

**Proposed Asia Pacific Universities
Forest Education Network
Side Event - Asia Pacific Forest Week**

**National Convention Center
Hanoi, Vietnam**

1300-1700 Wednesday 23 April 2008

Co-chairs: Professor Rod Keenan, University of Melbourne
Dr Jess Fernandez, ICRAF & SEANAFE

Rapporteur Professor Peter Kanowski, ANU & IPFE

Participants and apologies are listed in Annex 1.

Objectives

The objectives of the workshop were:

1. To identify major issues facing the development of forest education in the Asia Pacific region;
2. To discuss potential solutions to these issues;
3. To discuss the development of a formal network of tertiary forest education institutions, how it might operate, what kind of resources would be required to make it effective and where these might come from;
4. Decide on next steps and future actions.

Background information

The meeting was attended by more than 50 representatives of institutions from 12 countries and seven international organisations. The co-chairs and rapporteur made brief presentations about the background to the workshop, the South-East Asia Network for Forestry Education (SEANAFE), and the International Partnership for Forestry Education (IPFE), respectively. Background papers to each of these, and from workshop participants, were tabled.

Outcomes

1. Issues

Workshop participants identified key issues of concern to them. These issues are listed in point form in Annex 2. Common issues included:

- The need for universities to become more internationally connected and to develop international collaboration (these are often government or institution-wide policies)
- The need for curriculum review and updating to reflect current forest management challenges
- Declining student interest in forestry as a study option (the exception being Republic of Korea, where there were many students but few jobs in forestry or land management)
- The increasing cost to students and institutions of education
- The need to more effectively link teaching with industry needs and making graduates employment ready.
- The need to more effectively link and reinforce the research-teaching-policy chain
- More effectively maintaining and utilising university forests
- Incorporating general educational goals (eg. creative thinking, ICT, research skills) into professional forestry programs

Some responses:

- Collaborative masters-level programs being developed among institutions (Australia, Indonesia?)
- Curriculum review processes in Indonesia, Vietnam
- Internship and placement opportunities with industry and international agencies

2. Potential solutions

On the basis of the issues identified in #1, potential solutions were discussed by small groups in the context of three questions:

- Making networks work: what are the essentials?
- What are the top priorities for collaboration?
- How to keep curricula contemporary, & link graduates to employer needs & expectations

Groups' responses are summarised in point form in Annex 3. Key points:

Making networks work

- Strong mutual interests among members, clear agenda and objectives with measurable goals and targets
- Strong, participatory leadership, external champions and sharing of tasks across the membership
- Clear benefits of membership, willingness of members to commit resources, low overheads and transactions costs and independence of external funding
- Good communication, web-presence and regular events

Top priorities for collaboration

- Sharing of information on curriculum, teaching development activities and library resources and staff expertise
- Exchange arrangements for staff and students
- Development of benchmarking, peer review and common standards (perhaps a 'state of forestry curriculum' report)
- Joint teaching programs for specialist subject areas
- Joint research activities
- Promotion of forestry as an exciting and innovative career option
- Proposals to fund specific actions

Keeping the curriculum relevant and enhancing links with 'the industry'

- Frequent curriculum review, involving other institutions and external partners
- Mechanisms for linking graduates with employers
- Further development of internships and industry placements

Other points

- possible sources of support for network activities include ITTO, industry, country ODA and bilateral funding, institutional support for international collaboration
- Need to connect strongly with students and facilitate student-based activities, particularly IFSA/AFSA

3. Development of a formal network of tertiary forest education institutions

It was agreed that the formation of such a network should be pursued but there were varying opinions about whether or not the network should be developed separately from related existing networks (eg APAFRI, SEANAFE), with the

advantages and disadvantages of both options noted. Other points made in this discussion are listed in Annex 4.

4. Next steps and future actions

It was agreed that Professor Keenan would convene a steering committee to explore options for #3; membership is listed in Annex 5. It was agreed to circulate notes from the meeting to all participants, and keep them (and any other interested parties) of progress and developments. The possibility of a meeting in Korea in 2009, kindly hosted by Seoul National University, was noted.

