



AFoCO

한-아세안 산림협력협정
ASEAN-Korea Forest Cooperation

Newsletter

ASEAN-Korea Forest Cooperation

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Welcome to the first issue of the ASEAN-ROK Forest Cooperation Newsletter!

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Jul. 2013 : 2nd Working Group for the Establishment of AFoCO

Sep. 2013 : 3rd Session of Governing Council

Message from the Executive Director

Welcome to the first issue of the Newsletter. I hope that this Newsletter could be the window to provide and share relevant and up-to-date information.

The global society nowadays is very interested in addressing climate change and forest issues on the multilateral level, and the Agreement between ASEAN and ROK on Forest Cooperation is one of those efforts to strengthen Asian alliance towards an action-oriented initiative. The support and recognition by all the Parties, I believe, represent the importance of Asia, especially the Southeast Asian region in global forest sector.

By overcoming the challenges together towards achieving internationally recognized model for forest rehabilitation and delivering appropriate responses in the region, it will pave a way to further strengthen ASEAN-ROK forest cooperation and foster growth toward the broader scope of Asia.



The 1st Meeting of the Working Group for the Establishment of Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO)

The 1st Meeting of the “Working Group for the Establishment of Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO)” (WG-AFoCO) was held in Manila, Philippines on 26-27 March 2013. The meeting reviewed the Rules of Procedure of the WG-AFoCO. The meeting also discussed and provided inputs for the vision, mission, objectives, as well as procedural matters concerning the establishment of AFoCO.

This meeting finalized the working plan providing a step forward to the dialogue platform towards the establishment of the AFoCO. The Rules and Procedure are expected to go through internal consultation by all parties to the Agreement ready for finalization at the 2nd WG-AFoCO to be held in July 2013. /

The Technical Meeting for Assessment for the Implementation of the Agreement on ASEAN-ROK Forest Cooperation

The Technical Meeting for Assessment for the Implementation of the Agreement on ASEAN-ROK Forest Cooperation was held back to back with the WG-AFoCO in Manila, Philippines on 26 March 2013. The meeting reviewed and finalized the draft Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure for assessment procedure. The document is currently under consideration by the Governing Council for ad-referendum endorsement by 6 May 2013. The endorsed document will provide guidelines on the assessment of the implementation of the Agreement to be undertaken within the last three months of the Agreement.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to update on the status of the regional project and clarify on the preparation of the contribution of the Parties for 2013. /

Cooperation Activities

Box 1. Regional Cooperation Projects

Total Budget USD 1,000,000

Reclamation, Rehabilitation and Restoration of Degraded Forest Ecosystems (RRR-DFE)	
Mekong Basin Countries	Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam
BIMPS	Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore (BIMPS)

Duration 2 years

Budget USD 1,000,000

- Goals
- Sustainable management of forest resources, biodiversity, and environment through local people participation in Mekong Basin.
 - Establishment of models for rehabilitation of various degraded ecosystems, sustainable forest resources, sharing of technologies, protects biodiversity, and technologies transferred to stakeholders of BIMPS.

Capacity Building on Improving Forest Resources Assessment and Enhancing the Involvement of the Local Communities to Address the Adverse Impact of Climate Change

ASEAN 10 Countries	Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam
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Duration 2 years

Budget USD 2,000,000

- Goals
- Improvement of forest resource assessment to address adverse impact of climate change.
 - Involvement of local community in assessing the existing and potential adverse impact of climate change.

Update on Regional Cooperation Projects

In April 2012, the idea of regional cooperation project was introduced as one of the cooperation activities to be undertaken under the Agreement. Korea Forest Service proposed intention to support such projects and requested all Parties focused on identifying the project components. After several rounds of discussion, project components as well as specific activities has been identified and was formally approved by the 2nd Session of Governing Council held on 25 Jan 2013 in Myanmar as shown in Box1.

Due to certain domestic legal issue, the participating countries of each projects are now coordinating the procedural matters. The RRR-DFE in Mekong Basin Countries led by Thailand, however, has been able to proceed since its approval.

Together with Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Viet Nam, Royal Forest Department of Thailand is planning to launch the project by opening a regional project office and appointing a project manager in coming months. The project is expected to officially start in May 2013 and will be operational for a duration of 2 years. /

Feature

The First Issue of Newsletter Launched

The first issue of the AFoCo Newsletter is launched in April 2013 by the AFoCo Secretariat. The quarterly publication will be providing news and updates on the progress of cooperation activities under the AFoCo Agreement. It will also provide forest information and current forest issues of the Parties. In an attempt to increase awareness on the initiative and to exchange relevant information among the parties, this newsletter has been launched.

