NEWSLETTER

APAFRI BRIEF

THE ASIA PACIFIC ASSOCIATION OF FORESTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS No. 55: June 2025

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Greetings from Seoul, Korea!

We're already halfway through the year. I am pleased to see that many of APAFRI's planned activities have been successfully implemented and are progressing well.

The 29th Executive Committee (EC) Meeting was held virtually earlier this year. It was the first meeting following the election of the new committee during the Tenth General Assembly in 2024. I would like to express my appreciation to the EC members for their active involvement and support, especially in identifying resource persons for APAFRI's activities. With their collaboration, two virtual knowledge-sharing workshops were successfully conducted, featuring speakers from the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM, Indonesia), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), and the Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI).

As Chairman, representing the National Institute of Forest Science (NIFoS), Republic of Korea, I am proud that NIFoS continues to support APAFRI through an annual financial contribution. In the first half of 2025, this support has enabled APAFRI to carry out key activities, including capacity building in forest genetic resources and the strengthening of networks related to urban forestry, peatland, and mangrove restoration.

APAFRI proudly co-organized the International Symposium on "Asia's Unique Forests and Trees: Conserving Diversity, Building Resilience, Enhancing Productivity" with the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT. The symposium was successfully held from 19 to 23 May 2025 in Los Baños, the Philippines as part of the celebration of the International Day for Biodiversity 2025. We sincerely thank the College of Forestry and Natural Resources (CFNR), University of the Philippines Los Baños, for being an outstanding host and for their warm hospitality throughout this meaningful event.

Earlier this year, the second cycle of the APAFRI Research Fund (ARF) was launched, receiving strong interest and a high number of applications from member institutions. NIFoS is honoured to be the main contributor to this fund, which supports research and capacity-building efforts in forestry and forest products. We hope the fund will continue to benefit especially young and early-career researchers across the region.

In April, APAFRI also organized a successful online course, "Write Like a Pro: Supercharge Your Scientific Writing". This course provided practical guidance on preparing scientific manuscripts for publication and was open to all members. We are glad that it was well received and helped further strengthen APAFRI's visibility and impact.

There are still many exciting activities planned for the second half of the year. I look forward to the continued strong engagement and cooperation from all APAFRI members as we work together to advance sustainable forestry across the Asia-Pacific region.

Dr. Kim, Yongkwan
Chairman, APAFRI
June 2025

29TH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
18 March 2025
Online Meeting

The meeting was attended by seven of the nine Executive Committee (EC) members, as follows:

- **Dr. Kim, Yongkwan** National Institute of Forest Science (NIFoS), Republic of Korea
- **Mrs. Kanchan Devi** Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), India
- **Dr. Lee Soon Leong** Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM)
- **Dr. Riina Jalonen** Bioversity International, Malaysia
- **Dr. Analyn Codilan** College of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of the Philippines Los Baños (CFNR-UPLB), Philippines
- **Dr. Shoji Noguchi** Japan International Research Centre for Agricultural Science (JIRCAS), Japan
- **Dr. Zheng Yongqi** Research Institute of Forestry, Chinese Academy of Forestry (RIF-CAF), China

Dr. Pin Kar Yong, Executive Secretary of APAFRI, welcomed the EC members. He also congratulated Dr. Kim, Yongkwan on his appointment as the 25th President of NIFoS and warmly welcomed him as the new Chairman of the APAFRI Executive Committee.

In his opening remark, the Chairman emphasized APAFRI's important role in fostering regional networking among forestry researchers. He also expressed hope for greater involvement among member institutions in 2025 in APAFRI activities and conveyed his commitment to lead this association in expanding the forest research network across the Asia-Pacific region.

Dr. Pin presented the audited financial report and outlined the proposed activities of 2025. Mrs. Kanchan Devi responded regarding the APAFRI Virtual Knowledge Workshop and mentioned that ICFRE would be interested in submitting proposals for the online workshops.

Meanwhile, Dr. Riina Jalonen highlighted the upcoming International Symposium “Asia’s unique Forests and Trees: Conserving Diversity, Building Resilience, Enhancing Productivity” which will be organized from 19-23 May 2025 in Los Baños, the Philippines.

On behalf of FRIM, Dr. Lee Soon Leong reaffirmed their commitment to supporting APAFRI in terms of staffing, office space and financial contributions, which are crucial for APAFRI’s operations.

