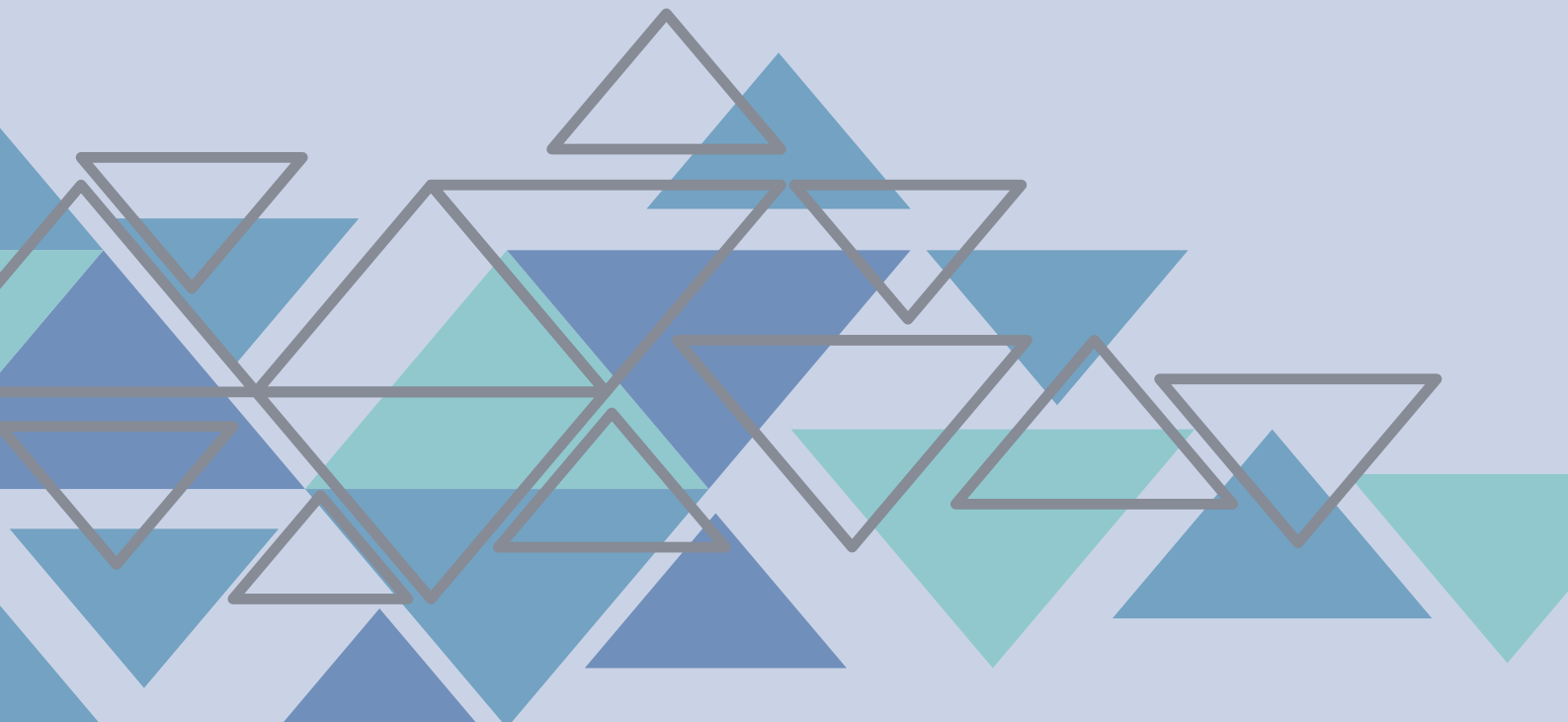


Asia-Pacific Network of Early Career Professionals for Global Change Research (APN-ECAP) Platform for Visibility in Global Change and Sustainability

(AOA2023-01SY-Saurav)

**First Regional Workshop |
APN-ECAP Nexus: Sparking
ECAPs Visibility in Global
Change Research and
Sustainability**

December 6, 2023





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BACKGROUND

The Asia-Pacific Network of Early Career Professionals for Global Change Research (APN-ECAP) is a pivotal initiative that aims to integrate and amplify the contributions of early career professionals in the fields of global change and sustainability. It's a collaborative endeavor funded by Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN), Japan, and implemented by the Center of Research for Environment, Energy, and Water (CREEW), Nepal, designed to bridge the gap between emerging talents and established experts in sustainability.

The first Regional Workshop APN-ECAP Nexus: Sparking ECAPs Visibility in Global Change Research and Sustainability was more than just a gathering; it was a concerted effort to empower early career professionals (ECAPs) with the knowledge, skills, and network needed to take on leadership roles in sustainability research. It emphasized not only the importance of discussions on sustainability challenges but also focused on building a community of ECAPs equipped to make a substantial impact in their respective fields.

The intergenerational workshop was designed not just as a meeting point for diverse age groups but as a breeding ground for innovative ideas and sustainable solutions. The expected outcome was to establish a forward-thinking and adaptable governance structure within APN-ECAP network, driven by a diverse array of perspectives and expertise. The event serves as a compelling example of how blending intergenerational experiences and viewpoints can significantly influence the future of APN-ECAP.



“Early career professionals play a crucial role in research, and it's essential to enhance their global visibility and engagement. This event is timely and offers valuable opportunities for young professionals engaged in real-time projects.”

