

International Tropical Fruits Network
(TFNet)



Summary of Activities

JULY 2025 -
APRIL 2026



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Linking people, technology, and market





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Executive Summary



This progress report is submitted to appraise the Chairperson and Board of Trustees on the activities and initiatives undertaken by the TFNet Secretariat from July 2025 to April 2026, covering the first 10 months following the appointment of Muhamed Salim bin Mohd Ali as Chief Executive Officer.

The report includes a matrix of action items identified during the 9th General Assembly and the 17th Board of Trustees Meeting, together with updates on their implementation status. It also highlights key administrative and operational improvements introduced during the reporting period.

In support of capacity building and knowledge sharing, TFNet successfully organized the 2025 International Symposium on Tropical Fruits, alongside a series of webinars focusing on underutilized tropical fruits such as mangosteen and sapodilla. Collectively, these programmes attracted 284 participants from 13 countries.

TFNet also facilitated a study visit for the Malaysian Pineapple Industry Board (MPIB) from 26–30 April 2026 to several leading pineapple-related companies in the Philippines, including Dole Philippines, Sun Farms, GS Fruits, and Asiatext, a company specializing in pineapple and abaca fiber-based textiles.

The collaborative project entitled “Enhancing the Production of Mango and Other Tropical Fruits to Address Demand and Market in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia”, implemented in collaboration with King Faisal University, was successfully completed in December 2025.

Looking ahead, TFNet is co-organizing the 2nd International Congress on Pineapple for Better Value Chain Adaptation (ICoP 2026), scheduled to take place from 8–10 September 2026 in Camarines Norte. In parallel, several pilot initiatives, including the TFNet Youth Programme: FruitNext and the TFNet Trade Database, are currently under development.

As part of efforts to strengthen and expand TFNet’s membership network and regional partnerships, TFNet CEO Muhamed Salim bin Mohd Ali signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) and the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) in the Philippines. Discussions and preparations are also underway with several other institutions for future MOUs aimed at enhancing regional cooperation and collaboration. In addition, the CEO conducted a series of working visits to promote TFNet and strengthen engagement with stakeholders in Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, and India.





9th TFNet General Assembly

TFNet's 9th General Assembly (GA) meeting were held on the 22nd September 2025, in hybrid mode, with the physical session convening in Darwin, Australia.

The GA brought together nine TFNet Country Members (Australia, Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Sudan), five Associate Members (AARDO, CABI, JIRCAS, MARDI, and MUF), three Expert Members, one Ordinary Member, and four observers from Malaysia, alongside the TFNet Secretariat.

Dr. Muhammad Sohail Mazhar, representing Australia, was appointed Chairperson of the GA, with Dr. Shalendra Prasad of Fiji and Dr. Sanjay Kumar Singh of India elected as Vice Chairpersons.

TFNet Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Muhamed Salim bin Mohd Ali, presented the 2022–2025 progress report and the draft 2025–2030 Strategic Plan and triennial workplan, designed to capture key industry megatrends and guide TFNet's future programmes. Following delegates' recommendations, the plan was refined and adopted by the Assembly to help member countries stay competitive and resilient in a changing global market.

During the election of the new Board of Trustees (2025–2028), Malaysia retained the Chairpersonship, while China and Fiji continued their second terms as Vice Chairpersons. The Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) and CAB International (CABI) were also re-elected for their second terms. For Expert Members, Peter Johnson (Australia) and Dr. Phebe Ding (Malaysia) were newly elected.



17th Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting

The 17th BOT meeting was conducted on 22nd September 2025, after the 9th General Assembly.