In adjourning the meeting, the Chairman expressed his satisfaction with the expanded activity plans for 2025 compared to the previous year. He thanked everyone present for their valuable insights and involvement in the meeting.

2ND MEETING OF THE COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH UNDER AUFN
13 February 2024
Online Meeting

In 2024, NIFoS and APAFRI started a joint research project titled *"Research & Analysis on the Statistics of Street Trees and Urban Forests of Asia"* under the Asia Urban Forest Network (AUFN). The project is led and fully funded by NIFoS, while APAFRI manage and facilitate its implementation.

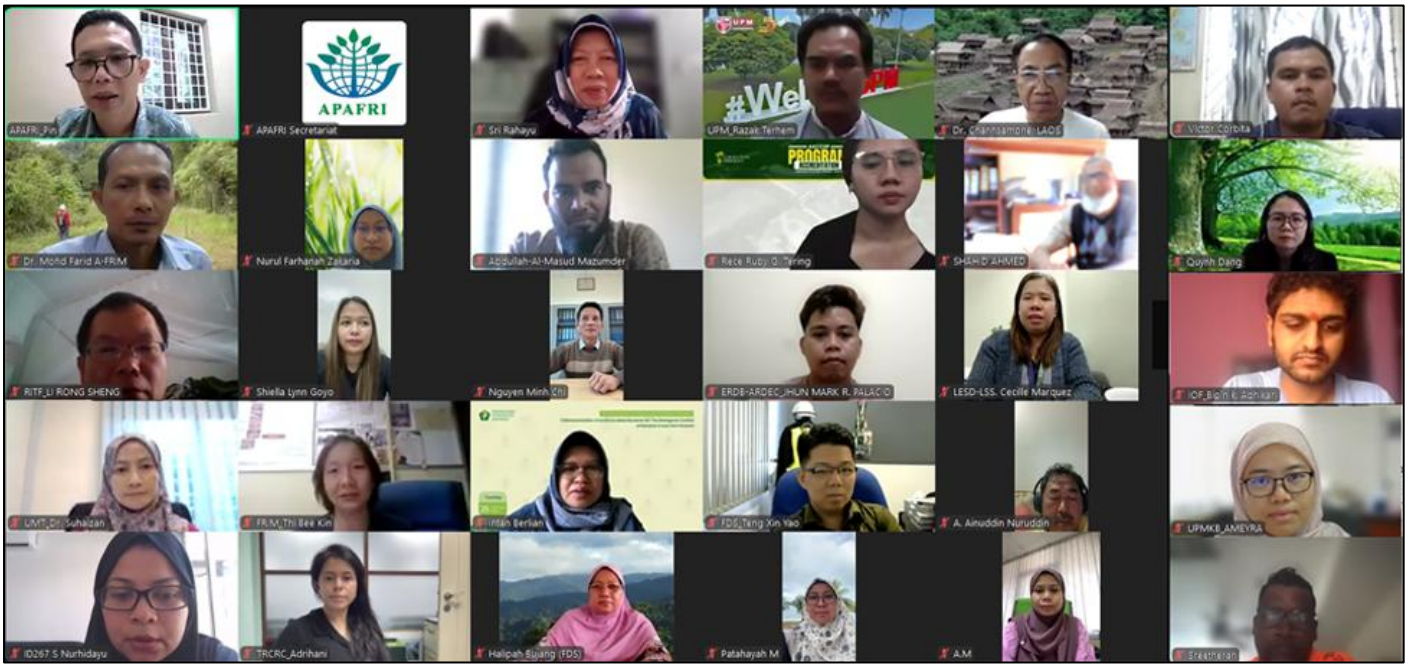
The 1st meeting of the collaborative research was organized virtually on 28 November 2024 participated by AUFN research group members. The meeting discussed the report template and service agreement with APAFRI for fund disbursement.

As part of the collaboration work, fine dust measuring devices were installed in December 2024 at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) and the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) by Asian Physis Co., Ltd., Korea. The data collected from both devices are being monitored through the Asian Initiatives for Clean Air Networks (AICAN) platform.

The 2nd meeting was conducted on 13 February 2024 focused on reviewing the Service Agreement with APAFRI concerning fund disbursement. It also provided a platform for collaborators to raise concerns, discuss challenges and share relevant updates related to the project's implementation.

