

Asia-Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism

1 Background

The Asia-Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism (AP-FECM) is a project of the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet)¹. The establishment of APFNet was proposed by the People's Republic of China and endorsed by Australia and the United States at the 15th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting in Sydney, Australia, in September 2007. The proposal was adopted by APEC Economic leaders and incorporated into the Sydney Declaration on Climate Change, Energy Security and Clean Development, in an effort to “enhance capacity building and strengthen information sharing on sustainable forest management in the forestry sector” in the region.

APFNet has a Board of Directors, which is its decision-making body, and a Council, which is its advisory body. It is supported by an Executive Director and Secretariat, whose task it is to implement the decisions and suggestions made by the Board and Council. APFNet projects are reviewed by a Project Appraisal Panel.

The AP-FECM has been running for 12 years. It has proposed and run a number of significant and very successful sub-projects during this time, such as its online courses², repeatedly justifying its continuation within the framework of APFNet. In addition, the networking opportunities have directly contributed to APFNet's goals of enhancing capacity building and strengthening information sharing on sustainable forest management.

¹ <https://www.apfnet.cn/>

² <https://apfecm.forestry.ubc.ca/sfm-online-courses/>

2 AP-FECM Mission Statement

The mission of the Asia Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism (AP-FECM) is to promote forestry education by strengthening cooperation and taking collaborative actions that contribute to furthering sustainable forest management (SFM).

3 Objectives

The Asia Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism will work with as many partners as possible to build a platform for promoting strong collaboration in SFM education in order to improve the overall capacity of SFM in the Asia-Pacific region. The specific objectives of the mechanism include:

- To provide a platform for exchanging academic information and sharing education resources between forestry institutions;
- To promote innovation and reform in forestry education and share achievements;
- To improve overall capacity in SFM in the region.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Asia Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism will, amongst other actions:

- Develop an appropriate model to train next-generation foresters who will be able to apply SFM knowledge to forest management practices;
- Identify key problems and issues in forestry education through regular forestry education meetings and surveys;
- Seek cooperation and develop collaborative programs in areas of common interest that will promote forestry education on SFM.

4 Organization and Structure

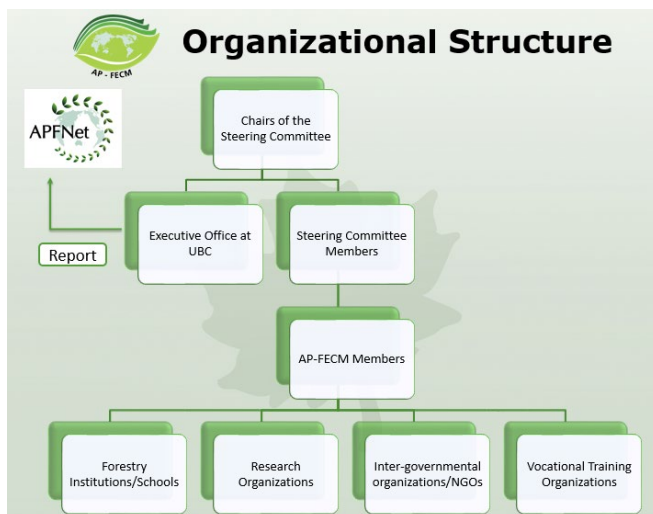
Membership of the AP-FECM is free and open to all relevant institutions (higher educational institutions and institutes providing vocational training, intergovernmental organizations, and NGOs), subject to the agreement of the Asia Pacific Forest Education Coordination Mechanism.

Each member shall appoint a liaison person for daily communication to facilitate the efficient operation of the mechanism.

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;

The activities of the AP-FECM are governed by the Chair, two Co-Chairs, and a Steering Committee, with advice from the Secretariat of the APFNet.



The AP-FECM is a project of the APFNet. The Board of APFNet has overall fiduciary responsibility of the organization, and all further activities of the AP-FECM are subject to approval by the Board.

5 General Assembly

The General Assembly is held biennially. Face-to-face meetings are the preferred format, but online meetings may be held if funds are not available for face-to-face meetings or if circumstances prevent a face-to-face meeting.

The General Assembly normally takes the form of a seminar or mini-conference, accompanied by a business meeting. It is open to all interested parties, and members of the AP-FECM are encouraged to send at least one delegate.

