

2019 ANNUAL REPORT





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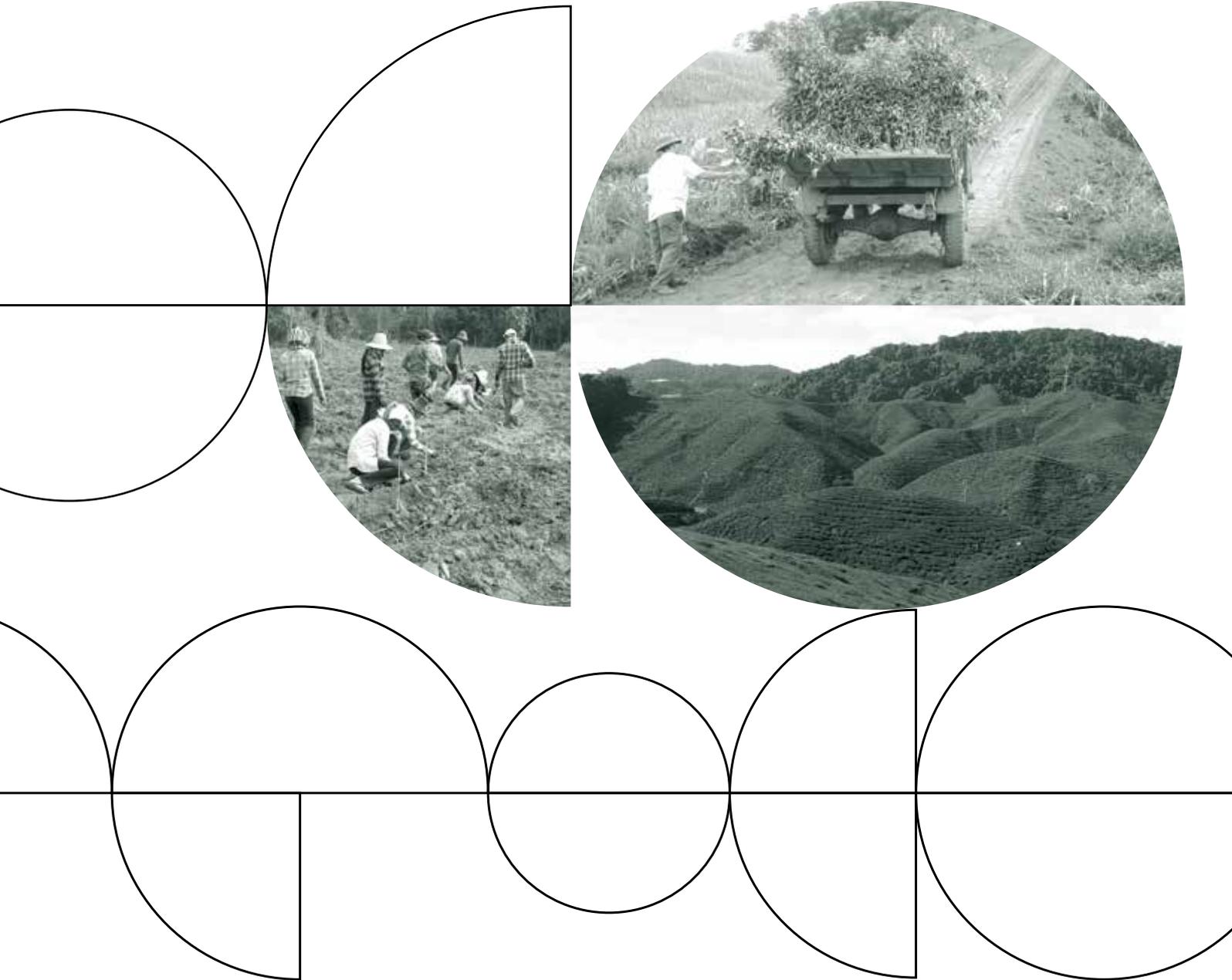
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Mr. Chenchu Norbu delivering his keynote speech at the Third Plenary Session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Week in 2019

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am pleased to present the 2019 Annual Report for the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO). The Annual Report is a compilation of the project highlights including successful events carried out in partnership with our member countries and partner institutions. 2019 is especially significant as it marks the first year of the organization's operation as a full-fledged intergovernmental organization in the region.

AFoCO launched the AFoCO Science and Technology Exchange Partnership (STEP) Program and saw our first PhD graduate from the Landmark Scholarship Program. All training courses and joint workshops were also conducted at the AFoCO Regional Training and Education Center (RETC) in Yangon region of Myanmar.

As for engagement and outreach efforts, we organized our first International Workshop on Achievements and the Way Forward for AFoCO and convened the first AFoCO Ministerial Meeting with ministers and high-level officials from member countries. Two sessions of the Assembly were also concluded in the Republic of Korea. At the 4th Asia-Pacific Forestry Week, we joined hands with the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet) and Pacific Community (SPC) to lead and coordinate Stream 1 on 'Restoring Our Forests and Landscapes'.

In 2019, we welcomed Indonesia, Lao PDR, Kazakhstan, the Philippines, and Thailand as Parties to AFoCO and we look forward to the other founding members joining AFoCO soon.

The organization has come a long way since its establishment was first proposed at the 2009 ASEAN-ROK Commemorative Summit. The photobook, 'Glimpses of Our Cooperation 2009-2019,' highlights cooperative projects with member countries and our various capacity development initiatives. I am confident that under the guidance of the Assembly, AFoCO will forge stronger and wider partnerships with other organizations to create positive and lasting impacts on the environment and benefit more stakeholders to work towards a Greener Asia.



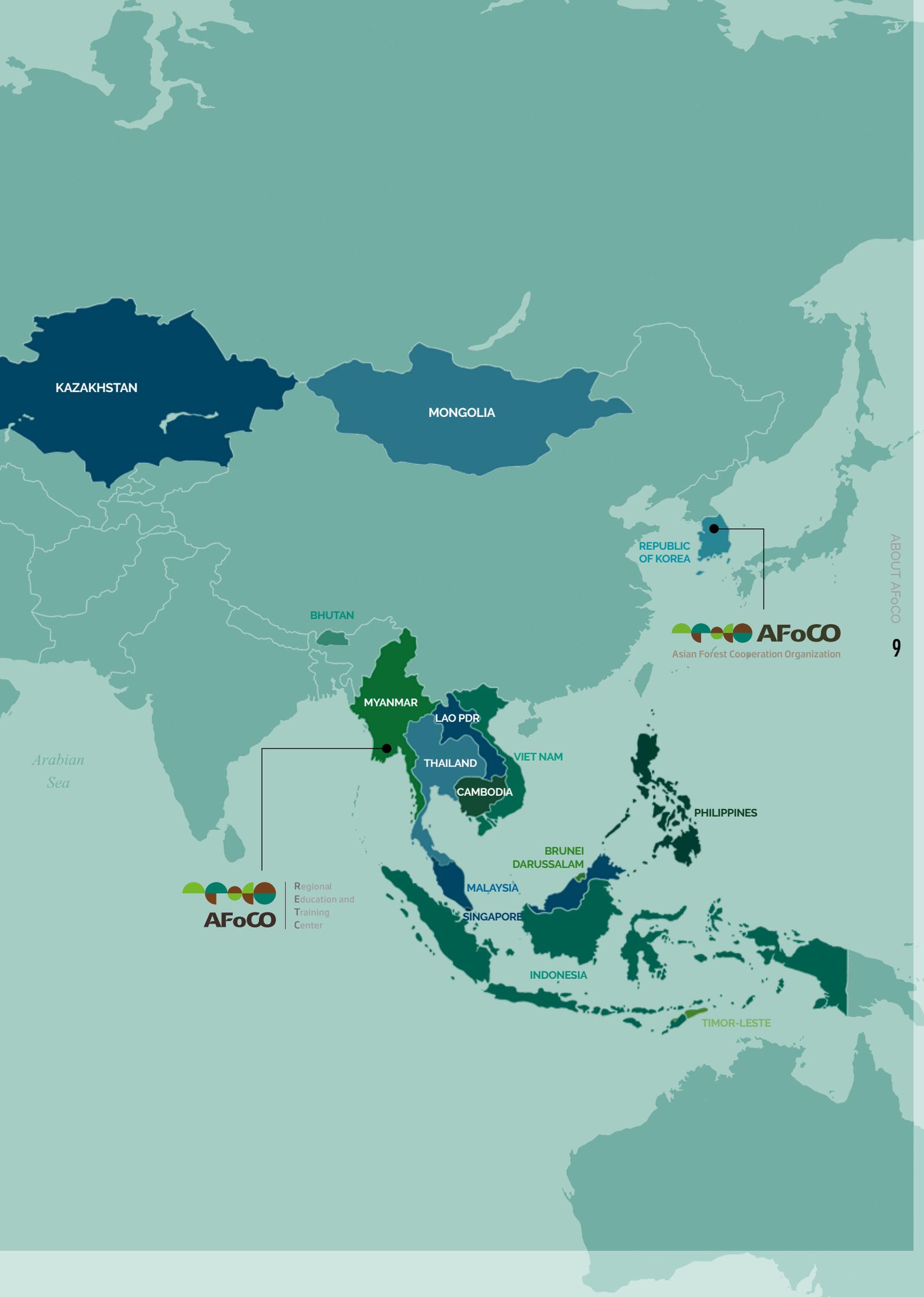
Chencho Norbu

First Executive Director of the
Asian Forest Cooperation Organization

ABOUT AFoCO

The Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO) is an intergovernmental organization that is committed to strengthening regional forest cooperation and taking concrete actions to promote sustainable forest management and address the impacts of climate change. The initial phase of AFoCO is the ASEAN-ROK Forest Cooperation (AFoCo), which was formalized in 2012 after the ASEAN-ROK Commemorative Summit in June 2009. On a global scale, forests are essential resources that are of inestimable value. However, despite their importance in combatting climate change, sustaining livelihoods and providing various ecosystem services, vast areas of forests continue to be overexploited or degraded. The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the global agenda for forestry requires concerted efforts and intersectoral collaboration. By reaching out to Member Countries across Asia, AFoCO has been concentrating its efforts in addressing emerging forestry issues to contribute to the sustainable management of forests and achieve our vision of a Greener Asia. AFoCO consists of two organs—the “Assembly” and the “Secretariat”. The Assembly is the highest decision-making body of AFoCO and it comprises of Representatives appointed by the Parties to the Agreement on the Establishment of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO). The Secretariat provides administrative support to the Organization and plays an important role in implementing the decisions of the Assembly. The Headquarters of AFoCO, including the Secretariat, is located in Seoul, the Republic of Korea.

As of December 2019, with the Philippines, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR and Thailand depositing the respective instruments in 2019, AFoCO's portfolio now consists of 14 member countries, including 12 Parties and 2 Observers, who cooperate and provide support in the implementation of its programs and projects.



KAZAKHSTAN

MONGOLIA

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

BHUTAN

MYANMAR

LAO PDR

VIET NAM

THAILAND

CAMBODIA

PHILIPPINES

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

MALAYSIA

SINGAPORE

INDONESIA

TIMOR-LESTE

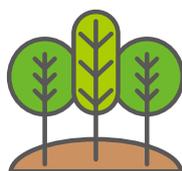
Arabian Sea



Regional Education and Training Center



FIVE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Initiating customized restoration & reforestation models

Customized restoration and reforestation models in target countries will be established and capacity building activities such as training courses and study tours will be implemented. AFoCO will design projects to ensure the proper involvement of local communities, systematic benefit-sharing mechanisms among stakeholders, and long-term sustainability of people and the environment.



Supporting research & development in climate change adaptation approaches

Scientific researches and studies on the development of climate change adaptation methodologies and approaches for vulnerable areas in the region will be carried out. AFoCO will support the implementation of field surveys and analytical studies on the risks, vulnerability, and impacts of climate change on major forest types as well as the development of relevant technical and policy recommendations.



Introducing systematic management on forest-related disasters

Proven fires-related disaster management technologies and integrated systems will be introduced. AFoCO will target disaster-prone areas such as hotspots of forest fires and landslides and carry out projects that cover both preventive and control measures such as forest fire monitoring and management, erosion and landslide control, the establishment of demonstration sites, and capacity building activities.



Local livelihood improvement & community-based small enterprise development

Communities and forest ecosystems in the region will both benefit from the implementation of proven forest-related activities for local livelihood improvement and small enterprise development, such as payments for forest ecosystem services and forest and community-based ecotourism. Advanced communication and imagery technologies will also be introduced to enhance the effectiveness of these activities.



