TFER GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS SCHEME

9 January 2026

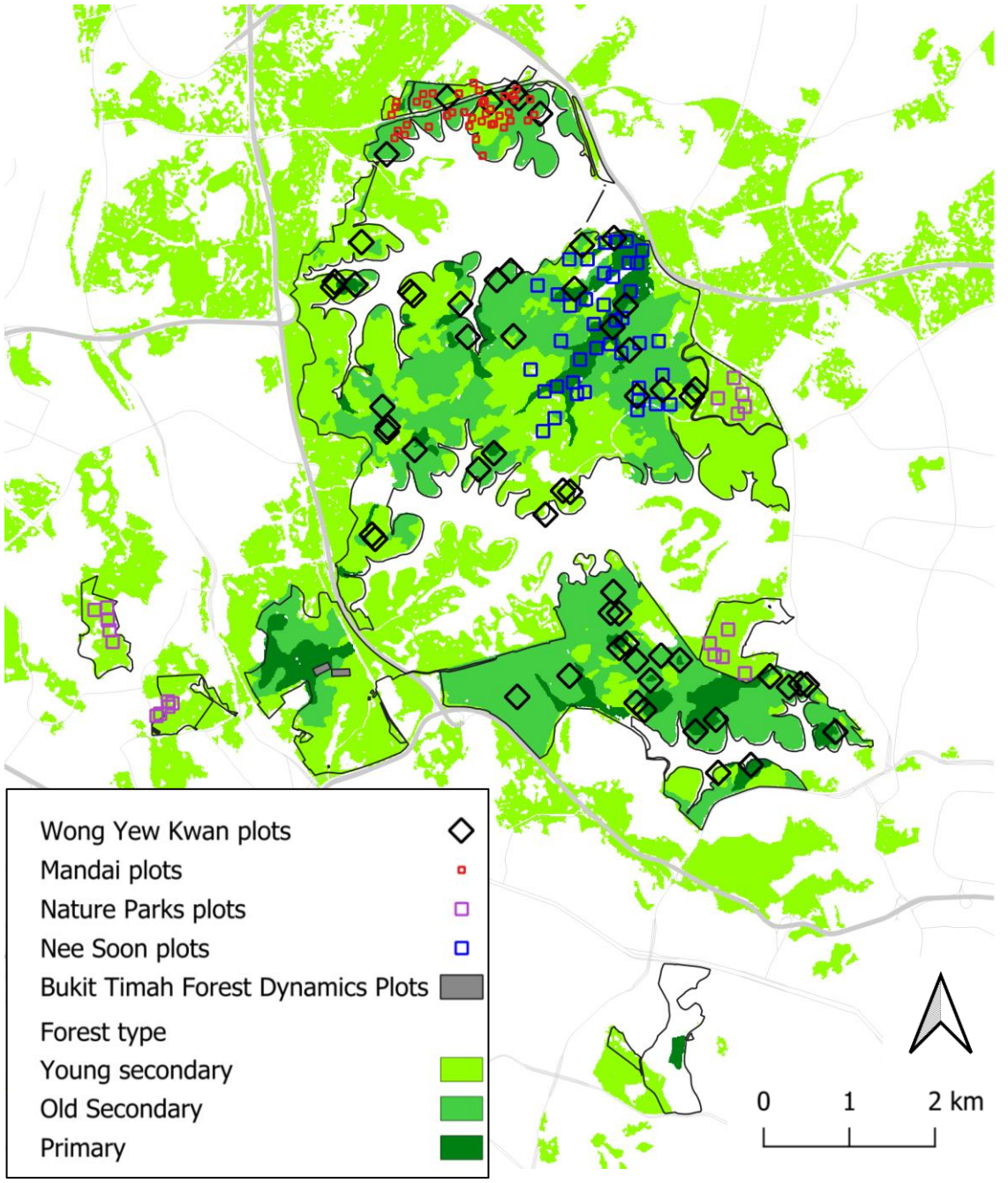
Grant Call Briefing

Agenda

- Overview of Grant Call
  - Eligibility Criteria
  - Funding Criteria
  - Evaluation Criteria
  - Timeline
  - Application process
- Call Topics
- Q&A
  - Please feel free to type your questions in the chat.

