

2nd APAP Workshop on Collaborative Management of Protected Areas

Summary Report

Sponsored by the Ministry of Environment (Japan), the 2nd Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP) Workshop with the theme “Collaborative Management of Protected Areas” was held on 13-15 February 2017 in Hakone, Japan. Collaborative management is necessary for the effective and equitable management of protected areas. Following on the 1st APAP Workshop, the 2nd Workshop was designed to identify key factors that would enable effective and equitable collaborative management through active stakeholder engagement.

Attended by 22 participants from 11 countries and 4 resource speakers, the event served as a venue for knowledge exchange, information sharing, and networking. Participants were selected to have a mix of representatives from both central and local/field agencies responsible for protected area management in their respective countries.

In a keynote speech on the first day of 2nd APAP, Ambassador Masahiko Horie, representing IUCN South and East Asia Regional Council, mentioned the history of the APAP workshop, and the progress made by each country regarding the biodiversity conservation from the Aichi Target 11. He also pointed out how climate change will affect biodiversity and natural ecosystems, thus becoming an impetus to incorporate climate change in the considerations and operations of protected area management.

Professor Yoshitaka Kumagai from Akita International University reiterated the purpose of APAP and described pressing challenges in protected area management. He briefly described collaborative management of protected areas in Japan. Lastly, he discussed the objectives of the workshop and presented questions for participants to ponder in the following days.

Participants presented protected area management in their respective countries - showcasing relevant laws, responsible institutions, projects implemented/ being implemented, financing schemes, communication protocols, collaborative system, and engagement strategies. As expected, collaborative management take various forms, contexts and applicability in different countries.

Some key findings are as follows:

- Some countries are more top down (mostly driven by the national government); other countries engage key actors and local communities more actively in planning, decision-making, and management processes.
- As demonstrated by the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park, some countries promote the use of National Parks for tourism, while others promote sustainable natural resource use and benefit sharing so that local communities will cooperate in conservation initiatives (e.g.

Thailand case study).

- In some countries the government is able to bear all the costs of protected area management, while in others they depend on external funding from aid agencies and international organizations.
- There are countries, which have progressed in terms of setting up funds and developing monitoring and evaluation tools to check the effectiveness and how to further improve initiatives.
- Several countries involve various stakeholders through committees or councils. However, it had been highlighted that involvement requires empowerment and capacity building, particularly of local communities, in order to maximize participation and enable sustained engagement.
- It was also pointed out that consideration of cultural and religious practices of these communities is imperative (e.g. Malaysia case study). Participants were particularly interested in discussing incentive mechanisms to engage local communities.
- Updates from several countries reveal how participants applied learnings from the 1st APAP Workshop to improve PA management in their respective countries.

Mr. Ratkawee Boonmake from IUCN Thailand Country Office presented about the Kaeng Krachan Forest Complex in Thailand, which is a proposed UNESCO World Heritage Site. He discussed how local communities are engaged in participatory management processes and benefit sharing, particularly through conflict resolution, land use planning, SMART (spatial monitoring and reporting tool) Patrol, and sustainable livelihood.

Ms. Yuri Aihara from the Hakone Visitor Centre spoke about the Fuji Hakone Izu National Park, its unique characteristics, and how collaborative management is being implemented in Hakone area. Further explanation of Hakone's natural environment was provided during a guided tour around the Hakone Visitor Centre. There, participants enjoyed the landscape model of Hakone, interactive displays, and natural landscape seen through wide glass windows.

The Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park presents a good case to demonstrate collaborative management in Japan. The National Park covers diverse ecosystems, it is the most visit National Park in the country, and private land owners comprise a relatively higher percentage (more than 60%) of the land cover of the National Park, compared with the national statistics. All these present numerous management challenges, which compel the need for collaborative action. In order to interact with experience the National Park environment, participants were brought to selected places in Hakone on Day 2 of the Workshop.



Photo: Participants during a trip to Owakudani, Hakone (volcanic valley)

Collaborative management, involving the Ministry of Environment (Japan), prefectural (Shizuoka and Yamanashi) and city/town governments, and local communities, is being practiced in the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park. During the visit to Sengokuhara (marshland characterized by silver grass), it was explained that the management of the marshland is more focused on ecological management and marshland conservation. Common problems include invasive species and impacts of wildlife such as deer. The trip to Owakudani, a popular tourist site, showed unique characteristics of the National Park's environment (volcanic valley with craters and vents). Participants learned about various initiatives to preserve the historical, geological and ecological values of the Hakone Geopark, which is both recognized by UNESCO and designated as a National Park.

The visit to the Fuji World Heritage Center and the Subaru Line (Station 1), showcased challenges in balancing nature conservation and tourism. With the increased popularity of Mt. Fuji, after being designated as a world heritage site, there is increased pressure to deal with and ensure the safety of visitors, especially foreign tourists. The need to emphasize the value of Mt. Fuji and its surrounding areas so that the visitors would be compelled to follow rules and regulations was explained.

On the final day of the workshop, Dr. Amran Hamzah talked about different approaches and various challenges encountered in protected area management from an Asian viewpoint. He pointed out that the traditional approach, with its philosophy of respect to sacred sites and harmony with local communities and nature, is more suitable to protected area management in

Asian countries. Through a case study in Sabah, Malaysia, he demonstrated the importance of recognizing native customary rights in protected area management and how communities can contribute to green economy.

Following the presentation, participants from each country shared initiatives in promoting active stakeholder engagement. They discussed stakeholders involved in protected area management in their respective countries, specifying their roles and degree of participation. They also explained incentives for active participation, financing sources, and factors for success and failures in collaborative management. Participants also discussed favorable characteristics of management committees (e.g. structure, operation, legitimacy, scope of responsibility) based on their experience.

Prior to the Workshop, participants were asked to answer a questionnaire about promoting and sustaining stakeholder engagement in collaborative management of protected areas in their countries. With this, participants were able to have a strong grasp of main discussion points and prepare for the presentation, thus leading to a productive knowledge sharing session. The results of the questionnaire show that:

- Various stakeholders, driven by different incentives (not limited to financial incentives), are involved in PA management in the APAP countries.
- For many developing countries, government funding for PA management is reinforced by external funding (e.g. aid agencies, international organizations)
- Majority of the respondents practice benefit sharing and have seen positive benefits. Yet, challenges such as sustainability of initiatives and equitable distribution of benefits, still remain.



Photo: Participants listening to the presentation about Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park (Hakone Visitor Center)



Photo: Participants actively participating in the group discussion

The participants were then divided into two groups to further discuss effective and equitable collaborative management. Grouping was done to ensure all countries are represented in each group. Facilitated by Dr. Amran and Prof. Kumagai, the groups had a very active and frank discussion based on their experiences. The results of the discussions revealed that although local participation is recognized, the government still has a leading role in selecting participants, leading the discussion, taking the ultimate responsibility and bearing the costs of management committees. It was mentioned that local communities should bear a degree of responsibility in managing protected areas, given that they have the capacity and that personal interests will not hinder public interest. The participants agreed that a clear vision shared by stakeholders, transparency, respect of values, sustainable funding and good leadership can lead to successful collaborative management.

Dr. Amran congratulated all the participants for sharing their knowledge and participating to make the workshop a success. Ms. Akiko Nishimae from the Ministry of Environment (Japan) made the closing remarks by expressing her wish to see all of the participants at the next workshop.