

Southeast Asian Network for Agroforestry Education

WELFARMS



Rural development and environmental conservation are complex issues which require broad and integrated solutions, as well as collaboration and participation among stakeholders. Education programmes in natural resource management, in contrast, are usually divided into sectors: forestry, agriculture, animal husbandry and so on. Their socioeconomic content is often limited. Agroforestry—the practice of growing trees on farms—bridges biophysical and socioeconomic disciplines and brings a systems approach to land management.





What is SEANAFAE?

The Southeast Asian Network for Agroforestry Education (SEANAFAE) was established in April 1999 by 32 universities and colleges in five countries. By 2004, membership had grown to 76 institutions. The aim is to strengthen natural resource management programmes through institutional collaboration in the SEAsia region. SEANAFAE currently covers Indonesia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

An institutional network, SEANAFAE is managed by its members. The biennial General Meeting sets the long-term priorities of the network, reflected in SEANAFAE's vision, mission, objectives, operational strategy and management mechanism. These principles are captured in the SEANAFAE Charter. The SEANAFAE Board plans and monitors activities. A Regional Facilitation Unit, hosted by the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), SEAsia Regional Office, provides technical assistance, financial support and connects SEANAFAE to regional and global partners.

At institutional level, SEANAFAE shows impact through more relevant curricula, improved teaching methods and materials, new research opportunities and, ultimately, graduates that are equipped with knowledge and skills that they can apply in a professional career.



By the mid 1990s, universities and colleges in SEAsia had gained a lot of experience in agroforestry education, research and development, but they had limited opportunity to share this knowledge. They felt the need for a regional mechanism for addressing common issues related to agroforestry education. A series of regional meetings, workshops and consultations in the 1990s led to the formation the Southeast Asian Network for Agroforestry Education in 1999:





- A regional expert consultation on developing curricula for agroforestry and community forestry in Asia was arranged by the Asia-Pacific Agroforestry Network (APAN) and Chiang Mai University, in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in June 1993.
- A Roundtable discussion on agroforestry education in Southeast Asia was organized by ICRAF and APAN, in Bogor, Indonesia, in November 1994.
- A status and needs assessment on agroforestry education in Southeast Asia was conducted in 1998, by ICRAF in collaboration with University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and key universities in Indonesia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.
- The 1st General Meeting of SEANAFFE was held in April 1999 in Los Baños, the Philippines. Thirty-two founding member institutions—universities and colleges—attended the meeting, which formally established the network and drafted its Charter.
- In 2001, SEANAFFE formed five national sub-networks. A decentralized structure responded better to diverse national needs and opportunities, and could handle an increasing membership more effectively.
- With 76 member institutions among them, (January 2004), the national networks are well positioned to influence national education, research and development systems.



Agroforestry is an old practice but a young science. This is reflected in education too: the first universities and colleges to teach agroforestry did so in the mid 1970-ies. Even today, many forestry and agriculture graduates have limited knowledge of agroforestry. During the 20-odd years that agroforestry has been taught, agroforestry as a science has changed rapidly. An earlier focus on agroforestry technologies is being replaced by a much broader view of agroforestry—a landscape view which looks at the multiple products and services that agroforestry provides. Participation of all stakeholders is important in order to analyse trade-offs and negotiate solutions. This broader view also includes governance aspects, including policies and the functions of institutions at all levels.

Throughout SEAsia, the interest for agroforestry and integrated land management is soaring. The intensive pressure on natural resources increases the importance of trees outside the forests. Policy makers do recognize the potential of agroforestry systems to address both environmental and livelihood issues. At farmers' level, agroforestry innovations help improve food security, increase household income and protect the soils.





At landscape level, agroforestry alternatives provide environmental services such as maintaining watershed functions, mitigating climate change and conserving biodiversity. Often, it is the land use decisions of poor upland farmers that decide the fate of these environmental services. What they grow and where they grow it, matters. Farmers' decisions are influenced by a complex set of socio-economic and biophysical conditions. It is a challenge for the education system in SEAsia to provide graduates who are capable of understanding and addressing these issues, and do so using participatory tools and working in multidisciplinary teams.

These views on agroforestry and natural resource management need to be captured by the universities and technical colleges in the region. The separation of forestry and agriculture in the educational system hampers this process. Agroforestry combines several biophysical and socioeconomic disciplines, which may require new or revised institutional arrangements. Enabling educational policies, that help institutionalize agroforestry education, are also needed.

