ensure project sustainability. For further improvement, the evaluators recommended a stronger focus on water (including gathering data on water use) in vegetation restoration and rehabilitation in sandy areas and the further strengthening of the project summary and the dissemination of existing project outputs.

#### ***b Terminal evaluation***

Two completed projects were evaluated in 2021 with the aims of reviewing project performance and determining outcomes and potential impacts.

### **i Demonstration on Sustainable Forest Management and Restoration in Hilly and Low Mountain Areas of Southern China [ID: 2016P2-CAF]**

The aims of the project were to showcase forest restoration models in typical hilly areas in southern China; determine the best methods for increasing forest carbon storage by comparing planting methods; and improve the livelihoods of local forest communities. The terminal evaluation, which was conducted in March 2021, found that the demonstration model for sustainably managing degraded Chinese fir forest is worth promoting in the Asia-Pacific region

because it both improved stand productivity through thinning and transformed the monoculture to mixed forest by promoting natural regeneration. According to the evaluation, the demonstration of degraded-forest restoration on rocky mountainous land confirmed that stand structure improvement and advanced silvicultural techniques are suitable means for increasing productivity and carbon sequestration and increasing biodiversity. In the event that another project phase is implemented, the evaluators recommended that it adopt landscape restoration planning.

## **ii Innovative Sustainable Forest Management Education in the Asia-Pacific Region (Phase II) [ID: 2018P3-UBC]**

The aims of the project were to improve access to SFM education, enhance teaching quality, and improve curriculum and research capabilities in the Asia-Pacific region. The terminal evaluation was conducted through a document review and online interviews between August to December 2021. It found that the project's successful implementation laid a foundation for building a certificate programme on SFM for universities in the Asia-Pacific region in the near future. It recommended increasing the educational impact and extending collaboration to the entire Asia-Pacific region through further promotion; helping more universities develop online certificate programmes; and conducting a professional review or evaluation of the courses developed. Important lessons learned from the project include that student-centred pedagogical models and learning activities are key for developing and implementing innovative online courses, and that both self-directed and instructor-led online course learning can provide more flexibility in study times and thus increase the engagement of course-takers.

### ***4) Project communication, publicity and dissemination***

APFNet convened two online workshops in 2021. One was on forest carbon accounting, as described on page 2. The other, *COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts in Forestry in the Asia-Pacific Region*, which was held in November 2021, was attended by nearly 50 APFNet project partners from more than 15 economies in the Asia-Pacific region. Participants shared their experiences on implementing forestry projects during the ongoing pandemic.

A seminar, *Forest Management in China: Balancing Conservation and Utilization*, was held in July 2021 to enable Chinese project partners to exchange experiences on forest management in administrative forest types such as economic forests, ecological forests and multifunctional forests. Participants provided recommendations to the Chinese government on how to improve regulations through on-the-ground examples from APFNet projects, which often demonstrate new, alternative management styles.

Two project brochures were finalized and published in 2021, *Boosting Local Livelihoods through Participatory Watershed Management in Indonesia* and *Developing an Integrated Watershed Management Plan for Cambodia's Prek Thnot Watershed*.

### **2.3 Regional policy dialogues**

APFNet uses its networking capability to promote policy dialogue, enhance exchanges on forest policies, and strengthen synergies in forest policies and innovations among member economies and thereby contribute to achieving regional and global forest-related goals. It made the following progress in 2021:

