



Fourth Asia Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism Conference and Steering Committee Meetings

Theme: Regional Forestry Education Resources Sharing and Mutual Course Recognition

Summary Report

24 February 2016 Pampanga, Philippines

On 24 February 2016, the Fourth Asia Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism (AP-FECM) Conference was held as a Stream 5 event at Asia-Pacific Forestry Week 2016 in Pampanga, Philippines. The 4th AP-FECM Conference, organized by APFNet and the University of British Columbia of Canada and supported by Beijing Forestry University of China and University Putra Malaysia, successfully invited 50 participants including university chancellors, presidents, deans, professors, and representatives from 27 regional economies and organizations to attend. Solid achievements were made to promote mutual understanding and strengthen the operation of AP-FECM. During the event, guest speakers, deans, and professors delivered excellent presentations and shared their valuable experiences on the theme *Regional Forestry Education Resources Sharing and Mutual Course Recognition*. Five potential activities of the Mechanism were introduced and fully discussed by all participants. Three new Steering Committee members were elected and the new composition of the Steering Committee was confirmed. The events provided a great opportunity for universities and organizations from the region to develop regional networks. It laid an important foundation for enhancing future collaborations in forestry education across the region.

Summaries of the Steering Committee Meetings and 4th AP-FECM Conference are provided below.



Session I: Steering Committee Meeting

Dr. John Innes, Chair of the Steering Committee, Dean, Faculty of Forestry, UBC, hosted the meeting. He introduced the composition of existing Steering Committee and recapped the decisions made in Durban meeting. Then, Dr. Innes went through the agenda of the 4th AP-FECM Conference and emphasized that the objectives were to strengthen regional collaborations in forestry education and expand education networks designed to help improve the quality of forestry education in the region. He encouraged all Steering Committee members to fully engage in discussion and interact among participants during the 4th AP-FECM Conference to reach the above objectives. Dr. Innes also reviewed the structure, mission, and development strategies of the AP-FECM. AP-FECM member recruitment policy, role of Steering Committee members, and new Steering Committee member election procedure were fully discussed and confirmed by all existing Steering Committee members.

Session II: 4th Asia Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism Conference

Opening Remarks

The meeting was opened by APFNet Executive Director Qu Guilin. He firstly discussed the accomplishments of the Mechanism in the past years. As he pointed out, the AP-FECM platform was established for universities to exchange their ideas and carry out concrete actions and cooperation that could enhance forestry education in the region. On the AP-FECM platform, forestry universities are the main players to share experiences and resources, seek opportunities and joint efforts to tackle challenges facing forestry education in the region. APFNet, as one of the initiators, will continue encouraging involvement of as many universities as possible, and indicated that it would support decisions made by participating universities at the meeting to the extent possible. Future actions and activities of the AP-FECM will be identified and determined during AP-FECM meetings with supports from all members of the Mechanism.



Dr. Portia G. Lapitan, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, University of the Philippines Los Banos, was the guest speaker to give an opening remark on behalf of the University of the Philippines Los Banos (UPLB). She conveyed best wishes and congratulations to the AP-FEMC and the 4th AP-FECM Conference on behalf of the Chancellor of UPLB. She put forward her appreciation of the contents of the Conference as well as the development of the Sustainable Forestry Management Online Courses under the AP-FECM.

During the three keynote presentations and nine case study presentations, bilateral/trilateral education programs between Canadian/China/US/Australian/Japanese universities and Southeast Asian/South Asian universities were shared. It was also identified that South-South collaboration between Southeast Asian universities are common. Typical models of cooperation include short-term exchange of students and/or faculty, dual or joint degree programs and joint research-led teaching.

International collaborative programs bring high-quality education resources to universities that currently face inadequate or insufficient resources in forestry faculties, laboratories and field facilities. It also leads to joint research projects. Students of collaborative programs can gain not only quality education, but also hand-on experience, language skills and cultural understanding. For example, a Japanese student can learn about tropical forestry in the field under joint programs between Kyushu University and ASEAN universities.

However, universities are facing challenges in collaborative programs such as:

- Lack of balance in the availability of curricula between international and domestic forestry programs: International courses are sometimes limited in non-English speaking economies, and existing international programs are general forestry programs that lack specific courses on topics such as forestry policy, forest hydrology, forest ecology, wood properties, forest management and others.
- Accreditation systems vary in different regions which is the barrier for implementing mutual course recognition.



