

ICRAF's Southeast Asian Regional Strategy for Capacity and Institutional Strengthening in Agroforestry

Concept Paper (4th draft, 7 December 1998)

Background

In Southeast Asia (SE Asia), the profile of agroforestry is rising rapidly as national governments, institutions and farmers increasingly recognize the potential of agroforestry to solve land-use problems. Several regional and international organizations are collaborating with countries in the region to support agroforestry research, development, training and education. As various actors in SE Asian countries grapple to apply agroforestry in development agendas and projects, their efforts are hampered by the lack of adequately trained persons to manage and implement agroforestry initiatives.

International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF), through its Southeast Asia Regional Research Programme aims to assist SEA countries to enhance their abilities to conduct agroforestry research, development and training activities that benefit farmers and communities, particularly those in poor, upland areas.

ICRAF in SE Asia

In 1992, ICRAF established its Southeast Asian Regional Research Programme in Bogor, Indonesia. Collaborative research projects were established in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand. Over the past 6 years, ICRAF-SEA and its partners have produced very valuable research findings. The collaborative research work on alternatives to slash-and-burn agriculture, complex agroforests, conservation farming, and management of imperata grasslands is producing results that ought to find their way to the appropriate knowledge systems and institutions. Therefore, it is very important that national educational and extension systems within the region are properly poised to capture and disseminate the emerging results. This need for capacity building reaches beyond the countries in which ICRAF has out-posted staff, particularly Lao PDR and Vietnam.

ICRAF has responded to this need by substantially increasing its capacity building programme in SEA since 1997. Currently, capacity building in the region is carried out via three projects:

- The Dutch-funded DSO project *Strengthening Training and Education in Agroforestry*. This is a 5-year project (1997-2001) with both regional and global activities: training of trainers, training materials development and production, and a small grants scheme. The regional component for SEA will be completed in 1999.
- A Sida-funded status and needs assessment on agroforestry education during 1997-98. This study covering 5 countries: Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam, has resulted in a project proposal for a regional agroforestry education network: the *Southeast Asian Network for Agroforestry Education (SEANAFE)* for the period 1999-2002.

The *Vietnam Agroforestry Capacity Building (VACB)* project, supported by Sida during 1998-1999 (with a probable extension to the end of 2002). VACB builds agroforestry capacity among scientists, educators and managers in Vietnam through collaboration with ICRAF and its partners in the region.

These activities have confirmed that there is a huge demand for capacity building in agroforestry in the region. They have also revealed that there is considerable capacity at some institutions, but insufficient mechanisms to share these experiences with lesser developed institutions.

In a little over one year, ICRAF-SEA has greatly expanded its in-house ability to support capacity-building efforts within the region. The recent establishment of ICRAF's new Development Division — the first of its kind in the CGIAR system — supports this process.

Agroforestry capacity building in Asia-Pacific

ICRAF is not the only actor in the region with an agroforestry capacity building agenda. An overview of some important agroforestry-related national or regional organizations and projects is shown below:

Table 1. Organizations and projects linked to agroforestry capacity building

Organization/project	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lao-Swedish Forestry Programme (Sida) • Mountain Rural Development Programme, Vietnam (Sida) 	Agroforestry training, research Uplands development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projet de transformation de l'ESAN en Faculté d'agriculture et des forêts, Laos (CCL, France) 	Institutional support, National University of Laos
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of Forestry Education Project, Laos (GTZ) 	Institutional support, National University of Laos
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Forestry Support Programme, Vietnam (HELVETAS, Switzerland) 	Institutional support, forestry colleges and universities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific: Asia-Pacific Agroforestry Network (APAN) 	General: publications, curriculum development, (APAN: see below)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Community Forestry Training Centre (RECOFTC), including Forest, Trees and Peoples Programme (FTPP) 	Training and information in community forestry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Regional Centre for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) 	Regional institution for education, research and training

ICRAF's approach is to build constructive partnerships with these, and other initiatives, thereby combining ICRAF's comparative advantage in research and development, with the strengths of those initiatives.

