APAFRI RESEARCH FUND
(ARF)
APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Updated April 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction to APAFRI Research Fund (ARF)

1.1. Overview of ARF
1.2. Objectives of ARF
1.3. Focus Areas
1.4. Eligibility Criteria
1.5. Selection Criteria of Projects
1.6. Location of Research
1.7. Project Duration
1.8. Responsibilities of Project leader
1.9. Scope of funding
1.10. Project extension
1.11. Notification of results
1.12. Acceptance of offer
1.13. ARF Agreement
1.14. Ownership and use of R&D equipment
1.15. Intellectual Property Rights
1.16. Publications
1.17. Quarterly Project Progress Report and End-Of-Project Report
1.18. Change of project leader
1.19. Transfers of grants between organisations
1.20. Termination

Chapter 2: Project Application

2.1. Application process
2.2. Application submission
2.3. Application form

Chapter 3: Project Evaluation

3.1. Screening, Selection and Approval

Chapter 4: Allocation and Disbursement of Fund

4.1. Quantum of Funding

4.2. Initial Disbursement

4.3. Progress payment

4.4. Institutional Financing Procedure

Chapter 5: Project Implementation and Monitoring

5.1. Project Implementation and Monitoring

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO APAFRI RESEARCH FUND (ARF)

1.1 OVERVIEW OF ARF

The APAFRI Research Fund (ARF) is established to support activities related to R&D and capacity building in the areas of forestry and forest products. This fund is open to young researcher (under the age of 40 as of 1 January of the year the proposal submission opens) and limited to MYR 45,000 (approximately USD 10,000) per project.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF ARF

i. To support short term study in the field of forestry and forest products among the member institutions;
ii. To encourage collaborations among member institutions in R&D works; and
iii. To support capacity building for enhancing research skills of researchers in member institutions.

1.3 FOCUS AREAS

i. **Forest Ecology and Biodiversity**
   - Understanding forest ecosystems and their dynamics
   - Conservation, management or protection of biodiversity and endangered species
   - Restoration of degraded forest ecosystems

ii. **Climate Change and Carbon Sequestration**
   - Role of forests in mitigating climate change through carbon storage
   - Impacts of climate change on forest health and distribution
   - Adaptive forest management practices for changing climates

iii. **Forest Genetics and Biotechnology**
   - Genetic improvement of tree species for productivity and resilience
   - Use of biotechnology in pest resistance and climate adaptation
   - Conservation of genetic resources

iv. **Forest Products and Biomaterials**

- Innovative uses of wood and non-timber forest products (NTFPs)
- Enhancing the efficiency of forest product processing industries

v. **Socioeconomic and Policy Studies**

- Impacts of forest policies on communities and economies
- Sustainable livelihoods for forest-dependent communities

1.4 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Research personnel/officers in active employment with an APAFRI member institutions with capabilities and facilities to conduct the R&D studies funded under this initiative.

1.5 SELECTION CRITERIA OF THE PROJECT

i. Activities of proposed projects shall fall within the ARF Focus areas.

ii. Funds **shall not be used** for:
   a. commercialisation;
   b. solely field visit/technical visit; and/or
   c. academic sponsorship or scholarship.

iii. Applicant shall be under the age of 40 as of 1 January of the year the proposal submission opens.

iv. Applicant shall demonstrate:
   a. Relevant experience in implementing projects in similar field/scope; and
   b. Strong organisational capability to implement the proposed project.

v. Applicant shall not be eligible to apply for another ARF grant if he/she has not completed an on-going ARF funded project.

1.6 LOCATION OF RESEARCH

The project under ARF shall be carried out within the institutions where the project members are based.

1.7 PROJECT DURATION

Project duration can be between 6 and 24 months.

1.8 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROJECT LEADER

The successful implementation of the project is the responsibility of the project leader. Project leader has to ensure that the project is carried out effectively to meet the specified objectives and milestones within the specified time frame and funding allocated.

