



SAARC Forestry Centre

NEWSLETTER

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SAARC Charter Day Celebrated in the Royal Manas National Park, Bhutan

The SAARC Forestry Centre in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bhutan celebrated the 30th SAARC Charter day on 8th December 2014 at the Royal Manas National Park, Bhutan. The celebration was aimed to raise public awareness of the commitment of Member Governments to the SAARC process and highlight some of the principal activities and work of the Association in general and the SAARC Forestry Centre, in particular.

The Royal Manas National Park, a trans-boundary National Park across Bhutan and India, two of the SAARC Member States, is well known for the extremely rich floral and faunal assemblages and has been identified as one of the world's biodiversity hotspots. The extremely rare and endangered endemic wildlife such as the Assam Roofed Turtle, Hispid Hare, Golden Langur and the Pygmy Hog are present in this trans-boundary Park. The Indian Manas National park spans over an area of 950 Km² and has been declared as a Tiger Reserve and as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The function at the Royal Manas National park included commemorative tree planting and cultural programme by the local residents. The function was attended by the officials of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Forestry and Park Services, staff of Dzongkhag/District Administration, Sarpang, and Dungkhag/sub-district officials of Panbang, SAARC Forestry Centre and members local government and local communities. Park officials from the Manas National Park, Assam, India also attended the function.



Stakeholders Meeting On Application Of Geospatial Technology For Assessment And Mapping of Land Degradation In SAARC Countries.

This was a joint programme of SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), Bangladesh, SAARC Forestry Centre (SFC), Bhutan and ICIMOD, Nepal. The stakeholders meeting was held in SAARC Forestry Centre, Thimphu on 23-25 December 2014. Focal points from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka attended the meeting. This was the first meeting of SAC-SFC-ICIMOD joint programme.

Purpose of the meeting were:

- Present the proposal and seek comments and suggestions
- To establish a common understanding on the methodology for field data collection
- Identify pilot sites (country wise or just 3-4 sites for the whole region)
- Prepare and agree on the work plan

The meeting was inaugurated by the Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture & Forests, Royal Government of Bhutan. Focal points of participating countries presented their respective country paper on land degradation.

Methodologies and techniques to assess land degradation were presented by ICIMOD Professionals. Country specific data availability, technical supports, methodologies and site selection matters were discussed during the meeting. The meeting agreed to conduct land degradation assessment & mapping activity on a pilot site for each participating country. The meeting also finalized the methodology and work plan for 2015





Participants of the Expert Group Meeting

Expert Group Meeting on Integrating “Payment for Environment Services (PES) in Mountain Ecosystem Management in the SAARC Region”

The SAARC Forestry Centre in collaboration with the Department of Forests and Park Services, Royal Government of Bhutan held a meeting of experts on ‘Integrating Payment for Environmental Services (PES) in Mountain Ecosystem Management in the SAARC Region’ at Paro, Bhutan on 6 & 7 August, 2014. Experts from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka presented papers on the theme. Detailed discussions were held to identify ways and means to integrate and enhance the use of PES in the mountain ecosystem management in the SAARC region. The proceedings of the meeting include papers which were presented as well as the outcome of the discussions titled as ‘Conclusions and Recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting’.

Payment for Environmental Services is an incentive-based direct approach to conservation of natural resources whereby service providers receive payments that are conditional on acceptable conservation performance. Though there are several obstacles and barriers to the successful implementation of PES in developing countries, PES has the potential as an important and effective model in the conservation of fragile mountain landscapes in the SAARC Region. Though poverty reduction is not the objective of PES, it can definitely address this important issue of the SAARC region.



SAARC Expert Group Meeting to Develop Guidelines to Assess TOF

The SAARC Expert Group Meeting to Develop Guidelines to Assess Trees Outside Forests (TOF) was held in at Waikhal, Sri Lanka from 29 - 31 October 2014. The three-day programme included two in-house sessions and on field visit on final day.



Participants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka presented their respective country status on TOF particularly focused on guidelines to assess TOF.

The important outcomes of the meeting are:

- Drafted a broad outline of the guidelines to assess trees outside (TOF)
- Identified issues and opportunities related to TOF development in the SAARC Region

Expert Group Meeting on Use of Geographic Information System (GIS) in Forest Management in South Asian Countries.



