

Our Work in 2022

A Peak Into HSF's Environmental Work

HSF Korea supports the process of reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula. In South Korea, this includes regional development, in which the border region (DMZ) is especially focused upon. In North Korea, HSF attempts to contribute to the peaceful development in the region through activities aiming for international integration and cooperation on the Korean Peninsula in the field of environment

World Wetland Day

In celebration of World Wetland Day on February 2nd, the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) Korea introduces our representative works. The foundation has participated in and hosted several seminars and projects regarding the protection of wetlands on the Korean Peninsula.



On November 26th, Hwaseong City hosted the 2021 International Symposium for Hwaseong Wetlands. This event was made possible by the joint effort of the Hwaseong Eco Foundation, EAAFP, Birds Korea, the Hwaseong Environmental Movement Association, the Korean Ministry of Environment, the Korean Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, the Korean Cultural Heritage Administration, and the Hanns Seidel Foundation Korea. Representatives of numerous environmental organizations and NGOs, national and international experts, site managers, government officials, and members of the local communities presented their insights in person and online in the four main sessions of the symposium. Its main theme of ‘connection’ was omnipresent throughout the various presentations and discussions.

Making the Invisible Visible

March 22nd is World Water Day, held ever since 1993, sanctioned by the United Nations to promote the importance of freshwater. World Water Day focuses on the importance of freshwater and aims to raise awareness of the 2.2 billion people that lack access to safe water which is in line with the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030.



In 2022, the focus of the day is particularly on ‘groundwater, making the invisible visible’. Groundwater is responsible for many lives on the Earth since it supplies most of the water we drink, produces food, sanitates, and industrial processes. Along with groundwater, it is noted that it is also critically important to protect the health of ecosystems such as wetlands rivers.



8 Days of Devastating Wildfire

Starting on March 4, 2022, the eastern coast of South Korea has been hit by devastating wildfires. The blaze, of which the cause is still unknown, first broke out in Uljin city and, due to dry weather and strong winds, was able to spread north into Gangwon province. The main fire could not be extinguished until 213 hours later, i.e., after more than eight days. Especially in Uljin, Samcheok, Gangneung and Donghae, it caused great damage and an estimated 20,923 hectares of forest have been destroyed. It is the country's most devastating fire on record.



Goseong county and HSF Korea have been partnering for the sustainable development of the inner-Korean border region since 2005. Other past projects in the region included the establishment of an eco-corridor for amphibians in form of a frog ladder. There are several upcoming events regarding the topics of forest and afforestation.

For the upcoming international day of forests on the 21st of March, the FAO has planned an online seminar event on ‘Sustainable wood for people and the planet’.

Cheorwon Inter-Korean Forest Cooperation

The Cheorwon Inter-Korean Forest Cooperation Center, which will serve as a hub for inter-Korean forest cooperation in the border area, was completed on April 26. The center will observe forest pests that travel between the two Koreas from the border area and benefit both Koreas through test control. The site of the center is a purification of the land used by military units in the past and stands for the creation of a peaceful forest on the Korean Peninsula through exchange and cooperation rather than military confrontation. It carries a deep meaning since anyone can visit freely to check the current status of inter-Korean forest cooperation and participate in events directly with private organizations.

Members of HSF, the deputy head of evaluation of HSF Munich, Mr. Maximilian Schmid, and project coordinator Northeast and Central Asia HSF Munich, Mr. Alexander Ganepola, attended the opening ceremony of the Cheorwon inter-Korean Forest Cooperation Center.

World Migratory Bird Day and the Work of Hanns Seidel Foundation

Nature knows no man-made borders. This is evident when migratory birds cross the demilitarized zone between the two Koreas. Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) Korea promotes exchanges amongst representatives of international organizations and national governments and raises awareness on the importance of environmental protection. At the same time, HSF Korea supports training in DPRK and abroad, conferences, and practical environmental studies to improve the expertise of decision-makers.

Since 2015, HSF works on the conservation of wetlands and international cooperation through the East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and others. These projects are meant to contribute not only to better nature protection but also to more understanding and ultimately reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula.



Renewable Energy Sources in Germany

On May 25, Hanns Seidel Foundation Korea invited their partners from Gangwon Province to participate in an online seminar on "Renewable Energy Sources in Germany" via Zoom.

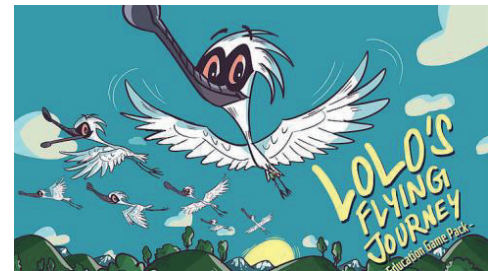


The main speaker Prof. Dr.-Ing. Wilfried Zörner, head of the Institute of new Energy Systems (InES) at Technische Hochschule Ingolstadt, provided extensive information on not only the energy political and legislative environment but also the role of renewable energies in Germany as well as detailed data on solar energy and the energetic use of biomass. Young-Soo Kim, project manager at HSF Korea, was in charge of the consecutive translation from German into Korean. The event was concluded with a Q&A session.

