APFNet STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020

(3nd DRAFT)

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CONTENT

BACKGROUND

Formally launched in 2008 under APEC mechanism, the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet) has entered its eighth year of development. At the end of 2010, APFNet issued its first five-year strategic plan –APFNet Strategic Plan 2011-2015. Guided by the Strategic Plan, APFNet has been helping its member economies in promoting and improving sustainable forest management and rehabilitation through a number of initiatives on capacity building, information sharing, supporting policy dialogues and demonstration projects. As revealed by a recent comprehensive assessment of the accomplishments and lessons learned in the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2011-2015, APFNet has proved itself to be a value-added forest-related organization in Asia-Pacific region. It has great potential in promoting better policy dialogues among the higher level decision-makers as well as bringing changes on the ground and to people's livelihoods. Its contribution is valuable in the effort of economies on sustainable forest management and rehabilitation of degraded forests.

In recent years, forests' role in climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, combating desertification, water resources conservation, energy development, health and food security are being better understood and discussed at the highest levels within the economies and at regional and global levels. Accordingly, a trend is on the rise to look at forests as a major component of landscape and to promote landscape approach for natural resource management. Forest issues are also being recognized more and more as cross-sectoral issues linked with social, economic, environmental and cultural issues. In the context of the new post-2015 global development agenda, titled, "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" a new set of comprehensive Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015. Furthermore, the Paris Agreement on climate change, agreed at the 21st Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP21) in December 2015, recognized the important role of forests in achieving its goal of limiting the rise of the global average temperature to well below 2 ℃ above pre-industrial levels, and encouraged all parties to take action to implement REDD+. Annex 1 highlights some of the forest-related objectives, goals and targets from different international processes, which provide new reference points for collaborative actions on forests.   Under the new global frameworks, APFNet can and should contribute intensively to the sustainable development of human society through promoting sustainable forest management and

rehabilitation in all economies of the Asia-Pacific region. It would pursue enhancing socio-economic benefits of forests for society, particularly for rural communities by forging collaborations and partnerships in the region.

VISION

APFNet aims to support economies of the Asia-Pacific region in expanding their forest cover and improving forest ecosystem quality to promote the multiple functions of forests and help mitigate and adapt to climate change and meet the changing socio-economic and environmental needs of the region.

MISSION

APFNet is committed to help the economies and people of the Asia-Pacific region in promoting and improving sustainable forest management and rehabilitation.

PRINCIPLES

➢ Openness and Participation

APFNet is a collective endeavor and responsive to the needs of its members and the general public of the region. APFNet will pursue its principles of openness and participation, and encourage the forest-related or relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, international and regional organizations, academic and research institutions and other interested entities to join APFNet's activities.

➢ Complementarity

APFNet will continue to build partnerships and collaborative arrangements to pool resources and knowledge from organizations across the region to better support its member economies to address the challenges of rehabilitation and other aspects of SFM. Such collaborations and partnerships will enhance the effectiveness of the efforts, avoid duplications and overlaps, and streamline the mutual learning among the partners with similar missions.

➢ Beneficiary Focused

APFNet is an organization made up of its members and is meant to help the members. Its actions will always be guided by the need and wish of the members.

VALUES

APFNet believes in and internalizes the following core values:

- ➢ Respect for differences

- ➢ Action-oriented

- ➢ Creative and innovative thinking

APFNet respects diversity of views and differences in opinions, beliefs, pathways and approaches to adopt and adapt to promote SFM. APFNet works on the premise that there cannot be "one-size-fits-all".

APFNet will continue to be guided by the needs to bring changes on the ground so its decisions will be action-oriented.

APFNet will remain innovative, inquisitive and exploratory. It encourages thinking outside the box and trying new ideas and approaches for addressing forest-related issues.

OBJECTIVES

a) Contribute to the achievement of the APEC aspirational goal of increasing forest cover by at least 20 million hectares of all types of forests by 2020;

b) Help to enhance forest carbon stocks and improve forest quality and productivity by promoting rehabilitation of existing but degraded forests and reforestation and afforestation of suitable cleared lands in the region;

c) Help to reduce forest loss and degradation and their associated emissions of greenhouse gases by strengthening sustainable forest management and enhancing biodiversity conservation; and

d) Help to increase the socio-economic benefits of forests in the region.