- APFNet cooperated with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in efforts to combat desertification in Greater Central Asia. The two organizations reached a preliminary consensus in 2021 on joint efforts for addressing desertification as a core part of regional ecological security.
- To improve the outcomes of training on vegetation restoration in arid areas of Greater Central Asia, APFNet completed a new edition of the textbook, *International Training Courses on Vegetation Restoration of Arid Lands in Greater Central Asia*, in 2021.
- APFNet organized the 2021 Info-Exchange Meeting on Strategic Forestry Cooperation in Greater Central Asia to explore more tangible collaboration in Greater Central Asia. Through consultation, member economies and partners reached a consensus on the development of subregional action plans on forestry cooperation.
- Members of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Planning Network (FPN), consulting during the FPN's Fifth Meeting, agreed to develop an analytical report, *Forest Restoration Planning in the Asia-Pacific Region: Stocktaking Study on Policies, Legal Frameworks and Programmes*. This jointly developed publication, which was completed in 2021, will facilitate regional forestry policy dialogue among APFNet members by providing an in-depth review of forest restoration policies, legal frameworks, management structures and existing practices.

### **2.4 Communication and information sharing**

APFNet continued to support regional efforts to collect, update and share information and data

on experiences, lessons learned and best practices in SFM and forest rehabilitation. In addition to communication and information sharing in APFNet projects, policy dialogues and capacity-building activities, APFNet conducted the following activities in 2021:

### ***1) Summarizing experiences gained in increasing forest cover in 2007–2020***

Responding to the aspirational goal to increase forest cover in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) region by at least 20 million ha of all types of forests by 2020, as agreed by the APEC economies, APFNet launched a completion assessment for the above-mentioned forest-cover goal in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). With the support of APEC member economies and the APEC Secretariat, a synthesis of economy reports, *Achieving the APEC 2020 Forest Cover Goal*, was developed and published on the APEC and APFNet websites in 2021. The report found that the total forest area across the APEC economies increased by 27.9 million ha between 2007 and 2020, thus achieving the aspirational goal. The *APEC Ministers Joint Statement* issued on 9 November 2021 welcomed the report and its findings. The report also put forward recommendations for economies in the region to further increase their forest cover and reduce forest degradation based on the actions taken and lessons learned. The key findings of the report were shared at several international meetings.

### ***2) Sharing China's lessons for achieving forest landscape restoration at scale***

Economies in the region have been working to deliver on their restoration pledges at the economy scale through various approaches. China increased its forest area by 138 million ha between 1949 and 2020, an increase from 8.6 percent of the total land area in 1949 to 23 percent in 2020. The economy's success in reversing forest degradation and forest loss shows that large-scale restoration is possible given continuous political and financial support, multistakeholder involvement and an adaptive management approach. Organized by APFNet, an e-poster session titled *Achieving Forest Landscape Restoration at Scale – Lessons from China for Ramping Up the Global Response* was held virtually at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in September 2021 as a means for sharing experiences in forest restoration and increasing understanding of how forest restoration can also be realized at scale in other economies.

### ***3) Sharing APFNet's concepts and progress***

APFNet produced and updated various information products on its website in 2021 with the aim of increasing public access to and knowledge of APFNet activities and assisting the development of forestry in APFNet member economies. They included news items, publications and scientific papers funded by APFNet, as well as information on new forest-

related laws and strategic forestry plans issued by economies in the region. Some items were also disseminated via social media to reach a wider audience. APFNet's annual report, outlining the key activities and outputs in 2020, was produced and released in English and Chinese. Three editions of the APFNet newsletter were sent to stakeholders via email. Short articles and project stories were produced and posted on internationally celebrated days, such as the International Day of Forests and World Environment Day.

#### ***4) Developing thematic paper on climate-change resilience of Pacific islands***

In collaboration with the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, APFNet took the lead on a thematic paper for the Pacific Forest Sector Outlook Study, *Increasing the Resilience of People and Landscapes in the Pacific Island Developing States: The Role of Forests and Trees in the Context of Climate Change*. The paper analysed climate change and its impacts on people, forests and forestry in Pacific Island economies and made recommendations for enabling the forest sector to increase adaptation and resilience. The draft paper was developed in 2021.