Strengthening institutional capabilities, diversifying resources & promoting regional actions

AFoCO will explore alternative funding sources to continue efforts. Identify common issues and challenges among Member Countries, and engage in international fora and dialogues to promote common interests and positions at the global level.

Institutional Review Recommendations & Policy Development

In accordance with the recommendation of the Advisory Roundtable endorsed by the Assembly at its Second Session, the Secretariat conducted the independent institutional review of AFoCO by external review panel to identify strategic issues and set future directions of AFoCO and the Secretariat.

The Institutional Review Panel provided recommendations on a wide range of issues from the strategic framework of AFoCO to the management system of the Secretariat including its organizational structure. The Secretariat is to develop an action plan for the implementation of the recommendations.

As guided by the decisions of the Assembly, AFoCO is committed to ensuring that its projects, programs or activities and operations are implemented in accordance with the policies.

Six policies were approved by the Assembly in 2019:

- Policy on Ethics and Conflicts of Interest for the Executive Director of the AFoCO Secretariat
- Policy on Ethics and Conflicts of Interest for the Assembly of AFoCO
- Policy on Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism
- Policy on Information Disclosure
- Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy
- Gender Policy



ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH EFFORTS

**INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON ACHIEVEMENTS &
THE WAY FORWARD OF AFoCO**

ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY WEEK 2019

**LAND DEGRADATION NEUTRALITY &
FOREST AND LANDSCAPE RESTORATION WORKSHOP**

SECOND SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF AFoCO

**TECHNICAL MEETING ON THE
STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT**

THIRD SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF AFoCO

AFoCO MINISTERIAL MEETING

ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH EFFORTS

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON ACHIEVEMENTS & THE WAY FORWARD OF AFoCO



On April 23, the International Workshop on Achievements and the Way Forward was held to share past experiences and achievements of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO) and discuss AFoCO's future direction. The workshop was attended by some 90 participants, including speakers and representatives from the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), and embassies of AFoCO members, as well as relevant ministries in the Republic of Korea.

The workshop shared the specific projects and activities undertaken by AFoCO and activities conducted during the organization's initial phase. In addition to the overall summary of activities, specific achievements — particularly forest genetic resources and forest rehabilitation, mangrove rehabilitation, and community-based forest management in the member countries — were shared.

The workshop produced constructive recommendations on:

- exploring regional actions and approaches;
- converging different actors in forestry within each country;
- learning from experiences, multiplying best practices, and using available resources;
- developing measurable outputs and outcomes;
- overcoming challenges in procedural matters; and
- keeping up with changing environments, needs, and technology.



ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY WEEK (APFW2019)



APFW2019 was held from June 17-21, 2019, at Songdo Convensia Center in Incheon, the Republic of Korea. Under the theme “Forests for peace and well-being,” the event gathered experts and scholars to discuss and share views on key issues in the region’s forestry sector. Together with Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet) and the Pacific Community (SPC), AFoCO led a series of events at APFW2019 under the

thematic stream of “Restoring Our Forests and Landscapes.” Recognizing that forest restoration failures typically result from the complexity of technical, socioeconomic, institutional, and financial challenges, Stream 1’s opening session set the stage for genuine engagement and dynamic discussions over the week.

Close to 20 events and meetings were organized under this thematic stream, which aimed to share insights, explore solutions and innovations, build collaborations, and expand networks in the field of forest restoration.

Forestry officials from member countries also attended the closed-door event “Contextualized Regional FLR Strategy to Attain Aspirations for a Greener Asia,” where they shared about national plans and policies related to forest landscape restoration (FLR) and identified gaps to be addressed to step up restoration efforts at the national level.



Inclusive of the closed-door event for AFoCO Member Countries above, AFoCO organized or co-organized eight events and participated in exhibition booths during APFW/2019 (refer to table below). MOUs were also inked with the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and Korea Institute of Arboretum Management (KIAM) to expand the scope of its work.

June 18	Stream 1 Opening Plenary "Restoring Our Forests and Landscapes"	Partnering with Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet) and Pacific Community (SPC)
June 19	FLR action on the ground: Accelerating and scaling up its contribution to international goals for climate, biodiversity, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Partnering with Korea Forest Service
June 19,	The 1st International Conference on Wild Plant Seeds — Ex situ conservation strategy for wild plant seeds in the Asia-Pacific region, advancing forest andscape restoration through retention of biodiversity	Partnering with Baekdudaegan National Arboretum of Korea
June 21	Contextualized regional FLR strategy to attain aspirations for a Greener Asia	Inviting AFoCO member countries and partner organizations
June 18, 19 & 21	Sharing best practices and technologies to shape future FLR strategies	Table-top exhibition with scheduled promotional events
June 17	Regional expert meeting on "Forestry in Nationally determined contributions (NDCs) of Asia-Pacific countries: 2020 Vision"	Partnering with Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Green Climate Fund (GCF), Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), The Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC), and GLZ
June 21	Innovation of Peat Land Management under a Changing Climate	Partnering with Forest for Life Indonesia and the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)



LAND DEGRADATION NEUTRALITY & FOREST AND LANDSCAPE RESTORATION WORKSHOP



On July 30-31, AFoCO and UNCCD organized the Joint Workshop on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR) at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok. The two-day workshop focused on bringing together the agencies responsible for land degradation neutrality and forest rehabilitation.

Fifty-seven participants from 20 countries and seven strategic partner organizations came together to identify potential opportunities and challenges in linking different initiatives

at the national level. The objectives of the workshop were to share implementation experiences and strengthen collaborative action on land degradation neutrality and forest landscape restoration, as well as to identify potential forest-based project opportunities under AFoCO and Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes (LDN TPP).

Strategic partners, including UN agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Green Climate Fund (GCF), Asia-Pacific Network (APFNet), Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), The Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), shared views on the relevance and consistency of forest-related commitments to land, climate, and biodiversity.

The workshop shared about how countries are integrating global goals, particularly those related to land degradation neutrality and forest rehabilitation, with national-level policies and actions. Despite the ongoing implementation of various policies and practices, there are often gaps in the implementation of comprehensive activities under land degradation neutrality and forest rehabilitation. Participants in the workshop reiterated that collaborative actions and synergies will bring about more effective and efficient implementation on the ground.

Many of the participating countries have national committees or steering bodies put in place to address these issues. The workshop provided an opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of ongoing mechanisms and further served as a reminder that local communities, as stakeholders, should be engaged in planning and implementation processes. Goals can be only achieved when there is good coordination among stakeholders.

By bringing together officials from the land management sector as well as the forest sector, the workshop was a leap forward toward strengthening existing cooperation among cross-sectoral stakeholders.

SECOND SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF AFoCO

The Second Session of the Assembly of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization was held on April 24-25, 2019 in Gyeongju, Republic of Korea. The meeting was attended by representatives and delegates from all Parties to AFoCO: Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Republic of Korea (ROK), Myanmar, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam. Delegates from observer countries — Indonesia, Lao PDR, Kazakhstan, and Thailand — also attended the meeting. The Assembly welcomed the Philippines as a Party to AFoCO and shared about other progress in activities under AFoCO. The Assembly further approved new projects and decided to hold a high-level meeting in October in conjunction with the Third Session of the Assembly.



TECHNICAL MEETING ON THE STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT

The Technical Meeting on the Strategic Implementation of the Agreement was held on July 2-4, 2019, in Bangkok, Thailand. Twenty-one delegates from 11 member countries attended the meeting. The meeting provided an opportunity to obtain inputs and comments on draft texts of new policies, guidelines, and other documents drafted by the Secretariat. The amendment of existing documents such as the Staff Regulations and Project Manual was also discussed.

The meeting also featured discussion about the plan of actions for the implementation of the Strategic Plan approved at the First Session of the Assembly. AFoCO is slowly shaping and strengthening its institutional framework with the assistance of its member countries.



THIRD SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF AFoCO

The Third Session of the Assembly was held on October 28-29, 2019, in Seoul, Republic of Korea. All 14 Parties and Observers attended the session. At the third session, the Assembly welcomed and congratulated Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, and Thailand on joining AFoCO as Parties.



The Plan of Actions for the Strategic Plan (2019-2020) was further elaborated, complementing the approved Strategic Plan by expanding on expected outcomes and outputs for each priority area. The plan also outlines the implementation framework summarizing how concrete actions taken by AFoCO at the country and regional level contribute toward achieving the objectives of the Strategic Plan.

During this session, the Assembly also expressed appreciation for the confirmation of 3.7 million USD in funding for six projects that will be implemented in 2020. In addition to the projects with confirmed funding, the Assembly also welcomed and approved new projects proposed by Indonesia and Viet Nam. The Assembly noted the efforts to strengthen networks in the region and further looked forward to cooperating with other international organizations, expanding joint activities, diversifying sources of funding, and developing joint policy and guideline documents, among other initiatives.

The session also provided an opportunity to consider the recommendations that transpired from the institutional review of AFoCO and the Secretariat, which was endorsed by the Advisory Roundtable. The Secretariat has since proceeded to identify and prepare an action plan for the strategic implementation of the recommendations.

AFoCO MINISTERIAL MEETING

The AFoCO Ministerial Meeting was convened on October 30, 2019, in Seoul, the Republic of Korea. Ministers and high-level officers responsible for forestry from the 14 member countries of AFoCO engaged in discourses on innovative local actions on global targets, exploring opportunities, the future of sustainable capacity development with the AFoCO Regional Education and Training Center (RETC) in Myanmar, and the way forward for AFoCO membership.

Those in attendance at the meeting voiced hope that AFoCO will build on the progress made thus far and continue to play an active role in the forestry sector. Participants appreciated the leadership of ASEAN Member States and the Republic of Korea in initiating the establishment of AFoCO, a regional platform to strengthen forest cooperation. In achieving the regional and global goals set to address environmental and development challenges,

it was recognized that all members of AFoCO have put forth great efforts toward developing innovative approaches in sustainable forest management and forest-based climate change mitigation and adaptation. Noting the important role of AFoCO's capacity building initiatives in the fulfillment of the national goals and priorities of member countries, attendees emphasized the need for joint efforts to promote the RETC as a pioneer institute and center of excellence for forestry in the region. They reaffirmed that strengthened partnership and cooperation among Asian countries is essential in achieving sustainable forest management at the regional level.

A project launching ceremony was held as part of the meeting to celebrate the launch of six new AFoCO projects to be implemented in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Viet Nam.





**CAPACITY
BUILDING
INITIATIVES**

**AFoCO RETC
TRAINING COURSES**

- Regular Training Courses
- Community Development Training Courses
- Customized Training Courses

AFoCO LANDMARK SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

AFoCO FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

**AFoCO SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
EXCHANGE PARTNERSHIP (STEP) PROGRAM**

GLOBAL FOREST CAMPS & WORKSHOPS

CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVES

AFoCO RETC – BUILDING CAPACITIES IN FORESTRY

40

TRAINING COURSES

7 REGULAR TRAINING COURSES
26 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRAINING COURSES
7 CUSTOMIZED TRAINING COURSES

4,284

PARTICIPANTS

652 PARTICIPANTS
3,020 PARTICIPANTS
612 PARTICIPANTS

**participant numbers indicated in man-days*

AFoCO is focusing efforts on developing the capacities of member countries to deal with pressing forestry and environmental issues such as deforestation, forest degradation, and climate change. Under the vision of a "A Greener Asia," the AFoCO Regional Education and Training Center (RETC) was established to:

- Educate and develop leaders to practice good governance in the forestry sector
- Provide practical and problem-solving oriented education programs to improve and promote sustainable forest management
- Enhance knowledge and practices to promote sustainable livelihoods for forest-dependent communities
- Serve as a hub for meaningful discourses and the implementation of customized forest restoration and rehabilitation models in Asia

Strategically located in Hmawbi Township, Yangon Region, Myanmar, the training facility has been utilized as a venue for AFoCO's capacity development activities as well as regional workshops and training courses jointly organized with other international organizations, research institutes, and universities.

Provision of Forest Fire Vehicles and Computers

The Korea Forest Service and AFoCO donated 5 forest fire vehicles and 24 computers to the Forest Department of Myanmar to promote forestry education and contribute to improving the management of forest disasters in Myanmar through the utilization of advanced technologies and equipment. This provision of vehicles and computers was commemorated in a donation ceremony held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, on September 12, 2019.



TRAINING COURSES

Regular Training Courses

AFoCO implemented seven regular short-term training courses in 2019. These short-term training courses were aimed at enhancing knowledge and understanding of forest management and providing greater access to advanced technologies.