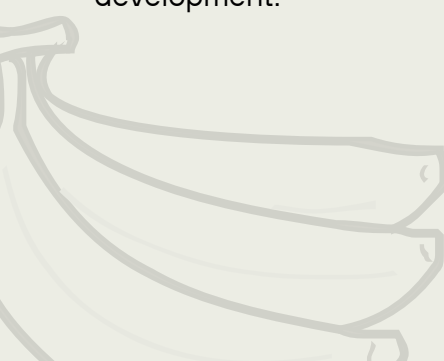
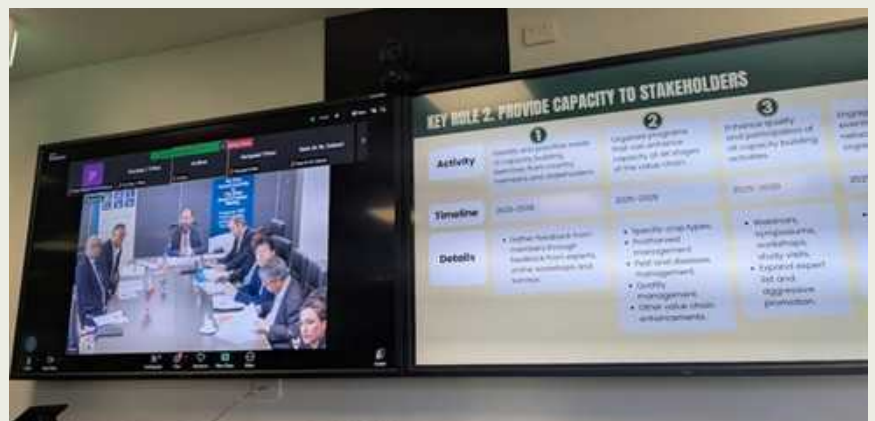
H.E. Datuk Seri Isham Ishak who is also the Secretary General for the Malaysian Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security chaired the session.



As the appointed Internal Auditor, Datuk Dr. Mohamad Roff presented the internal audit report on TFNet's financial and asset management, administration, membership, consultancies, collaborations, and knowledge dissemination. China offered to host the BOT for 2026.



In closing the 17th Board of Trustees meeting, the Chairperson thanked members for their active participation and reaffirmed the collective commitment to implementing the Strategic Plan 2025–2030. He stressed the need for continued collaboration and consistent support from members to ensure TFNet remains responsive, impactful, and a driving force in advancing sustainable tropical fruit development.



International Symposium on Tropical Fruits (ISTF 2025)



The International Symposium on Tropical Fruits (ISTF2025) was held on 23-25 September at the Danala Education and Community Precinct, Charles Darwin University, Darwin, Australia.

It was organized by TFNet and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Northern Territory Government, co-organized by the Guangdong Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Northern Territory Farmers Association (NT Farmers), and Charles Darwin University – Research Institute for Northern Agriculture (CDU RINA) with support from Agri Malaysia and the Consulate of Malaysia in Sydney.

There were a total of 40 physical participants and 31 online participants across 11 countries – Australia, Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, and Vietnam. Participants represented various stakeholders such as farmers, researchers, policy makers, government officials, and development agencies.

Twenty-nine presentations were delivered covering topics such as research and development, pest and disease management, market and trade, and solutions and best practices.



International Tropical Fruits Network (TFNet)

During the panel discussion, experts discussed how to bridge the gap between researchers and farmers. Andrew Bourne, Chief Executive Officer of NT Farmers emphasized the importance of understanding the commercial realities and constraints of faced by farmers when implementing new technologies or practices. Research needs to demand-driven and aligned with industry needs, while also considering the risks and challenges faced by farmers.

The panelists also explored ways to promote minor tropical fruits to a larger market, including forming partnerships with processors and retailers, and developing strategic plans for growth.



PHOTO: (from left to right): PANELISTS - Andrew Bourne (NT Farmers CEO), Dr. Zora Singh (Professor, Edith Cowan University), Peter Johnson (mango expert), Dr. Herminigilda A. Gabertan (Assistant Director, Bureau of Plant Industry, Philippines), Dr. Sanjay Kumar (Deputy Director, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, India). MODERATOR: Yacob Ahmad (Senior Technical Officer, TFNet)



International Symposium on Tropical Fruits (ISTF 2025) - Field Trip



Delegates of the 2025 International Symposium on Tropical Fruits (ISTF 2025) had the opportunity to experience firsthand how tropical fruits are cultivated in Australia's Northern Territory during a field trip organized by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF), Northern Territory Government, and the Northern Territory Farmers Association Inc.

Fifteen participants from six countries joined the excursion, which featured visits to research facilities, training sessions, and a commercial rambutan farm.



The first stop was the Coastal Plains Research Farm (CPRF), the principal horticultural research facility in the Darwin region, managed by DAF. Participants attended a training workshop on carbon farming, led by Dr. Upendra Shekhawat, Ms. Dakshina Yadav, and Dr. Emily Hinds.