KEY PRIORITIES 2016-2020

To contribute to the achievement of the global goals and targets related to forests, in particular, the forest-related Sustainable Development Goals, Global Objectives on Forests (i.e., SDG6 and SDG15), Aichi targets and the APEC 2020 Forest Cover Goal, APFNet will focus on the following priorities corresponding to its objectives.

Priority 1:   Rehabilitating degraded forests and increasing forest cover

Priority 2:   Improving forest quality through promoting sustainable management of all types of forests

Priority 3:   Strengthening ecological functions of forests and forest ecosystem security

Priority 4:   Enhancing forests' contribution to socio-economic development and improvement of local livelihoods.

Priority 1: Rehabilitating Degraded Forests and Increasing Forest Cover

Loss of forests and degradation of existing forest cover are the most critical challenges faced by many economies in Asia-Pacific region. The drivers of deforestation and forest degradation are complex, however policy failure and limited capacity of forestry agencies in terms of their technical, human and financial resources often exacerbate the crisis of deforestation and forest degradation. APFNet will adopt multiple strategies to help economies of the region in preventive as well as recovery aspects of deforestation and forest degradation. This would include, among others, analysis of drivers of forest challenges both within and outside of the forest sector; providing a common platform for exchange of knowledge and information on policies, management techniques and latest technologies that work in different member economies; and activities to support economies in building capacities to access the emerging forest-related financial resources.

Priority 2: Improving Forest Quality through Promoting Sustainable Management of All Types of Forests

Other than expansion of forest area, the future of forests also depends on improvement of forest quality. Applying sustainable forest management will undoubtedly contribute to forest quality improvement. This in turn would strengthen ecological functions of forests such as the protection of land and water resources, conservation of biodiversity, enhancement of carbon stocks to mitigate and adapt to climate change.   APFNet will not only support activities that transfer SFM knowledge and techniques, but also support the ones that build public support and political commitment for SFM and provide an effective platform for regional policy deliberations and exchange of experiences among both the high-level policy-makers as well as among the practitioners of forest management from across the region.

Priority 3: Strengthening Ecological Functions of Forests and Forest Ecosystem security

In Asia-Pacific region, forest plays a vital role not only in the protection of land and water resources and conservation of biodiversity, but also in bringing the region substantial opportunities to increase carbon stocks and contribute to mitigate and adapt to climate change. It secures human well-being in terms of sustaining the stabilization of environment and the adequacy of resources that support and required by human society development. APFNet will work with economies in the region to give recognition to integrated watershed management to address land and water resources issue, promote biodiversity conservation and mitigation and adaptation to climate change, as well as spread the understanding of forest eco-security to strengthen the role of forest in contributing to human well-being and human society development.

Priority 4: Enhancing Forests' Contribution to Socio-economic Development and Improvement of Local Livelihood

As a renewable natural resource, forests have immense potential to contribute to improving the livelihoods of society in large and forest-dependent communities, in particular, through forest products (both timber and non-timber forest products) and service-based economic activities. Many economies have successfully utilized their forest resources for economic development, and the contribution of the forest sector to GDPs has been noteworthy. However, if economic growth is based on depleting this natural asset, then neither forests nor growth will remain sustainable. Thus, the emphasis must be put on sustainable development with a balanced approach to the economic, social and environmental dimensions. APFNet will assist economies in the region in improving sustainable supply of forest products and services, including promoting payments for environmental services and ecotourism, development of community-based forest enterprises and marketing as well as the corporate social responsibility. APFNet will also support economies in developing appropriate policies in this regard.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUSES

APFNet will aim for a balanced cooperation approach to attend to the needs of economies in different geographical and ecological regions/subregions. For this purpose, it will focus its interventions in the following seven sub-regions:

- The Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS);

- Southeast Asia (except GMS);

- South Asia;

- Great Central Asia;

- Pacific Islands;

- North America; and

- Latin America.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS AND APPROACHES

APFNet will continue with its current four implementation tools with modified approaches and emphasis, namely, (i) Capacity building, (ii) Demonstration projects, (iii) Regional policy dialogues, and (iv) Communication and information-sharing.