-Dr. Indrajit Pal, AIT

INTRODUCTION

The First Regional Workshop of the Asia-Pacific Network of Early Career Professionals (APN-ECAP), held at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Thailand on December 6, 2023, marked a pivotal moment in the collaborative journey of ECAPs toward addressing global change and sustainability challenges. This workshop, a cornerstone initiative of APN-ECAP, was not just a congregation of minds but a crucible for forging the future path of sustainability research in the Asia-Pacific region.

The event was co-organized by APN, CREEW in collaboration with AIT and with the support of the 3rd International Symposium on Disaster Resilience and Sustainable Development (DRSD 2023). At its core, this workshop aimed to foster intergenerational collaboration and inclusivity, where the voices and ideas of emerging professionals played a central role in shaping the network's governance structure alongside their experienced counterparts.

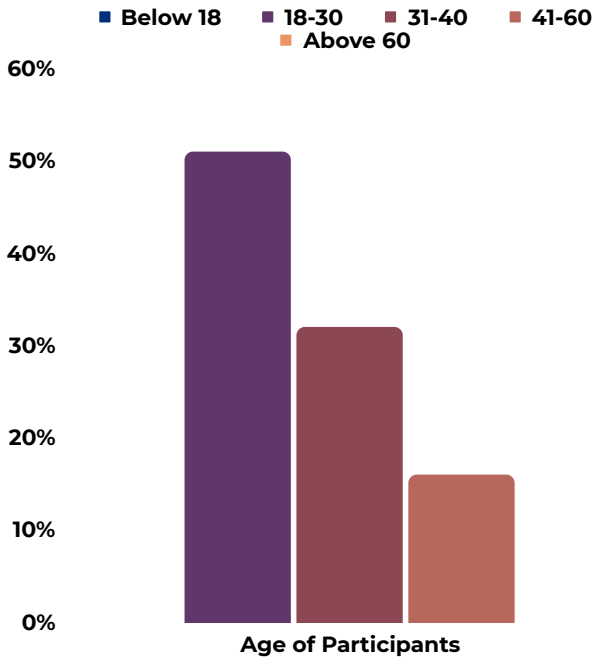
The workshop's central theme, embodied its primary objective: to solicit and integrate the intergenerational innovative ideas of ECAPs into the governance structure of the network. With a meticulously designed program that included interactive sessions, group discussions, and networking opportunities, the workshop aimed to delve deep into the roles, challenges, and aspirations of ECAPs while seeking their input on the governance framework. It was an opportunity for participants to share their forward-thinking perspectives, engage in solution-oriented dialogues, and align their personal goals with the collective objectives of the APN-ECAP network, fostering a vibrant and productive intergenerational exchange of ideas.



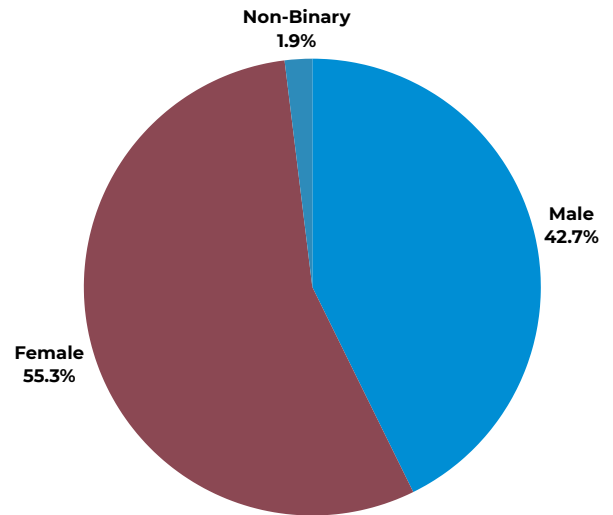
"The first regional workshop for the APN-ECAP project will mark a strong foundation for the inception of our exciting project with the value inputs of each and every one of you. We are passing the pattern directly to your capable hands, to direct your active engagement."