At the regional level, the most prominent capacity building effort in agroforestry to-date has been APAN, further described below.

Asia-Pacific Agroforestry Network (APAN)

During the past decade, FAO has been, and is, supporting agroforestry development efforts in the Asia-Pacific region. At the field level, FAO projects focusing on agroforestry, or with agroforestry components, have been operating in several countries within the region. At the regional level, FAO convened an expert consultation on agroforestry in Bangkok in May 1990, bringing together some 50 concerned professionals from 12 countries.

One important follow-up to this consultation was the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Agroforestry Network (APAN) in 1991. APAN was supported by FAO with funding from the Government of Japan and, later on, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). APAN worked with 11 countries in South and Southeast Asia on a range of activities designed to improve agroforestry coordination, information, training and farmer-based field activities. APAN funding finished in March 1997, but national networks are still operational to varying extents.

During 1991 to 1997, APAN partnered with ICRAF on a series of agroforestry training and education activities. These focused on training in upland systems research methods, curriculum development in agroforestry education, and production of training materials. ICRAF continues to collaborate with several APAN National Coordinators and national networks in research and development, including training and education.

ICRAF's regional strategy for capacity building in SE Asia

ICRAF's global capacity building mission and strategy

This regional strategy will direct ICRAF's support for agroforestry capacity-building in Southeast Asia into the next millennium. The strategy builds on the overall mission of ICRAF's Capacity and Institutional Strengthening Programme, that being:

To contribute towards quality education, training and information in agroforestry.

This mission will be achieved by promoting institutionalization of agroforestry in national research, training and education programmes. This will be done through the following specific strategies:

- to capture and adapt recent advances in agroforestry research and development to meet the needs of various clients.
- to provide learning opportunities to national collaborators.
- to catalyze and strengthen inter-institutional collaboration among stakeholders in agroforestry (especially through networking).
- to promote integrated land-use approaches to education and training.
- to periodically assess training needs, monitor the impact of training, and evaluate the capacity of national partners.

The SE Asian setting

In developing the regional capacity building strategy for SE Asia, the specific conditions of the region — biophysical, social, economical, institutional — needs to be taken into account. Some of these regional characteristics are listed below:

Agroforestry capacity is available, but unevenly distributed within and among countries, and in need of up-dating.

Institutions are, although with exceptions, reasonable developed in terms of staff and infrastructure.

The financial crisis affects institutions through budget cuts and cost increases; and the natural resources through re-migration to the rural areas.

Most arable lowlands have been opened up for agriculture, mainly rice. The pressure on the uplands is increasing, with adverse effects for the forest cover and for the sustainability of current agriculture practices.

There is a comparable large number of potential collaborators, national, regional and international.

- Current policy changes in several countries support a multisectoral, holistic view of land use. Such changes are, for instance, land allocation to small-scale farmers, decentralization in forest administrations, and integration of agriculture and forestry in institutions (universities, governments).

The SE Asian regional capacity building strategy

The overall objective of this regional strategy is:

to underpin the transformation of agroforestry research findings into the development agenda for countries in the Southeast Asian region.

The following table shows how ICRAF's global capacity building strategy will be implemented in SE Asia (table 2).

Table 2. ICRAF's capacity building strategy for SE Asia

ICRAF's global strategy	ICRAF's SE Asian strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to capture and adapt recent advances in agroforestry research and development to meet the needs of various clients • to provide learning opportunities to national collaborators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to develop, collate and share information and databases on agroforestry research, particularly in SE Asia.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to catalyze and strengthen inter-institutional collaboration among stakeholders in agroforestry (especially through networking). • to promote integrated land-use approaches to education and training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to build human capacity for agroforestry research, education and development among scientists, educators and managers in Southeast Asian countries • to promote regional and national networking in agroforestry research and education in SE Asia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to periodically assess training needs, monitor the impact of training, and evaluate the capacity of national partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to strengthen institutions in agroforestry research, education and development • to support the devolution of agroforestry training and development responsibilities from the national to the grassroots level. • to keep records of advances in agroforestry research and development in SE Asia

