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AIT BULLETIN

Coastal Institute Asia / AIT course underway



Joining forces to improve management of the world's threatened coastlines, this week the Asian Institute of Technology and Coastal Resources Center of the University of Rhode Island (CRC/URI) launched a three-week summer certificate level course on Integrated Coastal Ecosystem Management. The course "Coastal Institute Asia" conducted at AIT from 23 July to 10 August has attracted 27 participants representing twelve countries from Asia, Africa and North America.

The intensive programme, which this year marks the 10th edition in the series, is the first to be held in Asia. It is a bi-annual initiative of the Coastal Resources Center, University of Rhode Island, USA (CRC-URI). It builds upon a two-year partnership between AIT and CRC-URI through the Post-Tsunami Sustainable Coastal Livelihoods Project supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Participating students, who hail from five different fields of study within AIT, face three rigorous weekly examinations. Those successfully completing the course will gain three AIT credits. One of the course facilitators, AIT's **Dr Wenresti Gallardo**, emphasized how the course covers a broad spectrum of topics related to the dynamic and challenging aspects of integrated coastal ecosystems' management. New topics are introduced each week, building upon the previous course material, he said. Core elements include: Planning - Introduction to integrated coastal management concepts and processes; Implementation - Focus on coastal development and hazard resilience; Compliance, Evaluation; and Scaling - Scaling-up to ecosystem-based management.



Trainers emphasize technical management tools and techniques for tackling the multifaceted challenges facing the world's coastal regions. Professional and leadership skills such as critical thinking, conflict resolution, group facilitation and effective communication are also integral to the course. Rather than relying on a traditional lecture setting, the Coastal Institute deploys a combination of teaching styles, including hands-on simulations, group exercises, field visits, and an emphasis on applying the knowledge in the students' home countries.

Since the very first course held in 1991, the Coastal Institute has brought together participants and trainers from 65 countries from all regions of the world. They have come from a variety of backgrounds and share valuable real-life experiences, which are integral to the success of the course. All strive for one common goal - to improve the management of the world's coasts.

The CI-Asia course at AIT is taught and facilitated by AIT's own **Dr Wenresti Gallardo**, **Dr Ranjith Perera**, **Dr Dietrich Schmidt-Vogt**, and **Dr Amrit Bart**, alongside CRC-URI's **Ms Virginia Lee**, **Ms Pam Rubinoff** and **Mr Brian Crawford**. CI-Asia is supported by USAID in cooperation with CRC-URI and AIT. Some participants are supported by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Mangroves for the Future Program.

Coastal Institute Asia (CI-Asia) kicked off its partnership at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) on 23 July with welcome addresses by **Prof. Peter Haddawy**, AIT Vice President, Academic Affairs; **Jonathan Shaw**, Director, AIT Extension; and **Dr. Sahdev Singh**, Program Director, Agriculture, Resources and Development Program, AIT Extension.

For more information about the Coastal Institute summer program and CI-Asia, please visit the CRC-URI website at

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