

Third Meetings of the APFNet Council and Board of Directors
23 and 26 March 2017 Colombo, Sri Lanka

Progress Report on Implementation of APFNet Work Plan 2016

The report is prepared by the secretariat to outline the implementation status of APFNet Work Plan 2016, which was reviewed by Council (*Decision C.02/01*) and approved by Board of Directors (*Decision B.02/02*). The activities were further fine-tuned by in consideration of comments of the Council and Board, and to keep consistency with the newly adopted *APFNet Strategic Plan 2016-2020*.

2016 was the transitional period for APFNet to restructure and re-organize its activities to feed into the new Strategic Plan with new priorities and objectives. Intentions of enhancing linkage among four pillars and raising quality of delivery.

Most activities are completed with expected results achieved.

Highlights:

- APFNet Strategic Plan 2016-2020 released
- Policies and regulations for APFNet operations in place
- Selection and appoint of next Executive Director initiated
- Regional policy exchange was supported, such as the 1st Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Forestry in Greater Central Asia
- Construction of a Mini Botanical Garden in the National Park of Mongolia supported

Implementation of APFNet Work Plan 2016

| No. | Activities | Expected outputs/results | Status | Actual outputs/results/outcomes |
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| I | Institutional Development | | | |
| 1.1 | Second meeting of Board of Directors | Pursuant to the Board's mandate and responsibilities, to oversee and direct APFNet operations, approve APFNet strategies, programs and annual work plans | Completed | Board members met in May, in Cambodia, to review, discuss and approve matters before it, taking into account the recommendations and suggestions submitted by Council. It approved the following documents: (1) APFNet Strategic Plan 2016-2020 (2) APFNet Operations Manual (3) APFNet Salary and Subsidy Scheme (4) APFNet Accounting Policies and travel standards (5) Annual Work Plan and budget 2016 The Board also established the Project Appraisal Panel for 2016-18 to provide technical advice and recommendations on project concept notes and full proposals. |
| 1.2 | Second meeting of the Council | Pursuant to the Council's mandate and responsibilities, to make suggestions and recommendations to the Board of Directors on annual work plans and other proposals, share results and impacts of APFNet interventions, and provide policy advice | Completed | The Council met in May, in Cambodia. (1) Suggestions on the APFNet Strategic Plan 2016-2020 were forwarded to the Board of Directors. (2) Candidates for the Project Appraisal Panel 2016-18 were reviewed and proposed for adoption by Board of Directors. (3) Annual Work Plan and budget 2016 were discussed and suggestions formulated for the Board's consideration. |
| 1.3 | Communication within governance structure | Timely reporting of progress, milestones and issues related to APFNet's work between annual meetings to ensure decision-making is based on sufficient information and operations are transparent | Largely completed | (1) APFNet quarterly newsletters was distributed. (2) Reports of second meetings of Council and Board of Directors were circulated to the 2 bodies. (3) Bi-monthly brief on APFNet's progress was piloted. Major concern was expressed on the need to report results and impacts rather than just activities. Also, given that annual meetings were the main venue to discuss work in the year ahead, a better way of sharing information should be found. |

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| 1.4 | Selection of next Executive Director | To initiate the selection process, in line with the Board's decision and the approved work plan | In progress, as scheduled | <p>(1) Vacancy was posted on APFNet's website from November 2016 to February, 2017 and Council representatives were made aware of the opportunity to submit applications.</p> <p>(2) Only one application from China was received by the deadline.</p> <p>(3) Panel members were sought to shortlist candidates.</p> <p>Actions might be adjusted based on applications received. Review and selection will be done by first half of 2017 to ensure new ED is in office by September 2017.</p> |
| 1.5 | International representation on Secretariat staff | To create a diverse and multi-cultural environment and to enhance APFNet's rapport with members and partners | Completed | <p>(1) Mr. Airyai Vongxay (Lao) and Mr. Pak Sngoun Pisey (Cambodia) are on a 1-year secondment, responsible for project coordination.</p> <p>(2) Mr. Ben Forrest (Great Britain) and Ms. Alex Wu (Canada) are employed as part time staff.</p> <p>(3) Possibility of staff exchanges was explored with Australia and organizations such as EFI, among others.</p> |
| 1.6 | Capacity building in the Secretariat | To enhance professional and language skills | Completed | <p>(1) Regular training such as academic lectures and study tours was organized.</p> <p>(2) Two people were supported to complete a MS degree and a specialized non-degree program in forestry.</p> |
| 1.7 | Extension of APFNet offices | To explore the feasibility of establishing other APFNet offices, in line with Board's decision | In progress, as scheduled | Research and consultations were completed and a brief report on findings/proposed actions will be submitted to the Board for consideration at its third meeting. |
| II. | Partnerships | | | |
| 2.1 | Partnership development | To enhance cooperation under existing MoUs and develop new partners | Largely completed | <p>(1) A five-year MoU with IUFRO was signed, effective 26 October 2016, to enhance provision of scientific expertise by IUFRO to APFNet. Joint training to support researchers early in their career and to improve forestry research capacity was held in the margins of IUFRO's Regional Congress for Asia and Oceania.</p> <p>(2) Extension of the MoU with ITTO is in process but delayed due to election of new ED.</p> |

