

Collaboration with the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC) for Capacity Building in the Community Forestry Sector-

Introduction

RECOFTC is an autonomous, not-for-profit international organization that works closely with partners to design and facilitate learning processes and systems to support community forestry and natural resource management. The institution has the mission to enhance capacities at all levels to assist people of the Asia-Pacific region to develop community forestry and manage forest resources for optimum social, economic and environmental benefits. RECOFTC's scope will cover a range of ecological systems (e.g., mountain, arid and semi-arid areas, coastal zones); landscapes (e.g., all types of forests - natural and planted, watershed areas, protected areas, villages, agricultural land); and tenurial systems (e.g., legal and customary/de facto management and ownership arrangements).

Over the last four years, RECOFTC field activities have focused in selected areas, especially countries of the Greater Mekong Sub Region and Indonesia, but its international training courses, workshops and conferences have attracted participants from across the region and beyond. It has proactively contributed to various regional and global level forestry initiatives/forums. RECOFTC is now a member / partner of other regional and global forestry initiatives/forums, including Rights and Resources Initiative, Civil Society Advisory Group of the ITTO, ASEAN's Social Forestry Network, Asia Pacific Forestry Commission, Asia Forest Partnership and South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP).

MoU RECOFTC- SACEP

Dr. Yam Malla, Executive Director of RECOFTC, and Dr. A. A. Boaz, Director General of SACEP, signed the MoU on behalf of the two organizations in August 2007. SACEP and RECOFTC intend to cooperate in the areas common to their programmes in South Asia in accordance to the signed MoU. Both addressing programme activities in the areas of forest management share the focus on community resource management; forest communities' involvement in forest management; poverty alleviation, poverty and rights with concerns for sustainable development and guidance to the policy makers.

The 10th Governing Council (GC) of SACEP, had decided to make adaptation to climatic change issues as one of the priority areas of the work programme of SACEP. This issue is also being addressed by RECOFTC. The Regional Analysis and Representation Program of RECPFTC, which is responsible for this partnership, is currently ongoing.

Suggested collaborative programme activities for SACEP and RECOFTC

1. Research in community-based natural resource management through the provision of cost-effective capacity building products and services addressing i) conservation, ii) management and ii) equitable sharing.

2. Training in the identified areas (from the above) relating to Forestry Management under i) conservation, ii) management and iii) equitable sharing

Development of RECOFTC-SACEP work plan

Regional analysis and synthesis on aspects addressing of i) Poverty reduction and livelihoods, ii) Rural livelihoods and poverty reduction, iii) Forest governance and iv) Productive and sustainable forest management The above broad areas of combined interest will be developed based on RECOFTC's focus thematic issues in community based natural resource management as given below.

- A. Rural Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction:** mechanisms to achieve poverty reduction through sustainable, forest related, economic development. This will include activities to develop pro-poor markets and enterprises, integrated development planning to address social development in an integrated way (e.g. across health, education, agriculture, humanitarian assistance); analyzing the impact of Community Forestry on livelihoods and the local environment.
- B. Forest Governance:** supporting the development and implementation of sound *policies and laws* that support rights of access and use are fundamentals of poverty reducing Community Forestry, as well as robust and supportive local CF institutions that enable equitable sharing of benefits from CF.
- C. Productive and Sustainable Forest Management:** Community Forestry often occurs in degraded areas rather than high value areas. However, the scope to extend the principles and methods of CF to high value areas needs to be supported if the livelihood needs of communities in such areas are to be secured. Such areas range from conservation areas, where more restricted modes of forest use are in place, to high value timber resources in production forest areas. Fruitful areas to explore include landscape approaches to sustainable forest management, and forest management systems for multiple use including both timber and Non Timber Forest Products

Actions taken to develop a Specific Work Plan.

- **RECOFTC 2008 – 2013 Strategic Planning Consultative Meeting**

RECOFTC is currently embarking on a strategic planning process for the next program cycle, beyond Sep 2008. As an integral part of this process, RECOFTC held a one day stakeholder consultative workshop on the 19th of February at RECOFTC Secretariat, Kasetsart University, Pahonyothin Road Bangkok. As a Key Partner of the RECOFTC, SACEP was invited to this consultation to express its views on the partnership and how to incorporate it in the Planning process.

Discussed Points:

1. Emerging trends and drivers in forests/ natural resources in the region that RECOFTC –SACEP should consider as important to address in our strategic planning and future programming. Key opportunities for which we should position itself.

2. RECOFTC's core functions to address the trends and drivers in the region
3. Promote a package that is about a particular form of forest or resource management – community forestry or CBNRM, and skills for communities to represent their interests, and promote governance for effective forest/NRM management
4. Geographic focus of RECOFTC-intense engagement in a few countries to develop good understanding and linkage as a basis to share lessons more widely outside those countries. A more opportunistic approach throughout the region in countries that express need with more on regional networks and regional approaches.
5. The target audiences we should be reaching and pathways to influence and building understanding to affect positive change in the livelihoods of forest communities.
6. The type and range of information needed to make a difference and the most effective combinations of products/services/processes to reach the target audiences. (Networking, conferences, demonstration, research, convening different groups of stakeholders, advocacy, training courses, etc).

RECOFTC would like to attend the next GC meeting to outline RECOFTC-SACEP specific activities on the following: The SACEP-RECOFTC MOU (with possible amendments – e.g. communication protocol between RECOFTC and individual countries).