Many curricula in SEAsia were outdated or lacked central elements of what agroforestry is and how it is practiced. The need for participation of stakeholders in curriculum development and review became clear, in order to keep curricula relevant and up to date. But a good curriculum is not enough—to teach agroforestry effectively, there is also a need for relevant and accessible teaching materials. Teaching methods must balance theory and practice and should link effectively with the field, putting the learners at the center. Agroforestry teachers need training in the new approaches. Research opportunities for students and teaching staff must be created.



Objectives and Activities

SEANAFE's vision is to empower individuals and communities in Southeast Asia in managing their natural resources and the environment for a sustainable livelihood. The mission is to develop human resources for agroforestry and integrated natural resource management through collaboration among educational institutions.

The development objectives of SEANAFE are to:

- Provide regional and national mechanisms for interdisciplinary collaboration among agroforestry institutions and programmes
- Build individual and institutional capacity for agroforestry education, research and development
- Strengthen the quality, availability and accessibility of agroforestry education
- Facilitate research connectivity and collaboration
- Link agroforestry education to the extension system and practice in the field
- Promote and develop skills in communication and information dissemination
- Assist in mobilizing resources for national and regional collaboration

Influencing educational change requires work on several fronts simultaneously. SEANAFE addresses regional issues related to natural resource management through the following activities:

- Regional and national studies on key issues
- Review and development of agroforestry curricula
- Teaching materials supply, development and translation
- Capacity building for agroforestry staff
- Facilitation of connectivity between education and research systems
- Provision of links between education systems and farmers and communities
- Policy advocacy on agroforestry
- Information and communication
- Resource generation and mobilization

Key achievements

The achievements of SEANAFE include both processes which facilitate educational change and products which directly support agroforestry education. Such processes are:

- National and regional mechanisms for exchange of experience and for taking joint action
- Knowledge management which brings agroforestry research results to member institutions
- Integration of disciplines and participation among stakeholders
- Training of trainers
- South-South exchange

Examples of products:

- New agroforestry curricula in many member institutions
- Books and publications on agroforestry teaching and learning
- Translations of teaching materials
- Website and newsletters
- Studies on agroforestry education

Five years of regional networking has shown impact on:

- Agroforestry curriculum development: SEANAFE stimulates agroforestry curriculum development and review using participatory approaches. Stakeholders are involved in the curriculum development process to ensure relevant content and effective learning methods. 'A Guide to Learning Agroforestry' was published in 2000 as a tool for the curriculum development process. Translated and adapted versions of the Guide have also been published in the main languages of the region.
- Teaching materials: SEANAFE improves the access to training materials in agroforestry. Recent publications from ICRAF and other regional and international partners are distributed to libraries in member institutions. Materials are also translated and adapted by network members in each country. This way, research outputs and agroforestry knowledge is shared among the Network's members. The rapid development of Information Technology provides easier access to publications. SEANAFE is exploring this opportunity.
- Training of trainers: Developing teachers' knowledge and skills is a high priority for SEANAFE. The network provides training opportunities for teaching staff in agroforestry and natural resources management and the teaching and learning process. Training occurs both at regional and national levels. National training courses are usually a joint effort among several network members.