-Dr. Linda Stevenson, APN

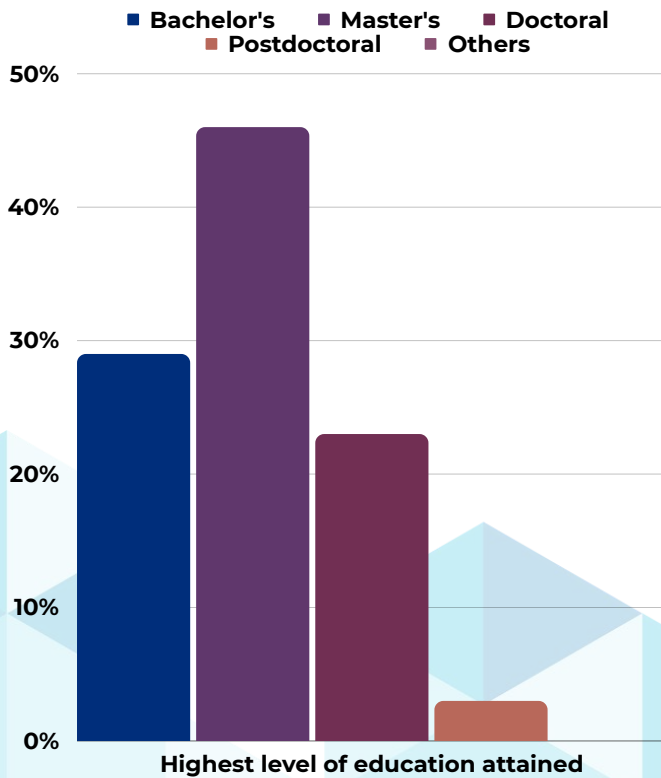
DEMOGRAPHICS



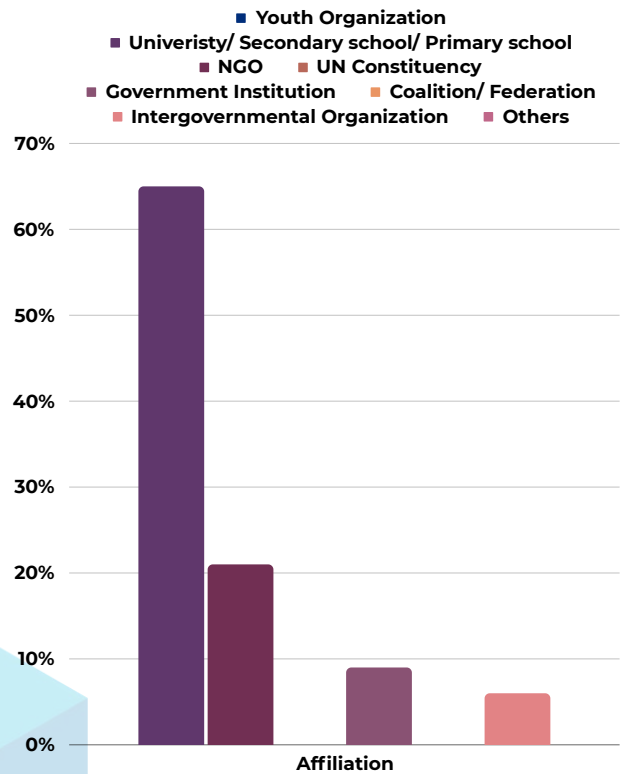
Picture 1: Participant's age range



Picture 2: Participant's gender



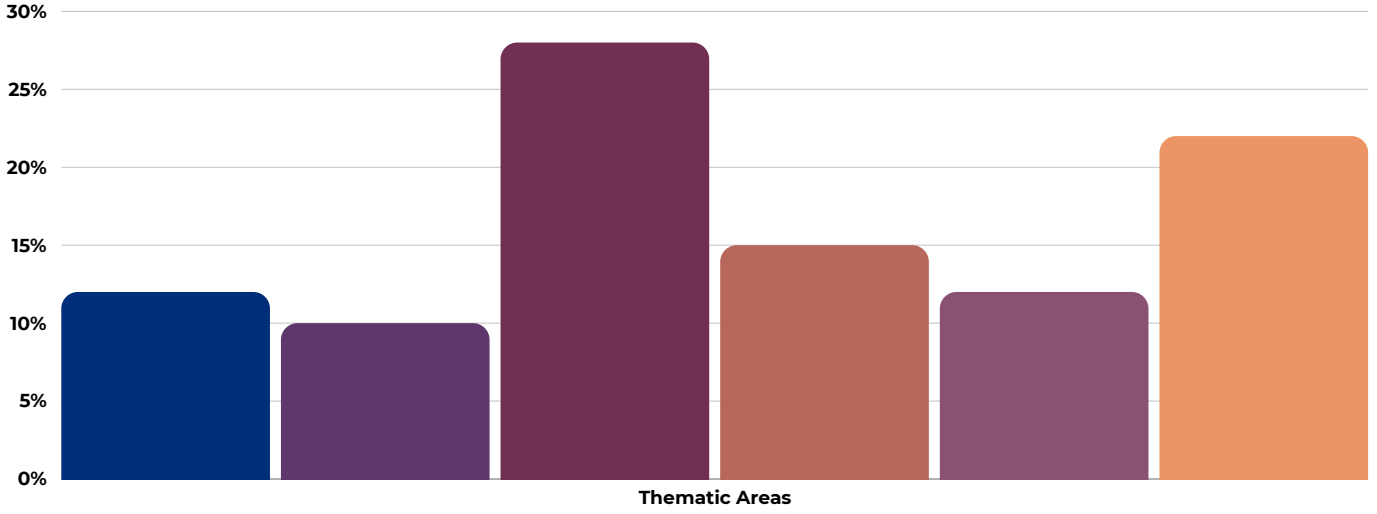
Picture 3: Participant's academic background



Picture 4: Participant's affiliation



- Air, Land, Coasts, and Oceans
- Biodiversity and Ecosystems
- Climate
- Food, water and Energy
- Human Dimensions
- Risk and Resilience



Picture 5: Participant's area of interest

ACTIVITIES

Opening Session

The workshop started with an organized registration process, followed by a series of opening remarks that set a tone of collaborative wisdom and forward-thinking innovation. Distinguished speakers highlighted the importance of blending the experiences of seasoned experts with the fresh ideas of young professionals in addressing global sustainability challenges.



"This initiative, will empower young scientists and researchers in the Asia-Pacific region, nurturing them into leaders, collaborators, and knowledge holders for global sustainability.."