- Await outcome of submission to Australian Government Forestry Skills and Capacity Building Program
- Potential next meeting of steering committee at Kasetsart University TROPFOR conference - 11/08
- SEANAFE to co-sponsor faculty-student dialogue at TROPFOR

Annex 1. Proposed Asia Pacific Universities Forest Education Network Side Event - Asia Pacific Forest Week

Apologies:

Hosny El-Lakany, Chair IPFE; Sari Pitkanen, Secretary General, IPFE; Bruce Manley (University of Canterbury, NZ), Jerry Vanclay (Southern Cross University, Australia)

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Annex 2. Key issues of concern to participants

Asian Young Leaders Climate Forum

- level of commitment to maintain network

Australia (ACIAR)

- project-related scholarships & training
- English-language requirements

Australia (DAFF)

- A-P capacity building program
- Australian skills shortage

Australia (Institute of Foresters of Aust)

- declining enrolments at each univ.; sharing of resources across univs.
- continuing professional development

India (FRI Univ)

- exchange of staff & faculty (w/i Asia)
- development of model curricula
- declining interest in forest education
- Indonesia (professional certification)
- dynamic market for graduates, but relatively inflexible curricula
- standards of competence

India (IIFM)

- education should be employment-linked
- more integrative (management, social, contemporary)

India (IIFM)

- student aspirations to IT, commerce ...
- rapid change of emphasis in key topics
- global network for knowledge creation
- sharing local learning internationally
- both enhance students' employability

- cover breadth of contemporary issues
- how to develop program/managers

Indonesia (GMU)

- curriculum revision to better match needs
- international collaboration

Indonesia (IPB)

- curriculum development with SEANAFE
- increased internationalisation
- declining interest
- increasing expense
- accelerating research capacity

Indonesia (MoF Training Centre)

- collaborative professional training for MoF staff (eg env. conservation)
- education forests

ICIMOD

- Himalayan university consortium/capacity building/ internships
- strengthen focus on mountain issues, more adaptive curricula

INBAR

- intern opportunities (& experience of offering)

IUFRO

- Open University model?
- GFIS-IPFE African collaboration

Korea (Seoul National Univ)

- more internationalisation
- shift in emphasis to Ecosystem Management
- too many institutions/ not enough students
- difficult to provide fieldwork

Korea (international cooperation)

- collaborating with MoF Indonesia in capacity building
- regional coordinator GFIS; collaboration with IPFE

Laos (MoF)**Germany-Lao collaboration**

- Masters coursework

Malaysia (UPM)

- information sharing
- undergraduate employability - 50%
- learning outcomes focus
- attracting high-quality students (local, international [graduate research students])

Malaysia (UMS)

- as for UPM; inc. student skills (expressing ideas, problem solving)
- industry training (6 months)/ placement challenges

Germany-Malaysia collaboration

- facilitate regional & international collab.

NZ (MAF)

- education for SFM

Mongolia (NUM)

- sharing experience & opportunities, esp for younger universities

Philippines (FMB)

- budget constraints to hiring

Philippines (UPLB)

- declining enrolments; strategies to address
- diversity of graduate roles - challenges to re-engineer forestry curricula
- use networks to share & strengthen; accommodate diversity of membership

Thailand (CMU)

- graduate focus

TRAFFIC

- curriculum relevance
- limited publicity about forestry courses
- language constraints (ESL)
- teaching could be more dynamic

Tropenbos (Vietnam)

- weak links between education & practical work/ research
- how to share information in reality
- capacity building challenges for professional in remote/ distributed locations

Vietnam (VFU)

- growing inter-university competition
- conflict between sustainable development & economic growth
- how to run network effectively
- India (ICFRE)
- how to match the needs of industry
- information access/ sharing for staff & students

Vietnam (VFU, HCM U, CH U)

- competition for students
- collaboration to enhance resources, information-sharing
- diminishing student interest
- curriculum reform & development, with inputs from stakeholders
- link between education & graduates' roles
- existing Vn network faces challenges
- link between education, research & policy
- challenges in network management

Vietnam (vocational education)

- limited capacity to respond to needs
- limited resources to support change

Annex 3. Potential solutions suggested by small groups

Topic 1: Making networks work: what are the essentials?

