

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Warm Greetings from Malaysia!

I hope you are healthy and doing well wherever you are.

It has been a busy first half year in APAFRI. I'm glad to see that the APAFRI's programs are back to full swing this year. Throughout this period, we successfully organised a total of three physical events and three online programs.

The 1st and 2nd Workshop of Asian Urban Forests Network (AUFN) for People & Environment was conducted successfully on 10-12 January and 28-29 June 2023. The establishment of AUFN led by the National Institute of Forest Science Korea (NIFoS) is a timely and commendable initiative. The workshops brought together all the researchers from this region so that knowledge and experience could be shared in realising the potential of urban forests against the challenges caused by climate change.

The APFORGEN 20th Anniversary and Strategy Review Meeting was organised successfully from 14-17 March 2023. I would like to extend my heartiest congratulations to the 20th anniversary of Asia Pacific Forest Genetic Resources Programme (APFORGEN). APFORGEN and APAFRI have a very close partnership since its establishment in 2003. APAFRI hosted the Secretariat of APFORGEN for 15 years from 2003 to 2017. Now the Secretariat is under the support of the Alliance of Biodiversity International and CIAT. We are very proud to witness the growth and success of this important working group over the years.

We received an overwhelmingly response to the online training courses that were introduced for the



first time last year. Some of the applicants had to be turned down due to the limited slots. The courses are now one of our important annual programs. A total of 108 scientists benefited from the Online Scientific Writing Course that was completed in April 2023. I hope that more scientists especially those at the junior level will be benefited from our online courses.

The first Virtual Knowledge Sharing Workshop was organised on 11 April 2023. The topic of the workshop was application of DNA markers in identifying tree species. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the speakers from the Taiwan Forestry Research Institute (TFRI) and the Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute (FFPRI) for sharing their valuable experiences. I strongly encourage our scientists to continue sharing their research on this platform in the future. If you have any specific topics you would like to propose for future workshops, please kindly submit them to the Secretariat.

The second half of this year promises to bring even more exciting programs. We kindly request you to stay tuned for upcoming announcements from the Secretariat.

Lastly, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the members of the Executive Committee and our dedicated partners for their invaluable contribution and unwavering support, which have greatly contributed to the success of our organisation.

With best regards

Dr. Ismail Parlan
Chairman, APAFRI
June 2023

1ST WORKSHOP OF ASIAN URBAN FORESTS NETWORK (AUFN) FOR PEOPLE & ENVIRONMENT 10-12 January 2023 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



The 1st Workshop of the Asian Urban Forests Network (AUFN) for People & Environment was held successfully from 10-12 January 2023 at Avante Hotel in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The workshop was jointly organized by the National Institute of Forest Science (NIFoS), the Asia Pacific Association of Forest Research Institutions (APAFRI), and the Northern Research Station, Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Dr. Im Kyun Lee, Division Director of Urban Forests, NIFoS, delivered the opening address, which was followed by congratulatory remarks from Dr. Ismail Parlan, Chairman of APAFRI, and Dr. Mark Majewsky from the USDA.

The workshop aimed to focus on the current status of urban forests and the understanding of street trees and urban forests in diverse environments of Asian cities. Sixteen researchers from Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam participated in the workshop. The workshop was organized in a hybrid format, allowing online participants to join the event via the Zoom application.

During the workshop, participants had field visits in Kuala Lumpur to explore the development of urban forests. The highlight was the Forest Skywalk at Kepong Botanic Gardens, the second canopy walkway established by the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM). The group also enjoyed a captivating trek along the Keruing trail.

Another notable visit was to KL Forest Eco Park, adjacent to the iconic Kuala Lumpur Tower. Formerly known as Bukit Nanas Forest, this ecological park offered participants a unique perspective on the integration of nature within the urban landscape. Additionally, participants had the opportunity to visit Perdana Botanical Garden and KLCC Park, both providing serene environments with beautiful green spaces and recreational areas.