During the meeting, Dr. Park Chan Ryul (NIFoS) provided a brief update on the initial plan to hold the 4th AUFN Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand in July 2024. However, a massive earthquake that struck the northern and central regions of Thailand caused significant structural cracks in several high-rise buildings in Bangkok, including the originally planned meeting venue. Given the circumstances, the venue was later relocated to Malaysia.

APAFRI VIRTUAL KNOWLEDGE SHARING WORKSHOP (1/2025)
MANAGEMENT OF PLANT DISEASES IN SUSTAINING FOREST HEALTH
26 February 2025



The first sharing workshop of 2025 was held on 26 February 2025 addressing the topic of "Management of Plant Diseases in Sustaining Forest Health." The knowledge shared by the three experienced speakers was engaging and informative, providing participants with valuable takeaways**.**

Prof. Dr. Sri Rahayu from **Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Indonesia** shared the management of gall rust disease caused by *Uromycladium falcatarium* on *Falcataria moluccana* trees in the Southeast Asia. Since the diseases were mainly spread by the wind, awareness among neighboring countries especially in South East Asia, which have almost the same climate and environmental conditions, must be developed. The outbreak of diseases in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Malaysia has been recorded from 1997 to 2013. This fungus can infect seeds, seedlings and trees at all growth stages, causing severe damage. Key management strategies include using healthy seeds from uninfected areas, early detection and removal of infected seedlings in nurseries, implementing pruning and sanitation practices in the field.

Dr. Mohd Farid Ahmad from **Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM)** shared the history and current state of forest plantations in Peninsular Malaysia, emphasizing the challenges posed by deforestation and the urgent need for sustainable practices. He highlighted major diseases that have drawn global attention from planters, scientists, and policymakers, including heart rot, root rot and Ceratocystis wilt and canker in *Acacia mangium*. He presented data on the pathogen's occurrence in Malaysia and its impact on forest plantations.

Dr. Razak Terhem from **University Putra Malaysia (UPM)** presented his work on bleeding disease affecting rain trees *(Albizia saman)* in urban environments in Malaysia. Over time, many trees have suffered from gummosis, leading to gradual tree decline. Symptoms include trunk discoloration, gummosis exudation, crusty deposits, cavities, and cracked or split bark. Fungal isolation consistently revealed a dominant species in infected trees, later identified as *Paecilomyces dactylethromorphus* as the causal agent of gummosis. Pathogenicity tests showed artificially inoculated trees developed the same symptoms as natural infections. Prochloraz manganese, among five fungicides tested, fully inhibited fungal growth in laboratory trials. Tree injuries from human or natural causes significantly increased susceptibility to fungal infection.

ONLINE COURSE ON
WRITE LIKE A PRO: SUPERCHARGE YOUR SCIENTIFIC WRITING
16, 23 April and 7 May 2025

The first session focused on supercharging writing habits. Dr. Reuben addressed common misconceptions about scientific writing, introduced the various types of scientific articles and a step-by-step approach in the writing process. He also shared strategies for building strong writing habits, along with key dos and don'ts such as using topic sentences, writing in the first person and applying appropriate qualifiers. Participants were invited to share their biggest challenges in writing scientific articles. Common issues included writing effective conclusions, interpreting results and selecting suitable journals for publication. Dr. Reuben discussed these challenges and suggested practical tips to overcome them, emphasizing the importance of perseverance and continuous improvement.

The second session focused on how to supercharge the title, abstract, introduction and methods sections of scientific manuscripts. After addressing questions from the first session, Dr. Reuben explained the five key components an abstract should include: the problem, aim, methods, main results and implications. He then provided an example of an abstract and asked participants to identify where each of these five aspects appeared. Dr. Reuben also emphasized the importance of a thorough literature review, a clear introduction and crafting strong titles for research papers. The session concluded with Dr. Reuben reviewing several abstracts to help participants refine them for publication in research journals.

Participants were tasked with revising a title and an abstract using examples from the slides in the second lecture. In this final session, Dr. Reuben reviewed their submissions, acknowledging both the quality of their works and the progress made. He provided constructive feedback, along with valuable tips and suggestions to further enhance their writings

Participants also learned how to write effective 'results and discussion' sections. Dr. Reuben emphasized that the results section should begin with a summary of the key findings, presented in order of importance. He explained that the discussion should directly address the research questions and support the answers with evidence from the results. To conclude the session, Dr. Reuben shared strategies for successful journal publication, encouraging participants to remain confident and persistent, even when faced with critical reviews or rejections

APAFRI is confident that this course has significantly strengthened participants' technical writing skills that will enhance the quality of their manuscripts for journal submission. We sincerely thank all participants for their dedications and active engagements throughout the online sessions.