1.9 SCOPE OF FUNDING

ARF funding covers the following scope:

i. Project Activities (e.g. Field/laboratory work to collect data, survey, training, workshop).
ii. Small equipment (e.g. Tools/equipment [provide quotation] required to carry-out project activities); (Max 20% of total amount applied for)
iii. Materials (e.g. Research materials/chemicals and disposables required to carry-out project activities).
iv. Travelling (breakdown of related costs if any, e.g. transportation and daily sustenance allowance (DSA) related to field work/site visit).
v. Administration (if any, e.g. project staff, contribution for utilities, stationery; not exceeding 10% of total amount applied for)
vi. Publication/Documentation (e.g. preparing reports, books, video, CDs). (<5% of total amount applied for)
vii. Contingency (<5% of total amount applied for)

The budget should be realistic and directly related to the implementation of project activities in a cost-effective manner. Indirect costs such as office rental, staff salary and overheads are not to be included. In terms of documentation, all relevant financial records (invoices, receipts, etc) should be kept and included as supporting documents to the monthly financial report to ARF Secretariat.

The applicant should prepare the budget carefully to avoid cost overrun. ARF **will not provide top-up funds to cover shortfalls**. Budget movement between activities and categories may be allowed only if appropriate justifications are provided and agreed by ARF Secretariat in writing.

1.10 PROJECT EXTENSION

Any project extension shall be officially applied by the Project leader three (3) months before the approved project completion date.. Projects shorter than one year are not eligible for extension. No additional fund will be provided for the project extension. In event where the project cannot be implemented or continued as approved, the Project leader may request to terminate the project or/and the ARF Secretariat reserved the right to terminate the project. Any unspent project fund shall be returned to ARF Secretariat with two (2) months of project termination.

1.11 NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

The results of applications will be notified to the applicants through email after the evaluation by APAFRI Secretariat.

1.12 ACCEPTANCE OF OFFER

Successful applicants must accept or decline the offer through email to the secretariat within 14 days after notification.

1.13 LETTER OF AGREEMENT (ARF AGREEMENT)

Successful applicants are required to sign a Letter of Agreement within 30 days upon acceptance of the approved projects failing which APAFRI has the right to revoke the approval.

1.14 OWNERSHIP AND USE OF EQUIPMENT

All materials and equipment purchased under the ARF must be recorded and tagged with the project identification number for monitoring and verification purposes and it belongs to the organisation conducting the studies.

All materials and equipment shall be transferred to and maintained by the organisation on conclusion of project.

1.15 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR)

Ownership and management of IPR, royalties and any other form of fees received by the organisation resulting from technology transfer licensing of technology or any other form of commercialisation shall be governed in accordance with the terms and conditions outlined in the Letter of Agreement.

1.16 PUBLICATIONS

Grantees are encouraged to publish the results of their projects (where applicable) in local and renowned publications only after all measures have been taken to protect IPR generated from these projects.

The contribution of APAFRI as the fund provider must be acknowledged at all times in all forms of publication. A copy of the publications should be attached with the progress/final reports.

1.17 QUARTERLY PROGESS REPORT AND End-Of-Project REPORT

Grantee is required to submit to ARF Secretariat a quarterly project progress report within two (2) weeks after the quarter ends.. An End-of-project Report is required to be submitted with 60 days after project completion/end. Reporting templates attached.

1.18 CHANGE OF PROJECT LEADER

If a project leader resigns, retires or moves to another organisation, the grantee must inform the ARF Secretariat of the change of project leader. The grantee's organisation must ensure that the new project leader has the necessary expertise and experience to lead the project.

1.19 TRANSFERS OF GRANT/FUND BETWEEN ORGANISATIONS

ARF Secretariat will disburse the approved project fund to the grantee's organisation according to the terms in the Letter of Agreement. The project will start upon the first disbursement of fund. Subsequent disbursements of balance

fund will be based on the acceptance of project progress report and end-of-project report. If the project has collaboration of more than one organisation, then the lead organisation shall disburse the allocated portion of fund to the collaborators following the organisation financial procedures.

1.20 TERMINATION

Projects can be terminated based on the following:

i. Any false reporting by the project leader;
ii. Any misuse of grant provided;
iii. Non-performance in terms of progress;
iv. Variation of scope project without getting prior approval from ARF Secretariat; and
v. No suitable project leader as replacement in the original recipient organisation in cases as in 1.18.
vi. The recipient organization is unable to accept the funds within six (6) months after the acceptance of the offer.

Any unspent project fund shall be returned to ARF Secretariat with two (2) months of project termination.