### **3 Governance and operations**

#### **3.1 Governance and institutional work**

##### ***1) Communication with the Board and Council***

To enable the Board and Council to better fulfil their responsibilities, the APFNet Secretariat communicated regularly with the Board Directors, Council members and partners in 2021. The Board of Directors was provided with quarterly updates to keep directors informed on the progress of APFNet activities. APFNet also maintained contact with Council Representatives and Contact Persons, including to invite them to attend certain virtual webinars and workshops.

##### ***2) APFNet's presence enhanced in the Americas***

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the APFNet–UBC Americas Office (AO) successfully maintained collaboration with partners in Latin America, encouraged SFM at the regional level, and broadened its network. In 2021, AO cooperated with UBC's Faculty of Forestry in convening a global forest leadership forum, the *Dialogue with Educational Leaders* series, which is a new initiative of the AP-FECM. In response to the pandemic, this series seeks to identify common key challenges for online teaching in forest-related higher education, as well as potential areas for future collaboration. Additionally, AO conducted a literature review to promote protected-area management in Latin America.

### **3.2 Partnerships**

APFNet explored opportunities for cooperation by renewing memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and establishing working groups with partners to support member economies.

#### ***1) Renewed memorandum of understanding and exploration of collaboration with partners***

The MOU between APFNet and IUFRO was renewed in December 2021 with the aim of continuing collaboration on climate change and reversing forest degradation through capacity building and policy development. Additionally, APFNet conducted several virtual meetings with partners such as RECOFTC and UBC to explore cooperation opportunities to support member economies.

#### ***2) Opportunities identified to present APFNet activities regionally and internationally***

Promoting APFNet's profile in the Asia-Pacific region is key to broadening and strengthening its networks. APFNet identified opportunities to communicate with members and partners by attending (virtually) several international meetings and events in 2021, including the Seventh Regional Meeting of Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services; the 60th IUFRO Enlarged Board Meeting; the United Nations Forum on Forests Expert Group Meeting; and the 57th Session of the International Tropical Timber Council. In attending these events, APFNet disseminated the outcomes of and learnings from its efforts and successes towards APFNet's strategic vision, thereby broadening its networks as well as identifying other strategic opportunities for collaboration.

### **3.3 APFNet Strategic Plan 2021–2025**

APFNet's third strategic plan was finalized in 2021 and began implementation. The *APFNet Strategic Plan 2021–2025* was prepared based on extensive consultations with the Board and Council members and partners, and it incorporated comments and suggestions made by the experts who conducted the Ten-year Review. Under the new plan, APFNet will focus more on forest restoration, and it will continue to contribute to restoring forests in the Asia-Pacific region through the four pillars of 1) demonstration projects; 2) capacity building; 3) policy dialogue; and 4) information sharing. Guided by the *APFNet Strategic Plan 2021–2025*, the organization will put more effort into coordinating activities under the four pillars to create synergies and increase impacts.

### **3.4 Monitoring and evaluation**

Both internal and external monitoring and evaluation were further enhanced in 2021. A thematic external evaluation of the ASP was completed in March 2021. Data collected during the evaluation indicate that the ASP offers great opportunities for forestry practitioners in the Asia-Pacific region to obtain further education and contributes positively to the development of forestry talent in APFNet member economies.

The systematic mid-term and terminal evaluations of APFNet-funded projects provide feedback to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of project operations and help improve the planning and implementation of future activities.

### **3.5 Administration, finance, human resource management**

Guided by the Executive Director and with flexible arrangements in place, the Secretariat's operations were stable and effective in 2021.

- Rules, regulations and procedures were reviewed and trainings were organized. A staff manual (including a code of conduct) was produced, covering aspects such as attendance, welfare and confidentiality, to ensure more standardized staff management.
- In-house capacity building was provided to help staff improve their presentation and language skills and enhance their understanding of international forestry. One staff member was sent to UBC to study for a master's degree in 2021. All staff members were encouraged to conduct small research projects, join field studies and summarize APFNet's practices on SFM to share at international conferences.
- Constrained by pandemic-related international travel and visa restrictions, new international staff members were unable to join APFNet in 2021. Instead, the APFNet Secretariat actively attracted and provided offers to new Chinese staff with international experience and forestry training to contribute to APFNet project management.
- APFNet operated with a reduced budget in 2021, with some of its activities postponed due to the pandemic. However, careful adjustment of budget allocations and an improvement in financial efficiency ensured the provision of financial resources for

key activities. Partner contributions provided important support for the implementation of activities (Annex 2).