Background

- The Tropical Forest Ecology Research (TFER) programme was established in March 2021 to coordinate and advance forest ecological research in Singapore
- Objectives of the TFER Grants and Fellowship Scheme (GFS)
  1. Build capacity in forest ecological research in Singapore and the region.
  2. Encourage use of and build on/enhance data collected in permanent research plots under NParks' TFER programme, i.e., the Long-Term Forest Ecological Monitoring plot network, Bukit Timah Forest Dynamics Plots, and Singapore Botanic Gardens Rain Forest decennial censuses.



Overview

- Lead Applicants can choose to apply for either or both the Small Grant component and Short-term Fellowship component
- Up to SGD100k per project (inclusive of total fellowship stipend/allowance, and all approved direct and indirect costs for the small grants component)
- Eight Call Topics for 2026 Grant Call
  - Proposals for forest ecology research can still be submitted even if not within the list of topics

Scheme components

Small Grants Component	Short-term Fellowships Component
Payment to host IHL via reimbursement of allowable research expenses (e.g. research assistant pay, consumables, local transport, equipment)	Monthly stipend of SGD 5,250, monthly accommodation allowance (overseas applicants) of SGD 1,000 NParks to pay for withholding tax
Up to 2 years per project	Recommended fellowship period of 3 months, must spend the full fellowship period in Singapore
Local IHL-affiliated early career researchers of ASEAN citizenship or SG PR only	All early career researchers who are of ASEAN citizenship or SG PR, regardless of institutional affiliation

Eligibility

- Undertaking or within 5 years of being conferred a research-intensive postgraduate degree at the point of application (taken to be the deadline of call)
  - Master's degrees obtained through coursework will not be considered
- Open to Singapore Citizens/Permanent Residents & Citizens of ASEAN member countries
- Small Grants: Lead Applicant must be affiliated with a Singapore-based IHL
  - For research staff working on a supervised project (e.g., post-doctoral fellows), current postgraduate students, or officially visiting students/staff, support by the supervisor/host faculty member will be required.
- Fellowship: Subject to Training Employment Pass (TEP) visa approval and applicant's employer's policy for receiving the stipend

Funding Criteria for Small Grants

- Direct Costs*
  - Supportable direct costs are incremental cost required to execute the programme; can be classified into the following cost categories:-
    - Expenditure on manpower (EOM);
    - Equipment;
    - Other Operating Expenses (OOE); and
    - Overseas Travel
  - 100% of the approved qualifying direct costs of a project;

- Indirect Costs (i.e. "overheads")
  - Costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified readily and specifically with a particular sponsored research project, but;
  - Contribute to the ability of the Institutions to support such research projects (e.g., providing research space, research administration and utilities), and not through the actual performance of activities under the sponsored project
  - 30% of the total qualifying approved direct costs of a project.

**Please refer to the grant call info sheet for more detailed information.*

Data/Cybersecurity Risk Management

- To safeguard against data leaks/breaches, depending on the nature of the research, the Institutions and/or collaborators may be required by NParks to:
  - Attain one of the data and/or cybersecurity standards certification listed below as a pre-requisite to start the project, receive data requested or execute the data collection (e.g. survey) for the Research.
  - Conduct an independent exit external audit assessment upon completion or termination of the Research.

Cyber Security Agency (CSA) Cybersecurity Standards	Inforcomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) Data Security Standards
Cyber Essentials Mark (CEM)	Data Protection Essentials (DPE)
Cyber Trust Mark (CTM) Note – there are a few tiers under CTM, Institutions will only have to attain certification for one tier for the project, if required.	Data Protection Trust Mark (DPTM)

- Exact requirements will be determined after evaluation.