The final stop took participants to Dr. Kerry Eupene's rambutan farm, established 35 years ago. A practicing dentist by profession, Dr. Eupene has developed innovative techniques to adapt rambutan production to local conditions. Unlike in Southeast Asia, rambutan in Darwin are grown under netting to protect against birds. His practices include boosting pollination by increasing the proportion of male trees to 20%, applying naphthyl acetic acid to influence flower gender, integrating stingless bees, and trialing different planting systems to improve yield and fruit quality.

Dole Philippines opens its doors to MPIB and Malaysian pineapple growers



The International Tropical Fruits Network (TFNet) led a study visit to the Philippines from 26 to 30 April 2026, bringing together the Malaysian Pineapple Industry Board (MPIB) and Malaysian industry players with the aim to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange between both countries' pineapple sectors.

The MPIB delegation was led by Chairman Mr. Sheikh Umar Bagharib and was supported by Malaysian Ambassador to the Philippines H.E. Dato' Abdul Malik Melvin Castelino and Consul General Mr. Deddy Faisal Ahmad Salleh with Mr. Muhamed Salim Mohd Ali leading TFNet.

The highlight of the mission was a visit to Dole Philippines, Inc. (Dolefil) located in Polomolok, South Cotabato. The delegation was allowed to visit Dole's pineapple production areas as well as processing facilities such as the fresh fruit packinghouse and cannery.

Located at the foot of Mt. Matutum, Dolefil's 16,500 hectare plantation annually produces more than 16 million boxes of fresh pineapples and 30 million cases of processed pineapples. They supply 60% of Japan's pineapple but also exports to markets around the world.

The delegation was received by Mr. Muniretrenam Muniandy, Agricultural Director and met the Managing Director, Mr. Javier C. Go.





Afterwards, the delegates visited Dolefil's state of the art cannery, which processes the F200 pineapple variety into products such as juices, concentrates, fruit slices, chunks, tidbits, and crushed. In line with Dolefil's zero waste policy, MD2 fruits that do not pass export quality requirements are also processed.

Overall, the study visit provided valuable exposure to best practices and strengthened collaboration between Malaysia and the Philippines, reinforcing the role of the International Tropical Fruit Network (TFNet) in driving knowledge exchange and capacity building in the tropical fruits sector. The experience will also be used for future direction of the pineapple industry in Malaysia.

Other sites that the delegation visited were GS Fruits and SunFarms. The study visit wouldn't have been possible without the support and facilitation of the Bureau of Plant Industry and the Plant Quarantine Office in General Santos.



TFNet and MPIB visit local pineapple companies in the Philippines



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After visiting Dole Philippines, the delegation also went to local pineapple companies in South Cotabato on April 26 to experience how medium sized enterprises conduct their business.



They were welcomed by GS Fruits Farm located in T'boli and SunFarms Agriventures Corporation in Tampakan. GS Fruits and SunFarms grow 180 ha and 220 ha of pineapple respectively.

Both farms do not export fruits on their own but are supplying 3-5 containers of pineapple per week to exporters such Sumifru Philippines Corporation and Dole Philippines.



The Malaysian delegates were able to visit their farms and GS Fruit's packing facilities. They noted that the local companies have similar packinghouse technologies in Malaysia, except that fruits are loaded into boxes on site.

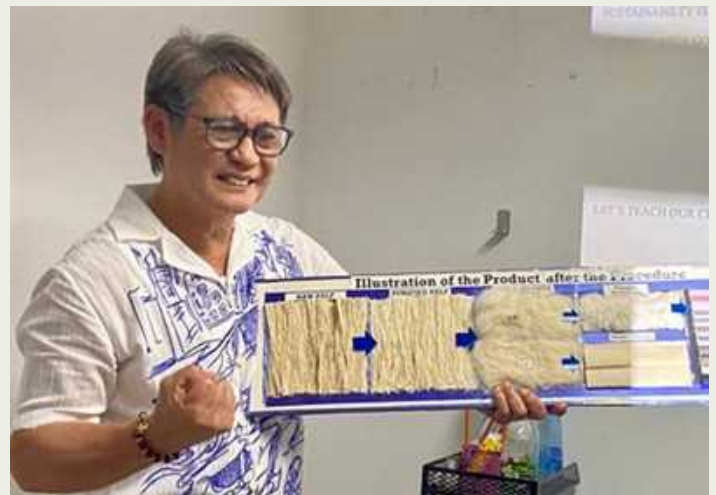
TFNet collaborates with MPIB to visit a pineapple textile company in the Philippines

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On April 29, the delegation visited Asia Textile Mills Inc. (Asiatex) located in Calamba, Philippines.