6 Steering Committee

A Steering Committee has been established as the decision-making body to oversee and steer the work of the AP-FECM. All of its decisions are taken based on consensus.

6.1 Composition of the Steering Committee

- a) Nine to Twelve forestry institutions/schools/departments in the Asia-Pacific region;
- b) At most two inter-governmental organizations/NGOs who are engaged in forestry education;
- c) At most one prominent institute providing vocational training in forestry.

The Steering Committee membership is vested within the forestry institutions/schools/departments. Each member of the Steering Committee will participate for the full term of four years. They will be from an institution within an AP-FECM member economy. In order to ensure diversity and equality amongst member economies, a maximum of two Steering Committee members from any one economy is permitted. The person may be the head of the institution, school or department, such as a president, dean or director, or may be nominated by the member institution to have the authority to speak on behalf of the institution.

6.2 Functions of the Steering Committee

- a) Review and make recommendations on the adoption or modification of its strategic plan, policies and procedures;
- b) Approve its regulations and rules;
- c) Facilitate membership development and partnership exploration of the Asia Pacific Forest Education Coordination Mechanism;
- d) Fundraise for potential programs;
- e) Identify the priorities for mechanism engagement and program development;
- f) Guide and direct the implementation of its programs;
- g) Review the composition of the Steering Committee regularly to ensure the active participation of its members;
- h) Elect the Chair and two Co-Chairs³;
- i) Fulfil any other functions conducive to the achievement of the objectives of the Asia Pacific Forest Education Coordination Mechanism;
- j) Work closely with APFNet, other Steering Committee members and the Executive Office of the AP-FECM

6.3 Election of Steering Committee members

The members of the Steering Committee are individuals who will serve a full term of four years. They should be employed by institutions of AP-FECM member economies and should be able to represent the interests of the AP-FECM member at the Steering Committee. Individuals will remain on the Committee for the full four-year term, regardless of any change in their status within their home institutions. They are eligible to stand for re-election at the end of their term.

³ Normally the past Chair and the potential future Chair

The Steering Committee has a maximum of 12 elected members. The Executive Director of APF-Net, or their designate, is an *ex officio* member of the Committee, with full voting rights. One position on the Committee is reserved for the position whose term as 'outgoing' Co-Chair (see below) is completed. This reserved position is valid for a single term, and continuation on the Committee will be subject to re-election.

Steering Committee members are elected by the members of the AP-FECM. Each member has a single vote. Prior to a General Assembly, the AP-FECM Executive Office will notify AP-FECM members of the election and will invite nominations or self-nominations using a designated form. The election process, as with all other procedures unless formally amended, will follow the framework approved during the 4th AP-FECM Conference held in Durban, South Africa, in 2016.

In the event that there are more than 12 nominees, the new nominees will each present a three-minute statement during a business meeting of the General Assembly, describing their vision, strategy, action plan and potential contribution to AP-FECM while in their role as a Steering Committee member. The order of presentation will be decided randomly.

At the end of the presentations, the designated representatives of the member economies will cast votes. A representative of the APFNet Secretariat will count and record the number of votes in real time, and will then announce the new members of the Steering Committee.

6.4 Meetings

The Steering Committee meeting is to be held annually or biennially. To avoid high transaction costs and maximize efficiency, the Steering Committee will hold its meetings back-to-back with regular Forestry Education meetings or during other relevant regional/international meetings. If necessary, the Chair of the Steering Committee may call special meetings to deal with specific issues; such meetings will normally be conducted through electronic means.

6.5 Chair and Co-Chairs

As previously agreed (in Durban), there is a Chair and two Co-Chairs. One of the Co-Chairs will be designated as the 'incoming' Co-Chair, and the other as the 'outgoing' Co-Chair. Each position may be held for a maximum of one term, unless the APFNet Secretariat agrees to a variance due to exceptional circumstances and this variance should be discussed and approved by the General Assembly. The intention is that the 'incoming' Co-Chair will serve a term of four years, and then will seek election as Chair. The 'outgoing' Co-Chair will be automatically allocated to the person whose term as Chair is coming to an end. If that person is unavailable to act as 'outgoing' Co-Chair, then the position will be left vacant. At the end of their term, the 'outgoing' Co-Chair will transition to a position on the Steering Committee and is not eligible for election to a Chair or Co-Chair position for one term. [Note: this system was established to ensure continuity while also providing the opportunity for turnover. It is common to many organizations].