• Forest Restoration and Food Security in Korea (Feb. 18-22)

In addition to sharing best practices on policy and management of national reforestation efforts in Korea with a focus on reforestation and food security issues, this training course also discussed challenges and lessons learned from previous reforestation experiences to guide ongoing and future reforestation efforts and support the development of reforestation models that are suited to specific country conditions.



• Development of AFoCO Project Proposals (Apr. 8-12)

To build the capacities of member countries in project development and resource mobilization, this training course focused on increasing efficiency and effectiveness in mobilizing resources to meet the needs of project development in member countries, providing knowledge and information on AFoCO projects and project formulation processes, as well as improving project planning and proposal development skills in line with AFoCO's Strategic Plan and Project Manual.



- **Workshop for Policymakers – Beyond Planting Trees: Forest Pathways to No Poverty and Zero Hunger (May 21-23)**

Co-organized with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), this workshop aimed to improve understanding of conceptual linkages between forests, poverty reduction, food security, and nutrition; share practical experiences and reflect on cases highlighting cross-sectoral policies, programs, and forest restoration and rehabilitation interventions; discuss challenges and opportunities and establish a concrete set of possible recommendations reflecting the lessons learned; and improve national and regional capacities in mainstreaming integrated forestry policy and programs well as any ongoing and future FRR efforts to create sustainable forest restoration and reforestation models.



- **Forest Fire Management (Jun. 24-28)**

This course aimed to enhance understanding of forest fire sciences, such as forest fire information and fire behavior; share knowledge on the best practices of forest fire management and suppression; and facilitate understanding of conceptual ideas on forest fire management. A fire control practice session was also conducted in the Moke-khar reserved forest in Minhla Township, Bago Region, Myanmar.



• Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for Livelihood Improvements (Aug. 26-30)

This training course covered topics on biodiversity and forest ecosystems, including the economics of biodiversity and forest ecosystems, as well as planning and implementation for the sustainable use of biodiversity. Case studies on the conservation and use of biodiversity and traditional forest knowledge were also introduced to participants.



• Accelerating Projects through Resource Diversification (Nov. 5-7)

In November 2019, high-level officials involved in AFoCO projects and activities from member countries gathered at the AFoCO RETC in Myanmar to learn about project funding mechanisms and discussed challenges, opportunities, and new ideas.

Experts from partner organizations such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Asia Forest Institute (AFI), Climate Forestry, and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) shared knowledge on project development through the formulation of co-financed projects and resource mobilization through co-financing mechanisms. The workshop provided an opportunity to strengthen networks with other organizations and exchange knowledge and experiences on project development, resource mobilization, and fundraising strategies.



• Facilitating Community-based Enterprises (Dec. 9-13)

Participants from AFoCO member countries learned how to explain and assess Community Forest Enterprise (CFE) principles in a community forestry (CF) context; apply the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) framework to identify community assets and conditions that help develop these assets for CFEs; explain the forest products and services screening and ranking tools; use the value chain tool to assess potential forest products and services and identify interventions along the value chain for sustainable CFEs; and explore risks and enabling conditions for sustainable CFE initiatives in the CF context. Participants also went on a field trip to practice using the tools and analytical framework learned during the in-class learning sessions.



Community Development Training Courses

• Education program for students and teachers in Yangon

In 2019, 22 study visits were organized for local students and teachers as part of the community development training program at the AFoCO RETC. A total of 1,320 students and teachers from schools in Yangon joined the study visits to gain more knowledge on the current state of forests and understand the roles of local communities in forest conservation and preventing deforestation. The study visits also contributed towards raising public awareness on forests and the important roles they play in mitigating climate change.

• Livelihood Improvement Courses

At the AFoCO RETC, livelihood development trainings are organized on a regular basis to train local people in making bamboo handicrafts, furniture, and other products in order to provide alternative income sources to sustain their livelihoods. In the long run, these community courses will help secure sustainable livelihoods, support the development of community forest enterprises, and reduce pressures on forest resources.

In 2019, a series of four livelihood improvement courses, each lasting five days, were implemented between March and July. The courses helped impart skills and knowledge in the creation of furniture, accessories and other merchandise from non-timber forest products; promote alternative substantive incomes by making community forestry products to access markets; introduce the practice of community forestry as an economically viable tool; and reduce pressures on the unsustainable use of forests.





Customized Training Courses

In addition to regular training courses, AFoCO has expanded its portfolio of capacity building initiatives to include customized training courses that are tailored to meet the needs of technical-level officers, policy-makers, university students, and local communities in member countries.

• Training of Trainers (ToT) on Facilitating Community-based Enterprises with RECOFTC

Jointly implemented with The Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC), the ToT courses are designed to prepare instructors to deliver regular community-based enterprise development courses. The courses focused on equipping prospective trainers with knowledge and skills on the planning and design of a community-based enterprise development curriculum and the delivery of participatory training sessions. A total of ten participants from Myanmar and the AFoCO Secretariat attended the series of three training workshops and facilitated a regular course held in December as a team.



• Young Forester Programs

AFoCO's Young Forester Programs are experiential-based programs designed to enhance understanding of forests and forest ecosystems in Asia and promote international cooperation in forestry. The program also challenges university students to look beyond the forest and think of integrative and cross-sectoral approaches to deal with issues in the forestry sector. The week-long program includes participatory lessons and field visits to provide students with practical learning experiences and valuable networking opportunities.



In 2019, AFoCO implemented three customized Young Forester Programs for university students:

- Young Forester Program with Chonnam National University (Jan. 20-27)
- Young Forester Program with Korea Forestry Promotion Institute (Sep. 18-25)
- Young Forester Program with Chungnam National University (Sep. 29-Oct. 5)



• ITTO Regional Workshop on Sustaining Teak Forests in Mekong Basin

Convened by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and organized in cooperation with the Forest Research Institution of Myanmar and AFoCO, the 4-day Regional Workshop on Sustaining Teak Forests in the Mekong Basin was held at the AFoCO RETC in Myanmar from September 24-27.

Six key recommendations on the sustainable development of the teak-based forest sector emerged from the dialogues and discussions at the workshop:

- Enhance the in situ and ex situ conservation of teak genetic resources
- Prove silvicultural aspects of teak plantations
- Promote the engagement of smallholders and communities
- Promote value chains for teak timber and timber products
- Strengthen the sustainable supply and consumption of teak timber and timber products
- Encourage the formulation of sustainable global teak strategies and recommended actions

The sustainable management of teak forests in the Mekong Basin will help create jobs for the young generation, generate income for smallholders, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). On the last day, participants visited a teak plantation in Taikkyi Township and the wood-based industrial factory of Myanmar timber enterprise in Insein Township to learn about natural teak forest management, teak plantation establishment, and sustainable wood industries.



AFoCO LANDMARK SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



Since 2015, the AFoCO Landmark Scholarship Program has been supporting outstanding scholars from ASEAN Member States in their pursuit of higher education at universities in the Republic of Korea. The Scholarship Program has been a key aspect of the organization's efforts in strengthening capacities and nurturing future leaders in the region's forestry sector.

2019 Graduates



"The knowledge and experiences I have acquired through the Landmark Scholarship Program will help me achieve my academic career goal of becoming a well-known researcher and scientist in Cambodia."

Dr. Nhem Sareth (Cambodia)

*PhD in Forest Resources,
Kongju National University*



"I had the opportunity to work on many research projects during my time in Korea. The knowledge I have gained from these experiences has certainly improved my research capabilities, and I believe that this will benefit me greatly in my professional career."

Aung Aung (Myanmar)

*MSc in Forest Resources,
Chungnam National University*



For the 2019 academic year, AFoCO awarded scholarships to three scholarship recipients: Ei Sandi Sett from Myanmar (PhD course at Seoul National University), Phayvanh Alounsavath from Lao PDR (PhD course at Chungnam National University), and Nur Syamsi Muhammad from Indonesia (MSc course at Yeungnam University). The organization also celebrated the successes of four scholars who graduated from their universities this year:



"The Program has helped me develop into a more pragmatic and creative thinker. The many opportunities that I have had participating in workshops, conferences, and outdoor activities have also helped to enhance my knowledge and made me a more confident person."

Tran Thi Mai Anh (Viet Nam)

MSc in Forest Resources,
Kookmin University



"My study is important not only to me but also to my country in terms of the mapping of environmental and social factors that underpin sustainable development. When I return to Myanmar, I will continue working at my department and make use of what I have learned to narrow the gaps in natural resources management."

Su Yi Hnin (Myanmar)

MSc in Forest Resources and Ecological Restoration,
Yeungnam University

2019 Fe



AFoCO FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM



The AFoCO Fellowship Program welcomes junior government officials of AFoCO member countries to work at the AFoCO Secretariat for a period of six months to a year. Operated on an annual basis, the program aims to establish an effective communication network between member countries and the Secretariat, facilitate close cooperation with member countries, and improve understanding of working environments

and procedural matters in order to facilitate the implementation of projects and activities.

The 2019 Fellowship Program welcomed four government officials from forestry ministries in member countries to the Secretariat Kinley Dem from Bhutan, Kemly Ouch from Cambodia, Thet Myat Yadanar Aye Myanmar, and Nguyen Xuan Huu from Viet Nam contributed their expertise through various projects and events and forged precious friendships while working together. During their stint in Korea, a series of study visits to the National Institute of Forest Science (NIFoS), Forest Aviation Headquarters, National Forest Seed Variety Center, and Wood Trade Center of the National Forestry Cooperation Federation, were organized to provide valuable opportunities to explore and share expertise and knowledge that can be adapted to their home countries.



(L to R) Nguyen Xuan Huu (Viet Nam), Kemly Ouch (Cambodia), Kinley Dem (Bhutan), and Thet Myat Yadanar Aye (Myanmar)

Flowship Officials

Kinley Dem

Department of Forests and Park Services,
Bhutan

"The Program opened my eyes to the efforts put forth in the member countries, especially the founding ASEAN countries, in the implementation of the projects gearing towards global greening. I learned about the grassroots level activities done by AFoCO and member countries while reviewing project documents and progress reports thereafter. How the member countries, with limited resources, work to a larger goal of a green Asia and further a clean and green world is noteworthy. The Program also provided us the avenue and skills to further strengthen cooperation and coordination in the region."

Thet Myat Yadanar Aye
Forest Department, Myanmar

AFoCO taught me the importance of strengthened cooperation and coordination amongst countries for forest management and also gave me insights into Korean culture. The six-month assignment also gave me exposure to many new ideas and experiences to work under different circumstances and environments and helped inculcate the spirit of team work."

Kemly Ouch

Forestry Administration, Cambodia

"I gained valuable experiences while coordinating the Joint Workshop on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR) and acquired knowledge about country-level implementation of the LDN, as well as about forest restoration initiatives at the national level, including institutional policy, stakeholder participation, and financing aspects. It gave me a larger picture of how forest restoration would greatly contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals as well as other global commitments."

Nguyen Xuan Huu

Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences,
Viet Nam

"I was impressed with the transparency and openness at AFoCO. The transparent and open communication helps people feel that the things they offer are valuable and meaningful because the staff knows that what they contribute affects the organization. The Secretariat holds ad hoc meetings and sharing sessions in addition to regular monthly meetings. This helps each and every staff member have a good grasp of what is happening and of their respective roles. Together, we brainstorm solutions and new ideas and openly discuss new courses of action."

AFoCO SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY EXCHANGE PARTNERSHIP (STEP) PROGRAM

September 2019 marked the launch of AFoCO's first Science and Technology Partnership (STEP) Program. Beginning on September 17, the month-long training course targeted technical-level researchers with at least a year's experience in the field of forest plant biodiversity. The theme for the 2019 STEP Program was "The Role of Arboreturns in the Conservation of Forest Plant Biodiversity," and the course was jointly organized with the Baekdudaegan National Arboretum (BDNA) — the second-largest arboretum in the world.

Located in Bonghwa county in north Gyeongsang province of Korea, BDNA is also home to the world's first underground tunnel-type seed storage facility.

This year's program at the BDNA aimed to share comprehensive knowledge and skills about plant conservation, such as the classification of forest plants, seed collection, seed management, tissue culture, seed viability tests, and propagation, and to



improve the capacity of officials by providing hands-on experiences related to landscape design, construction, and operation of arboreturns.

The researchers of the 2019 STEP Program are; Meng Loth from Cambodia, Kencho Rigzin from Bhutan, Nurul Hazlina from Brunei Darussalam, Swe Swe Win from Myanmar, and Trieu Thi Thu Ha from Viet Nam.