This expert group meeting was held at Pokhara, Nepal in collaboration with Institute of Forestry (IoF), Tribhuban University from 27-28 November 2014. GIS experts working in the field of forestry in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka attended the 2 days meeting. Objectives of the meeting were:

- ❖ To share experience, knowledge and developing an understanding of GIS use in forest management among SAARC member states.
- ❖ To recommend to achieve maximum benefit of GIS in forest management in SAARC countries.

Mr. M.S.R Murthy, Theme Leader, Geospatial solutions, ICIMOD, Nepal shared his knowledge and experiences with the participants as a resource person. Participants made respective country presentations which were then submitted to SFC. After necessary editing, country papers were finalized for inclusion in the proceeding.

Important outcomes of the meeting are:

- ❖ GIS professionals working in forestry sector of SAARC countries shared their knowledge and experiences
- ❖ Experts identified challenges and opportunities of Geospatial application in forestry of SAARC region.
- ❖ Recommendations for better implementation of GIS in forest management.



Mr. Sangay, New Director of the SAARC Forestry Centre

Mr. Sangay has joined the SAARC Forestry Centre as its Director on 01 September 2014. Mr. Sangay has been working as a Senior Forestry Specialist with Department of Forests & Park Services (DoFPS), Royal Government of Bhutan prior to joining the SAARC Forestry Centre (SFC).

Farewell to Dr. Sangay Wangchuk, former Director of the SAARC Forestry Centre Dr. Sangay Wangchuk joined the SAARC Forestry Centre in 2008 and established the Centre. He served as a Director of SFC till 31st August 2014. He has rejoined the Department of Forests and Park Service, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Royal Government of Bhutan as Nature Conservation Specialist.

Medicinal Garden of SAARC Forestry Centre

The SAARC Medicinal Plant Garden established in 2008 is regularly maintained. The Medicinal Plant Garden is mainly used for educational purpose for the visitors. The Centre plans to add more species that are found in the SAARC Member States.



Visit of Indian Forest Service Probationers to the SAARC Forestry Centre

Annually, the SAARC Forestry Centre receives two batches of Indian Forest Service Probationers from Indira Gandhi National Forestry Academy, Dehradun



Training workshop on Climate Resilient NRM focused on Forest and Wetlands Protected Areas of High delegates from Bangladesh.

The study visit cum workshop was organized by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Forestry Centre, Bhutan in collaboration with the USAID Funded Climate Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CRL) Project of Government of Bangladesh for the officials of Bangladesh Forest Department (FD), Department of Environment (DoE), Department of Fisheries (DoF) and Ministry of Land (MoL). Participants arrived on 17th June 2014 and departed on 23rd June 2014 after a week long study visit to Bhutan. During the visit, the participants were exposed to wide range of topics related to Forests, Environment, Climate Change, Wetland management, Protected area management, Biological conservation, Fishery management, and Land management. The participants visited the wetland management site at Phobjikha, Wangdue and interacted with the communities on biological conservation management and its ecosystem services.

Upcoming Event in 2015

Programme	Tentative Schedule	Venue
SAARC Expert Group Meeting on Sustainable Forest management and Mitigation against Climate Change within the SAARC Region	21 – 23 April 2015	Bhutan h
SAARC Expert Group Meeting on Status of Forest Inventory and Inventory methods practiced in the SAARC Countries	26 – 28 May 2015	Maldives
SAARC Expert Group on Forest management techniques with special focus on enhancing ecosystem services in the Climate Change scenario	9 – 11 June 2015	Bhutan
Application of Geospatial technology for assessment and mapping of land degradation in SAARC countries.	Jan – June 2015	Bhutan/Nepal /Bangladesh
Technology advancement in agro-forestry systems: Strategy for Climate Smart Agriculture technologies in SAARC Countries.	15 – 19 June 2015	Central Agroforestry research Institute, Jhansi, India
SAARC Expert Group meeting on community-based sustainable management of non-wood forest products (NWFP) and income generation for communities	11-13 August 2015	Afghanistan/India /Sri Lanka
SAARC Meeting of Heads of the Institutes/Centres of Forestry Research	August - September 2015	Bangladesh

Editors

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