- Inequitable access: Students vary in funding capacity to support their studies in other economies
- Inadequate financial resources to mobilize exchanges for students and faculty members
- Language and cultural barriers between exchange students/faculty members and the host universities

Participating universities also discussed the following possible solutions to the above challenges:

- Online courses: A cost-effective alternative of teaching that requires relatively low funding in the long term (besides initial development and set-up); and the resources can be easily accessed by students and faculty. Participating universities noted efforts should be put in accreditation and marketing.
- Scholarships: Financial support can allow more students to study abroad.
- Faculty mobility: Instead of promoting student exchange, the mobilization of faculty can at times actually be a more effective method of mobilizing education resources, to benefit more students at relatively lower cost.

Later on, five potential activities were introduced and discussed during the meeting.

Suggestions and comments were provided by participants.

- *Survey of Forestry Education in Asia-Pacific Region*: it should be focusing on forestry and forestry related subjects; conducting the survey online; adding more content such as quality assessment and education experience from students; encouraging joint proposals from universities in the region, etc.
- *Both Green Camp and Youth Leadership Summit*: marketing would be a crucial factor to attract target participants. .
- *Forestry Experts Database*: it could learn and connect with the database developing by IUFRO and FAO.



- *Online SFM Courses Phase II:* efforts should be made on curriculum development in some topics. Dr. John Innes stressed that those SFM online courses will need to be modified for the stage 2 Certificate program and upgraded again for the stage 3 Master’s degree program to meet the requirements and ensure the quality of the higher education program.

An election of new Steering Committee Members was conducted during the meeting, Dr. John Innes reviewed the organizational structure of the Mechanism and the election procedures for new Steering Committee Members. He introduced three candidates and proposed the voting. All participants agreed with the results of the election. Three new Steering Committee members are listed as follows.

Country	Organization	Representative	Title
Thailand	Kasetsart University	Dr. Chongrak Wacharinrat	Dean, Faculty of Forestry
		Dr. Ladawan Puangchit	Representative of Faculty of Forestry to attend this meeting
Japan	Kyoto University	Dr. Hisashi Miyagawa	Dean and Professor, Graduate School of Agriculture
		Prof. Akira Osawa	Representative of Forest and Biomaterials to attend this meeting Graduate School of Agriculture
USA	University of California, Berkeley	Dr. J. Keith Gilless	Dean, College of Natural Resources

During the conclusion session, Dr. John Innes concluded the meeting by pointing out that various opportunities in forestry education are within the global context. It was a great start to expand networks with regional stakeholders under the Asia-Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism. More connections would need to be developed with Europe and Africa in the future. Dr. Innes also highlighted that international collaboration in academic programs and research projects are both important to promote forestry education resource sharing and mutual course recognition. At the end, Dr. Innes expressed his appreciation for the participation of all guests and attendants in the meeting and thanked APFNet for their strong



support of the Mechanism and UBC. He anticipates that the AP-FECM will add value to APFNet and forestry education in the region.

Session III: New Steering Committee Meeting

The new Steering Committee Meeting was convened after the 4th AP-FECM Conference with seven existing Steering Committee members and three newly elected members. AP-FECM member universities joined the meeting as observers.

The operation of the Mechanism and the Work Plan of the Executive Office were presented by UBC in the session. As the Chair of next four-year term, UBC will help the Mechanism to effectively reach its objectives and fulfill its tasks by providing services and developing new projects.

In the last session, participants further discussed the membership policy of the Mechanism and Steering Committee, potential projects, and APFNet's funding policy and procedures. Dr Lu De, Assistant Executive Director of APFNet, explained the funding policy to all Steering Committee members and AP-FECM member universities presented and encouraged the engagement of universities to improve sustainable forest management in the region and promote the Mechanism. All Steering Committee members and Mechanism members expressed their great appreciation for this event and anticipated fruitful and profound cooperation through the AP-FECM platform.

Resolutions for the Meetings

All resolutions were discussed and reached agreement during the 4th Asia-Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism Conference and the Steering Committee Meetings.

1. AP-FECM Member Recruitment and Management Policy
 - 1) Based on the Framework, the Asia Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism is open to all stakeholders who are engaged in promoting forestry



education. Universities that participate in the AP-FECM meeting may gain the membership by designating a contact person to the Executive Office.