-Prof. Sangam Shrestha, AIT

Dr. Indrajit Pal went on to discuss his nine years of work at AIT, during which he focused on engaging with different networks, especially young professionals and educational networks. He highlighted Dr. Saurav KC's efforts in initiating APN-ECAP and welcomed young minds and researchers to the event. Dr. Pal emphasized the workshop's significance in fostering collaboration and engagement among ECAPs. He congratulated the team for bringing this concept to reality and stressed the importance of early career professionals in research. Dr. Pal recognized the need to increase their visibility and engagement at the global level. He concluded by underscoring the timely nature of the event in providing opportunities for young professionals involved in real-time projects.



"It is imperative to have a strong sense of ownership among ECAP's from the region and the existing governance structure of APN, particularly through entities such as scientific planning, capacity development, and sub-regional committees coordinated by a secretariat, serves as an optimal entry point for the integration of APN-ECAP."

Dr. Nafesa Ismail, representing Dr. Linda Stevenson, Head of Scientific Affairs and Knowledge Management at the Asia Pacific Network for Global Change Research, extended a warm welcome to all participants and honored keynote speakers. She emphasized the goal of strengthening ECAPs visibility in global change and sustainability, in the Asia Pacific region. She highlighted the importance of recognizing young professionals as essential stakeholders in sustainable development and their role in global change and sustainability research. She further emphasized the regional workshop's role in laying a strong foundation for the project, inviting participants to actively contribute to turning principles into effective practice.

Prof. Sangam Shrestha the Scientific Planning Group (SPG) Member, APN, and Dean of the School of Engineering and Technology at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Thailand expressed enthusiasm for AIT's involvement in the APN-ECAP project. Prof. Sangam emphasized collaboration with global institutions, including APN and CREEW, to address global sustainability issues and empower ECAPs. He praised the thematic focus of the first APN-ECAP regional workshop and its potential to foster innovative perspectives and solutions. Prof. Sangam had confidence in the platform's ability to connect young researchers with experienced professionals, empowering them as leaders for global sustainability. He highlighted the importance of APN-ECAP as a network for knowledge sharing and urged active involvement in shaping sustainable solutions. Prof. Sangam committed to promoting APN-ECAP within his network and encouraged others to do the same.



"We extend sincere appreciation to APN for their collaborative efforts in fostering the development of early career researchers."

-Dr. Dhundi Raj Pathak, CREEW

Ms. Naomi Young, Programme Officer, Knowledge Management and Scientific Affairs at the Secretariat of APN, APN-ECAP operates within the larger framework of APN, which has six focus areas and four strategic goals, including capacity development and stakeholder engagement. Ms. Young highlighted APN-ECAP's role in contributing to global agendas related to climate change, disaster risk reduction, and sustainability. She mentioned that APN's projects are often led by ECAPs from developing countries, with a focus on science-policy linkages. The regional workshop supports ECAPs through various activities, including training workshops, webinars, conferences, and an Annual Call for Proposals. She also emphasized APN-ECAP plays a crucial role in empowering and engaging early career professionals in the Asia-Pacific region in addressing global sustainability challenges.

Dr. Dhundi Raj Pathak, President of CREEW highlighted the significance of APN-ECAP as a momentous achievement in establishing a dynamic community of young scientists dedicated to addressing global change and sustainability, expressing appreciation to APN for their collaborative efforts in supporting early career researchers. He extended best wishes to all participants for a productive regional workshop, emphasizing the importance of providing a conducive space for participants to articulate their ideas and expectations, contributing to the network's sustained functionality.



"We are part of these kinds of groups, networks, events, and it's always a great opportunity to explore synergies and consider how collaboration between us can be possible. This collaboration extends beyond our involvement in APN-ECAP and encompasses our roles as students, researchers, colleagues, and advocates dedicated to global research, and sustainability worldwide."

-Dr. Saurav KC, CREEW

Dr. Saurav KC, Project Lead of APN-ECAP and Deputy Executive Director at CREEW, highlighted the project's alignment with APN's operational mandate to encourage ECAPs in science, research, and development related to global sustainability. Dr. Saurav described the activities conducted, including the Proposal Development and Training Workshop (PDTW) in May 2023, which involved networking sessions for ECAPs to gather ideas for the project's sustainability. The APN-ECAP Kick-off meeting in November 2023 drew over 100 participants, featuring senior scientists discussing opportunities and benefits of the network. It also included an interactive panel discussion with ECAPs. He outlined the workshop's objectives, including facilitating intergenerational communication, formulating diverse structures for APN-ECAP's sustainable management, and exploring collaboration opportunities among participants for global research and sustainability efforts.

Ms. Susmita Mishra, Research Associate, CREEW provided insights into APN-ECAP, emphasizing the diverse composition of the group, consisting of participants from various age groups, gender balance, and different thematic backgrounds. APN-ECAP focuses on accelerating global change and sustainability in the Asia-Pacific region, defining ECAPs as individuals under 40 years in APN Focus Countries, with specific educational and work experience criteria. An advisory group representing different countries in the Asia-Pacific region was formed at the project's outset. The objectives of APN-ECAP revolve around ECAPs' engagement in networking, planning, and action, to enhance ECAPs' capacity in decision-making and advocacy for sustainability. The project is divided into three phases, including Inception and Development, Pilot Implementation, and Implementation.



“We are looking forward to engaging ECPs in shaping our missions and directions and we hope that APN-ECAP will do just that with immense coordination from the CREEW team and support from us at the APN secretariat.”