Capacity Building

The focus of capacity development will be on building both technical and managerial competencies of the forestry professionals and practitioners to be able to effectively address the challenges of SFM and make forests contribute to sustainable development in the region. Capacity development will also emphasize the education of young foresters and students majored in forestry and other related fields to make forest and forestry benefit future generations and human well-being. Accordingly, the activities under the Capacity building tool would consist of the following components:

Thematic Training Workshops

APFNet will conduct a needs assessment in member economies for their training needs and expected levels of substantive content of such training workshops. Based on the needs assessment, the topics and schedule of training workshops will be prepared and the training workshops shall be designed based on the priorities identified in the needs assessment, which balances between technical and policy and management issues, as well as considers regional and specific sub-regional priority issues. APFNet Kunming Training Center (KTC) will be responsible for organizing workshops. In KTC, APFNet will develop a state-of-the-art infrastructure of its own, with technology-enhanced classrooms and other facilities to support innovative teaching and practical learning. Collaboration will be sought with other organizations or academic institutions with relevant expertise in organizing training workshop programs, in particular, those being organized outside of Kunming.

Cooperation and Coordination on Forestry Education

Under this program, the current "Asia-Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism (AP-FECM)" will be continued and enhanced. An effective and vibrant network among the forestry education institutions will be developed by expanding the membership of more Deans from across the region. The AP-FECM will also consider ways to enhance the quality and attractiveness of forestry and related formal education programs which are dynamic and robust to meet the rapidly changing situations and employ ability of new graduates. In this regard, AP-FECM will consider building a compendium of degree and non-degree programs on forestry and related disciplines across its member institutions.

Scholarship Program

Scholarships for a Master's degree in forestry and related fields will be expanded to more universities in and outside of China, the host economy of APFNet, to suit the increasing interests and needs of the aspiring scholarship recipients in the region. The scholarship program for Ph.D. in forestry will be piloted to create more opportunities for the young researchers to further develop their professional knowledge and skills while expanding the knowledge base of scientific forestry. APFNet will also make provisions for a few selected short-term non-degree training programs in academic institutions for highly specialized technologies and knowledge such as Remote Sensing, GIS, carbon accounting, green investment techniques, intergovernmental negotiations and public relations.

Projects

Projects are the most resource-intensive endeavors. When correct selection is done, designed well and implemented well, the payoff could also be huge in terms of bringing desired impacts to the project area and beyond. Projects can act both as a pilot to test new concepts and techniques, as well as a demonstration site, once their results are established or known. APFNet will give serious consideration to its selection criteria and procedure for project proposals.

Focusing on rehabilitation of degraded forests, APFNet will develop project ideas through careful consultations with member economies in the context of the priorities and objectives of the APFNet Strategies as well as conformity with economies' needs. To mobilize economies in the region to build close collaborations for addressing trans-boundary forestry issues, APFNet will give higher preference to projects with multiple economies involvement. A preference will also be given to project concepts on rehabilitation of degraded forests and the ones which are targeted in improving peoples'

livelihoods through SFM. To avoid duplications and overlapping, APFNet will restrain itself from funding projects that are similar to the ones already funded by other donors in the same economies or sub-regions.

APFNet will keep the following three categories of projects:

- Demonstration projects which showcase best practices in forest rehabilitation and management in a cost-effective manner;
- Research or policy development projects which focus on theoretical or technological research in forest sector or assessment and improvement of existing forestry policies and development of new forest strategies and strategic plans; and
- Capacity building projects that concentrate on institutional capacity enhancement including institutional planning and decision-making and enforcement.

Supporting Regional Policy Dialogues

Sustainable forest management and effective rehabilitation of degraded forests to a healthy state require not just technical capability, but also sound policies and strong and continued political commitment. In today's globalized and interconnected world, political commitment and policy coherence regarding forests are needed at the economy-level to regional and global levels.