APAFRI VIRTUAL KNOWLEDGE SHARING WORKSHOP (2/2025)
DNA PROFILING AND BARCODING IN TIMBER FORENSICS IN ASIA PACIFIC REGION
15 May 2025

On 15 May 2025, APAFRI continued its efforts by hosting another sharing workshop on 'DNA Profiling and Barcoding in Timber Forensics in Asia Pacific Region'.

Dr. Tnah Lee Hong from **Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM)** delivered her talk entitled "*Forensic Timber Tracking System: Insights from FRIM's Experience".* At FRIM's Genetics Laboratory, the mission is to support stakeholders in balancing the conservation and sustainable use of forest genetic resources through scientific research.

One of the laboratory's core research areas is the development of a forensic timber tracking system, which includes species identification through DNA barcoding and timber traceability via DNA profiling. These scientific approaches are vital for verifying timber legality, regulating trade, and promoting sustainable forest management.

Since 2009, FRIM has pioneered a DNA-based timber tracking system that utilizes the unique genetic properties of timber to identify species and trace logs back to their original populations and even individual stumps. This effort culminated in the development of the Malaysia Barcode of Plants (MyBARCODE), a comprehensive DNA barcoding system for accurate plant species identification and authentication.

Dr. Suma Arun Dev from **Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI), India** highlighted the institute's pioneering work in DNA barcoding and timber forensics. KFRI has established the first facility in India dedicated to this field, providing scientific support to various stakeholders, including government agencies and the judiciary, by offering tamper-proof DNA evidence in suspected timber theft cases.

DNA barcoding has also proven effective in verifying the authenticity of both wood and non-wood forest products, helping to address issues of market adulteration. Through the development of this technology, KFRI has demonstrated its application in species identification, resolving taxonomic uncertainties, certifying bamboo planting materials, and authenticating Ayurvedic raw materials and traded timber species.

The institute has also developed a reference DNA barcode database for commercially important timber species. This resource plays a crucial role in identifying adulterated wood and supports voluntary wood certification schemes by providing reliable, science-based verification tools.

APFORGEN'S ANNUAL MEETING AND INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIODIVERSITY 2025 SYMPOSIUM

19-23 May 2025

Los Banos, Philippines

(Photo credit: ©UPLB)

The annual meeting of Asia Pacific Forest Genetic Resources Programme (APFORGEN) and the symposium are jointly organized by APFORGEN, College of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of the Philippines (CFNR-UPLB), the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, and the Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions (APAFRI), with funding support from National Institute of Forest Science (NIFOS), Republic of Korea.

The annual meeting was hosted by CFNR-UPLB. Among the objectives of the annual meeting were to provide updates on implementing APFORGEN's strategy by learning from the experiences of representative member countries; to share initiatives and collaboration opportunities in member countries; and to share key findings from Asia through presentations and discussions in the Symposium.

Apart from the meeting, the APFORGEN three-day programme featured a range of engaging activities and enriching discussions. Making use of the academic setting, a one-day International Symposium "Asia's unique Forests and Trees: Conserving Diversity, Building Resilience, Enhancing Productivity" was organized in conjunction with the annual meeting and the International Day for Biodiversity.

The keynote session of the symposium featured three distinguished speakers who shared valuable insights on forest biodiversity and conservation. The first keynote address was delivered by Dr. Rekha R. Warrier, who discussed the use of single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) as a molecular tool to understand how species adapt to localized climate conditions.

In the second keynote, Prof. Emeritus Edwino S. Fernando presented on "Forests of the Philippines and Plant Diversity Darkspots", emphasizing the rich diversity of forest ecosystems and vascular plants, and their critical role in providing ecosystem services for people, biodiversity, and ecological stability.

The third keynote was delivered by Dr. Riina Jalonen, who highlighted the importance of conserving and restoring genetic diversity within and among populations of native, wild, and domesticated species, in alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework 2022.