The participants from APAFRI Member institutions:

1. Mr. Wencilito Palis Hintural, Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB), Philippines
Carbon Footprint Analysis Of Lapaz Plaza Iloilo City Using Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)
2. Dr. Ahmad Nazarudin, FRIM, Malaysia
Phenological Observation of an Urban Tree, Xanthostemon chrysanthus (F. Muell.) Benth.
3. Ms. Retno Nur Utami, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia
Status of Urban Forests and Green Open Space in Indonesia and Its Management Implications
4. Dr. Pham Duc Chien, Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences (VAFS), Vietnam
Urban forest in Vietnam: Status and the way forwards

APFORGEN 20TH ANNIVERSARY AND STRATEGY REVIEW MEETING 14-17 March 2023 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Since its establishment in 2003, the Asia Pacific Forest Genetic Resources Programme (APFORGEN) has served as a unique platform for researchers and forestry experts in the Asia Pacific region to develop and exchange best practices and capacities for the conservation and sustainable management of forest and tree genetic resources. APFORGEN member countries have implemented a regional strategy that aligns with the Global Plan of Action on Forest Genetic Resources, as endorsed by the Asia Pacific Forestry Commission. The previous APFORGEN strategy, formulated in 2017, successfully facilitated regional collaboration, raising over US\$1.5 million between 2018 and 2022.

As APFORGEN commemorates its 20th anniversary, a strategy review meeting was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 14-17 March 2023, with the following objectives:

- Review the extent to which the current strategy has been achieved, including identifying success factors and lessons learned.
- Refine an updated regional strategy for the period of 2023-2027, focusing on 3-4 strategic objectives.
- Develop concrete project and activity plans that promote regional collaboration to implement the strategic objectives.

- Organize a webinar on the significance of tree seed supply in attaining national forest and landscape restoration targets, to raise awareness about the importance of APFORGEN's work.

The workshop was jointly organized by APFORGEN, the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, and the Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions (APAFRI), with funding provided by the National Institute of Forest Science (NIFoS) and the OneCGIAR Research Initiative on Nature-Positive Solutions. Thirty representatives from APFORGEN member countries participated in the workshop.

During the workshop, two field trips were organized for the participants. The first trip took them to Bidor FRIM Research Station, also known as the Tin Tailings Afforestation Centre (TTAC), which was established in July 1996. The Perak State Government (PSG) sanctioned an area of 121.4 hectares of ex-mining land to the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) for establishing a research station. These tin tailings primarily consist of slime and sand tailings that are predominantly covered by grass and sparsely colonized by several pioneer species.

Subsequently, the participants visited Gua Tempurung, a cave situated in Gopeng, Perak. This limestone cave is renowned for being one of the largest and longest caves in the area.

WEBINAR

ORGANISING TREE SEED SUPPLY FOR NATIONAL FOREST AND LANDSCAPE RESTORATION TARGETS: EXPERIENCES FROM ASIA

15 March 2023

Asia lacks an overarching regional programme to support forest and landscape restoration, unlike Latin America and Africa where countries are actively sharing experiences and mobilising public and private funding for restoration through the 20x20 and Afr100 Initiatives, respectively. The Asia Pacific Forest Genetic Resources Programme (APFORGEN) fills the gap when it comes to strengthening capacities to supply seeds for restoration needs. APFORGEN was established in 2003 and has 15 member countries across the region. It provides a unique platform for the region's researchers and forestry experts to develop and share best practices and capacities for the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of forest and tree genetic resources.

As part of the week's program of APFORGEN's 20th Anniversary and Strategy Review Meeting held in Kuala Lumpur from 14-17 March 2023, a webinar titled "Organising Tree Seed Supply for National Forest and Landscape Restoration Targets: Experiences from Asia" was organized on 15 March 2023.