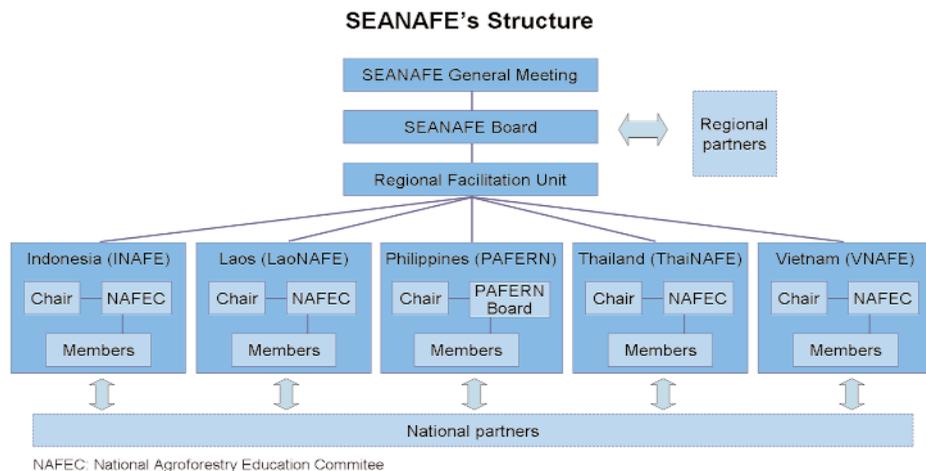
- **Research:** Research outputs must reach the education system. And doing research is a way to learn. SEANAFE facilitates connectivity between the education and research systems through thesis research fellowship for undergraduate and graduate students, as well as research opportunities for faculty members. Often, such research is carried out in collaboration with ICRAF. SEANAFE also provides training in agroforestry research methods.
- **Links with farmers:** When students work with farmers, they can study real problems in a real environment. This is why field activities are important to agroforestry education. SEANAFE links member institutions with the field in several ways, including development of agroforestry demonstration plots, and on-farm experimentation. This way, the relevance and quality of agroforestry education improves.
- **Policy advocacy:** National policies influence education, so to change education it becomes important to involve policy makers. SEANAFE's national networks inform policy-makers on developments of agroforestry in general, and agroforestry education in particular. Studies on job markets and placement of graduates give feedback to the education systems and helps direct reviews of national curricula. Stakeholders are invited to SEANAFE's workshops and meetings where these experiences are discussed.
- **Information and communication:** Networking is about sharing knowledge and developing a joint position on important issues. Information and communication is instrumental for a network. SEANAFE publishes both a printed and an electronic newsletter which are distributed widely. The SEANAFE Website provides network information and access to publications. Informal personal communication is important too—through participation in national and regional network meetings, members build the social capital of the Network.

Organization and management

Membership and Structure

SEANAFE is an institutional network of 76 member universities and colleges (January 2004). A list of members is available at our website.

SEANAPE is organized in five national networks in Indonesia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam, connected at regional level.



National networks

The five national networks are the main building blocks of SEANAPE. There were several reasons behind their creation:

- Each country has its unique set of needs and issues, reflecting the diverse cultural, political and economic diversity in SEAsia
- National networks enable members to use their national language in network activities
- Decision-making is closer to the members, increasing the ownership
- New member institutions can be invited
- Partnerships at national level can more easily be developed and national resources tapped

A National Agroforestry Education Committee (NAFEC) in each country is elected among the members. The NAFEC Chair also represents the country on the regional SEANAPE Board. The NAFEC prepares the annual programme of work and monitors its implementation.

General Meeting

A member-based network, SEANAPE has established a management structure where the members take active part. All member institutions are invited to the biennial General Meeting (GM) to decide on policies and long-term strategies for the network. The GM also elects the SEANAPE Chair and Vice Chair.

SEANAPE Board

The SEANAPE Board consists of the currently five NAFEC Chairs and the members of the Regional Facilitation Unit. The Board meets twice yearly to lead the implementation of SEANAPE's strategy. Among the responsibilities are to continuously develop SEANAPE, and to monitor and evaluate network activities. The Board is also an important link between the regional and national levels of the Network.

SEANAFE Regional Facilitation Unit

The Regional Facilitation Unit (RFU) is hosted by ICRAF's SEAsia Regional Office. Under the leadership of the SEANAFE Technical Adviser, the RFU provides technical assistance and logistical and administrative support to network activities. It also assists in resource mobilization for SEANAFE. Initially, the network is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Efforts are underway to broaden the funding base.

Cost-sharing for sustainability

To run its activities, SEANAFE and the member institutions share the costs involved. Usually, activities are lead by member institutions, which also contribute resources in cash or in kind. SEANAFE both provides financial support, and technical assistance and facilitation.

Partners

Partnership at national and regional levels is a key feature of SEANAFE. Among the partners are:

- African Network for Agroforestry Education (ANAFE)
- Asia-Pacific Agroforestry Network (APAN)
- Extension and Training Support for Agriculture and Forestry in the Uplands, Vietnam
- International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR)
- International Partnership on Forestry Education (IPFE)
- Regional Community Forestry Training Centre (RECOFTC)
- SEAMEO Regional Centre for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA)
- United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

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