**Annexes:**

1. Implementation of the APFNet Work Plan 2021
2. Partner contributions in 2021



## Annex 1 Implementation of the APFNet Work Plan 2021

I. Capacity building			
No.	Activity/task	Status	Results/outcomes
1	Provide young forestry officials with scholarships for professional development so they can better contribute to the forest sector	Completed	26 forestry officials and practitioners from APFNet member economies were supported by the APFNet Scholarship Program at Beijing Forestry University, Nanjing Forestry University and Chulalongkorn University
2	Enhance impacts of APFNet Alumni Network	Completed	Three editions of a newsletter were published and disseminated, and the Network's online portal provided a platform for alumni to share and exchange information
3	Reschedule and organize training workshop on forest carbon	Completed	A training workshop was organized on forestry carbon sinks and carbon accounting, attended by about 100 forestry officials and technicians
II. Projects			
No.	Activity/task	Status	Results/outcomes
4	Launch three new projects	Completed	<p>Three projects in Canada and China were launched successfully:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <a href="#">Adaptation of Asia-Pacific Forestry to Climate Change – Phase III</a> [ID: 2020P4-UBC]</li> <li>2) Study on Forest Carbon Storage and Carbon Sink Potential of Wangyedian Forest Farm [ID: 2021P2-INM]</li> <li>3) Construction of Multifunctional Forest Management Demonstration Sites – Phase III [ID: 2020P2-INM]</li> </ol>

5	Complete/close five projects	Completed	<p>Five projects in Canada, China and Mongolia were completed or closed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <a href="#">Demonstration on Sustainable Forest Management and Restoration in Hilly and Low Mountain Areas of Southern China</a> [ID: 2016P2-CAF]</li> <li>2) <a href="#">Construction of a Mini Botanic Park of 8.4ha within the National Garden Park of Mongolia's Mini Botanic Garden</a> [ID: 2013P5-MYN]</li> <li>3) <a href="#">Innovative Sustainable Forest Management Education in the Asia-Pacific Region</a> (Phase II) [ID: 2018P3-UBC]</li> <li>4) <a href="#">Fire Prevention Project of Sanyijing Forest Farm in Aohanqi Banner</a> [ID:2020P3-INM]</li> <li>5) <a href="#">Fire Prevention Project of the APFNet Sustainable Forest Management Demonstration and Training Base</a> [ID:2020P5-PE]</li> </ol>
6	Successfully implement 15 ongoing projects	Completed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Development of Participatory Management of Micro Catchment at the Bengawan Solo Upper Watershed Phase II [ID: 2020P1-INA]</li> <li>2) Community Tree Planting Project in Papua New Guinea [ID: 2017P3-PNG]</li> <li>3) Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management Planning and Demonstration Project in Greater Mekong Subregion (Cambodia) [ID: 2017P2-CAM]</li> <li>4) <a href="#">Demonstration of Vegetation Restoration and Management and Utilization of Forest Resources in the Greater Central Asia (Chifeng Site)</a> Phase II and added activities [ID: 2019P4-INM]</li> <li>5) Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management Planning and Demonstration Project in Greater</li> </ol>