The webinar focused on the restoration targets set by South and Southeast Asian countries to restore tens of millions of hectares of degraded forests and landscapes during the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration by 2030. The accomplishment of these targets necessitates a substantial supply of billions of tree seeds and seedlings. However, the availability of seed sources for native species is severely limited due to decades of forest loss and degradation.

The presentations in the webinar were as follows:

1. *Seed supply shortages constrain restoration targets*
Riina Jalonen, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT
2. *Management of seed sources in Indonesia*
Vivi Yuskianti and Ria Cahyaningsih, National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia
3. *Scope and opportunities for organised tree seed supply in India*
Rekha R Warriar and Ravichand Anandalakshmi, Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding, India
4. *Seed production program for forest restoration and commercial plantation establishment in Sri Lanka*
K M A Bandara, Forest Department, Sri Lanka
5. *Seed collection and conservation for Myanmar Reforestation and Rehabilitation Programme*
Mu Mu Aung and Aung Zaw Moe, Forest Research Institute, Forest Department, Myanmar
6. *Germplasm conservation selected indigenous forest trees in the Mt Makiling Forest Reserve, Philippines*
Lerma SJ Maldia, University of the Philippines Los Baños
7. *Engaging communities to participate in conservation and management of endangered tree species in Lao PDR*
Chaloun Bounthiphonh, National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute, Lao PDR
8. *Improving seed supply system in Cambodia*
Syneath Sreng, Institute of Forest and Wildlife Research and Development, Cambodia



ONLINE SCIENTIFIC WRITING COURSE

5, 12 and 27 April 2023



In response to the overwhelming participation in 2022, the online course was organized again in 2023.

The course was instructed by Professor Gopalasamy Reuben Clements, a conservation scientist by training and currently the co-founder of Nature-based Solutions Sdn Bhd. He formerly served as a Professor and Associate Dean at Sunway University.

The course offered valuable tips and guidance for preparing scientific manuscripts intended for journals. Through lectures featuring actual examples and exercises, participants were able to grasp the concepts. This course catered to both young and experienced scientists, aiming to enhance their technical writing skills.

The course was divided into three sessions, covering crucial topics such as:

- Introduction to writing a scientific manuscript
- Tips for writing "Title & Abstract"
- Tips for writing "Introduction"
- Tips for writing "Methodology"
- Tips for writing "Results & Discussion"
- Tips for writing "Conclusion & References"

A total of 216 registrations were received by APAFRI from 15 countries for this course. Out of these registrations, 108 individuals attended at least one of the three sessions conducted.

Notably, scientists based in Malaysia constituted 30 percent of the participants, demonstrating significant engagement. The Philippines ranked second with 24 percent, followed by Bangladesh with 15 percent of the participants.

At the end of the course, participants provided their feedback by completing an online questionnaire. The overall organization of the course was assessed based on the following criteria:

- Information received on the course
- Information on Zoom arrangement
- Overall arrangements of the course

53.7 percent of the participants rated the overall course arrangements as "very good," while another 46.3 percent rated them as "good."

Additionally, participants evaluated the eight topics presented during the course. Overall, more than 80 percent of the participants rated the various topics as "very good" or "good," indicating a positive assessment of the course.

VIRTUAL KNOWLEDGE SHARING WORKSHOP 2023

APPLICATION OF DNA MARKERS IN IDENTIFYING TREE SPECIES

11 April 2023



Each species of tree possesses a unique genetic code that can be identified using DNA markers present in wood samples. With the help of DNA markers, wood can be identified even if it has been processed, making it almost impossible to identify through traditional methods. This application of DNA markers is particularly useful in cases where illegal logging or trade in protected wood species is suspected.

In addition, DNA markers can be used to verify the origin of wood, as the genetic code of a tree is influenced by various environmental factors, such as soil type and climate. This can be particularly useful for wood certification in which DNA markers can provide assurance that the wood has been sourced responsibly. The application of DNA markers in tree species identification offers a promising alternative to combat illegal logging and promote sustainable forestry practices.