-Ms. Naomi Young, APN

Focused Sessions on Intergenerational Collaboration

Group Composition: Participants in the workshop were divided into five groups. Group 1 was comprised of the youngest participants, while Group 2 included senior participants attending the workshop. Group 3, 4, and 5 were composed of participants aged between 25-35.

Topics of Discussion: Groups 1 and 2 engaged in individual discussions on the following three specific topics:

- APN-ECAP Membership Management
- Five Flagship Activities of APN-ECAP
- Sources of Opportunities and Knowledge Products for APN-ECAP Network

While Group 3, 4, and 5 focused on preparing APN-ECAP Governance Structure.

Independent Discussions: During the initial part of the session, each group focused on these topics, dedicating one-third of the session time to these discussions. This allowed them to delve deeply into the subject matter.

Merged Discussions: Subsequently, the two groups (Group 1 and Group 2) came together to merge their discussions and comment on the outcomes generated by each group. This collaborative phase enabled them to synthesize ideas and perspectives from both the younger and senior participants.

Governance Structure Development: Meanwhile, the remaining three groups (Group 3, Group 4, and Group 5) worked independently on developing governance structures for the APN-ECAP project. These governance structures likely pertained to the organizational framework and decision-making processes within the initiative.

Intergenerational Input: To ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach to governance, Groups 1 and 2 shared their insights and input on governance structures with Groups 3, 4, and 5. This exchange of ideas and recommendations helped refine the governance structure of each group with an intergenerational perspective.

Intergenerational Exchange and Networking

The last session of the workshop concluded with four presentations. The first presentation was jointly delivered by Groups 1 and 2, summarizing their discussions on APN-ECAP Membership Management, Flagship Activities, and Knowledge Sources. The remaining three presentations likely focused on the governance structure discussions, reflecting the input and collaboration from all groups.

The key outputs of Group 1 and 2 are as follows:

1

APN-ECAP Membership Management

- Membership recruitment based on research area
- Membership Retention : Based on Experience and Age
- Sustainability of the group: Benefits , Fees ,discounts, support for conference or workshop, Exchange program, Releasing Monthly newsletter ,local group meet up for collaboration, social media

APN-ECAP Five Flagship Activities

- Mentoring, Internship, Skill Development Program, Fun Learning, Friendly Competition, Brainstorming Session on Integrating AI /ML /DS
- Capacity Building, Fellowship, Collaborative Research, Inter/transdisciplinary research, Exchange Program, Inter-generational dialogue

2

3

APN-ECAP Five Flagship Activities

- Government and Non-Government agencies, UNEP, IHE Delf, UNESCO, UN Haitat, UN-ECAP, SEI, K-WATER, APN , SANDEE, ICIMOD, USAID,JICA,SEI,GIZ
- Knowledge Product: Newsletter, Social Media /blog , Journal /Publication