			<p>Mekong Subregion (Pu'er Project Site) [ID: 2016P1-GMS-PE]</p> <p>6) Sustainable Forest Management in Northern Provinces of Lao PDR [ID: 2014P1-ASEM]</p> <p>7) <a href="#">Integrated Planning and Practices for Mangrove Management Associated with Agriculture and Aquaculture in Myanmar</a> [ID: 2018P1-MYR]</p> <p>8) Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management Planning and Demonstration Project in Greater Mekong Subregion (Myanmar) [ID: 2018P4-MYR]</p> <p>9) <a href="#">Reconstruction and Sustainable Management of Degraded Forest Based on the Combination of Interplanting Nitrogen Fixation Rare Tree Species and Thinning</a> [ID: 2018P4-CAF]</p> <p>10) <a href="#">Regional Forest Observations for Sustainable Forest Management</a> [ID:2018P2-CAF]</p> <p>11) Improving Capacities Towards Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Peat Swamp Forest Fires in Indonesia [ID:2018P5-IND]</p> <p>12) Empirical Synthesis and Capacity Building on Forestry [ID:2019P1-APFNet/MSU]</p> <p>13) <a href="#">Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management Planning and Demonstration Project in Greater Mekong Subregion (Viet Nam)</a> [ID: 2019P2-VNM]</p> <p>14) <a href="#">Establishment of a High-value Tree Species Breeding Center in Cambodia</a> [ID: 2019P3-CAM]</p> <p>15) <a href="#">APFNet Sustainable Forest Management Training Center Project</a> [ID: 2020P1-PE]</p>
III. Regional policy dialogues			

No.	Activity/task	Status	Results/outcomes
7	Support high-level forestry dialogues and exchanges in Greater Central Asia to share experiences and develop common strategic priorities	Completed	Conducted the 2021 Info-Exchange Meeting on Strategic Forestry Cooperation in Greater Central Asia. Introduced the Action Plan for Greater Central Asia Forestry Cooperation Mechanism (2021–2030) and prepared for its adoption at the Third Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Forestry in Greater Central Asia
8		Postponed	Due to the pandemic, the Third Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Forestry in Greater Central Asia was postponed to the second half of 2022
9		Completed	Developed a new edition of the textbook in Russian and Chinese for the International Training Course on Vegetation Restoration of Arid Lands in Greater Central Asia
10		Ongoing	APFNet and Shanghai Cooperation Organization strengthened cooperation on forest restoration (a memorandum of understanding – MOU) is now being negotiated)
11	Support the Forestry Planning Network to strengthen strategic capabilities, improve planning processes and increase the effectiveness of strategic forestry plans	Completed	The report <i>Forest Restoration Planning in the Asia-Pacific Region: Stocking Study on Policies, Legal Frameworks and Programmes</i> was finalized
12	Support the APFNet Transboundary Wildlife Conservation Initiative (@Wild) to increase cooperation in wildlife conservation among the Greater Mekong	Postponed	1) A study tour to the Bangliang Nature Reserve in Guangxi Province of China was postponed to 2022 2) A side-event on wildlife habitat protection at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity was postponed

	Subregion economies		because COP15 was itself postponed
13	Advance forestry research by strengthening cooperation and facilitating collaborative actions among forestry research institutions through the Sino–ASEAN Network of Forestry Research Institutes	Ongoing	The mid-term project evaluations of four research projects under the APFNet Small Research Grant and the second instalment of those projects were completed. The projects have progressed to the next phase
14	Support the Pu'er Forum to increase synergies and contributions to forest-related goals and international commitments	Completed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The second consultation meeting for group discussions on preparing the Pu'er Forum among the partners was organized</li> <li>2) A working group was established for preparing the Pu'er Forum after the meeting</li> </ol>
IV. Communication and information sharing			
No.	Activity/task	Status	Results/outcomes
15	Assess the extent of achievement of the APEC 2020 Forest Cover Goal and provide recommendations to further increase forest cover and reduce forest degradation	Completed	The assessment was completed and the results shared among APEC members. A synthesis report was posted on the APEC and <a href="#">APFNet</a> websites. The key findings were shared in international webinars
16	Share experiences and insights on large-scale forest restoration in China	Completed	An e-poster session, <i>Achieving Forest Landscape Restoration at Scale – Lessons from China for Ramping Up the Global Response</i> , was held virtually at the IUCN World Conservation Congress. A video of the presentation was posted on the website to reach a wider audience

