



AFoCO NEWSLETTER



AFoCO Celebrates 2nd Anniversary



Forest fire vehicles given to Cambodia through AFoCO Program

MEETINGS & EVENTS



AFoCO Scholars graduate from Dongguk University & Seoul National University



Learning best practices on reforestation in Asia
Developing aid-worthy projects & project [proposals](#)

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT



Supporting the conservation of major timber species in Cambodia



Cooperating to restore degraded forests in Lao PDR



Thai Binh Province promotes local mangrove species

PROJECT NEWS



MEETINGS & EVENTS

AFoCO celebrates 2nd Anniversary

We are happy to celebrate the second anniversary of our Organization on 27 April 2020. As we appreciate the unwavering support and cooperation of our Parties, the Secretariat is also delighted to know that the respective Governments of Mongolia and Malaysia have already reached an advanced stage of their domestic procedures towards joining AFoCO. Likewise, we are pleased to receive continuous support from the Republic of Korea (ROK) through the Korea Forest Service, especially in making the Operations of the Secretariat possible and in terms of project support. As of the 3rd Session of the Assembly, a total of 10 projects have been approved. Seven are in the inception stage, and Implementing Agencies in the respective Member-Countries are about to implement the new projects.

In the past year, we had a very active network in the international arena. We engaged with the

Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission and Asia-Pacific Forestry Week (APFW) organized by FAO and hosted by the Korea Forest Service, held in Songdo, the Republic of Korea. As a co-stream leader of Stream 1 (“Restoring Our Forests and Landscapes”) along with APFNet and SPC, we had around 20 fruitful events and meetings. With CIFOR and Baekdu Daegan National Arboretum of ROK, we explored niche areas for translating SFM and climate change policies into active initiatives on the ground in our Member Countries. We had a chance to organize a workshop on land degradation neutrality (LDN) and forest and landscape restoration (FLR) with UNCCD. The collaborative works with ITTO and RECOFTC for the new publication on FLR guidelines and the training module for community forestry were also a few of the unforgettable events. In our hearts, we never forgot the brilliant and wondrous moments of harmony in 2019.

Forest fire vehicles given to Cambodia through AFoCO Program

Under the AFoCO program to improve fire management in Member Countries, the Republic of Korea donated five fire forest vehicles to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Cambodia.

The Minister expressed his appreciation to the government of the Republic of Korea, AFoCO, and the Korea-Mekong Forest Cooperation Centre for their contribution and dedicated

efforts towards preventing forest fire disasters in the region and for sharing experiences and best practices on forest fire management, forest restoration, and sustainable forest development and management. Looking forward to the long-term benefits of such interventions, he further mentioned that “these firefighting facilities and equipment will directly benefit local forest management units.”



Mr. Chencho Norbu, Executive Director of AFoCO, expressed his sincere thanks to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries for its cooperation and assistance throughout the process, adding that the donation reaffirmed the Republic of Korea’s continued support and commitment on forest cooperation.

Following the ceremony, the Secretariat staff conducted a hands-on training on the operation and maintenance for officials in charge and distributed manuals on to guide officials on how to regularly inspect and maintain the vehicles. The Cambodia government also plans to distribute the vehicles to regions across the country.

66

Ma Carmina M. Canua DONGGUK UNIVERSITY

It is with great pride and privilege to be an alumna of the University and the AFoCO scholarship program. I feel it is imperative for a scholar to carry out and cascade the learnings and make an impact on society. Such an impact brings positive change for the welfare of the people and the environment. I will take advantage of my position in the government to materialize the knowledge and skills I have acquired in the program in terms of effectively managing the environment and natural resources in my country. I can now relate the theories and concepts with the actual scenarios of a localized environment and natural resources issues and challenges facing my country.

99

CAPACITY
DEVELOPMENT

AFoCO Scholars graduate with Master's degrees

We are proud to congratulate Ms. Ma. Carmina M. Canua from the Philippines and Mr. Tran Hai Long on the successful completion of their studies in the Republic of Korea! Ms. Ma. Carmina received a Master's degree in Biological and Environmental Science from Dongguk University while Mr. Tran Hai Long received with a Master's degree in Forest Environmental Science from Seoul National University.



66

Tran Hai Long SEOUL NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

The knowledge and experiences I gained through my study in Korea will help me one step further in achieving my goal of becoming a foremost expert in my field of study. This will also help position me better in the forestry sector so that I can actively seek opportunities to collaborate and with other relevant organizations and government agencies. Moreover, I would like to become a bridge for future cooperation between the Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences and AFoCO. Finally, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the staff at the AFoCO Secretariat and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences - Seoul National University for all their support for me during the time of my study in Korea.

99



CAPACITY
DEVELOPMENT

Learning best practices on reforestation in Asia

Forest rehabilitation and restoration in Asia is one of the major goals of AFoCO. This year's forest rehabilitation and reforestation course, under the theme "Reforestation and Community Participation", was organized in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The training course was held from 24 to 28 February 2020, at the AFoCO RETC in Myanmar.

A total of 20 participants from eight AFoCO member countries gathered together to learn about reforestation and community participation, food security and gender matters and discussed challenges and lessons learned from previous reforestation experiences to help guide ongoing and future reforestation efforts.



CAPACITY
DEVELOPMENT

Developing aid-worthy projects & project proposals

In early February, 21 government officials from AFoCO Member Countries gathered at the AFoCO RETC in Myanmar to learn about how to formulate sound and aid-worthy projects that reflect stakeholders' needs and address AFoCO's Strategic Priority Areas.