Evaluation Criteria

1. **Strength & Quality of Proposal**
   - Research Approach
   - Execution Plan
2. **Benefit and Relevance to Singapore**
   - Use of TFER permanent forest plots
   - Potential for application in Singapore
3. **Strength & Future Potential of Lead Applicant**
   - The Lead Applicant should demonstrate the relevance of a past track record or current research pursuits to the proposed project tasks.

Overview of Timeline

Item	Date (SGT, UTC +08:00)
Grant Call Opens	5 January 2026
Grant Call Briefing	9 January 2026, 2.00pm
Grant Call Closes	13 March 2026, 2.00pm
Evaluation of proposals	Q2 2026*
Notification, approval and letter of award for successful awardees only	Q3 2026 onwards*

**Timings are indicative*

Application process

- To apply, fill in the application form in Microsoft Word format, and email to momoka_ang@nparks.gov.sg by **13 March 2026, 2.00pm** (Singapore Time, UTC +8:00).
  - Incomplete (e.g., without required endorsements) or late applications will not be considered. Lead Applicants are advised to submit their application early.
  - The application form, grant call info sheet and FAQs can be found here: www.nparks.gov.sg/services/research-programmes/TFER-GFS
- For transparency, no verbal enquiries will be entertained. If you require clarification, please email Momoka at momoka_ang@nparks.gov.sg. Answers to all received queries will be reflected in the Grant Call FAQs document, which will be updated periodically to ensure all applicants have equal access to additional information.

CALL TOPICS

1. Development and assessment of forest restoration strategies

Examples

- Evaluating existing reforestation or natural regeneration strategies across with various land-use histories, e.g., abandoned plantations/kampung
- Understanding invertebrate roles (e.g., pollination, nutrient cycling) in restoration success
- Identifying how and where to plant to reduce wind or edge effects (see also Topics 2 and 3)
- Low-risk, cost-effective replacement of exotic trees (e.g., oil palm, rubber) while improving habitat function (see also Topic 4)

Suggested sites/resources available:

- Tree communities and demographic data in plots in BTNR, CCNR, Bukit Batok Nature Park, Bukit Batok Town Park, Thomson Nature Park, Windsor Nature Park, Singapore Botanic Gardens Rain Forest
- Camera trap, bioacoustics recordings, and bird survey data from 2022 – 2024 in CCNR and 2024 – 2026 in Bukit Batok Nature Park, Bukit Batok Town Park, Thomson Nature Park, Windsor Nature Park

2. Forest disturbance ecology

Examples

- Impact of wind speeds and "wind tunneling" on tree failure frequency near reservoir edges, boardwalks/trails and residential edges
- Identifying factors contributing to wildfire risk during dry weather

Suggested sites/resources available:

- Tree communities and demographic data in plots in BTNR, CCNR, Bukit Batok Nature Park, Bukit Batok Town Park, Thomson Nature Park, Windsor Nature Park, Singapore Botanic Gardens Rain Forest

3. Climate change impacts on and sensitivity and resilience of forests and forest-associated biodiversity

Example

Identifying which forest species will be impacted by (or benefit from) altered microclimate and fluctuations owing to future climate change and climate extremes (e.g., warming, heatwaves, altered precipitation patterns, severe droughts, increased frequency and strength of storms)

Suggested sites/resources available

- Sensors were deployed to log air temperature and relative humidity in plots in the CCNR, Bukit Batok Nature Park, Bukit Batok Town Park, Thomson Nature Park, Windsor Nature Park, Singapore Botanic Gardens Rain Forest; will be deployed in BTNR
- Tree demographic data from: 1993 onwards in BTNR; from 2013 onwards in the Nee Soon catchment; from 2022 onwards in CCNR, Bukit Batok Nature Park, Bukit Batok Town Park, Thomson Nature Park, Windsor Nature Park, Singapore Botanic Gardens Rain Forest
- Camera trap, bioacoustics recordings, and bird survey data from 2022 – 2024 in CCNR and 2024 – 2026 in Bukit Batok Nature Park, Bukit Batok Town Park, Thomson Nature Park, Windsor Nature Park