17	Share progress of APFNet activities in a timely manner	Completed	The <i>APFNet 2020 Annual Report</i> , three editions of a newsletter, four periodical reports for Board and Council members, and various news items and brochures were developed and released. Most were posted on the APFNet website and shared via social media
18	Develop a thematic paper for the Pacific Forest Sector Outlook Study	Ongoing	The thematic paper for the Pacific Forestry Sector Outlook Study, <i>Increasing the Resilience of People and Landscapes in the Pacific Island Developing States: The Role of Forests and Trees in the Context of Climate Change</i> , was drafted, in collaboration with FAO
V. Partnerships, networking, and outreach events			
No.	Activity/task	Status	Results/outcomes
19	Collaboration with FAO	Ongoing	Continued to implement the APFNet–FAO MOU
20	MOU renewal with partners	Ongoing	1) The MOU with IUFRO (2021–2025) was renewed 2) Collaboration areas were discussed with RECOFTC for the to-be-renewed MOU
21	Raise public awareness of the importance of forests and environmental education	Completed	Promotional activities were organized in Chaoyang, China, and Chifeng, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of China
VI. Governance, institutional work			
No.	Activity/task	Status	Results/outcomes
22	Maintained contact with the Board and Council	Completed	1) The Secretariat regularly communicated with Board and Council members 2) Four quarterly updates were circulated
23	APFNet’s presence in the Americas	Completed	The APFNet–UBC Americas Office conducted a brief literature review on the origins and current state of national parks in Latin America to identify challenges and knowledge gaps in the literature

24	Development of the third strategic plan	Completed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The <i>APFNet Strategic Plan 2021–2025</i> was developed and approved by the Board and released via the <a href="#">website</a></li> <li>2) A sharing session on the <i>APFNet Strategic Plan 2021–2025</i> was conducted at the Secretariat</li> <li>3) Hard copies of the strategic plan were printed and disseminated</li> </ol>
VII. Monitoring and evaluation			
No.	Activity/task	Status	Results/outcomes
25	Project evaluation	Partly completed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A mid-term evaluation of two projects was conducted to assess project performance and progress. Results were shared with project partners in a timely manner to guide remaining project implementation</li> <li>2) Completion evaluations of three projects were conducted to assess achievements and impacts</li> <li>3) According to the actual progress in the implementation of the identified projects, two project terminal evaluations were postponed to 2022</li> </ol>
26	External evaluation of the APFNet Scholarship Program (ASP)	Completed	A report of the ASP evaluation was released, including lessons learned and recommendations to improve the programme in its next stage. The evaluator made overall positive remarks on the achievements and impacts of the programme
27	Monitoring and evaluation system	Ongoing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Current guidelines on project evaluations were reviewed to identify gaps and problems</li> <li>2) Project monitoring and evaluation procedures, indicators and other operational details were clarified</li> <li>3) Criteria for the performance evaluation of consultants were explored</li> </ol>
VIII. Secretariat operations: administration, human resources, finance			

No.	Activity/task	Status	Results/outcomes
28	Policy review and amendment	Completed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Policies, rules, bylaws and procedures were reviewed, updated and implemented</li> <li>2) Training workshops were organized in the Secretariat to facilitate implementation of the updated organizational rules, bylaws and procedures</li> <li>3) The staff manual was followed</li> </ol>
29	Finance	Completed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) APFNet financial operations were regularly monitored and efficiency was enhanced</li> <li>2) An independent audit was conducted</li> </ol>
30	Development and management of human resources	Ongoing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) One staff member started a master's degree programme</li> <li>2) Regular weekly training, lectures and field visits were organized</li> <li>3) Staff participated in various forest-related events and meetings</li> <li>4) Staff were encouraged to speak at international events</li> </ol>