The interactive 5-day course is the second project development course organized by AFoCO. Through group work and discussions, participants were given ample opportunities to share information on the project-related materials of AFoCO and develop their project formulation skills. Potential AFoCO projects to be implemented at the country and regional levels in the future also transpired from the discussions.



Article by Soozin Ryang, Sokh Heng and Chencho Norbu

PROJECT NEWS

Supporting the conservation of major timber species in Cambodia



Establishment of Forest Genetics Research Center for Restoration of Major Timber Species in Cambodia

One of the timber species native to Cambodia, *Dalbergia cochinchinensis*, is reported to be at risk of extinction and is categorized as an endangered species in the IUCN Red List. Recognizing the urgent need to prevent further deforestation and conserve forest biodiversity, the government of Cambodia prepared and started implementing the National Forest Program of 2010-2029 to improve and manage forest cover through best practices of sustainable forest management principles.

One of the areas of research interest, based on the need of the hour in the country, is quality seed sources for high-value major timber species like *Dalbergia cochinchinensis*, *Dipterocarpus intricatus*, and *Pterocarpus macrocarpus*. The quality of seeds in terms of its genetic purity, phenotype, and productivity, is not assured in the country. In 2016, AFoCO, under the Landmark Program, provided support to conserve genetic resources of these important tree species with the objectives of

implementing a long-term tree breeding program and to strengthen the restoration and tree breeding capabilities of the Forestry Administration of Cambodia. The Institute of Forest and Wildlife Research and Development (IRD) under the Forestry Administration of Cambodia was assigned to implement the said project.

The Khun Ream Forest research station in Cambodia was established in 2012 by the KRCC through the project titled “Forest Restoration and Establishment of Forest Research Facilities”. Located in Khun Ream Commune, Banteay Srey District, Siem Reap Province, some 60km away from Siem Reap City, the Research Station has been serving as a hub for knowledge and experience sharing among researchers, practitioners, students, and local communities in Cambodia. The station has a nursery, research plots for forest rehabilitation and memorial tree plantation sites. This research station has also been identified as one of the project sites of the AFoCO Landmark Program.



Article by Soozin Ryang, Oukapone Alounsavath and Chencho Norbu

PROJECT NEWS

Cooperating to restore degraded forests in Lao PDR



Village-based Forest Rehabilitation in Lao PDR

The development of the forest sector in Lao PDR is guided by the Forest Strategy 2020, which is evolving into a new national plan targeting the year 2030 — the National Green Growth Strategy 2019-2030. These strategies aim to increase forest cover to 70% of the total land area by rehabilitating degraded forests, promoting the establishment of tree plantations and minimizing forest degradation and deforestation. Under the Forest Strategy 2020, the government also identifies ‘village land use and forest management’ as one of the thematic areas to encourage the participation of villagers and communities to achieve the target areas of reforestation. One of the components of the Landmark Program launched by AFoCO is the Restoration of Degraded Forests in Member

Countries. Lao PDR proposed a ten-year village-driven forest management project that commenced in 2016 as a part of the implementation of its Forest Strategy 2020. The objectives of the project include restoring degraded forest areas, strengthening the capabilities of stakeholders including villagers and contributing to poverty reduction of local communities. The project sites are located in Sangthong District, about 60 km north from Vientiane, the capital of Lao PDR.

Two Village Forest Development Groups (VFDGs) were formed. To ensure that field activities proceed smoothly, contract agreements were also signed between the VFDGs and the project team. One of the groups was assigned to produce seedlings for ex-situ conservation and enrichment plantations, and the other group was assigned to take up the plantation works. Around 64,340 seedlings of native species (Afzelia, Pterocarpus, Teak, Tectona, Sindora, and Shorea) were produced, and 20 ha of the enrichment plantation was completed in 2019.

Thai Binh Province promotes local mangrove species in coastal areas of Red River Delta

Rehabilitation & Development of Mangrove Forest Ecosystem in Thai Binh Province, Vietnam

According to the report on Vietnam's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), the average temperature in Vietnam has increased by approximately 0.5°C and the sea level has risen by about 20cm over the past 50 years. Extreme climate events have increased both in frequency and intensity. Climate change has made hazards, especially storms, floods, and droughts, more intense. The mangrove forests in provinces like Thai Binh have been degrading over the years mainly because of land-use changes, poor management, and increased frequency of annual floods and typhoons.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report (2018) on Ocean and Cryosphere in Changing Climate reported that risk related to sea-level rise (including erosion, flooding, and salinization) is expected to significantly increase by the end of this century along all low-lying coasts in the absence of major additional adaptation efforts. One of the adaptation measures under the NDC is to protect, restore, plant, and improve the quality of coastal forests, including mangroves, especially in coastal estuaries and the Mekong and Red River deltas.

Plantation at Thuy Xuan commune in 2016(left) and 2019(right)



The project site maps for the afforestation (80 ha), enrichment (80 ha) and protection (800 ha) areas of the two districts covering four communes (Thuy Hai and Thuy Xuan of Thai Thuy district, and Dong Long and Dong Hoang of Tien Hai district) were produced based on detailed field surveys carried out in 2015 and 2016. The seedlings for afforestation were produced at upstream nurseries and transported by boat through the river canals to the plantation sites. The plantations were carried out at low tide from the end of March through the end of September for three years between 2016 and 2018.