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| 2.2 | Asia-Pacific Forestry Week 2016 | Cooperation with partners | Completed | In close cooperation with FAO (RAP), APFNet contributed greatly to the event as leader of one of the 5 streams. It held 16 events where more than 100 speakers made presentations, examined issues related to green investment and to growing natural assets in the Asia-Pacific region. |
| III. | Supporting Regional Policy Dialogues | | | |
| 3.1 | Meetings of APEC ministers responsible for forestry(APEC MMRFs) | To work with APEC members to identify a host for the 4th ministerial session and seek ways to secure long-term support for this forum | In progress, as scheduled | Korea expressed its willingness to host the 4 th meeting and APEC procedures are underway for the announcement in early 2017. |
| 3.2 | Ministerial dialogues on forests in Greater Central Asia | To boost policy dialogue in the forest sector in Greater Central Asia and enhance the commitment of these economies for sustainable forest development in the region | Completed | 1st meeting of ministers responsible for forestry in Greater Central Asia was convened in May in Kazakhstan, with APFNet technical support, to enhance policy exchange and cooperation in the region. Ministers adopted the <i>Astana Statement</i> to guide future cooperation on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mitigating the impact of climate change and forest health decline • preventing cross-border forest fires • combating forest land degradation and desertification • promoting development of a regional forest monitoring system • promoting biological methods for forest protection • promoting sustainable development of forest plantations in desert areas • conserving and utilizing forest genetic resources • promoting development of methodologies for assessing the value of forest ecosystem services • promoting capacity building and training of specialists in forestry. |
| 3.3 | The Asia-Pacific Forestry Strategic Planning Network | To strengthen the development and implementation of forestry strategies and master plans in APFNet member economies | Completed | In consultation with forestry planners in the region, the concept note on the Asia-Pacific Forestry Planning Network (FPN) was developed and approved in principle at the <i>Asia-Pacific Forestry Planning Workshop</i> in January 2017 in Bangkok, Thailand. |

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| 3.4 | Dialogue on Green Investment and Growing Natural Assets | To enhance awareness and strengthen information exchange on investment in forestry | Not planned | During the Asia Pacific Forestry Week 2016, APFNet organized a workshop on mobilizing investments in Asia-Pacific forests. Among items discussed were investment challenges, cross-sectoral issues, stakeholder participation in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring, benefit sharing, forest land tenure, transparency and reliable data on investment opportunities, and the building of trust. |
| IV. | APFNet Projects and programs | | | |
| 4.1 | Planning and design of APFNet funded projects | To establish a Project Appraisal Panel 2016-2018 | Completed | (1) The seven-member panel is responsible for the technical review and recommendation of project concept notes and full proposals. They also advise on the development of proposals. (2) A feasibility study was conducted to develop project proposals. |
| | | To approve projects for APFNet funding | Completed | The call for concept notes opened in February and closed in April. A total of 31 submissions were received (22 regular cycle projects and 9 small projects), 8 of which were developed into full proposals for further review. |
| 4.2 | Project management, monitoring and evaluation(APFNet funded projects) | To guide the development of work plans that are consistent with the approved submissions and are implementable | Completed | APFNet guided the executing agencies of 12 projects to develop work plans consistent with the approved submissions. |
| | | To evaluate 4 projects and to enhance project monitoring and evaluation | In progress, as scheduled | Independent evaluators successfully evaluated 4 projects. The project evaluation system is being improved by streamlining the monitoring and evaluation procedures for completed projects. |
| 4.3 | Cooperation with China: Construction of a mini botanical garden in the National Park of Mongolia | To improve the local landscape and raise public awareness for ecosystem conservation in Mongolia and to enhance the capacity of local forestry technical staff | Completed | Background: In the context of the Chinese Initiative One Belt One Road, a number of APFNet members would be eligible for support. Cooperation has been enhanced between APFNet and Chinese ministries/agencies to develop projects that aim to direct more resources to APFNet members through projects. The park in Ulaanbaatar was designed with technical support from China and was opened to the public on 27 November 2016. |