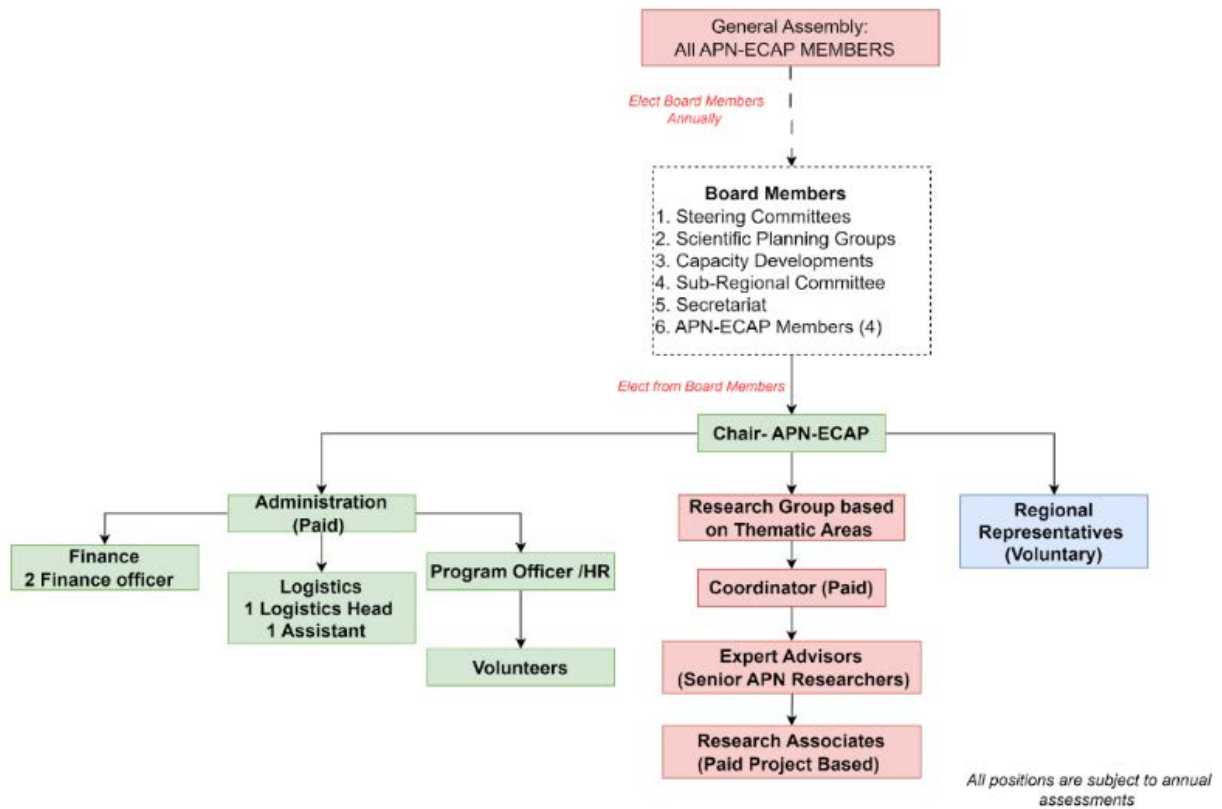


Figure: APN-ECAP Governance Structure by Group 3

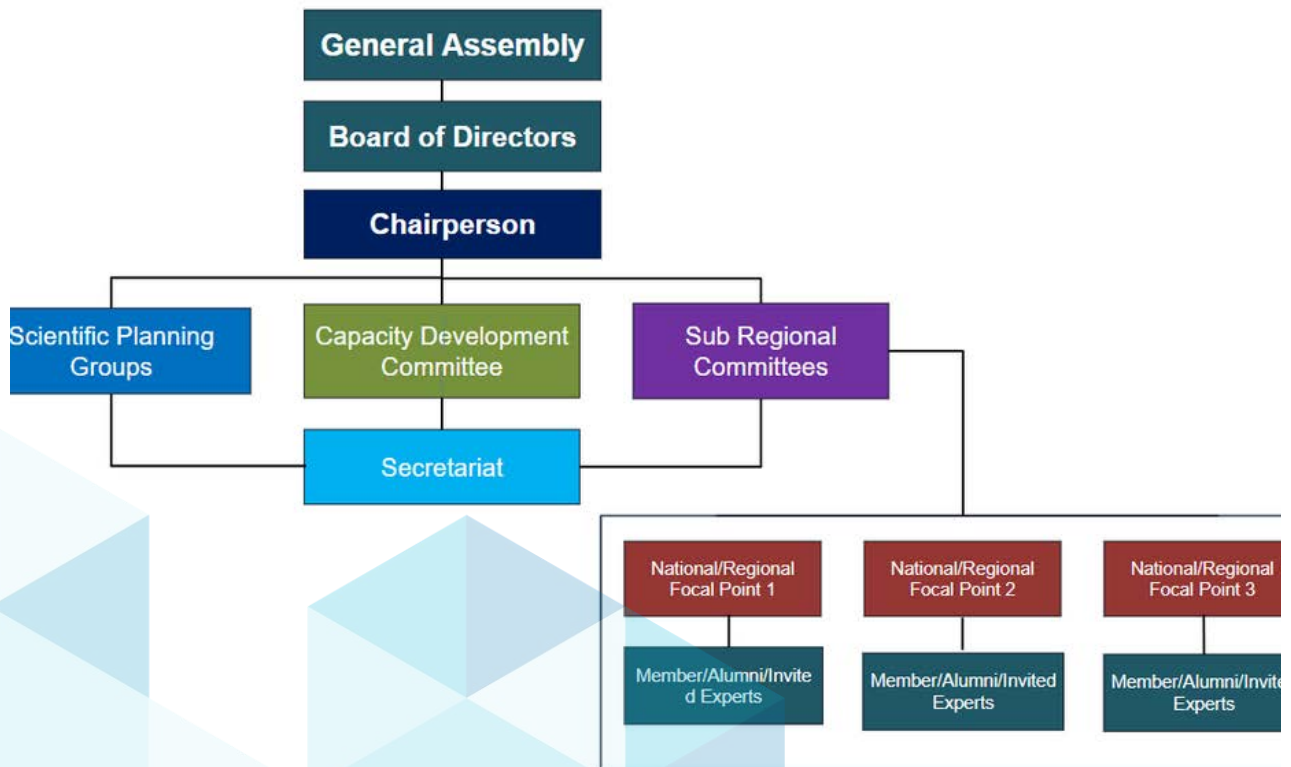


