



IMPROVEMENT OF RURAL LIVING CONDITIONS THROUGH HEALTHY FORESTS

ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRAINING CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), once richly covered with forests, is experiencing a decrease in forested areas at a rate higher than the natural regeneration rate. Since September 2014, Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) Korea has embarked on a comprehensive project, funded by the EU, to implement healthy forest policies and food security in the DPRK. By the end of this project, HSF Korea would have established a self-sufficient structure that practices sustainable forest management in the DPRK. HSF Korea has broken down this end goal into three objectives in order to help guide the project.



Objectives

To eliminate persistent technical and organizational deficiencies and deficits

To improve living conditions, especially for the population living in deforested areas

To increase food security in the DPRK, especially for the population living in deforested areas

ACTIVITIES

Launch of the project and Inception Workshop in DPRK



In September 2014, a delegation of the HSF Korea visited Pyongyang to launch a comprehensive project which can serve as a model to face the deficiencies in the field of forestry in the DPRK. 6 months after the project was initiated, an inception workshop was held which gathered staff members that specialize in technical and financial aspects of EU projects from HSF, the Forest Research Management Institute (FMRI), Carbon Trade Division (CTD) in order to produce an inception report that details the activity plan, the communication strategy, and the monitoring and evaluation scheme.

Set up of the Training Center for Sustainable Forest Management at the FMRI



The objective of this activity was to build the physical structure in which training activities about modern forestry take place. Electronic learning tools, basic forestry software on tree planting and growth management, basic literature on sustainable forestry, and classroom materials were prepared for the training center. Lectures not only covered tree nursery, seasonal challenges, advanced technological skills, but were also made accessible for students from Kim Il Sung University and Kim Chaek University of Technology through the national network – the Golden Mountain intranet.

ACTIVITIES

Set up of a Model Afforestation Site



The intended result of this activity was to develop a 80 ha afforestation model site for practical training, and to offer a yearly progress report of the activity. By the 33rd month since the project was initiated, the project team and staff of FMRI succeeded in constructing a growing tree nursery with electricity generated. A variety of seeds, ranging from common pine nuts used in Korean kitchens to aronia, which contains vitamins, have been planted. Some of the harvest were even sold to a pharmaceutical company in the DPRK in 2016. The Sangseo-Ri model afforestation site has also allowed FMRI experts to conduct tests on the effects of the red Light Emitting Device on tree seedling growth.

Local Training Workshops



11 local training workshops had three pronounced goals: 1) to increase technical and management capacity of the domestic forest experts and managers, 2) to facilitate the scientific studies in the forestry field, and 3) to contribute to the implementation of forest management in the DPRK. Workshops were led by local staff from the FMRI project team who had been previously trained during the international seminars, or by the HSF project staff when workshops were in the DPRK. The workshops were successful in implementing a self-sufficient local forest administration staff that is able to perform without significant logistical or content support by HSF once the project is over. The training workshops thoroughly covered various topics, such as the advantages and disadvantages of various methods of seeds planting. The seminars were also valuable in that they created a rare platform in which representatives of diverse forestry-related institutes can gather and discuss on a working level.

ACTIVITIES

International Seminars on Sustainable Forestry

Five international seminars were held over the course of the project timelines. The purpose was to implement the skills necessary for a sustainable management of forests by reaching a wide audience and having international experts sharing the experiences on various topics. A focus was forest inventory and sustainable forest management.

- ◆ 1st Seminar: The head of the forestry section of the monastery of the Order of Saint Benedict in Sankt Ottilien presented about cluster afforestation and visited the project of HSF Korea in Sangseo-Ri (Pyongan-Nam-Do).
- ◆ 2nd Seminar: Topics were the examination of the production of forestall reproductive material in Germany, the significance of the quality of genetic materials in tree seeds, and the use of such forestation techniques at Sangseo-Ri model site.
- ◆ 3rd Seminar: The seminar explored the international experiences of establishing a National Forest Inventory. It also sparked a productive exchange on contending theories about measuring carbon emissions from deforestation.
- ◆ 4th Seminar: Titled “Forest Pests and Integrated Pest Management,” the event held in Pyongyang discussed problems of forest pests and pest control, and included presentations and a practical training.
- ◆ 5th Seminar: More than 70 representatives of the DPR Korean forestry sector attended. Titled “Forestry Experiences in Mongolia”, it featured a number of Mongolian speakers explaining their work and experiences.



The Q&A sessions indicated that there was a need for further education on technical parts. Hence HSF provided additional collections of scientific literature and e-learning materials on afforestation.

ACTIVITIES

Trainings in China and Mongolia for Comparative Perspectives in Afforestation

The two trainings in China lasted seven days each. The staff of FMRI, HSF and CTD travelled to China with hopes of comparing successful afforestation examples in similar geographical contexts and climatic challenges. The project team visited companies in Southwest China, where they gained insight into technologies (e.g. solar panels) and construction processes (e.g. eco-bags technology). The team also visited Beijing Forestry University to learn about the latest research practices on tree nurseries and pest control. Meetings and exchanges with more than 10 national and international organizations supported the establishment of an international network and reintegration of the DPRK in the international forestry cooperation.

The three trainings in Mongolia also lasted seven days each. The staff of FMRI, HSF, and CTD visited Mongolia in order to establish comparative frameworks, acquire technical skills, and expand networks in the field of

afforestation and sustainable forest management. The trainings demonstrated that the DPRK delegation was very interested in international cooperation regarding afforestation. Additionally, HSF was able to strengthen connections with interest groups, such as the *Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)*, with a focus on the establishment of a National Forest Inventory, the *Asia Foundation*, and local groups in Mongolia.



Outcome

Around 260 people took part in the International Forest Seminars, roughly 750 experts participated in local trainings in the DPRK and 24 forest experts travelled to Mongolia and China for trainings. The partner organizations widened their network significantly by working with a large

amount of institutions and organizations in various fields. They also got the chance to connect with experts and international organizations and work towards continued cooperation.

Through the activities, the technical knowledge of the partner organization was increased and contacts with relevant technical and scientific counter-parts in China and Mongolia were established. Some of the contacts lead to a further and independent exchange and an internationalization of the DPRK Korean forestry sector. The project sites provide space for the training of foresters and a showcase for sustainable and successful reforestation efforts, while improving the livelihood of the local population through “cash crops” and additional benefits from ecosystem services around villages in Sangseo-Ri.





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