The objective of the sharing workshop was to establish a network for information exchange among scientists within APAFRI member institutions who are actively involved in the application of DNA markers for wood identification, genetics, and breeding. The workshop aimed to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing in these areas.

Dr. Chia-Chen Wu from the Taiwan Forestry Research Institute (TFRI) delivered an insightful presentation titled "Application of DNA markers for tree species identification: A case study in *Cinnamum kanehiari*". Dr. Wu's presentation highlighted the practical application of DNA markers for accurate tree species identification, focusing on a specific case study.

Dr. Suzuki Setsuko from the Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute (FFPRI) in Japan presented on "A DNA barcode reference library for the native woody seed plants of Japan." Dr. Setsuko's presentation showcased the development and importance of a DNA barcode reference library for native woody seed plants in Japan, demonstrating the potential of DNA markers in species identification and conservation efforts.

A total of sixty participants attended and benefited from the workshop. The knowledge shared by Dr. Chia-Chen Wu and Dr. Suzuki Setsuko added valuable perspectives to the workshop and contributed to its overall success. The event served as a platform for collaboration and enhanced understanding in the application of DNA markers for various research areas related to wood science and conservation.

URBAN FORESTS BEAT HEAT WAVES IN A CITY

2ND WORKSHOP OF ASIAN URBAN FORESTS NETWORKS (AUFN) FOR PEOPLE & ENVIRONMENT

28-29 June 2023
Seoul, Korea



The 2nd Workshop of Asian Urban Forests Network (AUFN) for People & Environment with the theme of “Urban Forests Beat Heat Waves in a City” was successfully organized by the National Institute of Forest Science (NIFoS), the Asia-Pacific Association of Forest Research Institute (APAFRI), and the USDA Forest Service.

This significant event was a continuation of the 1st Asian Urban Forest Network Conference held earlier this year in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In this latest edition, there was an inclusion of speakers from universities in Korea and the USA. Dr. Pin Kar Yong represented APAFRI in this workshop.

The main objectives of this event were to establish a network of scientists involved in research of urban forests in the region to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experiences, while exploring the opportunities for collaboration in order to enhance the capacity in research of urban forests and also raising public awareness of the role of urban forests in mitigating the impact of global climate change.

Dr. Im Kyun Lee, Division Director of Urban Forests, NIFoS, emphasized the significance of urban forests in promoting the well-being of both the environment and human communities. Recognizing this, NIFoS is developing a Korean version of the renowned iTree program originally created in the United States. The iTree program is a valuable tool for assessing the multiple benefits of urban forests.

Field tours were arranged at the Carbon Observation measurement point at Mount Namsan and Asian Initiative for Clean Air Networks (AiCAN) station in Changgyeonggung Palace.

The participants from APAFRI Member institutions:

1. Dr. Ahmad Nazarudin, Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), Malaysia
The Statistics of Urban Forests in Selected Cities in Malaysia
2. Ms. Hoang Nguyen Viet Hoa, Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences (VAFS), Vietnam
The Development of Urban Forests in Vietnam: Statistics of Some Main Cities

ONLINE COURSE

Data Analysis and Presentation for Scientific Publications

5, 12 and 19 September 2023

1400 - 1600 (GMT+8)

Live in Zoom

- Open to all the scientists from APAFRI member institutions
- Free of charge
- Certificate of Attendance will be issued to participants who have successfully attended all the sessions.

Please register with the Google Form:

<https://forms.gle/GDS6nBJG2JQPQEc8>

We invite the participation of researchers who are

- interested to learn more on data analysis and presentation of results.
- committed to attend all the scheduled training sessions.

Registration deadline: 31 August 2023

Date	Time (GMT+8)	Topic/Activity
5 September 2023	1400 – 1600	Excel for Scientific data analysis: Basic statistics or is there more?
12 September 2023	1400 – 1600	Interpretation of statistical results and generation of publication ready figure
19 September 2023	1400 – 1600	Introduction to R for data analysis and plotting: When would you need it?



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

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