APFNet, as a common platform in Asia and the Pacific region, provides a unique opportunity for regular policy dialogues, face-to-face meetings and exchange of information and experiences on SFM issues. It also has excellent potential to facilitate developing common understanding on forest- and sustainable development-related issues and thereby influences other global forest-related processes, including the UNFF, Rio Conventions, CITES, FAO, etc. As the international community has recently embarked on a new era of the development through Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and the Paris Agreement on climate change, APFNet will act as a strong link between the global policy agenda and economy-level policy development and actions. APFNet will aim to define its role and develop a niche in the post-2015 global development agenda, pertaining to forest issues.

Some of the key activities on policy development and strengthening political commitment to SFM during the 2016-2020 include:

- Analytical/comparative studies on policies in the region and beyond on issues related to SFM, including those on climate change, biodiversity, trade, combating deforestation and rehabilitation

- Improving visibility and impact of forests and forestry cooperation at international events and processes as well as regional mechanism such as World Forest Congress, UNFF, APEC, GMS, ASEM and Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) etc.

- Organizing forestry ministerial-level meetings for member economies to build rapport and policy coherence, political commitments and development cooperation among the economies

- Strengthening the APFNet mechanisms established to gather the high-level forestry officials on a regular basis to discuss existing and emerging forest-related issues as forest education, strategic planning, human resources development, etc. and then find the common strategy and policy to address the issues.

- Provide opportunities for dialogue between forest sector and other different sectors such as legislative body, finance sector and so forth.

Communication and Information Sharing

Timely, accurate and sufficient information is the key to sound decision-making. Learning from its past experiences in collecting, collating, updating and sharing data and information, APFNet will further improve its information gathering, synthesizing, and information-sharing activities to help members in their decision-making process, including releasing regular newsletters and publish communication materials to disseminate notable project outcomes and scoping for opportunities to conduct joint publication projects with external publishing houses and other international organizations.

Public support is critical for generating political commitment for forests in any jurisdiction. APFNet will develop appropriate communication tools and materials targeted to different groups in society, ranging from high-level political bodies to the general public, private sector and civil society to keep its stakeholders informed, motivated and supportive to what APFNet stands for and programs/projects undertaken at different levels. APFNet will also organize various outreach and visibility activities to promote the organization and major projects, by disseminating project materials and setting up exhibitions in international conferences.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT OF APFNet

An institutional arrangement, including human and financial resources, and an operational mechanism (e.g. rules of procedure, guidelines), is the backbone of any

organization. APFNet will take accelerated actions to enhance the status of the organization and its Secretariat as an effective and efficient international organization by institutionalizing the governance structure, formalizing membership policies and related rules and regulations, formulating a detailed plan to diversify and expand its funding base, and establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system.

Governance

APFNet's governance structure, from initial Interim Steering Committee and the working mechanism for APFNet Focal Points to the newly-established formal Board of Directors and the Council have reinforced the international composition and characteristics. The diagram below illustrates the relationship among subsidiary bodies. Detailed scope and functions of each subsidiary body are laid down in the APFNet Operational Framework.
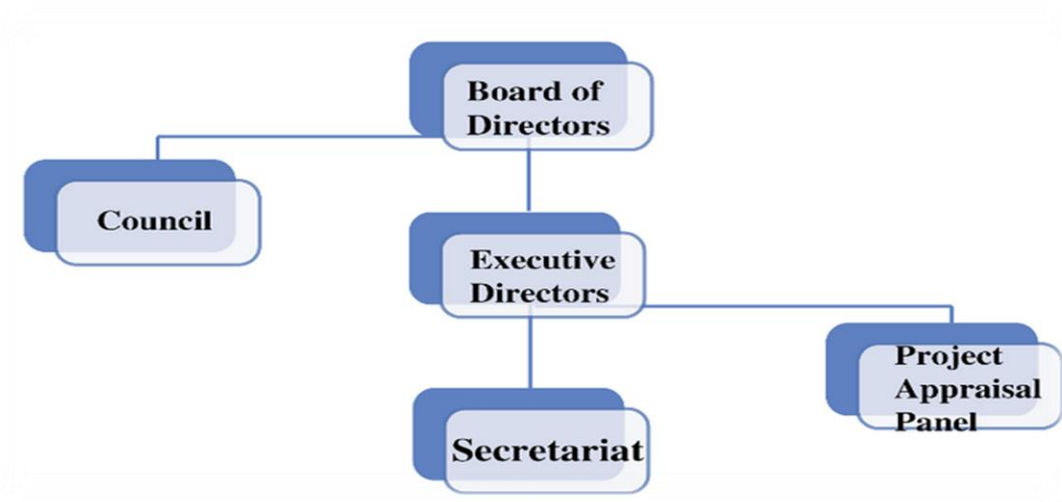
The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors provides general oversight of APFNet operations and makes decisions on major issues of APFNet. The responsibilities of the Board of Directors include:

