

As a consequence of global changes, modern forestry has been facing multiple challenges over the past decades. Forests contribute in many ways to human well-being, and many of these contributions can be enhanced by intelligently managing the forest resource. This includes conservation of biodiversity, mitigating climate change, safeguarding rural livelihoods and others. Sustainable management of forests is an art that requires, among other factors, scientific knowledge, practical experience, and a way of economic thinking that sustainably balances short- and long-term goals. International networking and sharing of experiences is among the most important mechanisms of spreading and advancing the idea and techniques of sustainable forest management.

The **German Alumni Forest Network – GAFoRN, a BMZ-DAAD funded initiative of the Center for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture and Forestry – CeTSAF - at Georg-August-Universität Göttingen and The Forest Science Department at the Technical University of Dresden**, has the objective to foster networking which is the background for this Symposium. In this Symposium we focus on academic forestry education, its role in forming experts in the multitude of fields relevant to forest management and to forest related research.

THE SYMPOSIUM's TOPIC: Academic Forestry Education - Developments and Needs

Forestry has entered into universities as an academic discipline quite late, at least compared to disciplines such as medicine, theology or laws. It has essentially developed over the past century (in rare cases over about the past two centuries). It is a discipline which lives from contributions from many other disciplines.

It has core subjects that are characterized by very typical features. Silviculture and forest planning are core disciplines that follow closely the three basic principles in forestry which are (1) sustainability, (2) long term visions and planning, (3) dependency on and planning along nature, including risks.

No other field of natural resources exhibits these features and it is one of the tasks of academic forestry education to form experts that internalize these principles of managing a forest resource, be it for production or conservation purposes or for any type of integrated multi-functional forestry.

Definition of Contents: the Curricula

Forestry curricula at universities need to enable the young forestry experts to enter their professional life well prepared. This professional life has been tremendously diversified over the past decades, and even within the core profession of a forest manager, a multitude of specializations have developed. It is a challenge to define the contents of Bachelor and Master courses in forestry and forest sciences such that the theoretical basis and practical skills are both being sufficiently developed. Also, a balance needs to be found between natural sciences and social sciences: “forestry is not first about trees, but about people”.

And in this context we find the great difference, for example, to biology: forestry is about *managing* a renewable natural resource by intelligent interventions such that future generations of people can continue enjoying it with all its functions and benefits; even if nobody can predict what the expectations of future generations may be.

Interdisciplinarity

There are some specific forestry disciplines such as silviculture, forest planning and wildlife management; however, a forestry expert does need good basics in natural sciences and social sciences as well. It is a challenge to define the curricula such that all these fields are sufficiently covered, without overloading.

Forestry is one of those disciplines which is defined along a specific “object” – *the forest* and its management. Many disciplines contribute to forestry and only few disciplines are very specific and exclusively for forestry. Foresters and forest scientists experience very soon in their professional life that their daily work can hardly successfully be implemented without support from experts in other fields on a regular basis. Interdisciplinary thinking, acting and co-operating need to be fostered from the very beginning. The question is then how to implement such “acquisition of skills” in an academic curriculum.

Cooperation, Internationality and Networking

Forestry is per se an international issue as forests are found in most vegetation zones on earth. Interdisciplinarity and internationality are, therefore, closely interlinked. The aim of this GAFoRN Symposium is to support this networking in an international forestry context.

It should be recommended, however, to start these networking efforts at an early stage of academic studies, by way of individual internships or group study projects abroad or by mandatory studies of one or two semesters at a partner university abroad.

In this Symposium we will jointly strive to develop options how to integrate such contemporary topics in a reasonable manner into forestry academic curricula.

Participants

The participants should be graduates from German Universities and/or former DAAD scholarship holders, preferably from the Universities of Göttingen and Dresden (Alumni) that are involved in academic teaching and research in fields related to the management of forested landscapes and the forest resource. **GAFoRN members are especially encouraged to participate.**

Organization

The Symposium is being prepared by the Centre for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture and Forestry (CeTSAF), Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Germany and managed by the Kunming Institute of Botany, Chinese Academy of Sciences at Kunming, Yunnan, China.

It takes place in the framework of the German Alumni Forest Network (GAFoRN) which is financially supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) with funds from the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation. GAFoRN is borne by the Center for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture and Forestry (CeTSAF), Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, and the Institute of International Forestry and Forest Products, Technical University of Dresden.





Venue

The Symposium is locally managed and run by the Kunming Institute of Botany (KIB), the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). The venue will be the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden, CAS, at Menglun in the tropical south of Yunnan Province. KIB is a leading institution in China for research in botany, biodiversity, and sustainable management of plant resources located in Yunnan, the province of China with highest biodiversity. Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden is located one hour drive from Jinghong, which can be reached from Kunming, capital of Yunnan province, by air (ca. 20 flights daily). Kunming international airport is well connected to many destinations in Asia. The botanical garden is spread out over an area of 900 ha at an altitude of 570 m. The climate is tropical monsoonal and March is still dry with rising temperatures.

Important deadlines

24th Dec 2009: abstract submission; in English language, around 300 words; 4-5 key words. Please submit to cetsaf@gwdg.de, indicating "GAForN Abstract" in the subject line. Abstracts will be reviewed. For organizational convenience after potential acceptance, please do also submit right away with the abstract: passport number, date and place of issue and date of expiry, nationality and the departure airport.

15th January 2010: Notification to invited participants. The Symposium organizers are prepared to cover the travel cost according to the regulations of DAAD. All original receipts need to be handed in. Travel grantees commit themselves to hand in their full papers (5 pages) by **28 Feb 2010**, so that the Symposium's documents can be prepared accordingly.

Program

The final program will be published on the CeTSAF web-page www.tropenzentrum.de once abstracts have been received and processed.

Language

The language of the symposium is English.

Contact for further information

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GAForN
German Alumni Forestry Network

3rd GAForN International Symposium

**1st Announcement and
CALL FOR PAPERS**

Academic Forestry Education: Developments and Needs

8. – 12. March 2010

organized by

**Kunming Institute of Botany KIB
to be held at**

**Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden,
Chinese Academy of Sciences CAS,
Yunnan, China**

**Kunming Institute of Botany, Kunming, China
Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Germany
Technische Universität Dresden, Germany**