



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

In light of these ambitious global targets and emerging national commitments, it is imperative to develop low-cost strategies and techniques for landscape restoration. The most widely used restoration approach involving tree planting is often costly and its application for restoring vast expanses of degraded forestlands may be limited.



Experience with natural regeneration has shown that natural regeneration 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 programs for a number of reasons, including: lack of awareness; perverse incentives favoring 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

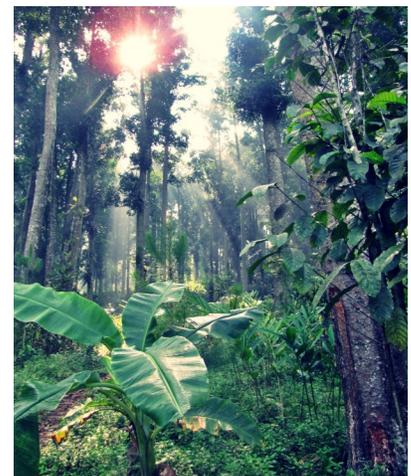
A regional workshop will be organized in Nanning, Guangxi Province, China to better understand the challenges and opportunities for natural forest regeneration and to promote its inclusion as a major component of large-scale restoration initiatives. The specific objectives of the workshop are as follows:

- ⇒ 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 framework; 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; and
- ⇒ Develop recommendations on the way forward to promote the use of natural regeneration in regional and national restoration initiatives.

The result of 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)
- ◆ Bioersity International
- ◆ Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)
- ◆ International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- ◆ RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests
- ◆ State Academy of Forestry Administration, China (STAFAC)
- ◆ World Resources Institute (WRI)



Participants

The workshop participants will comprise 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 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 for Tropical Forestry (ECTF) field site

Day 3

Session 5: Tools for prioritization, 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

It is envisaged that the following outputs will be produced as a result of the workshop:

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

Regional strategy and action plan for FLR 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 concurred 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 APFC as well as relevant organizations and experts, a preliminary draft of strategy was presented at the 23rd Session of FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO23).

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

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