Small Grant Program with EAAFP

The Global Future Environment Association organized the project under the theme of "Research on Ecosystem Services and Habitat for Migratory Birds in the Incheon Free Economic Zone (IFEZ)." In particular, the time-series changes in the habitat of Far Eastern Curlew in the area designated as the IFEZ were visualized, and by rating them, objective perspective and quantitative data on their role as an intermediate stop were provided. It is expected that international cooperation can be led by analyzing changes in the migration path of the domestic East Asia-Australia Flyway due to climate change and presenting measures reflecting future distribution when establishing the direction of conservation of migratory birds. In addition, it is expected to contribute to the preservation and increase of the Far Eastern Curlew population through the establishment of hot spot in Ramsar's strategic area due to the construction of highways near the destination of migratory birds in the future.

Journey of Flying Lolo or New Launched Educational Pack

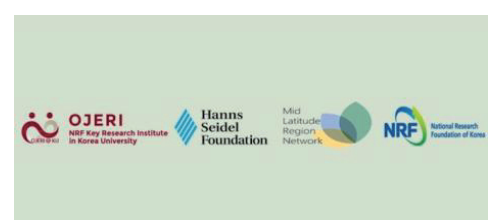


In light of the World Migratory Bird Day celebrations on May 14, East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) together with WWF Hong Kong and the support of Incheon Metropolitan City of the Republic of Korea and Hanns Seidel Foundation Korea launched an updated version of the educational pack „Lolo's Flying Journey“, a game about the migratory bird species Black-faced spoonbill and its migration routes. It is supposed to enhance knowledge on migratory birds and the protection of wetlands as well as spark players' interest for environmental protection and a sustainable lifestyle.

Monitoring the Impact of Climate Change with Experts

On the 5th and 6th of August, the Hanns Seidel Foundation in cooperation with the OJeong Resilience Institute and the Mid Latitude Region Network organized the "Pole Expert Group Meeting".

The event, which took place in early August at Korea University, focused on the topic of monitoring the impact of climate change on alpine areas, biodiversity, and the livelihoods of herders in the region. After participants, including HSF senior researcher Dr. Choi, presented research findings on the first day, a roundtable discussion on funding opportunities and the next steps were followed on the second day. Afterward, participants were invited to join an excursion to Siwori Village for presentations on smart agriculture and energy technologies.



XV World Forestry Congress

From May 2nd to May 6th, the XV World Forestry Congress 2021 took place, one year later than originally planned due to the COVID19 pandemic, in the COEX Exhibition Hall in Seoul, South Korea under the theme of "building a green, healthy, and resilient future with forests".

On Monday and Friday, in a booth in the exhibition pavilion, HSF Korea alongside its partners from Korea University OJeong Resilience Institutes (OJERI) provided information to the congress' participants regarding the foundation's efforts in the fields of afforestation and about the cooperation with OJERI. Among other materials, they were able to present the jointly created environmental textbooks in the North Korean language.

On Thursday, Pierre Clinquant from Hanns Seidel Foundation DPR Congo, the representative of HSF Korea, Dr. Bernhard Seliger, and Dr. Hyun-ah Choi, Senior researcher at HSF Korea, visited the exhibition pavilion after Dr. Seliger had provided insightful information during a presentation about the cooperation for ecological restoration of degraded forest areas in the DMZ and borderlands in a special session by the Korean National Arboretum and the Korea Forest Conservation Association.



Korean-German Climate and Environment Conference

On July 20th, the Korean-German Climate & Environment Conference on the topic of "Circular Economy in Korea and Germany: Recycling and Reuse of EV Batteries" was organized by the Korean-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the German Embassy in Seoul.

Project examples and cooperation ideas from both countries were also presented, as well as business models from companies. The interns David Straub and Sabine Leykam were also able to attend the event.

Small Grant Programme Onboard

This year, Hanns Seidel Foundation collaborates with EAAFP Foundation on its Small Grant Programme with a Special Call on "Ecology and the Inner-Korean Border Area."



Education of NGO officials on the promotion of the Inter-Korean Green Détente

From July 13th to July 15th, an education program for NGO officials, regarding the promotion of the Inter-Korean Green Detente, hosted by the Ministry of Unification, was held at Gwanghwamun Center Point. The training session intended to provide insights for officials who were interested in promoting the Inter-Korean Green Detente.

On the first two days of the program, lectures were held at the Center Point Building in Gwanghwamun. On the third day, the officials had the unique opportunity to visit the Paju Inter-Korean Forest Cooperation Center. At the center, the participants were introduced to the functions of the Inter-Korean forest cooperation. Furthermore, the officials were able to tour the entire facility.

In the first session, the current status of the Inter-Korean cooperation was presented, with an emphasis on the future direction of the Inter-Korean cooperation for the Green Detente, North Korea's recognition and response to the climate crisis, and the obligations that come from being a signatory of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.



