



## **Sino-ASEAN Network of Forestry Research Institutes (SANFRI)**

### **Minutes of the Fourth Steering Committee Meeting of SANFRI**

(19 - 20 September 2023, Hanoi, Vietnam)

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Sino-ASEAN Network of Forestry Research Institutes (SANFRI), as one of keystone policy dialogue activities of APFNet, is tailored for forestry researchers from ASEAN economies and China. It aims at advancing forestry research by strengthening cooperation and facilitating collaborative actions that contribute to sustainable forest management in the Asia-Pacific Region.

In line with the Framework of SANFRI and discussion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Steering Committee Meeting of SANFRI in January 2022, the 4<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee Meeting of SANFRI was held during 19 - 20 September 2023 in Hanoi, Vietnam. The Meeting was co-organized by APFNet, Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences (VAFS) and SANFRI Coordination Office (SCO), and invited all the Committee Members to review the implementation of SANFRI activities, discuss priorities for program development and explore collaboration opportunities among regional forestry research institutes.

#### **SUMMARY OF MAIN ACTIVITIES**

##### **1. Opening Ceremony**

During the opening ceremony in the morning of 19 September 2023, Dr. Tran Lam Dong, representative of SANFRI Chair Institute (VAFS), first expressed his welcome to all SANFRI representatives and participants. Vice Chair Dr. Ismail Parlan from Forest Research Institute (FRIM) noted the progress made since the establishment of SANFRI in 2018 and delivered his good wish to the cooperation.



Figure 1: Group Photo

Dr. Xin Shuyu from APFNet expressed great gratitude to all participants from Dr. Lu De, the ED of APFNet, “SANFRI is not APFNet’s network, it’s your platform”, quoted from Dr. Lu De.



Figure 2: Opening speech by Dr. Xin Shuyu from APFNet

## 2. A review of the framework of SANFRI

After the opening session, Dr. Zhang Jinfeng, Director of SANFRI Coordination Office (SCO), introduced the updates of SANFRI framework documents compared

with the original version in 2019, with specific aspects including guidelines and expected output of SANFRI activities.



Figure 3: A review of the framework of SANFRI by Dr. Zhang Jinfeng from SCO

### **3. Election of SANFRI Chair and Vice-chair for 2024-2025**

Election of SANFRI Chair and Vice-chair for 2024-2025 was carried out through voting among all SANFRI member institutes. During the voting process, as the rotating Chair of SANFRI for 2022-2023, VAFS recommended Dr. Ismail Parlan, Director General of Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) to be the next SANFRI Chair in line with the SANFRI Framework. Subsequently, Dr. Ismail Parlan, recommended National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) of Indonesia as new Vice-chair institute of SANFRI for 2024-2025. Representatives from all member institutes expressed their favors for this proposal.

As a result, Dr. Ismail Parlan, DG of FRIM (Malaysia) and Dr. Andes Hamuraby Rozak from BRIN of Indonesia have been elected as the new Chair and Vice-chair of SANFRI for 2024-2025 respectively.



Figure 4: Dr. Ismail Parlan, DG of FRIM (Malaysia) elected as the new Chair of SANFRI for 2024-2025

#### 4. Report on work progress for 2022-2023



Figure 5: SANFRI work report of 2022-2023 given by SANFRI Chair Institute VAFS

The Chair from VAFS provided an overview of SANFRI activities done in 2022-2023 and covered the following aspects:

- 1) Organization of Online Work Meeting and SANFRI training workshop

An on-line work meeting of SANFRI was convened on March 17th, 2022, agreed

to form an expert pool, issue a newsletter annually, apply for joint research project, establish the SANFRI Coordination Office (SCO) in YAFG, hold the fourth SC meeting in Vietnam as COVID-19 under control.

A twenty days' Online Training Workshop "Sustainable Management and Development of Tropical Plantation" sponsored by Science and Technology Department of Yunnan Province, was co-organized by YAFG and APFNet online during September 9-28, 2022 with involvement of 45 participants from APFNet SANFRI institutes.

## 2) Increased capacity, through the *Visiting Scholar program*

Dr. Mohd Khairun Anwar Uyup from FRIM Malaysia completed his 6-month academic visit in YAFG during Nov. 2022 to April 2023, carried out joint research on Wood Properties of High Value Tree Species. Dr. Khairun has submitted 2 academic papers to journals in June and July 2023 for review.

For the third batch of visiting scholar, 5 out of 7 applicants got sponsorship, 3 of them have admitted to YAFG in Sept. 2023 for a 6-month visit, other 2 from Thailand will visit next April for 3 months.

