

# Asia- Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet)

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## **Background**

Forests play a vital role in sustainable development, providing a range of economic, social and environmental benefits, including essential ecosystem services such as climate change mitigation and adaptation. Sustainable forest management, including forest rehabilitation, contributes significantly to development and poverty alleviation.

The Asia-Pacific region is rich in forest resources, encompassing a number of economies with large forests. Sustainable forest management and rehabilitation in the Asia-Pacific region will contribute to the sustainable development of the forestry industry and poverty alleviation of poor forest-dependent communities in the region. Sustainable forest management will also contribute to national and global efforts to mitigate and adapt to global warming by reducing carbon emissions and increasing carbon sequestration. Actions that avoid deforestation and promote sustainable management of existing forests, including reforestation, have great potential to address climate change given that deforestation represents some 20 percent of global emissions.

Some economies in the Asia-Pacific region have accumulated abundant experiences and expertise in sustainable forest management and rehabilitation, while others are in urgent need of useful information and technical assistance to address deforestation and forest degradation. There is a need to bridge the gap and share experiences and expertise among economies in the Asia-Pacific region.

In this regard, the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet), proposed by China and co-sponsored by Australia and the United States, was agreed by the 15th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in September 2007 in Sydney, Australia and was incorporated in the Sydney APEC Leaders' Declaration on Climate Change, Energy Security and Clean Development to "enhance capacity building and strengthen information sharing on sustainable forest management in the forestry sector" in the region.

### **Nature of the Network**

- **Openness and Participation**

The Network will be open to APEC economies and other interested partners outside of APEC.

- **Complementarities**

The Network will collaborate with all regional forest initiatives and processes to identify synergies, avoid duplication, identify opportunities and facilitate cooperation. The Network is intended to support the Multi-Year Program of Work of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the implementation of the Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests, including the Global Objectives on Forests. The Network will also complement the Australian Government's International Forest and Carbon Initiative, as well as the regional work of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN.

### **Mission**

The mission of the Network is to promote and improve sustainable forest management and rehabilitation in the Asia-Pacific region through capacity-building, information-sharing, regional policy dialogues and pilot projects.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the Network are:

- To promote forest rehabilitation, reforestation and afforestation in the region to contribute to the achievement of the aspirational goal of the APFNet plan of project implementation in 2011-2013.
- To strengthen sustainable forest management and improve forest quality in the region, including climate change mitigation and adaptation response and to increase carbon sequestration.
- To improve the productive capacity and socio-economic benefits of forest ecosystems and enhance biodiversity conservation in the region.

## **Potential Priority Areas**

The following are potential areas of focus for the early functioning period of the Network:

- Development of forest policies and programs
- Economic incentives for sustainable forest management and forest rehabilitation, including payments for ecosystem services
- Strengthening forest-related institutions and facilitating forest institutional reforms, such as clarifying property rights arrangements
- Forest inventory, monitoring and assessment, including “criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management”
- Forests and climate change, including resilience of forest ecosystems to global warming.
- Forest rehabilitation technologies and approaches
- Improving forest quality and health, including forest fire and pest diseases and control
- Strengthening forest law enforcement and governance, including tackling illegal logging and associated trade
- Forest management technologies at the management unit level
- Development of community-based forest enterprises

- Conservation of forest biodiversity
- Enhancement of private-public partnerships and corporate social responsibility
- Strengthening public awareness raising and information dissemination on SFM

### **Modalities of the Network**

- Relationship with APEC

The APFNet is an initiative endorsed by APEC Leaders in the 2007 Sydney Declaration on Climate Change, Energy Security and Clean Development. The APFNet will operate consistent with relevant APEC guidelines and established practices, will report to APEC on its progress and activities, and can apply for project financing through the appropriate APEC mechanism.

- Consultation Mechanism

A consultation process will be established with representatives from China, United States, Australia and other potential partners to facilitate discussions on the operation and future development of the Network.

- Secretariat

The Secretariat of the APFNet will be hosted by China and will be headed by a Director General (or a higher level official) in charge of the daily work. The Secretariat will establish and maintain a website.

### **Financial Mechanism of the Network**

China and Australia will provide initial funding to launch the Network. These financial resources will support activities of the Network in the early stages and are expected to attract voluntary contributions from other donors, including corporate entities and international organizations. The possibility of establishing a trust fund and seeking funding from APEC will be explored with further development of the Network.