



# Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation

APFNet/Council/ENG/2015/07

## Framework for APFNet Strategic Plan 2016-2020

### I. Background

A comprehensive assessment of the current Strategic Plan was conducted as part of efforts to develop the new Strategic Plan. The approach included an online survey, sample interviews and an analysis of official records and documents.

### Conclusions and recommendations

The stakeholders of APFNet welcomed its establishment and are generally satisfied with its performance. Most programs and activities were efficiently executed and targets met. The support it provides to economies to help achieve sustainable forest management (SFM) and to rehabilitate degraded forests is viewed as valuable.

#### 1. Capacity Building component

Among its key priority areas, capacity building through training workshops and education is considered a critical contribution to forest practitioners in the region. Stakeholders widely recognize the value of these endeavors and see it as an emerging “niche” for APFNet. However, they also felt that the quality and quantity of the capacity building component could be improved.

#### 2. Demonstration Project component

Demonstration projects are a high-investment component of APFNet’s activities. They are generally executed in an efficient and planned manner. While it can be reasonably assumed that interventions brought positive changes on the ground and to people’s lives, it is too early to assess their full effects and impacts. Stakeholders expressed concern that selection criteria were not always well understood and/or transparent and that projects were not equitably distributed across the region. Suggestions to improve this component include increasing the number of projects related to forest rehabilitation, those which are people-oriented and those which are trans-border in nature. Project monitoring and evaluation could also be strengthened.

#### 3. Policy Dialogue component

APFNet is in a unique position to facilitate regional policy dialogue on SFM, forest rehabilitation and related natural resources and environmental issues. A few initiatives have been undertaken in this area but efforts and results are modest to date. Stakeholders suggest that APFNet can and should engage senior policy-

makers to a greater extent as a means to increase political commitment for SFM and forest rehabilitation nationally, regionally and globally. In addition, it should provide a platform for constructive dialogue at cross-sectoral and cross-institutional levels on the impacts of actions/decisions on forests, on how forests can help to achieve the goals of other sectors, and on how they contribute more broadly to sustainable development.

#### **4. Information Sharing component**

APFNet initiated a number of activities related to information-sharing to improve communication. In this regard, it maintains vital databases on forest resources and facilitates learning and knowledge exchanges among member economies and other stakeholders. The assessment concluded that, while the work of the Secretariat is commendable, more can and must be done in this area.

#### **5. Governance and scope**

- a) APFNet's governance and institutional arrangement is based on the principles of openness, participation and complementarity. As such, it is developing partnerships with international and regional organizations, organizing conferences and meetings with those partners, and is continuously seeking collaboration with more organizations. A swift decision on the formal governance structure, in particular the Board, the Council and their responsibilities and authorities would help to shape APFNet's future strategic focus and operations.
- b) The status of APFNet as an international organization and the Secretariat need to be reinforced, addressed and clarified as soon as possible.
- c) Stakeholders recommend that APFNet avoid the temptation to stretch itself too thinly by trying to do everything. Instead, it should focus on a few critical areas in its next Strategic Plan and increase collaboration with other organizations to be more effective. By doing so, it could and should expand its activities to all sub-regions of the Asia-Pacific.

#### **6. Funding arrangement**

The funding arrangement and strategy should be diversified and expanded because dependency on one donor is not sustainable. More economies should be encouraged to contribute financially and in other ways, including intellectually and seconding staff to the Secretariat.

## II. Structure of APFNet's Strategic Plan 2016-2020

### (Proposed by the APFNet Secretariat)

To ensure the continuity of APFNet's activities, the structure/format of the current Strategic Plan will be used as much as possible in terms of objectives, priorities, implementation tools and approaches. However, some modification may be required to reflect new developments and to establish stronger links among the objectives, priorities, strategies, tools and approaches.

#### 1. Background

The first part of the new Strategic Plan should provide a situation analysis of internal and external environments in order to set the stage for APFNet's focus and activities over the next five years. This section should include a description of

- 1) APFNet's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats/challenges; and
- 2) emerging initiatives, issues and trends related to forests and broader sustainable development efforts (e.g., Sustainable Development Goals, the international arrangement on forests (IAF), climate change, trade, forest law enforcement and governance (FLEG), forest restoration/management at the landscape level, target of zero deforestation and zero degradation, community-based forest management, overseas development assistance and technological innovations).

#### 2. Vision, Mission and Objectives

##### 1) Value of APFNet

- a) Respect differences
- b) Action oriented
- c) Practice and impact

##### 2) Vision, Mission and Objectives

APFNet's mission is to support **forest restoration** and to improve **forest-based livelihoods**. In this regard, its objectives are to:

- a) Contribute to the expansion of forest cover in the region
- d) Support the restoration of degraded forests to enhance forest quality
- c) Strengthen the ecological functions of forests
- d) Increase socio-economic benefits of forests

#### 3. Implementation tools

##### 1) Capacity building

- a) Develop training courses in designated thematic areas to meet regional needs
- b) Increase the participation of universities in the Scholarship Program and improve its quality
- c) Support activities under the Forestry College Deans Meeting Mechanism in the Asia-Pacific region
- d) Further develop APFNet's proposed regional cooperative initiative, entitled Dialogue on Forestry Human Resources Development in the Asia-Pacific Region, to strengthen networking among training centers and human resources staff in forestry agencies
- e) Enhance the capacity of policy makers in the Asia-Pacific region through the Platform for Regional Dialogue on Forestry Strategic Planning

## **2) Demonstration projects**

APFNet will issue a call for project proposals every two years, open to all stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region. These projects should focus on demonstrating:

- a) best practices to restore degraded forests, with the involvement of multiple economies;
- b) multi-functional forest management, with emphasis on livelihoods and forest-based economic development;
- c) practical methodologies to monitor changes in forest cover and forest quality

In addition, APFNet will strengthen efforts to assess the impacts of projects which have concluded and to promote outcomes which have the potential to bring positive change on a wider scale.

## **3) Regional policy dialogue**

APFNet will strive to become a leading organization on SFM in the region by promoting a dialogue on forest policy and by promoting the importance of forests and of forestry cooperation in regional mechanisms such as APEC, ASEM and GMS.

## **4) Information sharing**

APFNet will strengthen information sharing on forests/forestry in the region by:

- a) supporting efforts to collect the latest available data
- b) processing and presenting information which focuses on substance, outcomes and analyses
- c) broadening its audience, including donors, current members and those who were previously involved in APFNet activities.

## **4. Governance and scope**

- APFNet's new governance structure is comprised of four subsidiary bodies: a Board of Directors, a Council, an Executive Director and Secretariat, and a Project Appraisal Panel.
- It also has detailed working modalities, regulations and rules on financial management, human resources development and administration that are in line with international practices.
- In addition, APFNet will continue to increase its membership and to develop its partnership base by strengthening cooperation under current MoUs and with host economy through outreach activities. It will also widen and diversify its sources of expertise.
- Areas which it will target include Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, the Pacific Islands and South America.

## **5. Financial arrangements**

As a means to improve its financial situation, APFNet will explore opportunities to

- secure funding from member economies;
- increase cooperation with other regional and international organizations;
- explore funding from the private sector through the APFNet fund.