The newsletter will be composed of four main sections: the headline, the AFoCo activities and feature article, and news from the parties.

The headline will post recent news on AFoCo meetings and activities, providing up-to-date information and progress of the implementation of the Agreement on ASEAN-ROK Forest Cooperation. The AFoCo activities will mainly focus on the progress of regional projects, individual cooperation projects and other activities under AFoCo. The feature article will be a special articles section. For the first issue, we have featured the recent publication of endemic plants in Brunei Darussalam. For the next few issues, the theme of feature section will be introduction of forest and forestry in each party after getting inputs from the parties. Information on the country's ecosystem and its effects on the country as a whole will be featured, including pictures of notable tree species and activities related to the field. Lastly, the news from the parties will present short articles on related domestic news from the parties.

Subscription details to the newsletter are provided at the end of this issue. /

Brunei Darussalam Launched a Book on Endemic Plant Species



Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Utama Dato Seri Setia Awg Hj Yahya (L), Minister of Industry & Primary Resources

The 'ASEAN-ROK Forestry Cooperation Project: Brunei Plant Biodiversity-Endemics and Database' project finally came to a conclusion in April 2013 and the publication titled "The Flowering Plants Endemic to Brunei Darussalam 2012" was launched on 11 April 2013. The book is part of the Government of Brunei Darussalam's efforts to sustainably manage the country's natural resources and moreover the virgin forests of Borneo Island. Containing a total of 65 flowering plants-35 being herbal-that are endemic to Brunei, its co-authors include guest researcher Jacqueline Henrot from the Netherlands, Joffre Ali Ahmad from the Brunei Forestry Department/Brunei national Herbarium, and Khoon Meng Wong from Singapore. With 119 pages worth of material, the information provided within the book is expected to pull researchers and enthusiast from other countries to visit.

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What is AFoCo Landmark Project?

The “AFoCo landmark project” will be another regional project to be undertaken under the Agreement with funding support of ROK. It is however aiming at a long-term activities and goals.

The idea was first introduced in November 2012 at the Inception Meeting and more specific proposal for project activities was presented at the 2nd Session of Governing Council in January 2013 in Myanmar, under the title ‘Restoring Degraded Forest in Southeast Asia as a Model for a Greener Asia: Capacity-Building on Forest Restoration and Sustainable Forestry’. As it is still very early stage, the Governing Council welcomed the initiative and suggested to further improve the project document. The Secretariat will work on the project document will be done within the year, taking into consideration the inputs and comments from all Parties. /

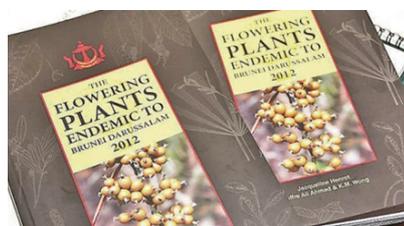
(...continued from p.2)

The Director of Forestry, Hj Saidin Salleh, who chaired the launching event, stated that “Besides discovering these endemic species, this cooperation can also train and heighten experiences and our expertise especially with the Forestry Department that are involved in research work in the forests and this has value for us.” He further emphasized its significance and extended appreciation as it is a product of cooperation between local and international scientists with support from the ASEAN Secretariat and Korea Forest Service.

The Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Utama Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Yahya bin Begawan Mudim Dato Paduka Haji Bakar, stated that the book “provides the basic information on the unique flowering plants in the country that we need to conserve in order to maintain the integrity of our natural environment.” He also emphasized that book “will serve as our preliminary step in conducting further studies and the development of appropriate management plans and strategies in preserving the identified plant species for the enjoyment and appreciation of our future generations.”

The book will be available for free while stocks last. /

<http://www.bt.com.bn/news-national/2013/04/12/brunei-launches-book-native-plants>



The newly launched book, “The Flowering Plants Endemic to Brunei Darussalam 2012”

Avoiding Sensitivities in the Move towards AFoCO

by Htain Lin, Senior Program Manager,
ASEAN-Korea Forest Cooperation Secretariat

Among the ASEAN forestry officials and alike, the name “AFoCO” is known as a Korean-led initiative to establish a regional organization, originated from a forestry cooperation between ASEAN 10 countries and Korea. Although the initiative is well publicized with full of high level events and government endorsement over the past year or so in Korea, there is a limited understanding and awareness about AFoCO in the ASEAN countries. Truly speaking, except very few of those engaged in AFoCO dialogue and events, no ordinary foresters, let alone general public, in ASEAN countries have a clue on what AFoCO means. That limited publicity about AFoCO may be due to preoccupation of ASEAN officials with their multitasking work or reluctance by the concerned officials to publicize it for some reasons.