## 3) Conduction of *Small Research Grant Program*

### **Reviewing and Assessing Completed Projects**

As of the year 2022, a total of five research reports needs to be evaluated, including four final reports and one mid-term report. Among the four final reports, three have passed the review conducted by four experts assigned by SCO to form an expert panel while one has applied for an extension. The mid-term evaluation report has passed both expert review and APFNet's financial evaluation, smoothly progressing to the next step. The insights derived from this evaluation were encapsulated in a comprehensive assessment report, subsequently submitted to the Secretariat.

As the year of 2023, three experts recommended by SCO and two committee members from APFNets have been invited to review the project titled Research on

Propagation of *Lithocarpus ducampii* (Hickel & A. Camus) A. Camus Seedlings by Using Super-light and Self-decomposing Bags to Improve Effective Forest Rehabilitation conducted by Dr. Nguyen Van Tho from VAFS. The project has passed all reviews and is waiting for closing approval of APFNet.

### **Application and approval of Small Research Grant**

In total, four research proposals received from Laos, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam & Laos in the year of 2022.

Through an in-depth expert evaluation process done by two of the rotating Steering Committee members of Indonesia and Laos (in sequence of alphabetical order of economies names), SANFRI Steering Committee graded and ranked the proposals based on criteria and indicators provided in Implementation Guidelines for APFNet Small Research Grant. And finally, three projects were selected and approved by APFNet secretariat for funding, bolstering their potential to make meaningful contributions.

### **5. Adopt and discussion on work plan for 2024-2025**

In general, the work plan for 2024-2025 has been developed as draft by joint efforts of the SCO and FRIM Malaysia under a guidance of APFNet. The drafted work plan was discussed, then agreed and approved during the Committee Meeting eventually. Key activities of new work plan will be carrying out in next two years as followed:

#### **5.1 The third batch of Visiting Scholar Program**

The Visiting Scholar Program is going to be continuously carrying out in 2023-2024, and some deficiencies need to be overcome:

- 1) Involve more member economies to the program (16 visiting scholars only from 5 economies, Myanmar & Vietnam not involved yet);
- 2) To improve management and research plan of scholars in terms of research topic, appropriate visiting time and outcomes;
- 3) To strengthen ties among member institutes by set up a communication network (Wechat or other SNS channels for example);
- 4) Longer visiting time is needed (3-12 months) for literature reading, method

learning, research work, data analysis and paper writing;

- 5) To provide training course on some necessary phrases of mandarin Chinese; and
- 6) To organize Chinese-culture-related activities.

## **5.2 APFNet Small Research Grant 2024-2025**

- 1) Facilitate and monitor the 3 new granted research projects

There are 3 new granted researches in 2023-2024, one is joint project from Vietnam & Laos, one is from Indonesia and one is from Malaysia.

A key objective involves providing dedicated support to Dr. Ong Su Ping from FRIM, ensuring the successful finalization of the quadrilateral agreement.

- 2) Mid-Term Review:

The year 2023 marked the commencement of mid-term reviews for three ongoing funded projects. These assessments encompassed meticulous evaluations of project progress vis-à-vis predetermined milestones. The insights garnered from these reviews aid in steering projects towards successful outcomes.

- 3) Completion Evaluation & recruitment of new application

A simultaneous endeavor involved overseeing the culmination of the one-and-a-half year project led by Dr. Nguyen Van Tho at the Vietnam Forestry Science Institute for the years 2021-2023. Rigorous assessments have been conducted to validate the attainment of project objectives in the first half year of 2023. The final decision shall be made soon.

In addition, for the granted research in 2023-2024, final evaluation should be given once the project finished. And new application for Project should be recruited in 2025.

- 4) Set up an expert panel

To set up an expert panel especially for project evaluation under APFNet Small Research Grant. It helps encourage the member institutes to evenly providing essential technical support to the mechanism activities. In addition, each member is required to recommend three to four qualified experts from their own institutes to form a pool of experts.

In conclusion, our efforts in the APFNet Small Research Grant initiative are poised to deliver meaningful and lasting contributions to the field of forestry research.

By nurturing budding researchers, facilitating impactful agreements, and rigorously evaluating projects, we aim to shape a sustainable future for forests and their management.

### **5.3 Hold the Fifth Steering Committee Meeting & the Fourth Early Career Academics Forum**

The SC Meeting is designed to be held every two years back-to-back with the Early Career Academics Forum. The two events will be organized in 2025 and hosted by the new Chair FRIM Malaysia for 2024-2025. The forum will still focus on the theme of forest restoration in tropical region, aiming to enhance mutual learning and exchange cutting-edge research results among young professionals from SANFRI member institutes.