Figure: APN-ECAP Governance Structure by Group 4

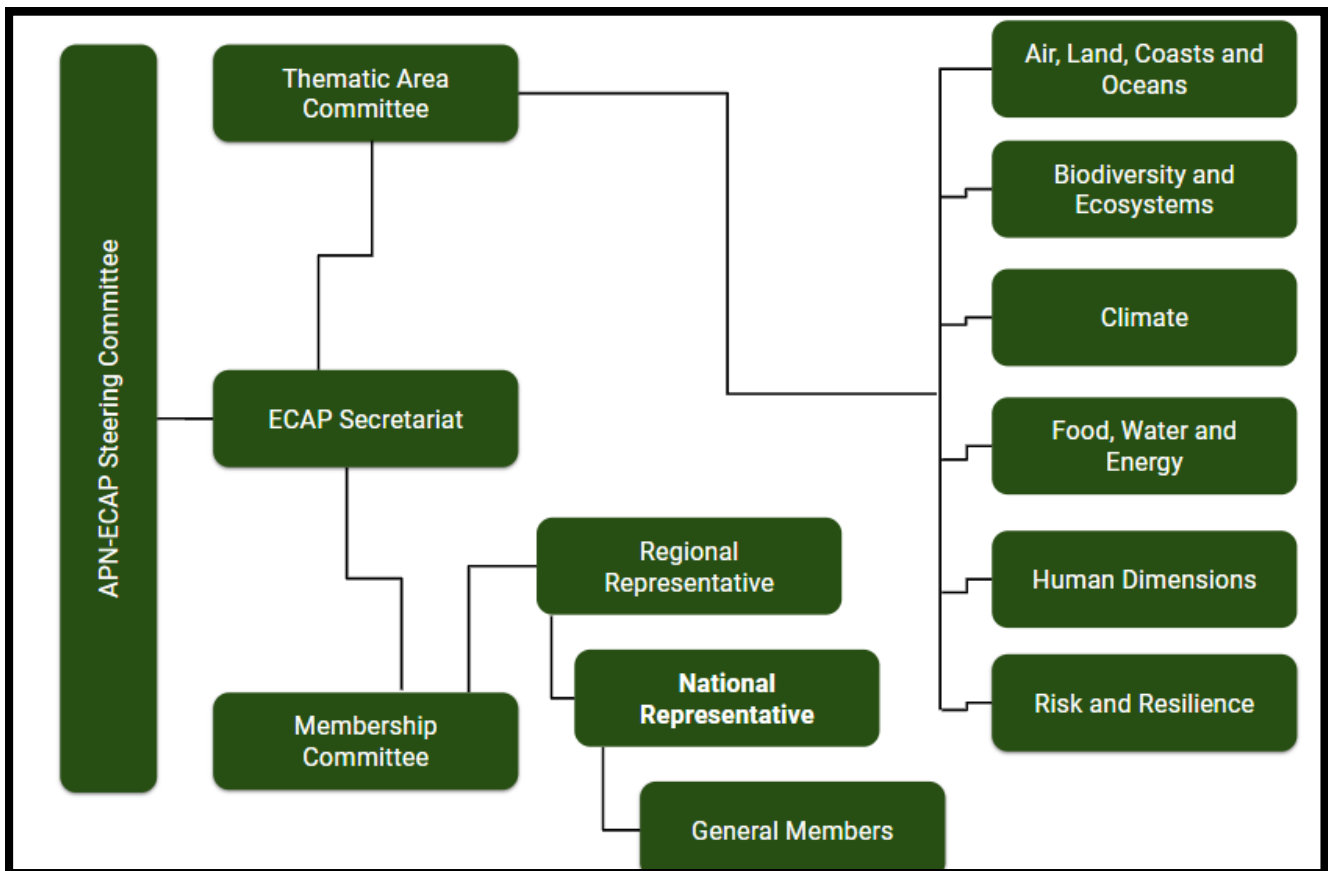
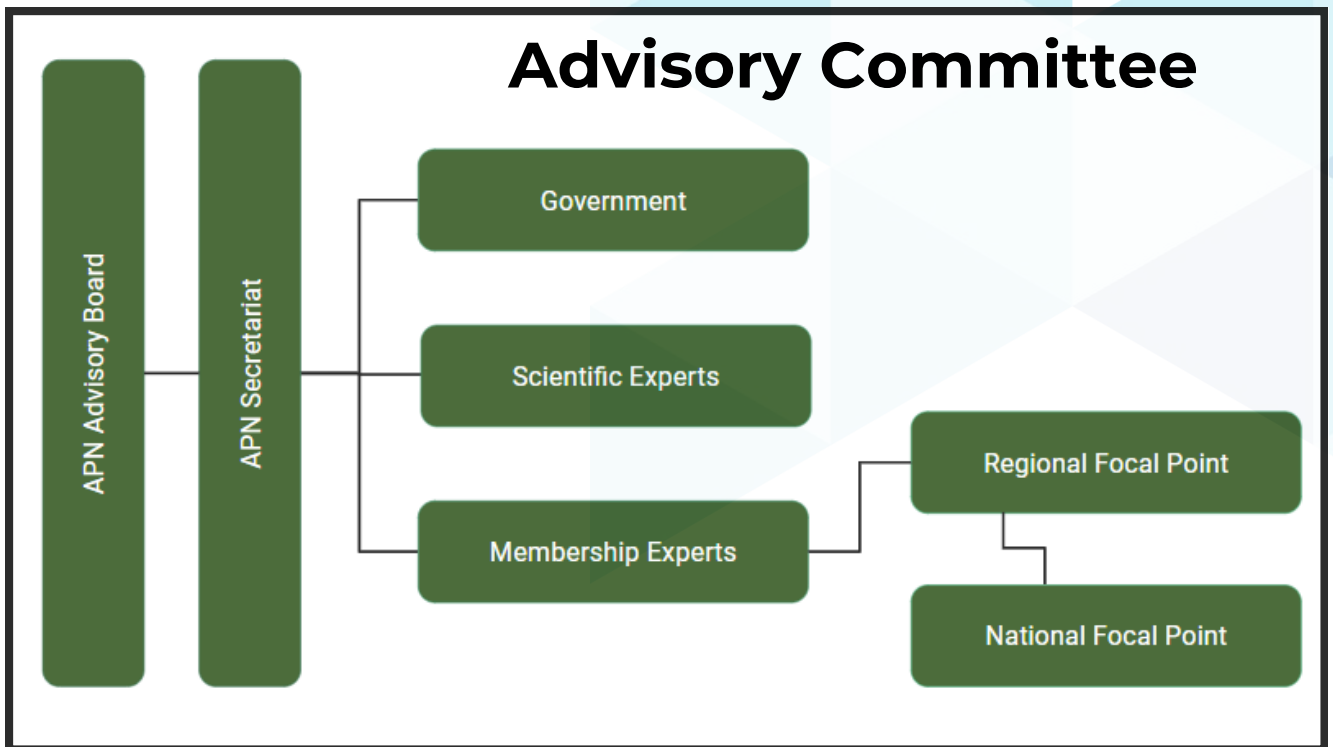


