

Abstract

Agroforestry systems have evolved over centuries through farmer experimentation and changing conditions. Today, it is a potent tool in conservation and rural development. Networks are about people and institutions. FAO has supported some 135 networks in various fields in the world. Networks show greatest effectiveness in information dissemination. International organizations that support agroforestry and community forestry networks in Asia-Pacific include ICRAF, FTTP, RECOFTC and APAN.

*Since 1991, APAN has been working with partner countries and international organizations to support agroforestry coordination, information exchange, training and farmer-based field activities. The proposed APAN 21 Programme is based on a framework for analyzing farm household decision-making in agroforestry. Major lessons learned about the nature, comparative advantages and limitations of networks are presented, which may have implications for the **Asia-Pacific Mountain Network**.*

A regional workshop held in Beijing in 1996 focused on issues of resource mobilization, cost-recovery and network sustainability. Existing networks possess limited experience on these aspects, and most are dependent on donor support. The Bangladesh National Agroforestry Working Group (NAWG) is developing innovative mechanisms to generate funds. These include: service charges on training and research services; royalties on electronic publications; and, in the future, publication fees to users and annual fees to NAWG members.

APAN Phase II funding through FAO terminated in March 1997. With support from FORDA, FAO, FTTP and ICRAF, the seventh APAN advisory committee meeting was convened in November 1997 in Bogor. The meeting revealed that network functions and activities are still continuing in member countries, albeit at a slower pace. Should funding for APAN 21 materialize, network activities can be quickly reactivated and intensified.

There are excellent prospects for agroforestry development in Asia-Pacific. But three key challenges exist: How to increase policy support at national and grassroots levels? How to improve cooperation and linkages among key agroforestry stakeholders? How to develop appropriate resource mobilization and cost-recovery mechanisms to sustain networks that support agroforestry development?