The organizers managed to support the participants from APAFRI member institutions to participate in the

event and share their extensive knowledge and expertise highlighting the urgent need to document, conserve, and sustainably use forest and tree diversity to ensure resilient and productive ecosystems. The presentation titles and sponsored speakers were as follows:

- A Blockchain-based Tracking of Origin and Managing Variety Rights in the Seeds/seedlings Supply Chain
  Zheng Yongqi, National Center for Forestry and Grassland Genetic Resources, Chinese Academy of Forestry, China

- Preserving the Gene Pool Conservation Genetics for Forest Sustainability
  Rekha R Warrier, ICFRE-Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding, India

- Genetic Diversity Restoration Strategies for the Endangered Subalpine Conifer *Taxus cuspidata* in the Republic of Korea
  Hyoin Lim, National Institute of Forest Science, Republic of Korea

- The Identification of Sustainable Intensification Options in Silvopastoral Farming Systems in Northern Laos
  Simone Vongkhamho, Forest Research Centre, National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI), Laos

- Advancing Forest Conservation Through Genetic Research and DNA Technologies
  Kevin Ng Kit Siong, Forest Research Institute Malaysia

- Beyond the National Conservation Review (NCR) (1997) in Sri Lanka, Designing an optimum protected areas system for Sri Lanka's Natural Forests
  Maddagama Arachchige Thulani Ruchika Kularatne, Department of Forest Conservation, Sri Lanka

- Reintroducing the Critically Endangered *Polyspora dasanayakei* and Restoring the Associated Habitat
  S. H. Bandumala, Department of Forest Conservation, Sri Lanka

A one-day workshop was carried out on the third day to cover both theoretical and practical components of the *MyFarmTrees* application, which is a digital platform used for monitoring and incentivizing tree planting efforts. The workshop aimed to familiarize participants with the application and explore its use in a simulated implementation process to maximize socio-environmental outcomes. By using the application, the simulated exercises were designed for connecting, documenting, and verifying tree seed supply chains for restoration purposes.

The final day's activities included a brief campus tour followed by a cultural visit to Villa Escudero Plantations & Resort. Participants had the opportunity to experience the area's natural beauty, rich biodiversity and cultural performances. This relaxing excursion provided a refreshing conclusion to the intensive programme and allowed participants to connect with one another in a more informal setting.

Photo kredit: @UPLB

[UPCOMING EVENT]

4TH INTERNATIONAL MANGROVE SYMPOSIUM 2025
Beyond Green Carbon: Regional Solutions for a Changing Climate
25-26 August 2025
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

About 50% of the world's mangrove forests are found in the Asia-Pacific region, where they provide essential ecological services - buffering coastlines from storms, nurturing rich biodiversity, and supporting the livelihoods of local communities. Mangroves are taxonomically diverse plant communities that thrive in tidal, saline wetlands and play a vital role in linking green (forests) and blue (ocean) ecosystems.

As climate change becomes more urgent, the role of mangroves in supporting carbon neutrality and climate adaptation and resilience has become increasingly critical. Recognized as highly efficient blue carbon ecosystems, mangroves can sequester and store carbon at rates up to 3–5 times higher than temperate forests. At the same time, they also function as green carbon sinks, uniquely combining marine and forest-based carbon storage capacities. This dual role makes mangroves a critical natural solution in the fight against climate change.

However, mangrove ecosystems are under serious threat. Alarming losses continue due to both natural and anthropogenic pressures - including urban expansion, pollution, aquaculture, tourism, and extreme weather events. These changes not only reduce carbon sink capacity but also fragment habitats and diminish the biodiversity that makes mangroves ecologically unique and valuable.

Effective, science-based actions are urgently needed to protect and restore mangrove forests for both present and future generations. In response, National Institute of Forest Science (NIFoS), Republic of Korea and Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions (APAFRI) will jointly organize the **4th International Mangrove Symposium 2025** to serve as a platform to share knowledge, experiences, and practical strategies on:

- Sustainable management of mangrove forests
- Conservation and restoration practices tailored to local conditions
- Carbon sequestration and climate adaptation and resilience functions of mangroves
- Practical restoration strategies that integrate forest and marine ecological knowledge to maintain biodiversity and resilience

The symposium will bring together researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to advance interdisciplinary solutions that bridge research and on-the-ground action across the Asia-Pacific region.

Symposium Objectives

- **Collaborative Network:** Build an international network for mangrove and biodiversity research to support carbon neutrality and resilience.
- **Advance Regional Cooperation**: Support the Korea Forest Service in working with Asia-Pacific countries to expand mangrove research and restoration under its carbon neutrality policy.
- **Promote Practical Knowledge Sharing:** Share research findings and field-based strategies for effective mangrove restoration and management.