Group 1

- clear agenda, mechanisms, activity
- leadership & commitment to follow-up
- common interest, information sharing, money, personal exchange, equity & trust, updating

Group 2

- active membership
- participatory leaders
- clear road maps created by network
- effective communication channels
- belief by members that capacity is going to be enhanced by network
- sustainable funding

Group 3

- strong coordinator/ facilitator
- clearly define vision/ objectives
- define membership/ criteria
- geographical scope (eg Asia-Pacific)
- small secretariat/ essential infrastructure
- maintain database
- regular meetings/ communication

Group 4

- mutual benefit
- clear objectives & agenda
- knowledge sharing recognises different levels
- champions who can devote time
- networking facilities - need basic infrastructure
- high level of enthusiasm
- need financial resources - lobby donors about importance
- make sure the work is shared around

Group 5

- commitment of members
- don't establish parallel structures; link to existing networks

Group 6

- not completely demand driven
- adequate resources
- sharing across languages - requires more funding
- focal person nominated for each participant
- measurable timebound targets
- mission statement/ slogan?

Group 7

- yearly donation (not fee) to show commitment
- focal points - for each country (can assist with overcoming language barriers)
- national steering committees

Topic 2: What are the top priorities for collaboration?

Group 1

- sharing information, R&D outcomes, common program, work experience, joint degrees, sharing resources, accreditation, staff & student exchange, short courses.

Group 7

- learn from others, don't reinvent wheel

Group 2

- exchange of info among members
- sharing of faculty resources
- collaborative research studies on contemporary issues
- internetworking of library resources
- initiating joint educational programs among members
- promoting forestry as a career

Group 3

- must function effectively & sustainably
- exchange of students & faculty
- info sharing
- e-library & e-learning
- promoting joint programs, both curriculum & research
- facilitate credit transfer

Group 4

- exchange of resource people among institutions on different topics (some common)
- sharing material resources (eg library, software, literature)
- joint education program & research activities
- peer review group
- list of resource people/ expertise

Group 5

- inventory of faculties & curricula
- database of expertise
- develop joint proposal to generate funds

Group 6

- curriculum development
- link outside the region
- joint proposal development to generate funds

Topic 3. How to keep curricula contemporary, & link graduates to employer needs & expectations?

Group 1

- criteria for curriculum assessment
- frequent review, flexibility
- fieldwork
- focused workshops
- contact with industry, feedback from stakeholders, linking grads to employers, assessment of competency requirements, requiring fieldwork as part of degree, involving employers in degree, advisory boards from the industry sector, employment portals

Group 2

- specific employer's needs must be studied - competency development
- regular review of curriculum, inc. employer involvement in curriculum design
- developing entrepreneurship amongst students, eg incubation centres
- bringing business sense into curriculum
- student internships in industry

Group 3

- update/ maintain/ share database of employers
- facilitate internships/ institutional training
- regular curriculum update, inc with employers
- promote forestry as innovative career option
- capacity building for faculty/ inc attachment to industry

Group 4

- frequent curriculum review - include employers & stakeholders
- best teaching methodologies - eg problem-oriented learning

Group 5

- stakeholder participation in curriculum review can be difficult

- could take case study approach - eg SEANAFE program

Group 6

- representatives from industry networks/ bodies should be integral
- internships
- employers involved in job market

Group 7

- recognise different needs of different countries
- involve industry representatives/ coordinate their input
- regular review of network (eg "State of Curriculum" report)

Annex 4. Other points made in concluding discussion

- use existing networks eg SEANAFE, APAFRI, etc.
- spell out what the network aspires to accomplish so institutions could also identify what they can offer?
- linking with other networks ok, but nothing wrong with an additional network focused on forestry education
- listen to students - eg, recognise changing demographic
- SEANAFE to co-sponsor faculty-student dialogue at Kesarat Univ international conference on tropical forestry - 11/08
- why the AP Forestry Education network? - contemporary curriculum; standards; maintaining quality of staff; research-education nexus; achieve greater political support by working together.
- sustaining funding is a challenge - eg SEANAFE funding runs out next year
- create a working group to elaborate concept note for proposed network developed by Rod Keenan, explore interest, and present findings to the body during an opportune meeting in the future
- forestry education network is needed; is existing network(s) sufficient, or do we need an additional one ...
- need not to get lost in other network's agenda/ issues
- make a start and use that to pursue funding
- hard to start and sustain a network unless you can tie it with a host organisation for core support
- possible sources of support:
 - ITTO?
 - industry
 - bilateral sources
 - ...
- link with IFSA/ AFSA to facilitate student activities
- networks come & go ... but need champions!
- if network is good, funding follows ...
- possible next meeting in Korea

Annex 5. Proposed Steering committee membership & contacts

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Plus one person from India IIFM or FRI University