CHAPTER 2: PROJECT APPLICATION

2.1 APPLICATION PROCESS

Application for ARF must be made using the application form which can be downloaded from **https://www.apafri.org/guidelines.htm** .

Please refer to the ARF Application Guideline for further instructions.

2.2 APPLICATION SUBMISSION

i. Project proposals shall be submitted in the standard application form.
ii. Project proposals shall clearly articulate how project objectives and activities would have a positive effect on the ARF focus areas.
iii. Project schedule/plan shall include milestones for monitoring.

2.3 APPLICATION FORM

This section of the Guidelines is for filling in the ARF Application Form.

General Requirements

i. Proposal for ARF grants should be made using the Application Form provided.
ii. Applicants are to refer to the call for proposal so that their proposed project is aligned to the priorities/focus areas identified.
iii. Completed application form should be submitted (soft copies) to:

APAFRI Secretariat
c/o Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM)
52019 Kepong
Selangor
Malaysia

Email : secretariat.of.apafri@gmail.com and syuqiah_apafri@frim.gov.my

Project Overview/Summary

i. **Project Title**: State the name of the project.
ii. **Project Location**: State where the project will be implemented.
iii. **Expected Start Date**: State the expected commencement date of the project.
iv. **Expected End Date**: State the expected completion date of the project.
v. **Project Duration**: Stated in months, the project duration should be a reasonable timeframe to implement proposed activities. Project duration is generally between 6 months to 24 months.
vi. **Focus Areas**: Tick the focus area of the project. Tick at least one of the Focus areas that the proposed project can identify with. It should be consistent with the call for proposal.
vii. **Total Funding Applied for**: This is the total requested support from ARF. The maximum is MYR 45,000 (≈USD 10,000). This should be consistent with the amount in **Part 7** and elaborated in **Part 8** of the Application Form.
viii. **Total Co-Funding**: State the amount of co-funding from other sources, including estimates of in-kind contributions. These should be consistent with the amount in **Part 7** of the Application Form and elaborated in **Part 8** of the Application Form.
ix. **Total Project Costs**: This is the Total Funding Applied for and Total Co-Funding. This amount should be consistent with the amount in **Part 7** of the Application Form.

Part 1: Applicant Background

This part captures information about the applicant.

i. **Name of Organisation**: State the official/registered name of organisation.
ii. **Date Established**: State when organisation was established.
iii. **Type of Organisation**: Tick the relevant box. If others, please provide details.
iv. **Membership of APAFRI**: Since when.
v. **Purpose / Objective of Organisation**: State the purpose/objective of organisation.

vi. **Number of Employees**: State the current number of employees or staff (for government agencies). This includes volunteers and part-time staff.

vii. **Number of Members**: For member-based organisation, state current membership.

viii. **Registered Address**: State the current mailing address for official correspondence. PO Box address is unacceptable.

ix. **Correspondence Address**: Should there be any change in correspondence address, inform the ARF Secretariat.

Part 2: Contact of Project team

This part captures contact details of:

i. **The Project Leader**, normally the person-in-charge of the specific proposed project.

ii. **The Project collaborators/team**, all the project team members shall be listed

Part 3: Project Description

This part provides clear and concise information about the proposed project

i. **Project Objective**: State the primary objective(s) and specific objective(s) of the proposed project.

ii. **Targeted Benefits/Outcomes**: State the expected benefits and outcomes and relate these to the Focus Areas of ARF Grant.

iii. **Targeted Beneficiaries**: State who stands to benefit from the project.

iv. **Background - Current Situation/Baseline**: Describe the current situation prior to the implementation of the proposed project. Provide baseline information at the project site (if applicable).

v. **Problem Statement**: State the issues that the proposed project will be addressing.

vi. **How does the project address the issues**: State how these issues will be tackled through this project.

vii. **Intended situation after project completion**: State the expected impacts after project completion.

