



Forests and Foods Innovation Challenge 2025

In Asia, forests are integral to food security, nutrition and sustainable livelihoods. They provide various food sources, from wild fruits and vegetables to medicinal plants. Asian forests support diverse agricultural systems, including agroforestry practices that have sustained communities for generations. These ecosystems are crucial for water resource management, soil conservation and preserving biodiversity, including essential pollinators for crop production. Forest-dependent communities and Indigenous Peoples rely on these resources for cultural practices and economic well-being. Moreover, forests play a significant role in climate change mitigation by storing vast amounts of carbon.

This challenge offers KUFF students an opportunity to contribute innovative ideas to the global conversation on the interlinkages of forests and food systems. They will be able to propose solutions within their sphere of influence, the KUFF campus, and have a chance at having their ideas implemented.

- Date: 13 February to 24 March 2025
- Format: Hybrid, in two parts
 - Pitching lab
 - Pitching event
- Participants: Kasetsart University Faculty of Forestry students
 - Team of up to three students
 - Graduate student level
 - Undergraduate student level
- Platform: Face-to-face pitching lab (China Room, RECOFTC main office)
- Pitching event (ForTrop room, KUFF)

Examples of innovations

Forest-to-campus food innovation

- incorporating forest-sourced or forest-inspired foods into campus meal options
- an app that can count the carbon sequestration of the food that you are eating
- a business model for foods coming from forests to be featured in the campus canteen

Forest-inspired zero waste

- reducing food waste on campus using ideas inspired by forest ecosystems or traditional forest-based practices

Forest food awareness campaign

- creative awareness campaign for the campus community about the connection between forests, food security, nutrition and sustainable eating habits

| Event plan | |
|----------------|---|
| 13-21 February | Sign up opens, closes on 21 February |
| 26-27 February | First-round selection (RECOFTC and KUFF) |
| 28 February | Announcement of selected groups with instructions |
| 3 to 5 March | Kick-off: Introduction to the theme, tracks and guidelines (KUFF) |
| 6 to 17 March | Ideation and development of groups: Teams work on projects |
| 18 March | Pitching lab (China Room, RECOFTC) |
| 19-23 March | Refinement of pitching strategy for groups |
| 24 March | Final presentations: Teams pitch solutions to a panel of judges |

Categories

1. Undergraduate
2. Graduate

Recognition

- Prizes
 - 3,000THB for winning team in undergraduate and graduate category, total of 6,000THB
 - 1,000THB for second prize, one per category total of 2,000THB
- Teams present ideas during the International Day of Forests online celebration
- Certificates will be given to all participants
- Top projects will be featured on university/RECOFTC social media and websites
- Participating teams will also receive tokens and merch from KUFF and RECOFTC/RMFN

Mechanics

- Register online through Google form
- Emails will be sent for instructions to prepare for the Pitching Lab
- Submit project presentations including final concept document/ proposal by 22 March 2025 before 16.00 ETC time
- Present on 24 March 2025. Each will have 3 minutes to present their idea to a panel of judges and public audience
- Allow 5 minutes for the judges to ask for clarification
- Announcement of winners
- The organizers will be taking photos and videos during events. We will be asking participants to sign consent forms.

Judging criteria

The evaluation will be based on four key criteria:

1. **Innovation**
The concept should be new, original, inspiring and valuable. The solution should be unique. The pitching should be compelling and creative.
2. **Forests and foods-related action**
The idea should align with the Sustainable Forests and Foods concept.
3. **Impact**
The idea should create a positive, lasting impact both for individuals on campus and the public, ensuring healthy forests and healthy foods for societies.
4. **Possibility**
Reality check. The concept should be practical, achievable with existing technologies, realistic resources and can be implemented in the near future.

Rules and procedures

1. Submission (21 February 2025)
 - a. Initial Application: Participants should submit a brief written proposal (no more than 500 words summarizing key aspects of the innovation, purpose, main feature and expected impact) to Google- Form Include the team's name and members.
 - b. Selection: The top ideas will be chosen based on innovation, feasibility and potential impact. The shortlist will be announced through KUFF website, bulletin board and Facebook by 28 February 2025.
 - c. Selected finalists will be emailed for further instructions on the concept note and the Pitching Lab event (see below).
2. Pitching lab (18 March 2025, China room, RECOFTC Building 1). By this time, each team should have a more robust plan and proposal. They should have the full concept/papers with them during this time.

Concept papers should have:

- a. Abstract or summary. This section is a shorter form of their initial application with 250 words max on key aspects of the innovation, purpose, main feature and expected impact. This can be used as the pitch.
- b. Introduction/background/rationale. What is the problem being addressed? Note any current solutions to the problem and limitations. Why do we need this innovation?
- c. Objectives of the innovation. What are the main goals or expected outcomes of the innovation? What is it trying to achieve?
- d. Approach. Explain the innovation. What makes it unique compared to other solutions or existing ways/practices? Outline the approach to develop and carry out the innovation. How does it work?
- e. Beneficiary/audience. Who will benefit from the innovation? How will they benefit? Be specific.
- f. Activities and timeframe. Break down the phases of implementation and include dates

- g. Resources/budget. Provide a rough estimate of the resources or budget that the concept will need so it can be implemented. This can be included in the Activities and timeframe.
 - h. Evaluation. How will success be measured? What metrics will be used to measure progress and impact?
 - i. Risks. Are there risks to note that would impact, influence or hinder the success of the innovation?
 - Sections of the paper (except for the Abstract/summary) will not have minimum or maximum word count but we encourage the students to be brief, clear and concise.
 - Finalists will have time to work more on their ideas as they will be challenged at the pitching lab. They will be coached on what to focus on, the key messages to deliver and be provided ideas on how they can deliver their pitch.
 - **Submit project presentations including final concept document/ proposal by 22 March 2025 before 16.00 ETC time.**
3. Pitch Presentation **on 24 March 2025 at KUFF For Trop room**
 - a. Each finalist will have 3 minutes to present their idea to a panel of judges and an audience.
 - b. The finalists can present their ideas any way they want.
 - c. The presentation should cover the following points related to the ideation:
 - i. The problem. Briefly explain the key issue related to Forests and Foods that the idea wants to address.
 - ii. The solution. Describe the innovative idea and how it would solve the issue.
 - iii. Impact. Discuss the potential impact and how the idea can be implemented or scaled.
 - iv. Call to action. Explain how others can get involved or support your innovative idea.
4. Judging
 - After the pitch presentation, the panel will ask contestants questions and evaluate based on the above criteria.
5. Awarding of winners
 - Winners will be selected and awarded at the Pitch presentation event.