4. Impacts of invasive species and improving the cost-effectiveness of control methods

Examples

- Physiology and growth inhibition of highly invasive tropical weeds, including *Dioscorea sansibarensis* (Zanzibar yam) and *Miconia* spp.
- Strategies for removing invasive/exotics that minimizes disruption of ecosystem services for wildlife, including nesting sites, food sources, and movement corridors

Suggested sites/resources available:

- Plant occurrences and tree (e.g., seedling) demographic data in plots in BTNR, CCNR, Bukit Batok Nature Park, Bukit Batok Town Park, Thomson Nature Park, Windsor Nature Park, Singapore Botanic Gardens Rain Forest
- Camera trap, bioacoustics recordings, and bird survey data from 2022 – 2024 in CCNR and 2024 – 2026 in Bukit Batok Nature Park, Bukit Batok Town Park, Thomson Nature Park, Windsor Nature Park

5. Life history or genetics studies & occupancy/demographic/ movement modelling for flagship/indicator species

Examples of flagship/indicator species/groups

- Dipterocarps
- Sunda pangolin
- Bulbuls
- Raffles' banded langur

Suggested sites/resources available:

- Tree demographic data from: 1993 onwards in BTNR; from 2013 onwards in the Nee Soon catchment; from 2022 onwards in CCNR, Bukit Batok Nature Park, Bukit Batok Town Park, Thomson Nature Park, Windsor Nature Park, Singapore Botanic Gardens Rain Forest
- Camera trap, bioacoustics recordings, and bird survey data from 2022 – 2024 in CCNR and 2024 – 2026 in Bukit Batok Nature Park, Bukit Batok Town Park, Thomson Nature Park, Windsor Nature Park

6. Forest dynamics modelling in Singapore forests

Example

Adapting existing or developing forest dynamic modeling frameworks to simulate/project forest responses to future scenarios (e.g., climate change; see Topic 3) and interventions (e.g., restoration; see Topic 1)

Suggested sites/resources available:

- Tree demographic data from: 1993 onwards in BTNR; from 2013 onwards in the Nee Soon catchment; from 2022 onwards in CCNR, Bukit Batok Nature Park, Bukit Batok Town Park, Thomson Nature Park, Windsor Nature Park, Singapore Botanic Gardens Rain Forest

7. Integrated botanical studies

Examples

- Coupling field observations of trees in plots with specimen- or laboratory-based work, e.g., plant functional/anatomical/eco-physiological trait measurements; plant taxonomy and systematics
- Harmonizing tree species concepts across regional forest plots to enable comparative studies

Suggested sites/resources available:

- Plant occurrence and tree abundance data in plots in BTNR, CCNR, Bukit Batok Nature Park, Bukit Batok Town Park, Thomson Nature Park, Windsor Nature Park, Singapore Botanic Gardens Rain Forest, some with herbarium vouchers

8. Plant pathogens in Singapore forests and implications for forest regeneration and climate resilience

Example

Investigating how native/introduced plant diseases (above- and belowground) affect forest plants to influence plant community structure during forest regeneration and/or under changing climate conditions (see Topic 3)

Suggested sites/resources available:

- Plant occurrence and tree abundance data in plots in BTNR, CCNR, Bukit Batok Nature Park, Bukit Batok Town Park, Thomson Nature Park, Windsor Nature Park, Singapore Botanic Gardens Rain Forest

Q&A

Please type your questions in the meeting chat.

THANK YOU

For further enquiries, please contact: momoka_ang@nparks.gov.sg