Part 4: Project Implementation

i. **Methodology**: Describe the methodology adopted for implementing activities of the project. If the project involves partnership with other organisations, provide details about the nature of this partnership.

ii. **Implementation Team Composition**: Provide details of the implementation team and their roles in project implementation. Include also team members from other organisations if the project involves cooperation with other organisations. Please attached the curricula vitae of each project team members.

iii. **Organisational Background and Administrative Support**: Demonstrate that the organisation has the experience and capacity to carry out the proposed activities. The organisational approach for project implementation should be included. Elaborate if the implementation team is within a larger division or section of the organisation. Include organisational chart if relevant.

iv. **Key Assumptions**: Include the key assumptions that were made while preparing and developing the project. The feasibility of the project will depend on these assumptions.

v. **Major Risk Factors Identified and Risk Mitigation Measures**: State the major risk factors that would affect the project, and prevent it from achieving its objectives and outcomes. These include internal risks (eg. staffing, team moral) and external risks (eg. relationship with project partners, climate). For each of the risks identified, please propose mitigation measure to address them.

Part 5: Project Implementation

This table provides the details of the planned project activities.

i. **Project Objective**: These should be consistent with project objective(s) stated in **Part 3** of the Application Form.

ii. **Project Activities**: List out the specific project activities that are planned. These could be grouped based on the objective(s) stated above.

iii. **Expected Specific and Measurable Result / Outcome**: State the specific and measurable result of each activity. These are measurable changes after implementing the project activity.

Part 6: Implementation Plan and Timeframe

The Implementation Plan and Timeframe is presented as a chart.

i. The implementation plan should present the planned activities, in logical sequence following the project implementation timeline from the commencement of the project to its completion.

ii. The implementation plan should also include activities such as monitoring and evaluation. (please see Part 9 of the Application Form and preparing progress and completion reports).

(***Sample for Demonstration Purpose Only***)

		Month																	
No	*Activity*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*	*12*	*13*	*14*	*15*	*16*	*17*	*18*
1	*Project Planning Meeting*																		
2	*Coordinate training*																		
3	*Conduct training for local community to carry out conservation activity*																		
4	*Implementation of conservation project by local community: Phase 1*																		
5	*Monitoring and Evaluation*																		
6	*Prepare progress report*																		
7	*Implementation of conservation project by local community: Phase 2*																		
8	*Monitoring and Evaluation*																		
9	*Prepare progress report*																		
10	*Documentation of lessons learnt*																		
11	*Prepare completion report*																		

Part 7: Summary of Project Funding

i. **Amount applied from the ARF**: This is the total amount requested from the ARF. The breakdown should be provided in the column "Amount Applied For" in **Part 8** of the Application Form.

ii. **Co-funding / Other Sources**: Please also include sources of funding obtained from others, including the applicant. These could be in-cash, in-kind or both. These should be consistent with the amount elaborated in **Part 8** of the Application Form, and a letter of commitment of the co-funding should be attached as supporting document (**Part 10** of the Application Form).

iii. **Total Funding**: Please sum-up sources of funding accordingly.

Part 8: Project Expenditure Budget

This part provides the breakdown of project expenditure budget. These should be grouped into the following categories:

i. **Administration** (not exceeding 10% of total amount applied for, e.g. project staff, contribution for utilities, stationery).

ii. **Project Activities** (e.g. survey, training, workshop).

iii. **Materials** (e.g. research material, chemical and disposables)

iv. **Equipment** (e.g. small scientific equipment and tools required to carry-out project activities - Max. 20% of total amount applied for; laptop/computer and camera are not allowed).

v. **Travelling** (breakdown of related costs if any, e.g. transportation and Daily Sustenance Allowance (DSA) related to field work/site visits).

vi. **Publication/Documentation** (e.g. preparing reports, books, video, CDs; not exceeding 5% of total amount applied for).

vii. **Contingency** (not exceeding 5% of total amount applied for).

If a planned expenditure item does not fall into any of the categories above, include this as "others" followed by description. Include also project expenditures that are co-funded, both in-cash and also in-kind in the columns provided.

The budget should be realistic, and should be directly related to the implementation of project activities in a cost-effective manner. Indirect costs such as office rent, and staff

overheads (i.e. percentage of staff costs) are not to be included. In term of documentation, all relevant financial records (invoices, receipts, etc) should be kept and included as supporting documents to the monthly financial report to ARF Secretariat. The Secretariat may request the supporting documents for checking purpose. The financial report must be verified by the Person in Charge (PIC) of the project

The applicant should prepare the budget carefully to avoid cost overrun. ARF **will not provide top-up funds to cover shortfalls**. Budget movement between activities and categories may be allowed only if appropriate justifications are provided upon approval by the ARF Committee.

