

**Training Workshop for Capacity Building and Networking
on Global Change Issues for Scientists in Bangladesh,
Nepal, and Sri Lanka (APN 2000-NC01)**

Project Leader:

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APN Funding

US \$5,000

Participating countries

Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka

Introduction/Background

The workshop was organized by the Sri Lanka National Committee of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, as a back-to-back activity to the APN supported Regional Training Workshop on Biogeochemical Budgeting and Socio-Economic Modelling held during 18-22 September 2000 at Mount Lavinia, Sri Lanka.

It was noted that participation of scientists from South Asian countries, except India, in regional studies concerning global change is at a very low level. In order to rectify this situation, the APN had suggested that a separate one-day workshop for building capacity on global change issues be held back-to-back with the above workshop. It was further suggested that one additional participant each from Bangladesh and Nepal be supported to attend the Coastal Modelling Workshop under the supplementary project.

The Objectives of the Workshop were to:

- Expose scientists in South Asian countries to the latest information regarding global change issues pertaining to land use/cover, terrestrial ecology, agriculture, forestry and climate variability;
- Discuss issues pertaining to above areas that need to be investigated on a regional basis; and
- Identify project proposals based on participants concepts for submission to APN and other agencies for funding.

Outline of activities conducted

The Workshop Programme included presentations made by resource persons both on the situation in Sri Lanka and the region as a whole. Discussion of some projects that have already been funded in South and Southeast Asia, APN Guidelines for Funding Regional Studies, and a general discussion to identify areas that need development into project proposals for further study. The details are given below.

1) Presentations on Sri Lanka Situation

The following papers were presented to introduce the participants to global change issues and their relevance to Sri Lanka:

- “Climate Variability in Sri Lanka”. Dr. A.W. Mohottala, former Director of Meteorology and former APN Scientific Planning Group member;
- “Ecology and Land-Use Issues in Sri Lanka and Global Change”. Prof. Sarath W. Kotagama, Professor of Environment Science, University of Colombo; and
- “Some Agroclimatological Issues in Sri Lanka”. Dr. C.R. Panabokke, Former Director of Agriculture and Consultant to IWMI.

2) Presentations on Regional Situation

SASCOM resource persons made the following presentations to appraise the participants on the regional global change issues and potential areas for collaborative studies:

- “Global Change Issues in South Asia”. Dr. A.P. Mitra, FRS, Director, Centre for Global Change Research, New Delhi;
- “Climate Change and Variability in the Indian Sub-Continent”. Dr. Rupa Kumar Kolli, Deputy Director and Head, Climatology & Hydrometeorology, Division, Indian Inst. Tropical Meteorology, Pune; and
- “Potential Studies on Land Use/ Land Cover Change, Soils and Terrestrial Ecosystems”. Dr. M. Velayutham, Director, Nat. Bureau of Soil Survey and Land Use Planning, Nagpur.

3) Description of Current Projects

The following on-going studies were described as case studies on land use/cover projects being conducted in South and Southeast Asia:

- Land Use/Cover Change in Asia and the Carbon Cycle;
- Land Use and Land Cover Change for Southeast Asia; and
- Intra-Country Networking on the Indo-Gangetic Plain Rice/Wheat Cropping Systems, extending from Pakistan through India and Nepal to Bangladesh.

4) Briefing on APN Procedures

The APN-SASCOM Liaison Officer, Dr. Sumana Bhattacharya made a presentation on APN Guidelines including the research framework, key scientific priorities, goals, strategies and criteria adopted for funding research proposals. She also explained the procedure for preparing proposals and offered to make contacts for regional collaboration.

Outcomes/Products

1) Identification of Possible Projects

During the general discussion, with guidance from resource persons, the participants came out with several suggestions on projects that could be

developed into proposals for submission to APN in 2001 for funding in 2002. These are described below:

- Regional study on impact evaluation of the quality of resource base and improvements in agricultural productivity brought about by irrigation command projects. Such a study could also include land use changes that had followed after the introduction of major irrigation schemes in participating countries;
- Studies on methane evolution from paddy lands and management strategies for reducing the intensity of evolution. Already South Asian countries have estimated methane emissions for their greenhouse gas inventory preparation. The proposed study could verify the emission factors and also look into mitigation options;
- Regional study on greenhouse gas emission factors in agriculture, forestry and land use sectors applicable to the region, as recommended by an IPCC meeting held recently in Ghana;
- Regional study on the impact of carbon dioxide elevation and climate change on the productivity of tea. The pre-proposal on the project has already been cleared by APN, but the full proposal could not be submitted due to late response from tea scientists of other countries; and
- Regional study for the analysis of trends in climate extremes and synthesis of climate variability data in South Asia which is subject to monsoon weather patterns and their correlation to agricultural productivity.

2) Capacity Building and Networking

The Workshop provided an opportunity for scientists in the region to familiarize themselves with APN procedures and build their capacity to benefit from funding offered by APN to pursue their research work. For many scientists from Sri Lanka, it was a unique opportunity for a group interested in climate variability and land use change to meet and exchange ideas on each others research. The visiting resource persons offered to collaborate in any suitable research studies that scientists in the participating countries may wish to undertake with APN funding.

Future directions/Follow-up work

Subsequent to the Workshop, several participants have already contacted the IGBP National Committee with possible proposals. Once the APN announces the next Call for Proposals, they will be persuaded to develop suitable proposals meeting APN criteria and guidelines for submission to APN. The IGBP National Committee will assist them in this exercise. In the meantime, contacts will be made with interested scientists in other countries in the region through SASCOM members to seek their participation as collaborating scientists.

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