Sampling seeds under the guidance of a BDNA expert



(L to R) Meng Loth (Cambodia), Swe Swe Win (Myanmar), Trieu Thi Thu Ha (Viet Nam), Nurul Hazlina (Brunei Darussalam), and Kencho Rigzin (Bhutan)

How do you think you can apply what you have learned at the STEP Program in your home country?

"Tissue culture the most important activity of the program because we can learn about how to make mediums for seed, tree cutting, callus, plant. In the IRD of Cambodia, we also have a tissue culture laboratory, but we lack the capacity to carry out tissue culture. In some places, it is not easy to find a parent plant which produces good seeds for storage. I hope that in the future, AFoCO will train participants from Cambodia on tissue culture on tropical seedlings that use callus and subculture to help enhance our research capabilities in this area."

Meng Loth, Forest Resource Social, Economic and Environmental Impact Assessment Center, Cambodia

"One of the most important and interesting activity, which I thoroughly enjoyed was learning about the Baekdudaegan Global Seed Vault. Since BDGSV being the only facility in the world which serves as both a seed bank and a seed vault, I believe that storing seeds in BDGSV would be a win-win situation for both the organizations when we talk about future conservation and preservation of our plant genetic resources. The way forward to achieve the conservation of plant genetic resources would be through a partnership between the National Biodiversity Centre of Bhutan and the Baekdudaegan Global Seed Vault."

Kencho Rigzin, Department of Forests and Park Services, Bhutan

"I am especially interested in the seed management protocol employed at BDNA including seed collection, seed cleaning, seed characteristic investigation, seed morphology investigation, seed viability test. In Vietnam, we have a seed store with more than 10,000 seed lots of plus trees. However, we are only able to conduct germination tests to check the germination rate of seeds. In the future, I hope we will have a chance to carry out X-ray tests and Tetrazolium tests as these methods are more time-saving and cost-effective."

Trieu Thi Thu Ha, Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences

Several applications that can be applied in Brunei include the seed collection and storage project with BDNA, improvement on nursery and Internet of Things (IOT), which allows one to remotely control the environmental conditions in a nursery. Furthermore, there is also plant biotechnology and tissue culture that can be applied in research on economically and medicinally important as well as rare, endemic and endangered native plant species for mass production and ex-situ conservation purposes.

Nurul Hazlina, Botanical Research Centre of University, Brunei Darussalam

"We learned about the systematic management of seeds and practiced carrying out procedures such as seed collection, cleaning, counting, measuring moisture content, germination tests and seed X-ray analysis. We were also introduced to nursery technologies and tissue culture. If disseminated through staff training, the skills and knowledge learned can help improve seed management in Myanmar and will be useful in our seed conservation program."

Swe Swe Win, Forest Seed Center, Forest Research Institute, Myanmar

GLOBAL FOREST CAMPS & WORKSHOPS



2,463
Students

14
Camps & Workshops

Forests play a key role in maintaining the health of our planet and mitigating the negative effects of climate change. Educating our younger generation about forests and their importance is crucial in instilling an appreciation for forests and nature and ensuring that our forests continue to be protected and sustainably managed for generations to come.

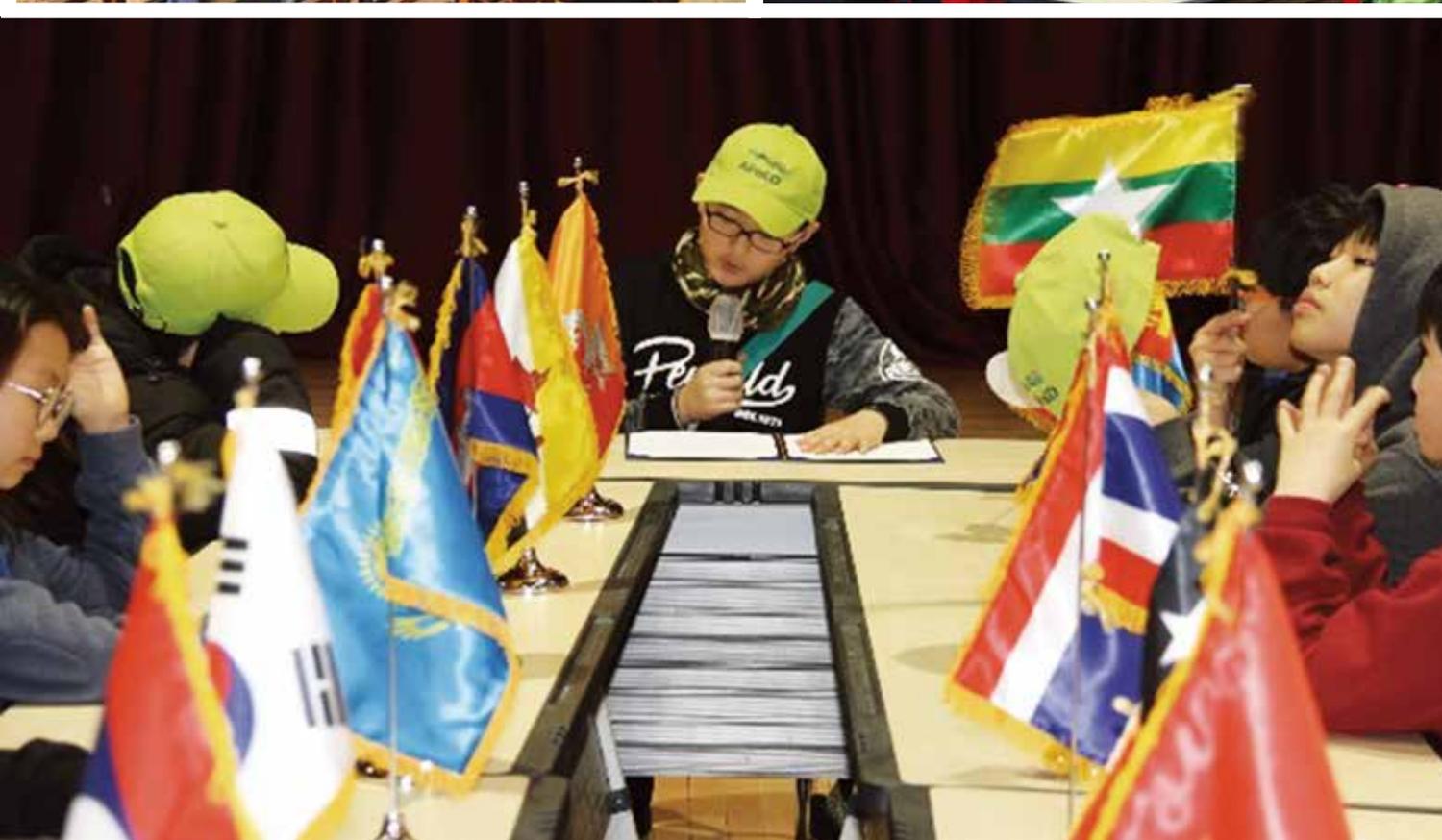
With support from the Korea Forest Welfare Institute's Korea Green Fund, AFoCO organized a series of forest education and experiential programs targeted at multicultural youths in Korea to enhance their understanding of the problems faced by forests and nature today and inspire them to take action to protect and manage them in a sustainable manner.

These programs promoted environmental awareness by helping children gain a better understanding of forests and the important roles that they play while providing opportunities to learn about international forest cooperation through various activities, including a mock AFoCO Assembly and other experiential cultural activities.

Partnering with the National Center for Forest Therapy in Yeongju and the National Center for Forest Activities in Hoengseong, AFoCO conducted five forest camp programs for elementary and middle school children in February and August. During the summer camps, participants also embarked on a study tour to the Forest Aviation Headquarters in Wonju and learned firsthand about how forest fires are being monitored, prevented, and suppressed through the use of integrated systems and advanced technologies.

In October and November, AFoCO visited schools across the country to organize experiential forest culture workshops. The half-day workshops began with a talk on forests in Asia and the benefits that they provide. The talk was followed by a wood crafting session which saw children diligently creating various wood products under the guidance of professional instructors.







PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

LANDMARK RESTORATION PROJECTS

Establishment of Forest Genetics Center for Restoration of Major Timber Species in Cambodia (AFoCO/005/2014)

Rehabilitation & Development of Mangrove Forest Ecosystem in Thai Binh Province, Viet Nam (AFoCO/006/2014)

Village-Based Forest Rehabilitation in Lao PDR (AFoCO/008/2014)

REGIONAL PROJECTS

Promotion of Forest Rehabilitation in Cambodia & Viet Nam through Demonstration Models & Improvement of Seed Supply System (AFoCO/003/2014)

Facilitating the Participatory Planning of Community-Based Forest Management using Geographic Information System & Remote Sensing Technologies in Forest Resources Management in the Philippines, Indonesia & Thailand (AFoCO/004/2014)

Domestication of Endangered, Endemic & Threatened Plant Species in Disturbed Terrestrial Ecosystems in Malaysia & Thailand (AFoCO/010/2016)

Capacity Building for Landscape Approach to Support the Sustainable Natural Resources Management in Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Philippines & Singapore (AFoCO/011/2016)

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

LANDMARK RESTORATION PROJECTS

Establishment of Forest Genetics Center for Restoration of Major Timber Species in Cambodia (AFoCO/005/2014)

Cambodia and other regions in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) lost heavy forest cover over more than 30 years from 1973 to 2009. The forest cover in Cambodia decreased by 22% in the period between 1973 and 2010, posing a threat to several species, including *Dalbergia cochinchinensis*, a valuable native species in Cambodia. Based on this background, this restoration project (2016-2025) aims to implement a long-term tree breeding plan for three main timber species, namely, *D. cochinchinensis*, *D. intricatus*, and *Pterocarpus macrocarpus*, and to strengthen the restoration and tree breeding capabilities of the Forestry Administration (FA) in Cambodia. In technical cooperation with the National Institute of Forest Science of the Republic of Korea (NIFoS), the project is establishing the country's first clonal seed orchard for three major timber species in Cambodia.

In 2019, this project entered its maintenance period of seed orchards and progeny test plantation sites, a total of 30 ha. The project team has taken professional training at the NIFoS for tree breeding, seed orchards, data analysis, and tree diseases. As a follow-up, the Tree Improvement Guidelines are currently undergoing a final editorial round. Once published, the guidelines will be the second major publication of this project after the Plus Tree Data Book, which has information on around 300 plus trees — including *D. cochinchinensis*, *D. intricatus*, and *P. macrocarpus* — across the country.

The project conducted maintenance activities for seed orchards (6 ha), progeny-test plantation areas (24 ha), experimental forests (100 ha), and *Dalbergia cochinchinensis* restoration areas (89 ha). The existing experimental forests were continuously

measured to keep track of the effect of silvicultural treatments. Data recording was conducted to monitor the annual growth of selected tree species.



Weeding, pruning, measuring, and monitoring

There was a technical training course on tree breeding in Korea. Four project coordinating field staff members were sent to attend the 7-day training course organized by NIFoS in Suwon, Korea. The course covered the basics of tree breeding, seed orchards, data analysis, and tree diseases.

Thirty students and lecturers from the Faculty of Forestry, Royal University of Agriculture (RUA), organized a 3-day study tour to the project site at Khun Ream Forest Research Station. During the course, students learned about the ongoing seed orchard establishment as well as other forest restoration research techniques and activities that have been carried out by Institute of Forest and Wildlife Research and Development (IRD). The students also paid a one-day trip to observe the situation at the other project site in Chan Sor

to learn about the field operation. In Khun Ream, moreover, the students had a chance to visit the seed source in the natural forest, which is known as the only one remaining in Cambodia for *Dalbergia* species, and learn about the local FA officer's duties in managing the forests.



IMPACT | Since the project is an initiative in Cambodia, project dissemination to students, government officials as well as national and international researchers is one of its significant activities. Visitors have been very interested in observing and learning from the project's activities. Throughout the year, high-level government officials of the country including the director general of the FA visited the project sites and attended presentation sessions organized by the project.

Rehabilitation & Development of Mangrove Forest Ecosystems in Thai Binh Province, Viet Nam (AFoCO/006/2014)

Mangrove forests play a crucial role in the livelihoods of the coastal people in Viet Nam, besides their role in the conservation and stabilization of the coastal land, especially amid an increasing number of massive floods and typhoons due to climate change. Mangrove survival in northern Viet Nam, where Thai Binh Province is located, is continuously challenged by low sea temperatures. The mangrove forest in the province saw a significant decline (19%) from 2000 to 2012. This project (2015-2023) is aimed toward rehabilitating and developing the mangrove forest ecosystems in the province and shall be done mainly through (i) new planting, supplementary planting (enrichment), and protection of mangrove forests and (ii) training for capacity building and communication.

