



Promoting the Role of Natural Regeneration in Large-scale Forest and Landscape Restoration: Challenges and Opportunities & Consultation to Operationalize Regional Strategy and Action Plan for Forest and Landscape Restoration in Asia-Pacific

19 – 21 June 2017
Nanning, Guangxi Province, China

Background

In 2011, the Bonn Challenge was announced with a goal to restore 150 million hectares of deforested and degraded lands by 2020. This ambitious target was reinforced during the UN Climate Summit 2014 in New York where more than 130 signatories endorsed calls to restore more than 350 million hectares of forests and croplands by 2030. In the Asia-Pacific region, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) set a goal to increase forest cover in the region by at least 20 million hectares by 2020, and member countries of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) and other organizations place increasing emphasis on forest restoration.

In light of these ambitious global targets and emerging national commitments, there are available low-cost strategies and techniques for landscape restoration. The most widely used restoration approach involves planting trees, which is often costly and less effective in restoring vast expanses of degraded forest lands.

Experience with natural regeneration has shown that it significantly reduces the cost of restoration in areas that meet certain conditions. Native species that are adapted to the prevailing conditions re-establish naturally with some assistance, achieving accelerated growth and releasing succession, leading to the recovery of native ecosystems. Restoration strategies based on natural regeneration also provide low-cost opportunities for conserving biodiversity and enhancing ecosystem services, including carbon sequestration and watershed protection.

Despite these economic and environmental advantages, natural regeneration is often overlooked in restoration policies and programmes for a number of reasons, including: lack of awareness; other incentives favouring plantation development or other land uses; lack of institutional support by government agencies and other organizations; unclear tenure and property rights; lack of incentives for local communities; and uncertainty over the restoration process and outcomes.





Objectives

A regional workshop will be organized in Nanning, Guangxi Province, China to explore the challenges and opportunities for natural forest regeneration, and to promote it as a major component of large-scale restoration initiatives. The specific objectives of the workshop are as follows:

- ⇒ Raise awareness among policymakers and practitioners regarding the potential of natural regeneration in contributing to the achievement of forest restoration goals.
- ⇒ Share experience in and scope for using natural regeneration as a tool for forest restoration.
- ⇒ Discuss key issues related to restoring forestlands through natural regeneration including: the ecology, techniques and monitoring of regeneration; enabling policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks; and the economic and social dimensions of natural regeneration.
- ⇒ Identify barriers, gaps and opportunities for mainstreaming the application of natural regeneration as a viable and effective strategy in forest restoration.
- ⇒ Develop recommendations on the way forward to promote the use of natural regeneration in regional and national restoration initiatives.

Results from the workshop will also feed into the consultation on regional strategy and action plan for forest and landscape restoration, which will be incorporated into the final session of the workshop.

Partners

- ◆ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- ◆ Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions (APAFRI)
- ◆ Asia Pacific Forest Genetic Resources Programme (APFORGEN)
- ◆ Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet)
- ◆ Bioversity International
- ◆ International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- ◆ RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests
- ◆ World Resources Institute (WRI)



Participants

The workshop participants are managers and practitioners of forest restoration, including forestry officials from selected Asia-Pacific countries as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations, academia and research institutions working on forest restoration programmes and projects in the region. Participants are expected to cover their own costs of travel and participation.



Indicative programme

Day 1

Keynote address:

The scale of the challenge and opportunity for restoration: the role of natural regeneration

Session 1: Ecology of natural regeneration

Session 2: Economic and social aspects of natural regeneration

Session 3: Policy, legal and institutional issues

Session 4: Experiences in forest restoration through natural regeneration

Day 2

Field visit to Pingxiang: Experimental Center of Tropical Forestry (ECTF) field site

Day 3

Session 5: Tools for prioritizing, decision-making and monitoring to enhance the success of natural regeneration strategies

Session 6: Summary of opportunities, constraints and next steps

Session 7: Consultation on regional strategy and action plan for FLR in Asia-Pacific

Outputs

The following outputs are expected to be produced as a result of the workshop:

- ♦ Workshop proceedings, including a summary of discussions and papers; and
- ♦ Policy briefs outlining key messages for policy-makers based on the workshop discussions.

Regional strategy and action plan for forest landscape restoration in Asia-Pacific

During the Asia-Pacific Forestry Week (APFW) 2016 held in Clark, Philippines, FAO organized a high-level regional consultation to develop an action plan for forest and landscape restoration in the Asia-Pacific. The event was attended by over 100 participants, who agreed on the need for a regional strategy for forest and landscape restoration, and recommended that FAO further develop the regional strategy and action plan. Following extensive consultations with member countries of Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) as well as relevant organizations and experts, a preliminary draft of the strategy was presented at the 23rd Session of the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO23).

As one of the initial recommended actions of the regional strategy, FAO is seeking to engage partners to discuss the operationalizing of the strategy and action plan. Taking advantage of the presence of country representatives, partner organizations and restoration experts at the workshop, a half-day consultation with the objective of identifying core partners in implementing the regional strategy and agreeing on concrete steps to be taken will be conducted. Results from the workshop on natural regeneration will also feed into the discussion on the regional strategy and action plan.

Contact Us

Ms Unna Chokkalingam
FAO Consultant
u.chokkalingam@gmail.com

Mr Kenichi Shono
FAO Forest Resources Officer
Kenichi.Shono@fao.org