Gochang Getbol Big Bird Race



From August 26th to August 28th, 2022, the Hanns Seidel Foundation had the chance to participate in the Gochang Getbol Big Bird Race which was organized by the Cultural Heritage Administration of Gochang District.

Gochang Getbol Big Bird Race, hosted by the Cultural Heritage Administration of Gochang District, took place in the southwest of the country. Besides the experienced birders Dr. Seliger and Dr. Choi, the birdwatching-freshmen project coordinator Jeongmin Khil and intern Sabine Leykam had the chance to participate in the competition.

Inter-Korean Forestry Cooperation Seminar

On August 23rd, 2022, the 'Inter-Korean Forestry Cooperation Seminar' was held in the conference room of the Mirae Library of Kangwon National University.



The aim of this seminar was to discuss the restoration of the forest ecosystem on the Korean Peninsula, measures to respond to the climate crisis, and forestry cooperation plans. Experts from various fields attended this seminar, including Young-hoon Song, director of the Kangwon Institute for Unification, and Heon-Su Lee, president of the Inter-Korean Gangwon Province Cooperation Association. Hanns Seidel Foundation's senior researcher Dr. Hyun-Ah Choi offered opinions on inter-Korean forest cooperation plans as a panelist. Project coordinator Jeongmin Khil and intern researcher Hyukbin Eun also attended the seminar.

HSF-EAAFP Flyway Conference

In cooperation with the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership, Hanns Seidel Foundation Korea held a conference titled "Management of flyways of Asia - similarities, common challenges, overlap and differences" on the 23rd of November.



One of the greatest challenges of climate change is the threat of a dramatic loss of biodiversity. Therefore, preserving ecosystems and biodiversity becomes an important part of the mitigation of climate change. Migratory birds, which count as the most important bio-indicators of a healthy environment, are using so-called "flyways", i.e. like routes in the sky leading from breeding to non-breeding grounds. Even though there has been great networking between the nine big flyways worldwide, more exchange among them is needed.

In 2016, HSF became one of EAAFP's partners and has since been one of its 39 members. The East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) was launched on November 6th, 2006, and aims to protect migratory waterbirds, their habitats, and the livelihoods of people dependent upon them. The EAAFP has since organized workshops, conferences, and events to promote exchange and learning between airways.

World Bee Day

May 20 was proclaimed World Bee Day by the United Nations General Assembly in 2018 and serves as a reminder of the decline of the world bee population as well as their long-term and sustainable protection. It aims to raise awareness of the importance of bees to our biodiversity and survival and underscores the dangers bees are exposed to due to shrinking habitats, lack of food, and toxic pesticides.



World Biodiversity Day

May 22 is designated as World Biodiversity Day by the United Nations and this year's slogan, "Building a shared future for all life", was chosen to support the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which will soon be adopted at the upcoming UN Biodiversity Conference #COP15. Biodiversity is the answer to a variety of challenges surrounding sustainable development and is the foundation for climate and health issues, food and water security, and sustainable livelihoods. This year, a list of 22 actions for biodiversity has been published to inspire action for nature.

Hanns Seidel Foundation Korea, alongside its many partners, is committed to sustainable development on the Korean Peninsula and the preservation of wetlands, birds, and biodiversity in South and North Korea and cooperates in numerous projects on these topics.



Hanns Seidel Foundation celebrates World Migratory Bird Day

Nature knows no man-made borders. This is evident when migratory birds cross the demilitarized zone between the two Koreas. Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) Korea promotes exchanges amongst representatives of international organizations and national governments and raises awareness on the importance of environmental protection. At the same time, HSF Korea supports training in DPRK and abroad, conferences, and practical environmental studies to improve the expertise of decision-makers.

Since 2015, HSF works on the conservation of wetlands and international cooperation through the East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and others. These projects are meant to contribute not only to better nature protection but also to more understanding and ultimately reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula.

Wadden Sea Study Trip

With the study trip, HSF Korea and their partner organizations for this project, including East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP), Wetlands International, and WWF Germany, aimed to enhance multilateral cooperation related to SDG 13 (Climate Change), SDG 14 (Marine Ecosystem, Life Below Water), and SDG 17 (Partnership).

By meeting experts, information exchange, and engaging in successful workshops, the delegation is confident that it helped in further discussions in the future plan on how South Korea and North Korea could work together through bilateral and multilateral cooperation – the main goal of HSF Korea on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia based on Wadden Sea's cases.



The outcomes of this study trip were shared at our next projects, the German Korean conference with the German Embassy in Seoul on the 17th of November and our flyway conference with EAAFP on November 23rd. In addition, a German newspaper published two articles about the visit to Zwillbrock Biological Station to discuss nature conservation, including the cooperation that had begun on cross-border rewetting in the Aamsveen/Hündfelder Moor area.

Trans-Pacific Sustainability Dialogue 2022

The conference aimed to generate new research and policy partnerships to expedite the implementation of the Agenda's underlying framework of 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

To achieve systems transformation and sustainable development, discussions turned to the need to value and invest in nature.