As all the planting activities were completed in 2018, this project has been focusing on its post-planting practices for the entire area, assisted by the technical consultation agency of Viet Nam, the Research Institute for Forest Ecology and Environment (RIFEE). The workshop "Protection and development of mangrove forest in association with sustainable aquaculture production and ecotourism in Thai Binh Province" was held on November 26-27, 2019, in Thai Binh. The workshop mainly tapped into the potential of the project site to be exhibited as a demonstration site for mangrove ecotourism in the province, which was a good initiative for the project steering committee to advise the RIFEE to do a relative baseline study on in 2020.

The project conducted the tending and protection of mangrove forests planted in 2017 (60 ha) and 2018 (60 ha). The four participating communes regularly implemented patrolling activities for existing mangrove areas (800 ha) and areas planted in 2016 (40 ha). Some degradation tendency in planted regions was observed in two communes (4 ha), so the RIFEE will conduct scientific research to increase its survival rate to over 60 % in 2020.

At the 5th PSC Meeting, the Committee notably celebrated the publication of the "Guidelines for Forest Plantation and Protection, and Monitoring and Evaluation" for *Sonneratia caseolaris*, *Kandelia obovata*, and *Avicennia marina* in Vietnamese and English, consisting of five separate booklets on:

- 1) Instruction on nursery techniques
- 2) Guidelines on new and supplementary planting techniques
- 3) Standards for seedling development and approval for silvicultural activities
- 4) Guidelines for mangrove forest community-based management
- 5) Monitoring and evaluation plans for silvicultural activities.



Visit to the project site in Thuy Xuan Commune by Nguyen Quoc Tri, Director General of VNFoREST

News broadcasts on Thai Binh television and newspaper reports about the mangrove forests and project activities have been produced to disseminate information on the project and the roles of mangrove forests in the environment.

A training course for local authorities and local people inside and outside the project sites was held on November 23, 2019, at the Thuy Xuan Commune. At the training, RIFEE provided updated regulations of the Forestry Law 2017 and relevant regulations on coastal forests, including mangrove forests. The workshop 'on' "Protection and development of mangrove forest in association with sustainable aquaculture production and ecotourism in Thai Binh Province," aimed to:

- Share orientations on the protection and development of the mangrove forest ecosystems in Thai Binh Province
- Share experiences on models of sustainable aquaculture production and ecotourism development in association with the protection and development of mangrove forests
- Discuss how to ensure harmonization between the protection and development of mangrove forests and sustainable aquaculture and ecotourism development in Thai Binh Province



Site visit to a local brewery that produces beverages from mangrove tree parts



Workshop on "Protection and development of mangrove forest in association with sustainable aquaculture production and ecotourism in Thai Binh Province"



Training course for local authorities and local people



News broadcast on Thai Binh television

IMPACT | The project has been encouraging the active participation of local people in forest tending and protection and has increased awareness of local people about the roles of mangroves. Likewise, it involves close cooperation among the central and provincial governments, the technical consultancy body (RIFEE), and the AFoCO Secretariat. It has attracted considerable attention from the Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFoREST) and provincial and local authorities to consider sustainable — provincially and locally orientated — mangrove forest management, and now they are cooperating to apply the concept of mangrove ecotourism to Thai Binh Province.

Village-based Forest Rehabilitation in Lao PDR (AFoCO/008/2014)

The overall objective of this project (2016-2025) is to increase forest cover through the restoration of degraded forest areas; strengthen the capability of government agencies, local authorities, and villagers in implementing National Forest Rehabilitation Policy; and contribute to poverty reduction by providing a direct income to local people, particularly the poor. Drawing on the ROK's experiences in national forest rehabilitation, the project is introducing a new concept of "village-driven forest rehabilitation," focusing on capacity building to boost villagers' ownership of forests with new practical methodologies.

The concept has also contributed to the improvement of Forestry Law by emphasizing capacity building to boost villagers' ownership of forests, for which the project is mainly operated by two village groups: Village Forest Development Groups (VFDGs) and Village Forest Protection Groups (VFPGs). Considering the continuous improvement of guidelines for village-driven forest rehabilitation based on observations and lessons from project sites in the central and southern regions of the country, a total of 60 ha of ex-situ plantation areas has been rehabilitated, and 90 ha of enrichment plantation sites were planted with native trees selected by villagers until 2019.

In Paksong, project staff and VFDG members have produced about 30,000 seedlings of native species based on the contract of producing 60,000 seedlings. Villagers have earned an income from seedling production of about 180,000,000 Lao Kip (USD 20,000, or USD 460/person). To implement the enrichment plantation, the project staff and VFDG members thoroughly conducted assessments of natural regeneration in three blocks to be planted in 2019, 2020, and 2021 with a total land area of 120 ha. The ex-situ conservation plantation of 40 ha is well-maintained and protected by families who have signed a contract with the project staff.

In Sangthong, the project staff and VFDG members have produced about 64,340 seedlings (*Azalia* Spp., *Pterocarpus* Spp., Teak, *Sindora* Spp., and *Shorea* Spp.) based on a contract of providing ten species and 70,000 seedlings. The total area of 630 ha for enrichment planting was demarcated, of which 55 ha have been planted thus far.



To obtain more information on land suitability for enrichment planting, project staff and VFDG members conducted a complete reassessment of natural regeneration and potential areas for enrichment planting in four villages. The results showed that out of 600 ha in Phoukanya, 39% (230 ha) is suitable for applying enrichment planting, and 24% (145 ha) is secondary forest to regenerate naturally. The rest of the areas (300 ha) have steep slopes, rocky pan, or bamboo, so they are not suitable for planting. Regarding the 300 ha, the project will consider establishing an alternative plan following the advice of the PSC. The ex-situ conservation plantation of 20 ha is well-maintained and protected by families who have signed a contract with the project staff.

The project distributed 20,751 seedlings to seven individual landowners for agroforestry activities in Sangthong.

In Paksong, a ceremony for National Arbor Day was organized at Kongtoun Secondary School, Paksong District, Champasak Province, in mid-June. The project also hosted an awareness-raising event on the proper use of natural water supply systems in the village of Kongtoun.

In Sangthong, a ceremony for Arbor Day was organized in Ban Nongboua Sangthong District, Vientiane Capital, on June 14, 2019. Two groups visited the project site. The first group was 15 people from Nepal visited the project site on July 10, 2019, and the second group consisted of 40 people from civil society organizations working in Lao PDR.



Visitors from Nepal at the project site in Sangthong



The official use of the natural water supply system in the village of Kongtoun village, Paksong



Seedling production at Nalath nursery

The project a total of 110 provided patrolling uniforms for the VFPGs of Sangthong and Paksong. Four laptops and a printer were also offered to project staff in the Village Forest Management Division (two laptops), Paksong (a computer), and Sangthong (a computer and a printer). The project also supported two graduate from the Faculty of Forestry, National University of Laos, to assist the project staff in the implementation of enrichment activities in Sangthong and Paksong.

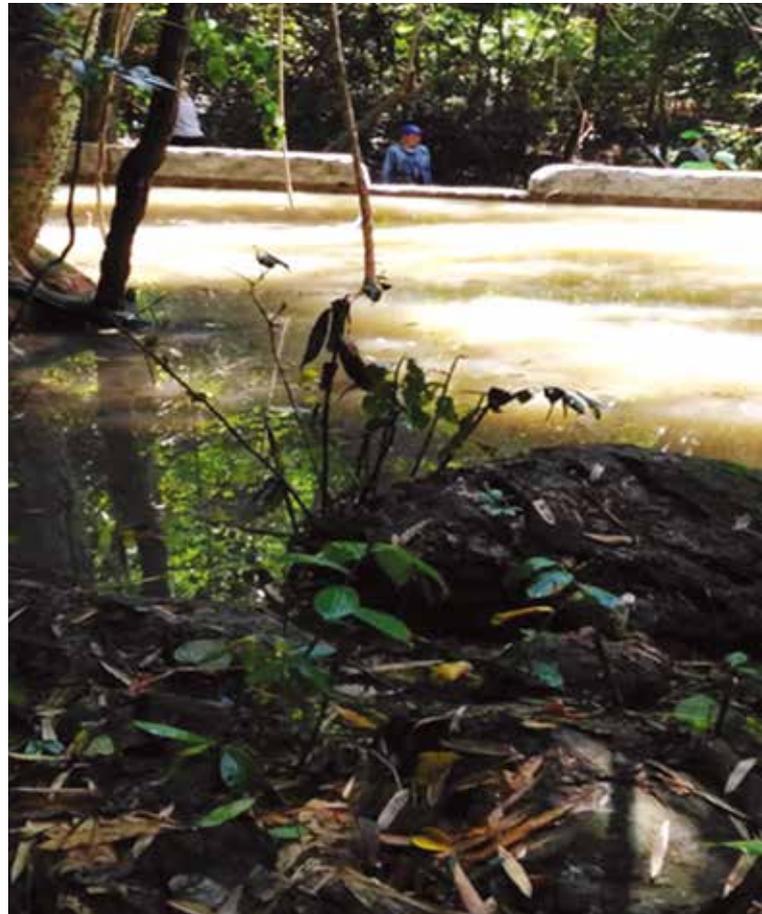
A small check-dam in Phoukhanya Mountain of Sangthong near the enrichment plantation site was constructed in June 2019. The check dam — 1.50 m in height, 11 m in width, and 0.30 m in thickness — can store about 1,800-2,000 m³ of water.

Improvement of the natural water supply system from Kongtoun Mountain to Kongtoun village in Paksong has been completed, and the system is now ready to use. Three main activities have been completed: construction of a water tank at Kongtoun Mountain, construction of a water tank in Kongtoun village, and running pipes from a water tank at Kongtoun Mountain to the water tank in Kongtoun village.

The establishment of trekking roads and observation sites within the project site is envisaged to help enhance and facilitate village-driven forest protection and patrol work. Five observation sites each have been identified in Paksong and Sangthong. The project also improved and maintained 11 km and 10 km of trekking routes in Paksong and Sangthong respectively.



A small check dam that can store water in Phoukhanya Mountain, Sangthong





Improving a trekking route in Paksong



Running pipes from a water tank at Kongtoun Mountain to a water tank in Kongtoun village in Paksong

IMPACT | The project was designed to support the government policy to strengthen the capacity of villagers dealing with forest resource management by providing grassroots empowerment in the decision-making process and steering away from top-down approaches. All VFBGs, VFDGs and village heads, including the villagers around the project sites, engage in the implementation of the project's activities. District Governors of Paksong and Sangthong have been strongly supporting the implementation of the project's activities. Application of a project activity through a contract agreement with the village groups is advantageous and the most effective approach. Villagers are themselves committed to accomplishing their given task without frequent support from the project staff.

In 2019, many visitors visited the project sites in Sangthong and Paksong to exchange their views and experiences. The project's concepts and approaches are currently being used by other forestry development projects such as the Sustainable Forest Management Project in Northern Laos (APFNet) and the Dry Dipterocarp Forest Ecosystem Project (UNDP). In addition, experiences on income generation through the implementation of forest rehabilitation activities contributed to the improvement of forest laws related to forest regeneration.

REGIONAL PROJECTS

Promotion of Forest Rehabilitation in Cambodia & Viet Nam through Demonstration Models and Improvement of Seed Supply System (AFoCO/003/2014)

This project (2014-2019) aims to promote reforestation and rehabilitation in Cambodia and Viet Nam by improving the tree seed supply system. It will enhance tree seed collection and nursery practices and make quality seeds readily accessible to seed users and forest restoration practitioners. Cambodia is focused on improving the local seed supply system and demonstrating good practices to encourage people. At the same time, Viet Nam is doing more work on the improvement of existing seed sources and the seedling production system, as well as supporting local communities with reforestation in a watershed area.

With the support of the project, seed sources and supply chains for economically and ecologically important tree species have been surveyed and established across Viet Nam and Cambodia. The demonstration models developed served as study sites for future capacity building activities on forest restoration and rehabilitation.

As the last year of implementation was 2019, the project has implemented all activities as planned with significant impacts on society in each country. Notably, a significant achievement of this project is that the local people who participated improved their knowledge, skills, and livelihoods with technical and financial support from the project. The PSC celebrated the project's achievements and also shared ideas on how these achievements could have a sustainable impact for forest rehabilitation against climate change in both countries at the last meeting organized on December 11, 2019, in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

The major activities undertaken in 2019 under this project to fulfill its objectives are as follows:

- Initiate a seed distribution system in Cambodia with identified seed sources and seed distributors

Thinning was conducted at an *Acacia mangium* plantation, with about 40% of trees removed. The removed trees were given to local communities for use as firewood and poles.



