

Session 3: Global Forest Information Service (GFIS)

The third session of the IUFRO event – taking place in the afternoon - focused on the Global Forest Information Service (GFIS) and was moderated by Ho Sang Kang, GFIS Regional Coordinator for Asia and Russia. GFIS, an IUFRO-led CPF Initiative, provides the framework for sharing forest-related data and information through a single gateway. The main objectives of this session were a) to introduce the GFIS concept, b) invite current information provider partners from the regions to share their experiences with GFIS, c) invite new potential partners to discuss their expectations of global information sharing, and d) demonstrate under real-world conditions how easy it is to create the necessary information feeds (RSS) and link them to the GFIS gateway at <http://www.gfis.net/>.

In the first presentation, Eero Mikkola, the GFIS Coordinator, introduced the participants to the latest GFIS internet gateway, as well as the status of partnership development with expert institutions from around the world (link to presentation). This was followed by a short presentations prepared by three existing GFIS partners– i.e. Research Center for Forest Ecology & Environment (RCFEE) Vietnam; Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions (APAFRI); and USDA Forest Service (USA), on their experiences providing information to GFIS and using the system in their daily work. Some recommendations and plans for future development of GFIS were mentioned (links to three presentations).

In a second block of presentations, potential GFIS partners in Asia – Indonesian Ministry of Forestry; Indonesian Center for Education & Training (CFET); Myanmar Forest Research Institute, and World Resources Institute - informed the participants of their own information resources and how these are currently stored, managed and disseminated. They also elaborated on their expectations of GFIS when joining as GFIS partners (links to the above-mentioned presentations).

In the final session, Mr. Randy D. McCracken, USDA Forest Service, demonstrated how a forest information news feed – based on “Really Simple Syndication” (RSS) - could be created and linked to the GFIS gateway (link to presentation). In this way, individual information resources could be located from anywhere in the world.

Overall, the participants showed great interest in GFIS and some of them expressed their interest to join as a GFIS partner. In the weeks to come, the GFIS Coordination unit will establish contacts with these potential partners to finalize their link to GFIS and commence the exchange of forest-related information resources.

A power point presentation was shown by KFRI regarding the preparation and invitation to the 23rd IUFRO World Congress to be held in Seoul, Republic of Korea in 2010. A promotional video was presented showing the excellent meeting facilities of the congress in Seoul and the forested landscapes of Korea, which will be visited during the in-congress and post-congress excursions.