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| | Forest ecosystem management in GMS region | To demonstrate policies and tools to manage forest ecosystems at a regional scale, to protect the environment and biodiversity, to increase agricultural production and to support social development in the Lancang-Mekong Watershed | In progress, as scheduled | <p>Commissioned by China:</p> <p>(1) APFNet conducted a comprehensive study to analyze the current status and challenges related to the integrated management of the forest ecosystem in Lancang-Mekong Watershed. Successful stories and best practices were assembled.</p> <p>(2) A US\$5 million project entitled “Demonstration of Integrated Planning and Management of Forest Ecosystems in the Greater Mekong Sub-region” was developed.</p> <p>(3) Of the six participating economies, the planning of activities for the site in Yunnan Province (China) was completed.</p> |
| | Feasibility study to demonstrate vegetation rehabilitation and forest management and utilization in Greater Central Asia | To follow up on the Astana Statement, adopted at 1st meeting of ministers responsible for forests in GCA | In progress, as scheduled | This study intends to provide the basis for developing a regional project to rehabilitate vegetation and manage/utilize forests in Greater Central Asia. The aim is to promote integrated forest ecosystem management as a means to enhance the ecological, economic, social and cultural functions of the forest ecosystem in this region. |
| V. | Capacity Building | | | |
| 5.1 | Scholarship Program | <p>(1) To improve the coordination and support to host universities to diversify teaching approaches</p> <p>(2) To extend assessment of the program to include its impact on the graduate’s career development</p> | Largely completed | <p>(1) 17 candidates enrolled in a Master’s degree program (7 at BFU and 10 at NFU) and 14 students graduated.</p> <p>(2) In addition to curriculum courses and lectures, field studies were organized to practice forest management and to learn about China’s forestry, including tenure reform.</p> <p>(3) APFNet and IUFRO co-organized a workshop on forestry research for the graduates.</p> <p>Assessment of the program’s impact was not conducted.</p> |

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| 5.2 | Training programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) To conduct training in the region (2) To organize a study tour for GCA officials (3) To assess training needs in GCA | Largely completed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Training on forest rehabilitation and management was conducted in July in Kunming, China. (2) Training on forestry and rural livelihood development took place in November in Sri Lanka. (3) Training and a study tour on the techniques to recover dryland vegetation were conducted in September in Inner Mongolia. <p>Assessment of training needs in GCA was delayed due to insufficient data.</p> |
| 5.3 | The Asia-Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism (APFECM) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) To prepare an annual report on current trends and emerging challenges in forestry education (2) To certify previously developed online courses (3) To facilitate mutual recognition of courses in regional institutions (4) To develop new project proposals (5) To establish a regional database of forestry experts (6) To organize youth programs (7) To expand and promote institutional capacity, including by recruiting new members and raising funds | Largely completed, as scheduled | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The Forestry Education Survey was developed to determine the status and development of forestry education in the region. The annual report is expected to be ready by mid-2017. (2) Students and faculty from the University of British Columbia, Bogor Agricultural University, National University of Singapore, Nanjing Forestry University and Northwest A&F University studied various academic courses and partnering universities now recognize credits from these programs. (3) The AP-FECM is holding a session during IUFRO's 125th Anniversary Congress in 2017 and 12 guest speakers have been invited to submit abstracts. (4) More than 20 experts have been identified and joined the pool. |
| 5.4 | Trainer in Forestry (TIF)Network (Development of human resources) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) To obtain feedback and direction from the APFNet Council (2) To conduct a needs assessment (3) To organize consultations (4) To develop networks and work with experts and partners | Largely completed, as scheduled | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Consulted Council at its meeting and at other international gatherings. (2) A needs assessment was not completed. (3) A consultation workshop was held in December. (4) A tentative roster of partners was established. |
| 5.5 | Early Career Academics Program (ECAP) | Not in the 2016 work plan | N/A | Meeting held on the concept of the program in October to obtain feedback on the desirability of further developing it. |

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| VI. Information sharing and communication | | | | |
| 6.1 | APFNet Communication Guide released | To strengthen the communications component in new project proposals and work with executing agencies to integrate this aspect into current projects. | Completed | |
| 6.3 | APFNet Publications | To share APFNet findings and recommendations | Completed | (1) Degraded Forest Rehabilitation and Sustainable Forest Management in the Asia-Pacific Region (2) Assessment of Progress towards the APEC 2020 Forest Cover Goal |
| 6.4 | APFNet Networking | To facilitate communication between APFNet and its partners in Beijing | Completed | (1) Embassies of Nepal, Sri Lanka and Cambodia were invited to visit APFNet project site and training base in Inner Mongolia in September. (2) APFNet invited about 60 guests from embassies, Beijing offices of international organizations, related Ministries, departments, institutions and universities in China for a New Year's reception. |
| VII. APFNet Fund | | | | |
| 7.1 | Fund raising | To raise fund from donor companies and organizations | Completed | USD15, 912 was donated by People's Insurance Company of China (PICC) Foundation and Granny's Hotpot Restaurant. |
| 7.2 | New Project development | To develop forestry projects based on donor's intension | Completed | With PICC Foundation's donation, an afforestation project was developed and under implementation, to establish 14 ha planted forest of mixed species in Inner Mongolia, as a carbon sink of 403t CO ₂ per year and a protecting shield for farmlands. |

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| 7.3 | Project implementation | To assure of project outcomes achieved as desired by donors | Completed | <p>Supporting Small-sized Community-based forestry enterprises Project in GMS economies is aimed at contributing to livelihood by providing harvesting and processing machines to small-sized community-based forestry enterprises, and get local people trained, to better utilize forest resources to produce timber and NTFP products.</p> <p>By 2016, Lao and Thailand have received machines and training on operation, and the other economies will be included in the project.</p> |
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