a) Defining and revising APFNet strategies, objectives and priorities;

b) Adopting APFNet administrative and financial regulations;

c) Appointing the Executive Director, determining his/her term, assessing performance and terminating employment, if warranted; and

d) Deciding on the organizational framework and the establishment of subsidiary bodies, including branches and offices in the region.

The Council

The Council is an advisory body of APFNet and also a forum of exchange among APFNet members with respect to APFNet's programs and development. The Council is composed of representatives from each member and meets once a year to provide advice for APFNet on strategic direction, policies and annual work plan.

The Project Appraisal Panel

The Panel, acting as the independent technical appraisal body of APFNet, is to review and make recommendations on the technical feasibility and suitability of APFNet projects for funding; and to provide technical comments for project proponents to improve the formulation of project proposals. Regular meetings of the Panel are convened to assess project concept notes and full project proposals.

The Executive Director and Secretariat

The Executive Director of APFNet is responsible for the overall management of APFNet, including the proper pursuit of objectives, implementation of programs and completion of activities. The Executive Director is the legal representative of APFNet and has the sole authority to sign all deeds, contracts, and agreements and other legal documents which are necessary to ensure the normal operation of APFNet.

The Secretariat, headed by the Executive Director, should consist of the minimum number of staff necessary to provide technical and administrative support within available budgetary resources, and is responsible for the administration and operation of the strategy advised by the Council and agreed by the Board.

To enhance the credibility and multilateralism vision of APFNet, thorough working procedures, regulations and rules in terms of human resources and administration will be laid down in line with international practice.

It is underscored that capacity building of the Secretariat staff is equally important to enable it to discharge its responsibilities in a highly effective and efficient manner. Thus, a mechanism for the Secretariat staff on continued improvement of competencies and career development will also be set out in a practical manner.

Membership and Partnership Development

APFNet currently has 26 economies and 5 international organizations as its members (Annex 2). APFNet welcome and encourage more requests for membership from other economies in the region.

Since APFNet aims to build and strengthen networks and provide a common platform for all members and other relevant stakeholders in Asia-Pacific region to share knowledge and exchange experiences, partnership is an indispensable tool and bridge to APFNet. APFNet will continue to expand and diversify its collaboration with various partnersto achieve its objectives. Conducting tangible cooperation under current MoUs will be taken as priorities.

Financial Arrangement

APFNet has been receiving substantial financial support from the host economy, China, and it is expected to continue during the period of 2016-2020. APFNet has also established a dedicated APFNet Fund to receive contributions from all sources, including the private sector. Due to growing recognition of the value of APFNet, more economies are expected to seek membership, and demand for support from APFNet will continue to grow. To broaden the funding base for sustainability of financial resources in the long run, APFNet will diversify its funding sources through operation of APFNet Fund for supports from private sector, its member economies, as well as by strengthening collaboration with other regional and international organizations to make effective use of financial resources.

Monitoring and Evaluation System

Based on the needs of APFNet to receive correct feedback to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its activities, an efficient and regular monitoring and evaluation system will be developed and operated. With the M&E system developed, efficient implementation of projects and other activities, timely feedback and corrective actions taken could be expected.

The M&E system will be developed with procedures, indicators and other operational details laid down in a separate document. Implementation guidelines and other necessary documents will be prepared as well for institutionalizing the M&E system.