Part 9: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

This part provides clear and concise information about the indicator of each planned activity, who would monitor these, and when. Hence it functions also as a project-monitoring schedule.

i. **Indicator**: The expected specific and measurable result / outcome of each activity are already stated in **Part 5** of the Application Form. These are measurable changes after implementing the project activity.
ii. **Who will monitor**: Specify who (e.g. superior of the project leader, ideally research manager/director of Head of the institution where the project is based) will be responsible to monitor the indicator.
iii. **When will monitoring be carried out**: Specify when the monitoring will be carried out.

Part 10: Other details

Grantees must provide bank details and supporting documents as follows:

i. Government Agencies:
    a) organisation structure; and
    b) letter of commitment of co-funder (if applicable).
ii. Other organisations:
    a) registration document;
    b) organisation structure;

c) photocopy of bank statement / bank book, and iv) latest (audited) financial statement; and
d) letter of commitment of co-funding (if applicable).

CHAPTER 3: PROJECT EVALUATION

3.1. SCREENING, SELECTION AND APPROVAL

i. The ARF Committee shall determine a screening modality (which may be periodically reviewed to ensure that the modality is working effectively).
ii. Initial screening is performed by the ARF Secretariat to ensure that proposals fulfil the eligibility criteria, and that the information provided is complete. If needed, the ARF Secretariat shall contact the applicant for further information.
iii. Only proposals that have fulfilled eligibility criteria, and provided relevant information will be evaluated and reviewed by the Technical Committee.
iv. Applicants may be required to present their proposals to the Technical Committee.
v. The Technical Committee shall present and recommend proposals to the ARF Committee for approval.

CHAPTER 4: ALLOCATION AND DISBURSEMENT OF FUND

4.1. QUANTUM OF FUNDING

The maximum grant amount for each project is MYR 45,000.00.

4.2. INITIAL DISBURSEMENT

i. The disbursement amount and schedule may differ, and is contingent upon the nature and length of project activities. In general, the first disbursement shall not exceed 50% of the total project grant amount subject to the objectives, work scope and work plan of the proposal. (except when justified and prior approval from ARF Committee has been received).

ii. This first disbursement shall be released upon signing of LOA.

4.3. PROGRESS PAYMENT

i. Subsequent payments are subject to the following conditions:

   a. Submission of progress report and completion report by the Grantee to the ARF Secretariat.

   b. Upon satisfactory assessment and verification by the Secretariat, recommendations shall be forwarded to the Chairman for approval of subsequent payments.

ii. The ARF Committee may decide to recommend a different payment schedule for projects with grant amount not exceeding MYR 30,000 and project duration not more than six (6) months.

4.4. INSTITUTIONAL FINANCIAL PROCEDURE

i. Grantees must abide by all financial rules and regulations of the organisation especially those pertaining to procurement, disbursement and IPR.

ii. The Grantee and APAFRI shall enter into an agreement in the form of LOA (Attachment A).

iii. The LOA shall be signed by the Grantee and the Chairman of ARF Committee/ Executive Secretary of APAFRI.

iv. The LOA shall describe the responsibilities of the signatories, duration of the project, payment schedule and amount, milestones and templates for progress reports, records, information and end-of-project report.

v. Any unspent/excess fund after project completion shall be returned to APAFRI within three (3) months after project completion date.

CHAPTER 5: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

5.1 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

i. Grantees must submit quarterly progress (Attachment B) and completion reports (Attachment C) as per project schedule and milestones as set out in the LOA. It is a requirement for Grantees to submit progress reports and completion report as one of the conditions for release of final payment.

ii. The progress and outcomes of activities carried out, including quantifiable and measurable indicators, and financial expenditures shall be monitored and evaluated through various means such as progress reports and site visits by the ARF Secretariat/Executive Committee members. The quarterly progress report is to be submitted within two (2) weeks after the quarter ends.

iii. Any project delay shall be reported in the progress report.

iv. Project extension shall be officially applied by the Project leader three (3) months before the approved project completion date. Projects shorter than one year are not eligible for extension. Project leader shall continue to submit quarterly progress report during project extension period and completion report.

v. In event where the project cannot be implemented or continued as approved, the Project leader may request to terminate the project or/and the ARF Secretariat reserve the right to terminate the project. Any unspent project fund shall be returned to APAFRI with two (2) months of project termination.