Members of the AP-FECM are encouraged to:

- Participate in AP-FECM meetings and observe Steering Committee meetings;
- Contribute to AP-FECM annual reports, publications and regular updates on activities;
- Participate in the AP-FECM activities and projects;

2) Roles of Steering Committee Members

The Steering Committee was established as the decision-making body to oversee and steer operations of the Mechanism. It was clarified that the role of Steering Committee is to summarize discussions, suggestions and decisions made by participating universities and transfer them to concrete actions.

Members of the Steering Committee have the obligation to:

- Designate a representative to the Steering Committee and provide contact person(s) for regular communication;
- Support AP-FECM's goals, objectives, activities and project implementation;
- Take responsibility for overseeing and steering operations of the AP-FECM;
- Liaise with local universities, colleges and forestry-related organizations as a representative of the Steering Committee to facilitate regional forestry education networks;
- Work closely with APFNet, other Steering Committee members and the Executive Office of the AP-FECM.

As approved by the consensus of universities at the 4th AP-FECM Conference, three new members had been confirmed to join the Steering Committee. The new composition of the Steering Committee shows in table 1.



Table 1

New Composition of Steering Committee					
No	Economy	Organization	Representative	Title	Status
1	Canada	The University of British Columbia	Dr. John Innes	Chair of the AP-FECM; Dean, Faculty of Forestry	Current
2	China	Beijing Forestry University	Dr. Luo Youqing	Co-Chair of the AP-FECM; Vice President	Current
3	Malaysia	Putra University of Malaysia	Dr. Mohamed Zakaria Hussin	Co-Chair of the AP-FECM; Dean, Faculty of Forestry	Current
4	Australia	University of Melbourne	Dr. Chris Weston	Deputy Head, School of Land and Environment	Current
5	Philippines	University of the Philippines Los Baños College	Dr. Willie P. ABASOLO	Dean, College of Forestry and Natural Resources	Current
6	Indonesia	Bogor Agricultural University (IPB)	Dr Rinekso Sukmadi	Dean, Faculty of Forestry	Current
7	Viet Nam	Vietnam National University of Forestry	Dr. Bui The Doi	Vice President; Dean, Faculty of Forestry	Current
8	Thailand	Kasetsart University, Bangkok	Dr. Chongrak Wacharinrat	Dean, Faculty of Forestry	New
9	Japan	Kyoto Univerisity	Dr. Hisashi Miyagawa	Dean and Professor, Graduate School of Agriculture	New
10	USA	University of California, Berkeley	Dr. J. Keith Gillless	Dean, College of Natural Resources	New



2. The Asia-Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism acts as a platform for forestry universities and organizations to collaborate in forestry education programs and research projects to enhance Sustainable Forest Management in the region. Participants and members are expecting that more collaborative activities including resources sharing, mutual courses recognitions, students and faculty exchange, etc. will be facilitated through the AP-FECM platform.

3. Five potential projects proposed at the meeting will need to be modified and improved in accordance with the suggestions generated from the meetings. Here are comments for each project.
 - 1) *Survey of Forestry Education in Asia-Pacific Region led by BFU*
 - Focus on forestry and forestry related subjects
 - Conduct the survey online
 - Add more content such as quality assessment and education experience from students
 - Encourage joint proposals from universities in the region
 - 2) *Forestry College Students Green Camp led by BFU*
 - Marketing – be aware of target groups and topics
 - 3) *SFM Online Courses Phase II, Certificate and Master's Program led by UBC*
 - Effort should be made on curriculum development in some topics
 - Ensure high quality and meet the requirements of Certificates and Master's degree programs
 - Access performance of the first six online courses, evaluate how well they have been received by students and applied by universities before heading to the other six courses.
 - 4) *Youth Leadership Summit led by UBC*
 - Marketing – be aware of target groups and topics
 - 5) *Forestry Experts Network and Database led by the Executive Office*



- Consult and connect with FAO and IUFRO regarding their forestry database to maximize resources and reach the same standard
4. According to APFNet's funding policy, new proposed projects related to forestry education can be submitted to the APFNet secretariat through the call for proposals procedure. Proposals will be reviewed by the APFNet Project Appraisal Panel and funds will be approved and granted according to standard operational procedures. APFNet will release calls for proposals every two years. The deadline for submitting project concept notes in 2016 will be the 30 April. Detailed information of APFNet's project application could be found here: http://www.apfnet.cn/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=128&Itemid=116

Annex: (will be posted on the AP-FECM website)

1. Attendant list of the 4th AP-FECM Conference
2. Agenda of the 4th AP-FECM Conference and Steering Committee Meetings
3. Details of Presentations and Discussions
4. Presentations of Keynote Speeches and Case Sharing