



Framework for APFNet Strategic Plan 2016-2020

I. Background

A comprehensive assessment of the current Strategic Plan was conducted as a part of the development of the new Strategic Plan, based on an online survey, sample interviews and analysis of the official records and documents. The key conclusions and recommendations of the draft Report are as follows:

Conclusions and recommendations

The stakeholders of APFNet have welcomed its establishment and are generally quite satisfied with its performance. The majority of its programs and activities were fairly efficiently executed, and its expected targets accomplished. Its contribution is valuable in the effort of economies on SFM and the rehabilitation of degraded forests.

1. Capacity Building component

Among its key priority action areas, its programs on capacity building through training workshops and education opportunities were highly valued as the critical contribution to forest practitioners in the region. This is widely recognized by the stakeholders, and is certainly an emerging “niche” of APFNet. However, there is also room for improvement in the quality and quantity of the capacity building component.

2. Demonstration Project component

The demonstration projects are high-investment component of APFNet. They are generally being executed in efficient and planned manner. While it can be reasonably assumed that the targeted interventions of a project would definitely have brought some changes on the ground and in people, it is difficult to assess their full effects and impacts at this early stage of their execution. There were concerns among the stakeholders that project selection criteria were less understood and/or transparent, and the projects were not equitably distributed to all sub-regions of the Asia-Pacific. Suggestions to improve the component on projects included: increasing the projects on rehabilitation, people-focused and multi-economy/cross-border projects, and emphasis on monitoring and evaluation.

3. Supporting Policy Dialogue component

APFNet is in a unique position to facilitate regional policy dialogue related to SFM and forest rehabilitation, and related natural resources and environmental issues. It has started a few initiatives under this program but the efforts and results seem to be modest in scope. APFNet can and should do more to engage senior policy-makers for increased political commitment for SFM and rehabilitation in their economies, as well as regionally and globally, and provide a platform for constructive dialogue at cross-sectoral, cross-institutional levels, to show how forests are impacted and how forests can contribute to other sectors and to sustainable development.

4. Information Sharing component

APFNet has initiated a number of activities on the information-sharing component of its strategic plan to improve communication, maintaining vital databases on forest resources, and learning and knowledge exchanges among its member economies and other relevant stakeholders. The assessment concluded that while the work done by the Secretariat is commendable, more can and must be done in this area.

5. Governance and scope

- APFNet's governance and institutional arrangement is based on its principles of openness, participation and complementarity. As such, it has been developing partnerships with a number of international and regional organizations, organizing conferences and meetings with those partners, and is continuously seeking more collaboration with more organizations. A swifter decision on the formal governance structure, in particular, the Board and Council and their specific and mutual responsibilities and authorities, would greatly help shape APFNet's strategic focus and working modality.
- The status of APFNet as an international organization and the composition of the Secretariat need to be reinforced, addressed, and clarified as soon as possible.
- APFNet is recommended to do a better job by avoiding the temptation to do everything and stretching itself too thin. Focused shall be only on a few critical areas in its next Strategic Plan, and collaborating with other organizations to be more effective. However, it is also emphasized that APFNet should expand the geographic scope of its activities to cover all sub-regions of the Asia-Pacific area.

6. Funding arrangement

The funding arrangement and strategy needs attention. Funding sources should be diversified and expanded, as one-donor dependency is not sustainable. More economies should be encouraged to actively contribute financially and in other ways, including intellectually and by seconding staff to the Secretariat.

II. General Structure of APFNet Strategic Plan 2016-2020

(Proposed by the APFNet Secretariat)

An effort will be made to use the structure/format of the current Strategic Plan as much as possible in terms of the objectives, priorities and implementation tools and approaches to keep the continuity of current APFNet's activities. However, there could be a need for modifying the structure of the new Strategic Plan, based on the situation analysis and to establish more logical forward and backward link among the objectives, priorities, strategies and tools/approaches.

1. Background

Situation analysis: analysis of internal and external environments

- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats/Challenges of APFNet
- Analysis of emerging trends of forest and sustainable development related issues, decisions, public moods, etc. (e.g., SDGs, IAF, Climate Change, trade, FLEG, Landscape approach, zero deforestation/zero degradation, CBFM, ODA trend, technological innovations).

2. Vision, Mission and Objectives:

1) Value of APFNet:

- “Respect differences”
- “Action oriented”
- “Practice and impact”

2) Vision, Mission and Objectives:

- Emphasis on **forest restoration** and **forest related livelihood improvement**
- Proposed Objectives are:
 - a) Contribute to the expansion of forest cover
 - d) Improve forest quality by rehabilitation of degraded forests
 - c) Strengthen ecological function of forests
 - d) Increase socio-economic benefits of forests

3. Key implementation tools:

1) Capacity building:

- Systematically design the Thematic Training courses to meet regional needs
- Involve more universities' participation in the Scholarship Program and improve the quality of the Program
- Highlight activities under Forestry College Deans Meeting Mechanism in Asia-Pacific Region
- Design more activities under Dialogue on Forestry Human Resources

Development in the Asia-Pacific Region, which is an APFNet proposed regional cooperative initiative to strengthen networking among training centers and human resources staff in forestry agencies in the region

- Enhance the capacity of policy makers in Asia-Pacific region through activities under Platform for Regional Dialogue on Forestry Strategic Planning

2) Demonstration projects:

- “Call for Project Proposal” opens to all stakeholders in Asia-Pacific region every two years
- Demonstration projects focus on
 - 1) degraded forest restoration, especially best practice demonstration with multiple economies involvements;
 - 2) multi-functional forest management with emphasis on people’s livelihoods and forest-based economic development;
 - 3) monitoring forest cover and forest quality changes.
- Strengthening follow-ups after projects concluded to check and promote the impact of the projects

3) Supporting regional policy dialogues:

Play the role of resource leader on forest policy in the Asia-Pacific region by becoming a leading organization in the region on SFM, and improving visibility and impact of forests and forestry cooperation at regional mechanism such as APEC, ASEM, GMS etc.

4) Information sharing:

- Strengthen information sharing in terms of APFNet activities and most up-to-date forestry information within Asia-Pacific region
- Processing and presenting information more focus on substance, outcomes and analyses.
- Broaden audience, including donors, members, and all persons who once involved in APFNet activities.

4. Governance and scope

- 1) Instead of the interim arrangement, the governance of APFNet has four subsidiary bodies: a Board of Directors, a Council, an Executive Director and Secretariat, and a Project Appraisal Panel.
- 2) Thorough working procedures, regulations and rules in terms of financial

management, human resources and administration that in line with international practice.

- 3) Keep promoting membership and partnership development by
 - conducting tangible cooperation under current MoUs;
 - strengthening cooperation with host economy through outreach activities;
 - diversifying expertise sources
- 4) Key cooperation sub-region includes Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, the Pacific islands and South America

5. Financial arrangement

Diversification of funding sources to improve the funding situation, including:

- exploring supports from member economies
- strengthening cooperation with other regional and international organizations
- operation of APFNet Fund