Thinning operation in at the *Acacia mangium* plantation



Maintaining and monitoring a seed production area in Kbal Chay

- Establish a tree seed laboratory with supporting facilities and trained staff in Cambodia

Subcultures of six tree species (*Dalbergia cochinchinensis*, *D. oliveri*, *Lagerstroemia floribunda*, *Albizia lebbekoides*, *Cassia siamea*, *Xylia xylocarpa*) were developed successfully. Six hundred seedlings of the above species and 1,000 seedlings of orchid were produced, and the training course "Tissue Culture for Commercial Purposes" was provided four times to 13 trainees from two universities of agriculture in Phnom Penh and a local NGO. Twenty-two kilograms of seeds of *Cassia javanica*, *Azelia xylocarpa*, *Sterculia Spp.* and a kilogram of *Shorea siamensis* fruit was collected from Pursat Province and displayed in the tree seed laboratory.



Seedlings of *Lagerstroemia floribunda*, *Dalbergia oliveri*, *Xylia xylocarpa*, and *Albizia lebbekoides* produced from subcultures



Tree Seed Laboratory in Cambodia

• Improve seed sources and seedling production and management in Viet Nam

A two-day training course, "Plant tissue culture techniques and nursery/seedling production," was organized for 25 selected participants on May 23-24, 2019, at Hoa Binh Environment Practice Center in Hoa Binh Province.



A training course on plant tissue culture and nursery techniques on May 23-24, 2019, at Hoa Binh Environment Practice Center

• Establish demonstration models of forest rehabilitation in Cambodia and Viet Nam

In Cambodia, a leaflet on seed sources was updated to include an additional list of seed production areas and respective contact persons in the provinces of Preah Sihanouk and Siem Reap, as well as those of three eucalyptus species in Kampong Chhnang Province. Cambodia established two demonstration plots and maintained two existing plots created by a previous AFoCO-funded project.

In Viet Nam, the Community Forest Management (CFM) model of 91 ha of natural forest, including 1 ha of medicinal trial planting, has been well managed and maintained as designed and scheduled by the village CFM board and the local community of Xom Khoe. The cost for maintenance was mostly from their CFM fund set up during CFM's establishment in 2017. Regular tending and maintenance are being conducted for the demonstration models and

other sites of the project area. The project's outstanding results in Viet Nam are four forest rehabilitation demonstration models:

- A new planting model (5 ha), consisting of a 3-ha site in Mon village, Phuc Tien commune, Ky Son district and a 2-ha site in Khoe village, Xam Khoe commune, Mai Chau district
- An enrichment planting model (5 ha) established in Khoe village, Xam Khoe commune, Mai Châu district
- An agroforestry model (5 ha) developed in the Cao Phong and Tan Lac districts, Hoa Binh (Figure 20)
- A community-based forest management model (91 ha) in Khoe village, Xam Khoe commune, Mai Chau district



Planting model established in Phuc Tien, Ky Son district, Hoa Binh, Viet Nam



Plantations of *Eucalyptus urophylla* and *E. camaldulensis* (below) established 18 years ago in Meanork plantation, Kampong Chhnang province, have been included in the list of seed sources



SUSTAINABILITY | In **Cambodia**, the project has created opportunities for local communities to generate additional sources of income from seed and seedling sales. The seed supply system in Cambodia has been put into operation. Expected future challenges are securing other investments and technical support for the local seed suppliers in seed collection and sales. Another challenge is that Cambodia has no mechanism to ensure that good quality seeds are traded. To tackle these problems, Cambodia proposed developing a future project proposal dealing with a registration and certification system for seed and seed sources in the country to ensure that qualified seeds are traded.

In **Viet Nam**, the project has improved the knowledge and skills of local authorities and local communities with regard to seedling production and forest rehabilitation. This new knowledge and expertise will contribute to the expert rehabilitation of watershed areas as well as improve local livelihoods. The demonstration models of forest rehabilitation in Hoa Binh Province have shown positive impacts on local biodiversity, soil, water sources, and hydrologic patterns, with evidence of an increased biodiversity index and a significant reduction in land lost due to erosion and runoff.

Facilitating the Participatory Planning of Community-based Forest Management Using a Geographic Information System & Remote Sensing Technologies in Forest Resource Management in the Philippines, Indonesia, & Thailand

(AFoCO/004/2014)

In the Philippines, 4,803 project sites covering 2.9 million hectares were placed under the Community-based Forest Management (CBFM) program across the country. Similarly, Indonesia provides legal access to communities managing state forests through the designation of Community Forests, Village Forests, Private Forests, and People's Plantation Forests. Thailand, as part of its 2007 National Constitution (Article 56), recognizes communal rights in the conservation and use of natural resources. Advocates hail CBFM for its effectiveness in promoting conservation and maintaining traditional livelihoods, while simultaneously developing local economies. However, to manage the forests, a community-driven management plan is a must. Accordingly, the technical capacity of communities needs to be strengthened, especially in areas of planning, monitoring, and the implementation of forest management activities, projects, and programs.

In this context, this project (2014-2020) promotes the use of a Geographic Information System (GIS)

and Remote Sensing (RS) in CBFM in the preparation of community-level forest management (CFM) plans by fostering local technicians in the community. Within the framework of national programs and policies, three pilot sites were selected in each country, and the outputs of the project were identified accordingly for developing workable CFM in the future. As the last implementation year was 2019, the project endeavored to improve local communities' welfare, particularly the local communities depending on forest resources. The participatory planning of CBFM developed by the project has been providing capacity for the communities to try out realistic and map-based planning. Each country has considered the duplication of the project's GIS-RS based CBFM scheme in other regions. Since there were some administrative delays, the project coordination committee decided to extend the project period by six months until the end of June 2020.

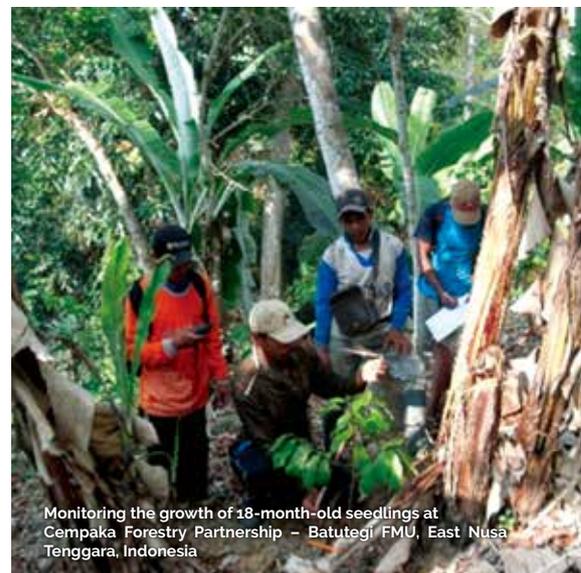
The major activities undertaken in 2019 under this project to fulfill its objectives are as follows:

• Maintain and increase the area developed within established tenured forests

In the Philippines, the continuous protection and maintenance of established agroforestry plantations was conducted in Regions 1, 5, and 11. Additionally, in Region 5, a small water impounding structure (SWIS) was built for water storage.

In Indonesia, the maintenance of plantations at three pilot sites was conducted. Monitoring and replanting activities at the Cempaka Forestry Partnership of Lampung Province, Tuar Tana Community Forest, and Paru Village Forest in Sijunjung of West Sumatra were conducted from Feb. 7-9, Feb. 21-23, and March 16-18, 2019, respectively.

In Thailand, continuous maintenance of planted areas, community forests, and nurseries of three project sites was conducted, including fire control activities. A practical manual for the community nursery was developed.



Monitoring the growth of 18-month-old seedlings at Cempaka Forestry Partnership – Batutegi FMU, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

- Improve the financial capability of target beneficiaries to implement forest development activities;

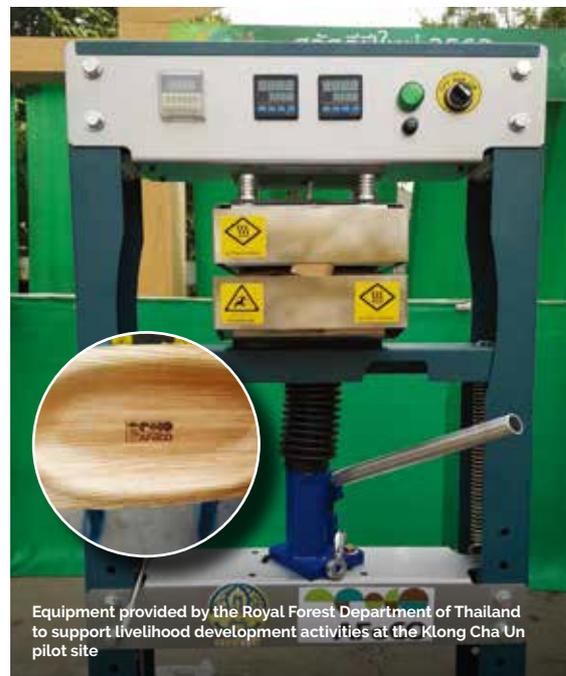
In the Philippines, the respective Regional Technical Working Group for each project site conducted a series of meetings with the People's Organizations (POs). It provided technical assistance to develop their livelihood programs.

In Indonesia, in cooperation with the respective regional research agency, the project conducted regular training and technology transfer activities to support the development of forest-based agribusiness at three pilot sites. Each region, in consultation with the villagers, acquired the necessary technical equipment and devices.

In Thailand, the project started up to compose a community fund for each site and provided financial and technical support for enterprise development.



On-site learning event on mushroom production at Rang-ay Bantay Association Inc. site in Pangasinan, Region 1 of the Philippines



Equipment provided by the Royal Forest Department of Thailand to support livelihood development activities at the Klong Cha Un pilot site



Making and designing coco coir slippers during the hands-on training, "Livelihood Product Presentation and Social Media Marketing" in Albay, Region 5 of the Philippines

- Increase the number of target beneficiaries with improved forest management planning capabilities

In the Philippines, the project technical working groups trained the members of the respective People's Organization in operating the Database Management and Monitoring System and encoding data on their enhanced Community Resource Management Framework and project accomplishments.

In Indonesia, the project hired a technical consultant to design and develop the Forest Management Information System to be utilized by web GIS and mobile Android applications.

In Thailand, the project hired a technical consultant to develop the Database Management System.

- Apply the improved participatory planning guidelines with the aid of GIS and RS in community-based forest management projects

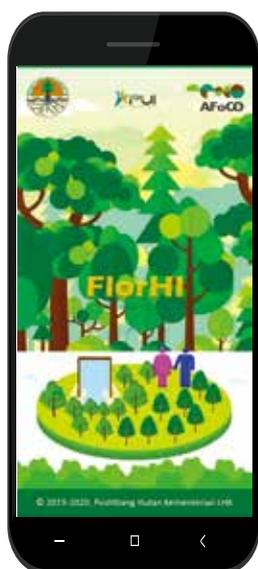
In the Philippines, after the deed of donation, the project designated members of the respective People's Organization in Region 1, 5, and 11. The members encoded data from their Community Resource Management Framework and uploaded geotagged photos into the Database Management and Monitoring System. Accordingly, a regular assessment of the operation of the system was conducted in each region on March 14, May 14-17, and June 4-7, 2019. In Indonesia, the project prepared for and tested the initial version of the Forest Management Information System via Android and web GIS applications. For that, the project acquired a database server device and drone, as well as a desktop and laptop.

In Thailand, the project, in cooperation with the local project technical staff at each site, conducted continuous technical updates and upgrades of the Database Management System.



Monitoring and provision of technical support to Mae Tha community forest of Chiang Mai province, Thailand

On-site monitoring of the CRMF database to assess and impart tips on maintenance to community members, Philippines



Development of the mobile application "Flora Hutan Indonesia"



Database development on the web GIS-based distribution of flora in Indonesia

IMPACT | In the **Philippines**, the technical working group members in each region provide assistance and inputs in development, mainly to assist livelihood/enterprise proposals for the three pilot sites. The provision of solar panels may help ease the burden on communities that do not yet have adequate electricity, thereby enabling the operation of database management and monitoring systems and livelihood activities.

The Ministry of Environment and Forestry, **Indonesia**, is considering scaling up outputs at the project level to forest management models across the country. The project has been providing evidence that forestry interventions primarily via social forestry programs are essential factors in the poverty reduction chain. For sustainability, well-structured planning procedures have an indispensable role in forest management because they are the crucial initial step in forest management.