6.5.1 Responsibilities of the Chair:

- a) Preside over each Steering Committee meeting;
- b) Develop the agenda of Steering Committee meetings after consultation with AP-FECM Executive Office, the Co-Chairs and the Steering Committee members;
- c) Explore partnerships and seek funding for the Asia Pacific Forest Education Coordination Mechanism;
- d) Monitor the work of the Executive Office of the mechanism;
- e) Serve as a channel of communication between members of the mechanism, the Steering Committee and APFNet;
- f) Ensure observance of the rules and procedures of the Mechanism.

6.5.2 Responsibilities of the Co-Chairs:

- a) Provide advice to the Chair on developing the agenda of the Steering Committee meeting;
- b) Provide advice to the Executive Office of the mechanism on developing the work plan and proposed activities;
- c) Explore partnerships and seek funding for the Asia Pacific Forest Education Coordination Mechanism;
- d) Perform responsibilities of the Chair a), b), d), e) and f) in the absence of the Chair.

6.5.3 Election of the Chair and Co-Chairs

When the Chair and two Co-Chairs vacate their positions because of completion of their terms or for any other reason, the Steering Committee shall elect the new Chair and 'incoming' Co-Chair at a Steering Committee meeting. The Chair and Co-Chairs are elected by the Steering Committee in a closed-door meeting. All members of the Steering Committee are eligible to vote, unless there is a conflict of interest.

All Steering Committee members can nominate or self-nominate as candidates for Chair and 'incoming' Co-Chair. The position of 'outgoing' Co-Chair is allocated automatically and not subject to a vote. Similarly, when the term of the 'outgoing' Co-Chair is completed, the individual will automatically be allocated a place on the Steering Committee for one term.

In the event that there is more than one candidate for the Chair and/or 'incoming' Co-Chair positions, each candidate will present their potential strategy, action plan, and contribution to the Steering Committee. All Steering Committee members will vote and determine the final positions.

If the Chair chooses to resign from his/her office during their term, he/she shall notify the Executive Office of AP-FECM and the Steering Committee members. One of the Co-Chairs will normally serve the remaining term of the Chair, subject to the agreement of the other Steering Committee members.

7. Executive Office

A lesson learnt in the early years of AP-FECM was that many academic administrative positions in some economies are held for very short terms (2 years or less). This leads to frequent changes in academic leadership, with the risk of a loss of institutional memory. To maintain the continuity of work of the AP-FECM, in the event that the Chair does not wish to host and co-finance the Executive Office of the Mechanism, it will continue to be hosted by UBC Faculty of Forestry. The Executive Office works under the supervision of Chair, Co-Chairs and the Steering Committee. It is meant to implement the decisions made by the Steering Committee and facilitate its operation as well as the long-term development of the Mechanism. Its budget is provided jointly by APFNet and the host institution.

7.1 Responsibilities of Executive Office:

- a) Summarize the current situation and trends in the development of forestry education as well as emerging challenges, coordinate with the Steering Committee to develop an action plan for the mechanism, and submit plans to the APFNet secretariat;
- b) Based on the adopted action plan, develop annual work plans that identify the activities and programs under the mechanism after seeking suggestions from the members, and implement the work plans upon acceptance from APFNet;
- c) Coordinate and organize the Asia Pacific Forestry Education Mechanism meetings;
- d) Produce reports and publications on forestry education in the region to establish the Mechanism as the leading initiative in the field, and strengthen communication with other regional initiatives, forestry fora, and policymakers to make it influential;
- e) Stay in communication with other members of the Mechanism, and encourage related institutions to join the Mechanism;
- f) Explore partnerships and seek funding for the Asia Pacific Forest Education Coordination Mechanism;
- g) Report regularly to the APFNet secretariat on progress made and problems encountered;

8 Fundraising

APFNet will provide a specific amount of funding to support the operation of the mechanism and the Executive Office upon its acceptance on the annual work plan of the Asia Pacific Forest Education Coordination Mechanism. The mechanism will also seek financial support from other entities to facilitate project development and implementation as well as the activities of the organization. Relevant entities engaged in a project could contribute in cash or in kind by providing necessary technical support and teaching facilities.