Rationale

The economic value of intact, fully functioning ecosystems, as providers of both natural products and environmental services, is now well established. However, once they become degraded, the stream of benefits flowing from such kind of ecosystems is considerably reduced often for long periods since natural regeneration is slow and restoration is both expensive and time-consuming.

The recent rapid economic development of most Asian countries, particularly in Southeast Asia, has been considered impressive but it has been achieved at the expense of the environment, undermining delivery of natural products and ecosystem services. A 2012 working paper by the Asian Development Bank Institute reported that Asia is confronted by serious environmental problems that threaten to undermine future growth, food security, and regional stability. The region now faces the prospect of a dwindling supply of environmental capital to support the growing demands of a rapidly growing and urbanized population.

Aside from rapid population growth, ecosystem degradation is caused by various factors including increasing market demands for forest products, over cultivation of agricultural lands, poor governance, etc. In its 2011 report, the Food and Agriculture Organization estimated that about 40 percent of land in two-thirds of ASEAN nations (excluding Singapore) suffers from either severe or very severe degradation due to human activities. Thus, ASEAN countries already recognize the importance of effectively implementing policies for environmentally sustainable growth (ASEAN 2007).

The science and practice of ecological restoration could have a significant impact on the abovementioned problems as it improves natural resources management and biodiversity conservation, encourages use of traditional ecological knowledge, enhances climate change mitigation and adaptation, and builds sustainable livelihoods. It is becoming increasingly important worldwide as a way to regain the integrity of ecosystems while simultaneously enhancing human welfare.

Globally, several past ecological restoration schemes by governments and nongovernmental organizations have been successful. Lessons learned from these experiences are critical for redefining environmental policies, determining and prioritizing research needs, and charting concerted efforts from all sectors of society towards a sustainable and integrated development of the ASEAN region.

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Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Conference will provide a forum for scientists and practitioners to share useful lessons, address challenges, and generate commitments to strengthen policy decisions and work collaboratively towards ecological restoration for sustainable and integrated regional development in Southeast Asia along global biodiversity and other conservation goals.

The quorum of conference participants will identify gaps in our knowledge of restoration and identify new approaches to both policies and practices that will form an agenda to guide the future direction of research and development in this field.

Themes and Topics

1. Approaches, Techniques and Innovations in Ecological Restoration
   - Restoration in parks and protected areas
   - Restoration in agro-ecological and silvicultural systems
   - Restoration in an urban context
   - Community and landscape scale restoration

2. Socio-economic, Cultural and Ethical Dimensions of Ecological Restoration
   - Traditional ecological knowledge and community-based restoration
   - Monitoring and adaptive management

3. Ecological Restoration, Biodiversity, and Climate Change
   - Threatened and endangered species, populations and habitats
   - Invasive species management
   - The role of restoration in mitigating and adapting to climate change

4. Ecological restoration policies and other legal frameworks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and Topics</th>
<th>12 October</th>
<th>13 October</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>Opening Program</td>
<td>Plenary Session 2: Panel Discussion on Future Directions on Ecosystem Restoration in Southeast Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>Coffee/Tea Break, Poster Presentations &amp; Exhibit Viewing</td>
<td>Coffee/Tea Break, Poster Presentations &amp; Exhibit Viewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30</td>
<td>Plenary Session 1: Keynote Speeches and Open Discussions on Gains and Challenges in Ecosystem Restoration in Southeast Asia</td>
<td>Parallel Session 3: Ecological Restoration, Biodiversity, and Climate Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.30</td>
<td>Lunch/Poster Presentations &amp; Exhibit Viewing</td>
<td>Lunch/Poster Presentations &amp; Exhibit Viewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>Parallel Session 1: Approaches, Techniques and Innovations in Ecological Restoration</td>
<td>Parallel Session 4: Ecological restoration policies and other legal frameworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>Coffee/Tea Break, Poster Presentations &amp; Exhibit Viewing</td>
<td>Coffee/Tea Break, Poster Presentations &amp; Exhibit Viewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>Parallel Session 2: Socio-economic, Cultural and Ethical Dimensions of Ecological Restoration</td>
<td>Conference Synthesis &amp; Closing Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>Welcome Dinner, Launching of the Society for Ecological Restoration in Southeast Asia</td>
<td>Welcome Dinner, Launching of the Society for Ecological Restoration in Southeast Asia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References:


Invitation for Sponsorship

SEAMEO BIOTROP welcomes partnerships and co-sponsorship with various relevant institutions in the implementation of this conference in the following forms:

- Direct funding support for the overall implementation
- Convening specific conference sessions
- Support for attendance of resource persons and paper presenters
- Other in-kind support: conference materials and equipment, lunches and dinners of participants, etc.

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