Figure: APN-ECAP Governance Structure by Group 5

CONCLUSIONS

The APN-ECAP Regional Workshop was marked by its commitment to fostering intergenerational collaboration and knowledge exchange. The first segment, dedicated to introduction by keynote speakers, laid the groundwork for meaningful interactions between young professionals and senior experts. This collaborative spirit carried forward into the breakout sessions, where participants engaged in discussions and presentation preparations. These sessions provided a unique platform for participants to share their diverse perspectives and insights, creating a rich tapestry of ideas that enriched the workshop's overall discourse.

As participants bridged generational gaps and worked collectively on presentation materials, they embodied the core value of APN-ECAP: "ECAPs in Networking, Planning and Action". This collaborative effort not only enriched the workshop's content but also underscored the significance of intergenerational dialogue in addressing global sustainability challenges.

The group presentation segment was a pivotal highlight of the workshop, offering a space for participants to synthesize their collective knowledge and present multifaceted perspectives on sustainability topics. These presentations encapsulated the essence of the workshop's discussions and provided actionable insights for future endeavors. The workshop concluded with key takeaways from these presentations and closing remarks that looked ahead to future initiatives and ongoing support for ECAPs.



"Intergenerational discussions are the heartbeat of APN-ECAP, where the wisdom of experience meets the energy of youth. Here different generations come together to share knowledge, insights, and ideas. These exchanges are key to our healthy development, fostering collaboration and ensuring a sustainable future for all."

-Susmita Mishra, CREEW

A crucial aspect of the workshop was the networking lunch, where professionals forged valuable connections and laid the foundation for potential collaborations. This informal exchange of ideas underscored the importance of networking and collaboration in addressing the complex challenges of sustainability.

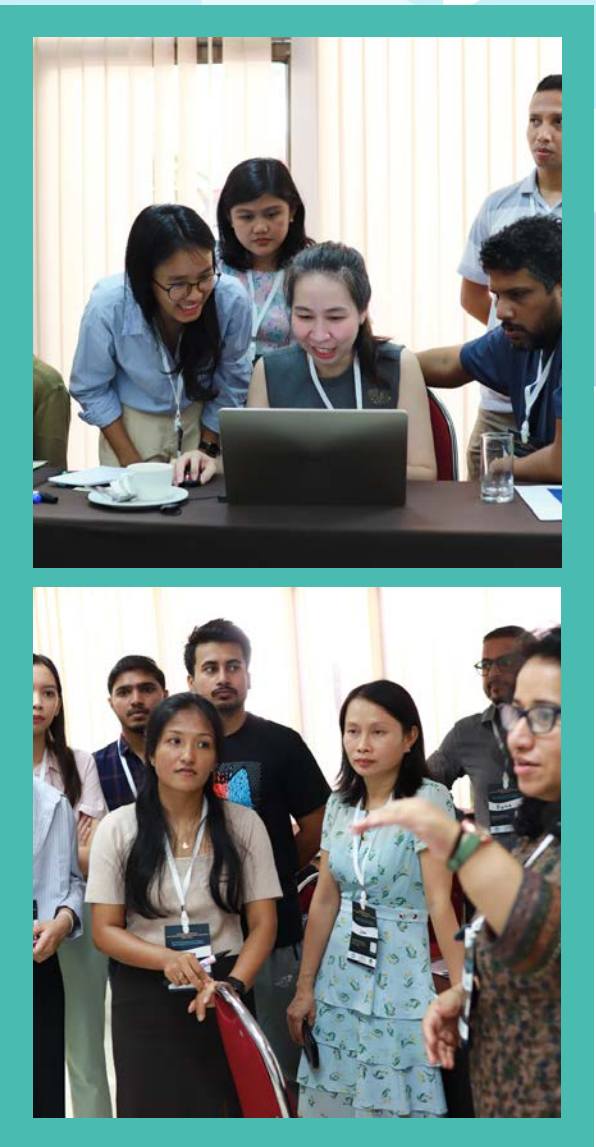
Moving forward, this spirit of cooperation promises to drive future initiatives and actions aimed at advancing the cause of sustainability in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. The APN-ECAP's inaugural workshop has set a strong precedent for the ongoing partnership between emerging professionals and established experts, ensuring a more sustainable future for all.

The anticipated impact of the APN-ECAP's first workshop is profound, as it lays the groundwork for a robust network of ECAPs ready to contribute significantly to global sustainability efforts. The event not only highlighted the current challenges and opportunities in the field but also showcased the immense potential of ECAPs to drive meaningful change in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. As this network continues to evolve, it promises to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of sustainability research and fostering collaborative efforts for a more sustainable world.



“The recruitment of members for APN-ECAP should be founded upon alignment with the thematic area of its research. Simultaneously, the sustainability of membership retention hinges on a strategic recruitment approach that considers a balanced mix of members in terms of both age and experience.” (Intergenerational Communication)

ANNEX



ANNEX



ANNEX





CONTACTUS



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