ANNEX 1 Forest-related Objectives, Goals, Targets and Commitments

Global Objectives on Forests (UNFF, 2007)	Aichi Targets and Bonn Challenge (CBD, 2010)	New York Declaration on Forests (2014)	Sustainable Development Goals and Targets (2015)[1]
1 Reverse the loss of forest cover through SFM and increasing efforts to prevent forest degradation 2 Enhance forest benefits and their contributions to internationally agreed development goals 3 Increase the area of sustainably managed forests 4 Reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management	Aichi Targets numbers: 5: halve deforestation and the loss of other natural habitats by 2020 11: protect 17% of land and 10% of oceans through protected areas by 2020 15: restore 15% of degraded lands by 2020 Bonn Challenge: Restore 150 million ha of deforested and degraded lands globally by 2020	1 Halve the rate of loss of natural forests globally by 2020 and end natural forest loss by 2030 2 Restore 150 m ha of degraded forests and landscapes by 2020, and more than 350 m ha by 2030 3 Support and help meet private sector goal of eliminating deforestation from the production of agricultural commodities such as palm oil, soy, paper and beef products by 2020	**SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all** 6.6. By 2020 protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes **SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss** 15.1. By 2020 ensure conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements 15.2. By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests, and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally 15.b. Mobilize significantly resources from all sources and at all

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[1] Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 70/1, 25 September 2015.

			levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation

ANNEX 2 APFNet Member List

NO.	APEC economies	NO.	Non-APEC economies	NO.	International Organization
1	Australia	1	Bangladesh	1	FAO
2	Brunei Darussalam	2	Cambodia	2	ITTO
3	Canada	3	Fiji	3	RECOFTC
4	Hong Kong, China	4	India	4	SPC
5	Indonesia	5	Lao PDR	5	TNC
6	Malaysia	6	Myanmar		
7	Mexico	7	Mongolia		
8	New Zealand	8	Nepal		
9	Peru	9	Sri Lanka		
10	Papua New Guinea				
11	P.R. China				
12	The Philippines				
13	Singapore				
14	Chinese Taipei				
15	Thailand				
16	The United States of America				
17	Viet Nam				

ANNEX 3 Strategic Plan Matrix (2016-2020)

Implementation Tools / Priorities	Rehabilitating degraded forests and increasing forest cover	Improving forest quality through promoting the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests	Strengthening ecological functions of forests and forest ecosystem security	Enhancing forests' contribution to socio-economic development and improvement of local livelihoods
I. Capacity Building				
1.1 Training workshops	• A need assessment on the priority topics for training workshops conducted • 150+ trained practitioners on different topics as determined by the need assessment			
1.2 Scholarships for MS degree and specialized non-degree programs	• 60+ scholarships supported in at least five forestry universities or colleges in the region awarded on topics related to the strategic priorities			
1.3 Strengthening regional forestry education	• More Forestry Deans from the region encouraged to join the FCDMM • Meetings of Regional Forestry Deans supported • Follow-up to the decisions of those meetings supported • Survey on user satisfaction of the online Course Modules and a new need assessment conducted • New online Course Modules prepared, as needed			
II. Demonstration Projects	5+ projects on forest restoration 2+ best practice pilots on SFM 5+ projects on forest related livelihoods improvement			
III. Supporting Regional Policy Dialogues	• At least one regional policy dialogue relevant to APFNet's Strategic Priority Areas supported each year • Two High-level meetings in Ministerial level the region meetings			

		convened
IV.	**Communication & Information-sharing**	APFNet learning hub established to share lessons and best practices on SFM and rehabilitation from the region and beyond. It will contain analytical studies, research findings, key publications from APFNet and other organizations, and relevant training materials as a one-stop shop for latest knowledge source on SFM and rehabilitation issues
		Publication series established to share good practices and information on incentives and management approaches and management and planning tools
		Newsletters, brochures and other audio-video and social media approaches to raise awareness and public support for SFM and for APFNet.
		20+ study tours or staff exchanges to accelerate information-sharing on innovations in forest conservation, management and development
		5+ study tours and/or panel discussions for high-level policy makers to raise political commitment for SFM (Ministers, parliamentarians, Corporate CEOs, etc.)
Strengthening institutional aspects of APFNet		Capacity building for APFNet Secretariat staff: Scholarships for MS degree and specialized non-degree programs in forestry provided to 10 Secretariat staff
		Governance issues including membership and legal standing of APFNet established
		Funding strategy developed and implemented
		New partnerships and collaborative activities formed
		M&E system developed and adopted