They were received by Mr. Matthew Lazaro, Director and Vice President of Asiatex, who provided an overview of the company's operations and capabilities.



TFNet conducts preliminary site visit to pineapple companies in the Philippines



Mr. Muhamed Salim bin Mohd Ali, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the International Tropical Fruits Network (TFNet), conducted a preliminary site visit to selected pineapple companies in Southern Mindanao on 16–17 February 2026. He was accompanied by Mr. Christian Cangao, Information Officer of TFNet.

The visit aimed to survey potential sites for a planned delegation of Malaysian pineapple industry players tentatively scheduled for April 2026, as well as to strengthen networking and collaboration between TFNet and key private sector stakeholders in the Philippine pineapple industry.

The pineapple companies that welcomed TFNet were Dole Philippines Inc., Sun Farms, and GS Fruits. Dolefil is a multinational company that is one of the biggest pineapple producers in the world, exporting 26 million cases of processed pineapple and 13 million boxes of fresh pineapple annually. Meanwhile, Sun Farms and GS Fruits are both local companies that supply fruits to exporters such as Sumifru and Dole.

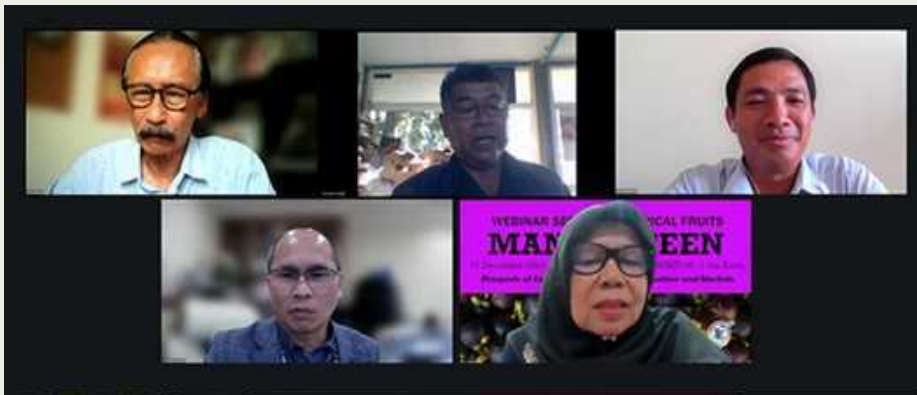
During the visit, the companies presented their operations, which included:

- The four stages of cultural practices for pineapple production: establishment, vegetative growth, flowering induction, and fruit development;
- Harvesting, sorting, and grading processes;
- Packinghouse facilities for fresh fruit export, including postharvest handling, treatment, and packaging systems.



Webinar on “The Prospects for Expanding Mangosteen Production and Markets – Opportunities and Challenges”

The challenges and opportunities in improving mangosteen production and markets were discussed in a webinar organized by International tropical fruits network (TFNet) on 17 December 2025. Experts from India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam presented country perspectives. The webinar was attended by 131 participants from 13 countries including Malaysia, Thailand, India, Vietnam, Philippines, Fiji and Australia, indicating global interest in the future of the ‘Queen of Fruits.’



Webinar on “The Prospects for Expanding Sapodilla Production and Markets – Opportunities and Challenges”

The webinar on ‘The Prospects for Expanding Sapodilla Production and Markets – Opportunities and Challenges’ on 14 April 2026, organized by the International Tropical Fruits Network (TFNet).

Sapodilla, also known as Sapota and Chiku (*Manilkara zapota* L) is a minor tropical fruit that is gaining popularity and has strong potential for further development. The fruit is popular in Mexico, Brazil and across Asia and Southeast Asian countries. India is the largest producer and exporter of the fruit, followed by other exporters including Brazil, Mexico, Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam.