National Institute of Forest Science

APAFRI

4TH INTERNATIONAL MANGROVE SYMPOSIUM 2025

Beyond Green Carbon: Regional Solutions for a Changing Climate

Strengthening Science and Practice for Mangrove-Based Climate Action

25 AUGUST 2025

NOVOTEL KUALA LUMPUR CITY CENTRE
MALAYSIA

- Sustainable management of mangrove forests
- Conservation and restoration practices
- Carbon sequestration and climate adaptation
- Practical restoration strategies

FREE ADMISSION

Limited to 50 participants

Register now at:
https://forms.gle/9t98K2zy3npv9CQW8

Email : secretariat.of.apafri@gmail.com

Registration Deadline

18 AUGUST 2025

APAFRI

ANALYZE LIKE A PRO:

Supercharge Your Data Analysis and Presentation

6, 13 and 20 August 2025

1400 - 1600 (GMT+8) | Live in Zoom

Which statistical analysis should you use to analyse data collected from experimental studies? Before you can answer this, you first need to understand basic experimental design conducted in the field or under controlled conditions in the laboratory setting. In this course, real data will be used in all statistical tests carried out. The instructor will demonstrate how statistical analyses are carried out using the open-source statistical software program R, and to interpret the results obtained. Ultimately, this introductory course will equip you with analytical skills to solve real-world problems, especially in the forestry and forest products sector. This course is suitable for both young and experienced researchers to enhance their skills in generating the necessary figures/graphs. It is open to all the scientists from APAFRI member institutions.

Date	Time (GMT +8)	Topic
6 Aug 2025	1400 – 1600	Introduction to basic statistics
13 Aug 2025	1400 – 1600	Normal distribution and hypothesis testing
20 Aug 2025	1400 – 1600	Introduction to R for data analysis

Please register at https://forms.gle/2Tpx2FPoSyNGyv7E9

Deadline: 31 July 2025

About the Instructor:

Dr. Gopalasamy Reuben Clements is a conservation scientist by training, co-founder of Nature-based Solutions Sdn Bhd and currently a Sustainable Finance Specialist, Zoological Society of London. He received his PhD in conservation science from James Cook University and obtained his MSc and BSc in biology from the National University of Singapore. Reuben's research focused on forest and biodiversity conservation and has published over 100 articles that include Nature and is an editorial board member with international peer-reviewed journals such as Climate Change Ecology and Biology Letters. His work has been featured in the BBC, New York Times and National Geographic, and was a finalist with the 2023 Rolex Award for Enterprise.

For more information, please contact

Ms. Syuqiyah (secretariat.of.apafri@gmail.com) or Dr. Pin Kar Yong (pin@frim.gov.my)

APAFRI RESEARCH FUND (ARF) 2025

Established in 2024, the APAFRI Research Fund (ARF) aims to support research and development as well as capacity-building activities in the field of forestry and forest products. The fund is open to young researchers (under 40 years old), with a funding limit of MYR 45,000 (approximately USD 10,000) per project.

In its first cycle in 2024, two proposals were selected to receive the fund as following:

1. Trees, Traditions, and Tomorrow: A Socio-Ecological Look at Village Common Forests in Khagrachari District of Bangladesh
   Mr Jime Roy, Bangladesh Forest Research Institute (BFRI), Bangladesh
2. Hot oil treatment for improved utilization of secondary woods
   Mr Anandu Reghu, Institute of Wood Science & Technology (IWST), India

The second cycle opened for proposal submission on 4 February 2026, attracting an overwhelming response from member institutions. After a thorough review by the evaluation panel, three proposals were shortlisted.

At present, the revision phase is in progress, during which the shortlisted applicants are refining their proposals based on feedback from the panel. This process will be completed before the formal signing of the funding agreements.

Membership Fee

APAFRI Constitution : Article VII

Members whose dues are not paid for more than 12 months are deemed to be in default and shall not enjoy the membership benefit until the subscription is fully paid.

We encourage all members to pay their membership fees in a timely manner to continue enjoying the benefits of membership.

Once payment is made, please inform us and provide the transaction date so we can update our records. Kindly ensure you have received the official receipt from the Secretariat for your payment.

The APAFRI Newsletter is compiled by the Secretariat. Your comments, articles and/or suggestions are gratefully received.

Contact us:

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