Implementation approach

In implementing the regional strategy, ICRAF's approach will be to

- form strong partnerships with national institutions — research institutes, universities, extension agencies, local government units, NGOs and farmers' organizations.
- make special efforts to integrate research findings from ICRAF collaborative research into capacity building activities
- together with a wide range of partners, develop and implement agroforestry capacity-building projects and activities at the regional, national and grassroots levels.
- link agroforestry training with appropriate research and development initiatives in the region
- focus on training-of-trainers, to improve the multiplier effect
- make maximum use of trainers and resource persons from within the region.
- build communication and information-sharing bridges among the concerned stakeholders

The strategy will have different focus in different countries within the region in the following way:

- *Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines* (ICRAF mission: strategic collaborative research): The capacity building strategy will focus on ICRAF teams and partners, and the on-going research and development activities in key watersheds in these countries. The strategy aims at providing additional human and financial resources to develop capacity-building programmes and to link them with the dynamic infrastructure already in place within this 'research triangle'.

Vietnam and Lao PDR. (ICRAF mission: primarily capacity building) These countries represent the emerging ICRAF presence and collaboration in Indochina. In Vietnam, strategy is to complement the *Vietnam Agroforestry Capacity-Building Project*, In Lao PDR, the strategy is to link with and support the nascent plans to develop ICRAF collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Lao-IRRI Upland Programme.

- *Other SE Asia countries* (ICRAF mission: primarily collegial liaison) . Other countries in the region, such as China, would like to develop more collaboration with ICRAF to build capacity in agroforestry. The strategy is to include more countries and institutions in regional training and information activities, and to play a networking role within the region.

Activities

The activities under the SE Asia regional strategy will build on the 5 projects under ICRAF's Capacity and Institutional Strengthening Programme:

- Project 5.1 Group training in agroforestry
- Project 5.2 Individual training in agroforestry
- Project 5.3 Agroforestry training materials
- Project 5.4 Strengthening agroforestry in tertiary education
- Project 5.5 Information for agroforestry research and development

Further, the capacity building activities targets the research system, the development system and the education system in the countries of the region.

The following annex displays the capacity building activities in a matrix format. The matrix describes the overarching problem, outlines the strategy for each problem, shows present resources/activities, and points out opportunities and needs for capacity building.

The problem identification, displayed in the matrix, is based on two regional activities carried out during 1998:

- A status and needs assessment on agroforestry education and training in Indonesia, Laos, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. The study, supported by Sida, was conducted by partner institutions in the 5 countries and coordinated by ICRAF.
- A regional planning workshop in Bogor 10-13 August, under the DSO-funded project on *Strengthening Training and Education in Agroforestry*.

This matrix will be used as a 'road map' in designing future national, regional or thematic capacity building projects. It will also help in setting priorities.

As mentioned, at present, ICRAF coordinates 3 capacity-building projects:

- The Sida-funded *Southeast Asian Network for Agroforestry Education (SEANAFE)* for the period 1999-2002 (start January 1999).
- The Dutch-funded DSO project on *Strengthening Training and Education in Agroforestry*, a global 5-year project (1997-2001). The regional component for Southeast Asia will be completed in 1999..
- The *Vietnam Agroforestry Capacity Building (VACB)* project, supported by Sida during 1998-1999 (with a probable extension to the end of 2002)

In summary, some activities are fairly well financed for 1999, particularly training of trainers, support to educational institutions, and activities in Vietnam. Other areas have little available financial resources in spite of huge demand, particularly individual training and information support. There are huge gaps in the assured funding for 2000 and beyond.

There is a tremendous need for capacity building, including information on agroforestry, expressed through the regional studies conducted and confirmed by many partners in research and development organizations. The opportunities expressed in the matrix show only the main potential areas for new projects. Some of these opportunities are already being built into ICRAF's day-to-day activities, while other need additional funding.