Apparently, there are certain concerns and reservations among the ASEAN countries before committing themselves fully into this Korean-led initiative. At this stage of AFoCO dialogue, most ASEAN countries are mainly trying to assess the financial and technical benefit to be gained from joining AFoCO as well as the level of commitment from Korea. Also, there is another point to ensure the scope of AFoCO activities will not go against their national interest and plan. Historically, ASEAN forests have been dealing with various forms of illegal logging and there are still issues to be addressed on governance, transparency, corruption, and illicit trading actions either domestically or across the border at the regional level. These represent formidable challenges for some ASEAN countries and became sensitive due to their inability to cope with the problems or the implications associated with the issues.

Currently, Korea is rallying and campaigning AFoCO under the theme of Green Growth with climate change related interventions and reforestation actions, which are considered less sensitive and more of a common for the ASEAN countries. When it comes specific to the actions of Green Growth and Green Economy, there will certainly be promoting sustainable and eco-friendly practices and approaches. It is where the actions by AFoCO will counter against the unsustainable or illicit practices found elsewhere in ASEAN region and the issue of sensitivity is likely to surface. It would not be 100% possible to avoid such sensitive issues along the path of AFoCO in the future, however, at this initial stage of dialogue process, it is more advisable to carefully plan and avoid such conflicting issues on the discussion table. Otherwise, the already slow dialogue, due to wait-and-see approach of ASEAN side, would be running on a tougher road. /

News from the Parties

Indonesia Gets on Board

Indonesia finalized its internal procedures and sent the notification letter to the ASEAN Secretariat. We are now eagerly expecting the official notification from the ASEAN Secretariat to all Parties likely to be sent very soon. Now that ROK as well as all ASEAN Member States are on board, the cooperation activities is to come into full swing.

The 2nd Meeting of the "Working Group for the Establishment of Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO)" (WG-AFoCO) will be the next official occasion to be held in Laos in July 2013. It is all the more significant that all Parties are represented at this meeting as it will be the venue to go into details of strategy and the structure of the dialogue towards the AFoCO as well as the participation of other Asian countries.

Looking back at 9 months since the entry into force in August 2012, many milestones has been established - the Secretariat was set up in Seoul, 2 Governing Council meetings were held, the plan for regional projects was finalized, assessment procedure is almost finalized, a step forward was taken towards dialogue for establishment of AFoCO, and so on.

We could be optimistic and ambitious to accomplish the objectives of the Agreement on ASEAN-ROK Forest Cooperation. /

New Minister Appointed for Korea Forest Service

On March 15, the new administration of ROK announced the incoming Minister for Korea Forest Service. Dr. Shin Won-sop, a former professor at Chungbuk National University, has had various experiences in the forest field. He received masters degree from New Brunswick and Ph. D. from University of Toronto in forestry and dendrology.



He will be the 30th Minister of Korea Forest Service and will be succeeding Dr. Lee Don-Koo. With nearly hundred papers, he is also the author of several forest-related books. He served as a professor at Chungbuk National University most of his professional career, and also has experiences as professor and researcher at University of British Columbia, University of Idaho, as well as Forest Research Institute in Finland. He was also involved in the Forest Therapy Forum, Korean Institute of Forest Recreation, Korea Forest Society among others.

Notable are his works and studies in forest recreation and healing programs. He is a recognized scholar in the area of International Forest Welfare, as well. /

<http://www.naeil.com/News/economy/ViewNews.asp?nnum=707722&sid=E&tid=5>

Secretariat News

Participation at UNFF-10



The 10th Session of United Nations Forum on Forests was held on 8-19 April, 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey. Dr. Park Chongho, Executive Director (Acting), has been invited to introduce

ASEAN-ROK Forest Cooperation Agreement (AFoCo) as well as future Asian Forest Cooperation Organization at a side event, entitled "Forest and Landscape Restoration: Promising Examples in support of the Bonn Challenge", which was held on 9 April and organized by FAO, Korea Forest Service, and IUCN. /

New Leaflet Published



The AFoCo Secretariat has published a new leaflet introducing the ASEAN-Korea Forest Cooperation and its projects. Aligned with the theme of Greener Asia, the leaflet was produced in a green tone to emphasize the determinacy of AFoCo to spread the notion of environment protection and sustainable development. The newly published leaflets were displayed and distributed at the UNFF-10. /

[READER'S CORNER]

Suggest a title for our newsletter

We are running out of fresh smart ideas for a title of our beautiful newsletter. Your creative brilliant ideas will be greatly appreciated and the winner of the selected title will be provided with a small token of appreciation from the Secretariat. Send now and win a souvenir! newsletter@afocosec.org

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