## **6. WRAP-UP AND THE NEXT STEP**

Some key conclusion and observation of the Meeting are indicated as follows:

- 1) New Chair and Vice-chair of SANFRI for 2024-2025

Chair: Director General of Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM)

Name	Title	E-mail
Dr. Ismail Parlan	Director General of FRIM	ismailp@frim.gov.my

Vice-chair: Head of Research Center for Plant Conservation, Botanical Gardens and Forestry, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia

Name	Title	E-mail
Dr. Andes Hamuraby Rozak	Head of Research Center for Plant Conservation, Botanical Gardens and Forestry, BRIN, Indonesia	andes.hamuraby.rozak@brin.go.id
Ms. Ratna Uli Damayanti Sianturi	Research Center for Plant Conservation, Botanical Gardens and Forestry, BRIN, Indonesia	nauliratna@gmail.com

- 2) Support from new Chair, Vice-chair and APFNet.

As new chair of SANFRI for 2024-2025, Dr. Ismail Parlan, Director General

of FRIM Malaysia expressed he will put efforts in the development of SANFRI and provide support to the mechanism activities. Dr. Ismail also highly acknowledged the successful completion of the Meeting.

Ratna Uli Damayanti Sianturi, representative of BRIN, mentioned that she would report the meeting to Dr. Andes after return. As representative of newly elected vice chair institute, Ms. Ratna wrapped up the Forum in the afternoon, and encouraged that more young researchers in this region could be more knowledgeable and competent through concert efforts of among all members through the SANFRI platform.

- 3) The SANFRI work report for 2022-2023 and work plan for 2024-2025 were endorsed and adopted;
- 4) Arrangement: The Fifth Steering Committee Meeting of SANFRI has been proposed by FRIM to be held in Putrajaya, Malaysia in August/September in 2025. A final decision would be made at least 6 months in advance;
- 5) Expert pool: each member institute proposes 3 to 4 candidates and sends their CVs to SCO for review by APFNet;
- 6) APFNet will send official letters to the newly elected Chair, Vice Chair, SCO, and elected experts; and
- 7) Promote the multi-lateral cooperation: if there's funding from any SANFRI member institute and open to other counterparts, please send the announcement/recruitment to SCO which will provide assistance to disseminate the information, such as international research conference, training program, etc..

ANNEX 1: Meeting agenda

Time	Agenda	Facilitator
09:00 - 09:15	<b>Opening remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences (SANFRI Chair)</li> <li>• Forest Research Institute Malaysia (SANFRI Vice-Chair)</li> <li>• APFNet (SANFRI Sponsor)</li> </ul>	Dr. Tran Lam Dong, vice president of VAFS
09:15 - 09:20	Introduction of the meeting agenda - by Dr. Tran Lam Dong, vice president of VAFS	
09:20 - 09:50	Introduction and discussion of the newly updated framework of SANFRI - by Prof.Dr. Zhang Jinfeng, SCO	
09:50 - 10:05	Election of SANFRI Chair and Vice-chair for 2024 - 2025	
10:05 - 10:10	Group Photo	
10:10 - 10:30	Coffee Break	
10:30 - 10:50	Report on the progress of the SANFRI activities during 2022-2023 & discussions - by Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences (VAFS)	Dr. Ismail Parlan, Director General, FRIM
10:50 - 11:20	Discuss and adopt work plan for 2024-2025 - by Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM)	
11:20 - 11:35	Discuss date and venue of the 5 <sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting	
11:35 - 12:00	Wrap-up and closing	Dr. Tran Lam Dong, vice president of VAFS

**ANNEX2:** List of participants of the Fourth SANFRI Steering Committee Meeting

- Mr. MA Vuthy, Deputy Director, Institute of Forest and Wildlife Research and Development of Cambodia; vuthydalin@yahoo.com
- Prof.Ms. Zhong Mingchuan, President of Yunnan Academy of Forestry and Grassland of China;zmingchuan@vip.163.com
- Ms. Ratna Uli Damayanti Sianturi, Research Center for Plant Conservation, Botanical Gardens and Forestry, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia; nauriratna@gmail.com
- Dr.Mr. Vongvilay Vongkhamsao, Director of Forestry Research Centre, National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute of Laos; vongvilay7566@gmail.com
- Dr.Mr. Ismail Parlan, Director General of Forest Research Institute Malaysia; ismailp@frim.gov.my
- Dr. Ms. Hlaing Ei Ei, Forest Research Institute of Myanmar; eieiswehlaing@gmail.com
- Mrs. Phuangphan Whuangplong, Director of Silviculture Research Division, Forest Research and Development Bureau Royal Forest Department, Thailand; Pyf49@hotmail.com
- Dr.Mr. Tran Lam Dong, vice president of Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences; dong.tran@vafs.gov.vn
- Dr.Xin Shuyu, Director of Policy Dialogue Division of APFNet Secretariat; xinshuyu@apfnet.cn