## Annex 2 APFNet partners' contribution in 2021

No.	Activity	Partner	Contributions in kind or cash (USD)
1	Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management Planning and Demonstration Project in Greater Mekong Subregion (Pu'er Project Site, China)	Forestry Bureau of Pu'er Wanzhangshan Forest Farm	49,800.00
2	APFNet Sustainable Forest Management Training Center Project	Forestry Bureau of Pu'er Wanzhangshan Forest Farm	1,129,242.42
3	Fire Prevention Project of APFNet Sustainable Forest Management Demonstration and Training Base (Pu'er)	Forestry Bureau of Pu'er Wanzhangshan Forest Farm	69,868.69
4	Development of Participatory Management of Micro Catchment at the Bengawan Solo Upper Watershed – Phase II	Watershed Management Technology Center	74,281.00
5	Wangyedian Multifunctional Forest Management Demonstration Sites – Phase III	Wangyedian Forest Farm	233,590.91
6	Regional Forest Observations for Sustainable Forest Management	Institute of Forest Resource Information Techniques, Chinese Academy of Forestry	33,600.00
7	Study on Variation Pattern of Growth Characteristics of Two Families of Precious Rosewood Tree Species in Seedling Stage and their Genetic Diversity (a small research project under SANFRI)	Yunnan Academy of Forestry and Grassland	11,645.37
8	APFNet Scholarship Program	Beijing Forestry University	19,333.33
9	APFNet Scholarship Program	Nanjing Forestry University	31,515.15
10	Development of Criteria for Rehabilitating Degraded Tropical Forests in the Lancang-Mekong Region	APFNet–UBC Americas Office	24,750.00
11	Demonstration Project of Forest Experience and Nature Education (Wanzhangshan, Pu'er)	Forestry Bureau of Pu'er Wanzhangshan Forest Farm	43,863.64
12	Improving Capacities Towards Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Peat	Center for Standardization of Sustainable Forest	52,440.00

	Swamp Forest Fires in Indonesia	Management Instruments, University of Melbourne	
13	Demonstration on Integrated Planning and Management of Forest Ecosystem in Greater Mekong Subregion – Myanmar site	Forest Research Institute, Myanmar	121,163.00
14	Reconstruction and Sustainable Management of Degraded Forest Based on the Combination of Interplanting Nitrogen Fixation Rare Tree Species and Thinning	Institute of Forest and Wildlife Research and Development, Cambodia	36,200.00
15	Establishment of a High-value Tree Species Breeding Center in Cambodia	Institute of Forest and Wildlife Research and Development, Cambodia; Yunnan Academy of Forestry and Grassland, China	163,973.00
16	Demonstration of Vegetation Restoration and Management and Utilization of Forest Resources in the Greater Central Asia (Chifeng site) – Phase II	Chifeng Municipal Forestry Bureau; Sanyijing State-owned Forest Farm, Aohan Banner	89,713.64
17	Added activities – Demonstration of Vegetation Restoration and Management and Utilization of Forest Resources in the Greater Central Asia (Chifeng site) – Phase II	Chifeng Municipal Forestry Bureau; Sanyijing State-owned Forest Farm, Aohan Banner	149,090.91
18	Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management Planning and Demonstration Project in Greater Mekong Subregion (Cambodia)	Institute of Forest and Wildlife Research and Development, Cambodia	66,073.50
19	Adaptation of Asia-Pacific Forestry to Climate Change – Phase III	University of British Columbia	14,650.00
20	Demonstration on Integrated Planning and Management of Forest Ecosystem in Greater Mekong Subregion – Viet Nam site	Forest Inventory and Planning Institute	42,145.16
21	Innovative Sustainable Forest Management Education in the Asia-Pacific Region – Phase II	University of British Columbia	94,100.00
22	Sustainable Forest Management in Northern Provinces of Lao PDR	Department of Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	25,609.91
	<b>Total</b>		<b>2,576,649.63</b>