In **Thailand**, for the sake of reflecting the views of communities, the Royal Forest Department (RFD) encouraged communities participating in the project to develop and submit their enterprise/business models as a proposal. For the rest of the project period, the RFD will provide necessary financial and technical support following the plan, based on which each community is expected to build up the capacity to develop exit strategies on its own. At present, only the Klong Chaun community group has already submitted a plan to RFD.

Domestication of Endangered, Endemic, & Threatened Plant Species in Disturbed Terrestrial Ecosystems in Malaysia & Thailand (AFoCO/010/2016)

Domestication of endangered, endemic, and threatened species (EETS) is known as one of the practical approaches to conserving germplasm. It is also essential to recover the ecological functions of ex-mining areas. In this context, the project (2016-2022) aims to develop and transfer domestication techniques of EETS in disturbed terrestrial ecosystems and conserve biodiversity in Thailand and Malaysia. The selected EETS, consisting of national and IUCN Red List species, are planted in ex-mining areas of both countries. This project is expected to enhance the capacity of Malaysia and Thailand in the reclamation, rehabilitation, and restoration of degraded forest ecosystems through the domestication of EETS, exchange of expertise, and capacity development.

In 2019, the project accomplished all the planting activities with EETS in both countries. A third session of the regional workshop on the domestication of EETS was organized at the Forest Research Institute, Malaysia, and around 20 researchers and government officials from nine ASEAN Member States shared their views on forest landscape restoration schemes, particularly for post-mining areas.

The major activities undertaken in 2019 to fulfill its objectives are as follows:

- Domesticate national red-list species in Thailand and Malaysia

The making of site locality maps and establishment of model plots in Bidor, Malaysia, have been conducted. A regeneration study was also conducted to compare the type and number of regenerated trees in planted and non-planted areas. The project site in Malaysia accounted for 6.8 ha, with 3 ha planted in 2017 and 3.8 ha in 2019. To date, a total of 17 species and 3,160 trees have been planted through this project. For the 2019 planting, a total of 12 species and 1,650 EETS seedlings were planted at the new planting site, and it was observed that all seedlings had survival rates above 90% at six months after planting. Six out of 12 planted species recorded almost 100% survival, including *Shorea sumatrana* and *Aquilaria malaccensis*. Both species also achieved considerable growth, which enables them to be recommended for planting at other similar degraded sites.

In Thailand, a total of 2,420 EETS plants were planted and monitored at the Mae Moh site, and another 400 EETS plants were planted at the Phang Nga site in Thailand. In the year 2019, it was a long dry rainy season in Mae Moh ex-mining areas, so watering in itself was not enough. Banana plants were used not only as useful nursing plants but also to provide shade, soil moisture, and a cool atmosphere for the planted seedlings. This year, *Senna siamea* and *Acacia auriculiformis* were newly added as nursing plants. In addition, plastic shading sheets were used for species in rainy forests such as *Aquilaria crassna*, *Magnolia sirindhorniae*, *Dillenia ovata*, *Magnolia rajaniana*, *Parkia sumatrana*, and *Aquilaria malaccensis*. Since herbicides and chemicals are not allowed at Mae Moh mining areas, more frequent manual weeding was performed.

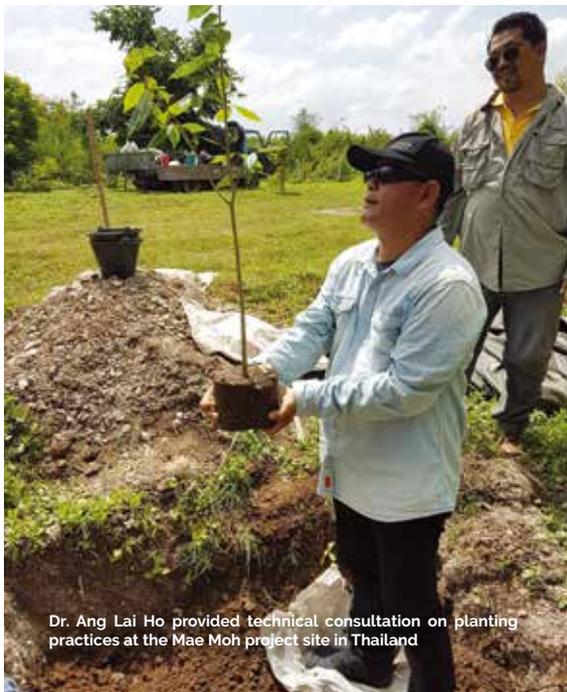


Preparing a planting hole and covering it with rice straws and a plastic shade sheet after plantation planting (below) in Mae Moh, Thailand



- Strengthen cooperation between Malaysia-Thailand on biodiversity conservation, domestication techniques, and technology transfer

Following advice at the Project Coordination Meeting, the Malaysia project team provided on-site technical consultation to Thailand in October 2019, particularly for the improvement of planting practices.



Dr. Ang Lai Ho provided technical consultation on planting practices at the Mae Moh project site in Thailand

- Exchange knowledge and lessons learned on best practices for of rehabilitation and biodiversity conservation

A regional workshop titled "Domestication of Endangered, Endemic, and Threatened Species in Disturbed Terrestrial Ecosystems" was organized on Nov. 7-8, 2019. All the presentations mainly discussed efforts for the rehabilitation and conservation of native or endangered plants across the region, with particular interests and challenges. It was the third regional workshop of the project, and almost the same group of trainees from each country has been participating in the workshop annually. On the second day of the workshop, participants and invited speakers were also briefed about on-site treatment and selection of species to ensure good survival and growth of EETS.

In December 2019, the Secretariat organized a project evaluation workshop hosted by the Korea Forest Service as well as study tours to forestry institutes in the Republic of Korea. On behalf of the implementing countries, Dr. Ang Lai Hoe, the regional project director, was invited to the workshop to present the current progress of domestication of EETS in Malaysia and Thailand and share knowledge on EETS domestication and technologies adopted in the project.



An evaluation meeting with the AFoCO Secretariat



IMPACT | The project sites are becoming popular with local governments, non-government agencies and international organizations. In the future, more visits from both domestic and international bodies are expected for the sharing of knowledge on establishing repositories of EETS in degraded areas.

Recently, the project was introduced as a successful case to the Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). The project team was invited to the AFoCO Secretariat and the Korea Forest Service to present their main outputs and milestones of the project, which would also be an excellent baseline to develop a new project proposal of the Secretariat for upscaling the concept of EETS rehabilitation in Asia.

The high survival rate of planted EETS indicates that most of the selected species were suitable to be planted at the former tin mine. These species could thus be recommended as choice species for similar sites as repositories for EETS, provided there is substantial tending of plants for at least three years and protection from encroachment by wild Likewise, However, the domestication techniques need to include improvements to some maintenance techniques, such as practices for protecting against attacks by wild animals, watering, and weeding.

Capacity building on the application of landscape approach to support the sustainable natural resources management in Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Philippines & Singapore (AFoCO/011 /2016)



Peatland demonstration site in Indonesia in 2018



ANR demonstration plot in Central Luzon, Philippines in 2019

Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) is a planned process targeted at regaining ecological functions and enhancing human well-being in deforested or degraded forest landscapes. The participation of local communities constitutes a vital aspect of the FLR approach, from planning through implementation. This project (2016-2019) aims to strengthen transboundary cooperation in the forestry sector among ASEAN through the establishment of four different learning sites to increase local capacities in FLR — peatland restoration with agroforestry in Indonesia, assisted natural regeneration in the Philippines, coastal forest rehabilitation (ANR) in Brunei Darussalam, and urban forestry with biodiversity conservation in Singapore.

In last year of the implementation in 2019, the project focused on maximizing capacity-building activities through the establishment of demonstration sites.

The main activities undertaken in 2019 under this project to fulfill its objectives are as follows:

- Recognize and contribute to addressing a wide range of natural resources management issues and concerns across different ecosystems

In the Philippines and Indonesia, project management and supervision activities were conducted until the end of the implementation in May 2019. Coordination meetings, field monitoring, and workshops were done to identify implementation issues and concerns and formulate strategies on how the same could be addressed.

In Brunei Darussalam, after the establishment of the demonstration site, a tree planting event was organized at the project site in May 2019. As celebrating the success of the said plot as a new forest learning site, Hengyi Industries Sdn Bhd pledged to plant a total of 200 hectares reforestation project as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility.



Tree planting event organized at the project site in Brunei Darussalam in May 2019

- Assess the management compatibilities of communities and relevant stakeholders within a specific landscape and interrelationships between and among landscapes in a Ridge to Reef horizon

In Singapore, a Special Project Coordination Committee meeting held on 28 February 2019 saw representatives from the Implementing ASEAN Member States and the AFoCO Secretariat deliberate on issues and concerns about the completion of the BIPS Project.

- Capacitate respective forestry sector technicians through formal and experiential learning on RRR-DFE following the landscape approach

A Cross-Country Visit was conducted on 26 and 27 February 2019, in Singapore, where 20 participants from the project implementing countries and the AFoCO Secretariat were brought to various habitat enhancement sites representing different ecosystems managed by the National Parks Board in Singapore. The visit showcased and shared



Participants visiting Marsiling Park, one of the habitat enhancement sites, during the Cross-Country Visit, conducted in Singapore in February 2019

about some of Singapore's biodiversity conservation efforts to restore, manage, and enhance urban landscapes and ecosystems .

SUSTAINABILITY | In the **Philippines**, the implementation of the project resulted in a number of positive impacts, both internal and external to the community. At the outset, the performance of the project strengthened the management, not just of the demonstration site, but the entire CBFM area. The project was mainstreamed with the PO's Community Management Framework (CRMF), which became one of the catalysts for their protection and conservation initiatives. Moreover, the implementation of the project produced several outcomes and outputs which are valuable references when enhancing and updating existing policies, guidelines, and practices with regards to the application and mainstreaming of the ANR technology to the overall initiative of the Government on the restoration and rehabilitation forest land areas in the country.

Finally, the DENR Region 3 has officially adopted the learning demonstration plots as an ANR Model Site through the memorandum dated 14 May 2019, where capacity building and other related activities of the forestry sector can be conducted, taking reference of the best practices and lessons learned during implementation of the project.

In **Indonesia**, the project noted several scientific, technology, environmental, social, and economic impacts. Demonstration plots provided a field laboratory for university students and researchers to conduct research. Land preparation, water level management through canal blocking, planting techniques, quality seedlings, plantation tending, forest fire control, and the performance of four local tree species are interesting subjects for research. This project also motivated researchers to improve FLR technology, especially in nursery operations, land preparation, plantation tending, and agroforestry. The social impact of this project is to promote interactions between villages around Tumbang Nusa Research Station and raise social acceptance of the FLR activities. The economic and financial implications of the project include supporting local communities in adopting productive agroforestry practices that generate income for them. The project has also resulted in environmental impacts such as improved peatland and PSF conditions as well as the prevention of forest fires.

In **Brunei Darussalam**, by having a project demonstration plot, the area could be used as a pilot project for the compilation of data on carbon sequestration. Currently, the government is working together with undergraduate students from local and international institutions to investigate proper procedures to calculate the carbon traps in trees. This will support strategic coordination, implementation, and alignment of work plans in addressing climate change issues at the national level and help in the development of policies and programs to mitigate emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and enhance sinks of all GHGs. The project site also being used for education purposes by local and international researchers and experts to study about native species in Brunei, forest fire management, and climate change mitigation and adaptation methods.

Singapore's position in the BIPS Project is unique and differs from that of the other implementing countries. Instead of establishing a demonstration plot, Singapore played a leading role capacity building and showcased Singapore's experience on forest rehabilitation and restoration mainly through efforts for biodiversity conservation and providing potential models for urban forestry.

IV

PARTNERSHIP & COMMUNICATION

STRATEGIC PARTNERS
PUBLICATIONS & REPORTS

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

A strong network and continuous collaboration among international organizations with common interests contributes to reversing the loss of forest cover and strengthening the role of forests in attaining larger global goals. In order to proactively promote AFoCO's visibility globally as well as in respective member countries, the Secretariat explored collaboration with partners in addition to continued engagement in regular meetings and events.

The AFoCO Agreement is registered in the [UN Treaty Collection](#). AFoCO was also registered as an accredited intergovernmental organization with the UNCCD. The Secretariat initiated the accreditation process with the GCF.

To increase synergies among organizations, AFoCO made partnership arrangements with partner organizations such as the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), and the Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC), Korea Forest Service (KFS), Korea Institute of Arboretum Management (KIAM), Korea Forest Welfare Institute (FOWI), and Dream Sharing Social Cooperative. Camerata Salzburg, a world renowned chamber orchestra based in Austria also joined hands with AFoCO to combat climate change for a Greener Asia as a goodwill ambassador.

In 2019, AFoCO was represented in a number of relevant events including the Asia Pacific Forestry Week, Korea Global Adaptation Week, the ASEAN Senior Officials on Forestry (ASOF) Meeting, Chuncheon Urban Forestry and Asia Pacific Environment Forum, and the 5th International Conference of Indonesia Forest Researchers, among others.



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification



GREEN
CLIMATE
FUND



Global
Green Growth
Institute



RECOFTC



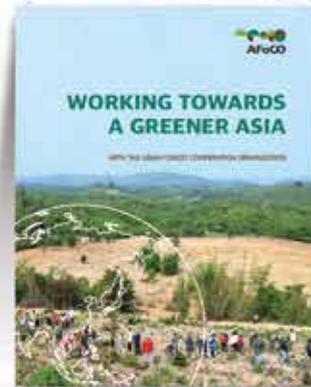
GOODWILL AMBASSADOR

PUBLICATIONS & REPORTS



Exploring the Forest with Tory and Sully

Comic-based textbook
for children



Moving Towards a Greener Asia

Set of leaflets with
information on projects



Glimpses of Our Cooperation (2009-2019)

Special compilation of highlights
and achievements



AFoCO Project Report Volume 2: Individual Forest Cooperation Projects 2012-2013

Report on key project activities and outputs



Forest Pathways through National Reforestation Programs & Innovative Public-Private Forest Investments

Special publication on the ROK's
reforestation experiences



Life as an intern at the AFoCO RETC in Myanmar



CHO HYUNMIN

KANGWON NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, KOREA



The most precious memories that I have are of my friends there. It was hardly possible for us to be able to adapt to the new living environment in Myanmar without any help. Thankfully, the people at the RETC shared many needed materials with us – usually food and snacks to keep us energized! Also, it was really fun having conversations with the staff and training participants and sharing about our different cultures. When it comes to meeting local people, since I can't speak Myanmar language and they don't speak English, we communicated through gestures and sounds. Communicating in this way was a really fresh and overwhelming experience for me.

The more people I met, the more I felt embarrassed because they have a true passion for improving the forests in their countries. However, this encouraged me to think about how I can contribute to the Korea's forestry sector of my country in the future.

If I could go back to the time when I was in Myanmar, I want to challenge myself by meeting more people and visiting other places in Myanmar. Thank you RETC and Myanmar!



Hyunmin and Jinsu interacting with children at an orphanage



Jinsu helping out at a community development course on soap-making



Under the Overseas Forest Internship Program supported by the Korea Forest Service and Korea Forestry Promotion Institute, two interns were selected for the 2019 internship program at the AFoCO RETC. During their six-month stint at the RETC, the interns had the opportunity to assist in the preparation of training programs, development of training modules, and maintenance and operation of the center.



PARK JINSU

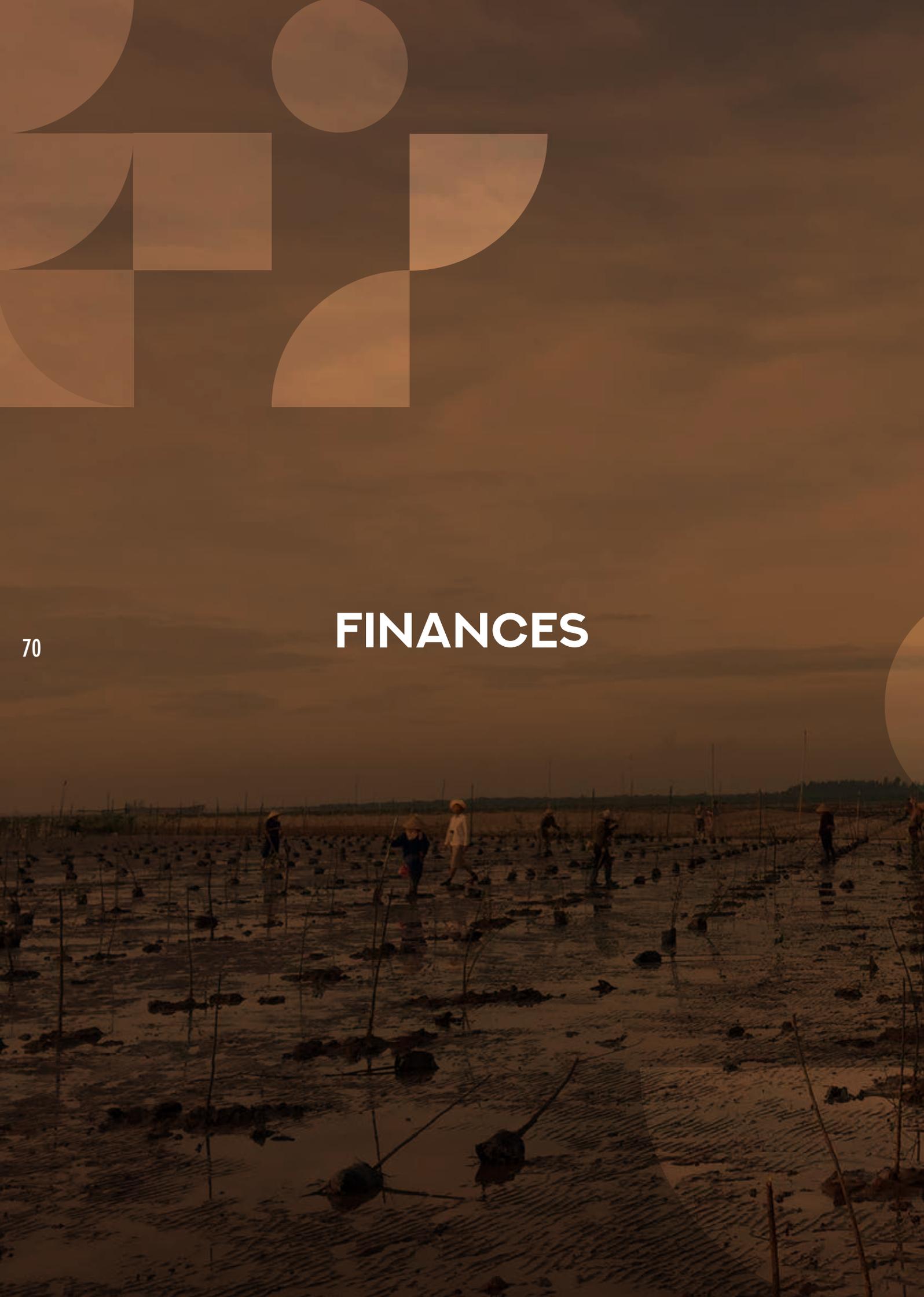
KYUNGPOOK NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, KOREA



This was the first time I had stayed overseas for an extended period of time and everything felt very new to me. Living in Myanmar for six months made me realize many things. People in Myanmar generally lead carefree lives without worrying too much about the future. Watching them, I was reminded to enjoy the present and forget the competitive mindset that I had when living in Korea.

My internship was a valuable experience not only because we got to be involved in many aspects of the RETC operation and management but also because of the many other activities we engaged in during our free time. We mostly interacted with the RETC staff and learned about one another's cultures and languages. Every weekend, Hyunmin and I visited a nearby orphanage to teach Korean and spend time with the children there.

Life in Myanmar wasn't easy but during my internship, I got to experience much more than I had imagined. Here goes my advice to the next batch of RETC interns: try not to focus on the difficulties you encounter along the way. Instead, open your eyes to what you can do, and meet and interact more with the people around you!



FINANCES



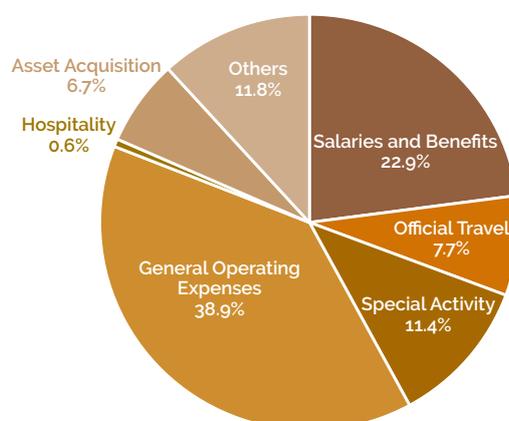
FINANCES

The financial highlights are based on the financial report prepared for the fiscal year of 2019 started on 1 January 2019 and ended on 31 December 2019 in accordance with paragraph 7.5 under the Financial Regulations of AFoCO.

Administrative Account for operating cost in 2019 was managed based on the annual budget plan approved by the First Session of the AFoCO Assembly held on 13 November 2018 in Seoul, Korea, which amounts USD 5,017,046. The revenue secured for the operating cost in FY2019 amounted to **97.1% (USD 4,873,004)** of the planned budget approved by the Assembly. The budget execution rate for the operating cost was **92.9% (USD 4,525,962)** of its revenue in FY2019.

	Total Amount (USD)
Revenue	
Assessed Contributions	4,023,209
Others	667,977
Supplementary Budget	181,818
Total Annual Revenue (A)	4,873,004
Expenditure	
A.1. Salaries and Benefits	1,037,699
A.2. Official Travel	351,112
A.3. Special Activity	515,481
A.4. General Operating Expenses	1,759,785
A.5. Hospitality	27,122
A.6. Asset Acquisition	301,638
A.7. Provisions and Contingencies	-
A.8. Others	533,126
Total Annual Expenditure (B)	4,525,962
Net Total (A-B)	347,041

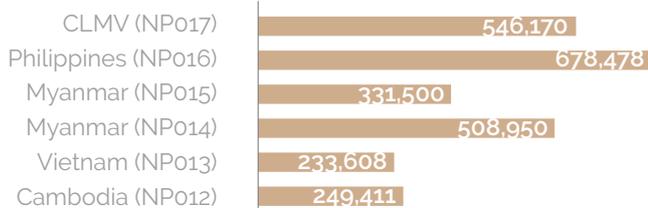
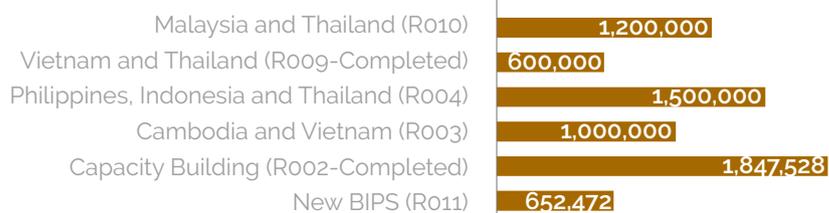
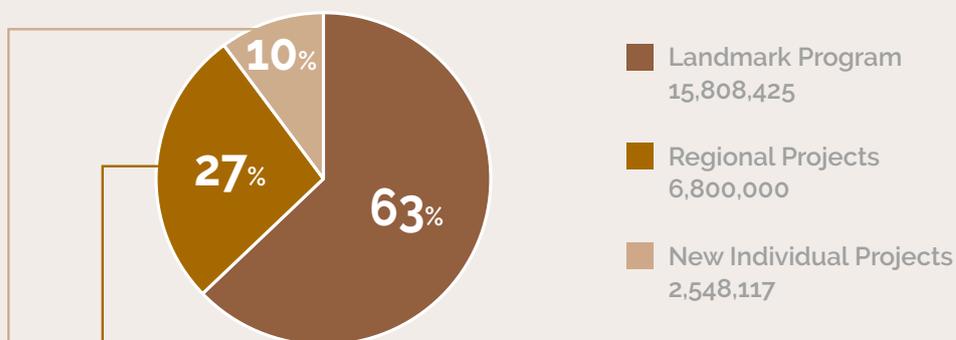
EXPENDITURE, 2019



The due amount of mandatory contributions from the Parties to the operating cost of AFoCO assessed by the First Session of the Assembly for FY2019 is **USD 4,048,183**, and 99.4% of this assessed amount of mandatory contribution has been paid by the end of FY2019. Around 79% and 3% of the total revenue actually secured for the operating cost in FY2019 were the mandatory contributions from ROK and other Parties as assessed by the Assembly, respectively. Around 18% of the total revenue was secured from other sources including supplementary budget besides the Parties' mandatory contributions.

The amount of voluntary contributions to the Special Accounts for cooperative activities in FY2019 was **USD 3,790,909** in total committed for on-going activities under the Landmark program and regional projects and newly approved individual projects. All project funds in FY2019 were committed by ROK through the Korea Forest Service.

FUNDS COMMITTED FOR COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES, 2013 – 2019



NOTE

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