The presentations discussed the status of sapodilla in their respective countries, including popular varieties, production and export figures, pest and diseases, and growth opportunities.



Free Trade Agreements (FTAs): Importance and Impacts on the Agriculture Sector

By Stoix Nebin Pascua, SEARCA

Speaking at the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) Agriculture and Development Seminar Series (ADSS) on 12 February 2026, Mr. Muhamed Salim bin Mohd Ali, Chief Executive Officer of the International Tropical Fruits Network (TFNet), emphasized that free trade agreements (FTAs) are powerful tools for agricultural transformation.



In his presentation titled “Free Trade Agreements (FTAs): Importance and Impacts on the Agriculture Sector,” Salim defined FTAs as arrangements between two or more trading alliances that primarily agree to reduce or eliminate customs tariffs and non-tariff barriers on substantial trade between them.

Highlighting their significance, he explained that FTAs encourage competition on a global level, which enhances the efficiency of domestic industries, promotes specialization among countries, and increases the availability of more affordable and higher-quality products for consumers. He added that with FTAs, global monopolies are eliminated due to increased competition. Moreover, FTAs help build shared frameworks for trade and investment and support people-to-people and business-to-business linkages, ultimately contributing to broader global economic growth.



11th Indian Horticulture Congress

The 11th Indian Horticultural Congress was held from 6–9 November 2025 at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru, India. It was organized by the Indian Academy of Horticultural Sciences in collaboration with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, the University of Agricultural Sciences Bengaluru, and the University of Horticultural Sciences, Bagalkot.

Mr. Muhamed Salim Mohd Ali, Chief Executive Officer of the International Tropical Fruits Network (TFNet), highlighted the importance of cross-border and interdisciplinary collaboration. He also presented a keynote paper titled “Innovations and Partnerships in Tropical Fruit Production: Strengthening Value Chains and Market Access”.

Mr. Yacob Ahmad, Senior Technical Officer of TFNet, also delivered a keynote presentation on “Global Trends in Litchi and Rambutan Production, Value Addition and Trade” during the workshop on pomegranate and exotic tropical fruits.



Enhancing the production of Mango and Other Tropical Fruits to Address Demand and Market in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

A project on 'Enhancing the production of Mango and Other Tropical Fruits to Address Demand and Market in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia' is an example of the many efforts undertaken to improve the tropical fruit situation in the Kingdom.

The project is a collaboration of King Faisal University and International Tropical Fruit Network (TFNet).

The initiative which began in 2023 with an assessment of the tropical fruit situation has provided strategic directions on the means to develop the sector, amid current challenges. The recommendations include the use of best cultivars, best field practices including planting systems, canopy management, pest and disease and postharvest management.

Training sessions and farm visits were held for these purposes. Besides improving the currently grown mango varieties, it was also proposed that new commercially viable cultivars be introduced to improve productivity and quality, at the same time augmenting germplasm availability.

Moreover, the project complements the Saudi and Middle East Green Initiative, which aims at integrating environmental protection, energy transition and innovative sustainability programs that aims for a green future, that is being implemented in the Kingdom.



Through the project, mango varieties that have been introduced include Irwin and popular Southeast Asian varieties such as Nam Dok Mai, Chok Anan and Yuwen. Other tropical fruit trees that have been introduced include jackfruit, sapote, guava, passionfruit, wax apple and dragon fruit. The fruit types introduced are varieties known for their high yields, quality and market potential.

The introduced seedlings are being established at the Jazan National Research and Development Center for Sustainable Agriculture (ESTIDAMAH) in a demonstration plot highlighting technologies such as high-density planting and best field practices.

The plot also serves as a propagation source for mango and tropical fruits seedlings that may be distributed to other suitable locations in the country. In addition, it also serves as an observation plot to study the effect of shade on plant growth performance and the efficient use and management of water resources.

Another area with similar focus is the National Organic Agriculture Center (NOAC) at Onaizah, Qassim, where demonstration plots with selected tropical and subtropical fruits will be introduced and observed for their adaptability. The commercial fruit types proposed at NOAC include mango, guava, passionfruit, fig, pomegranate, grape, apricot and pear.

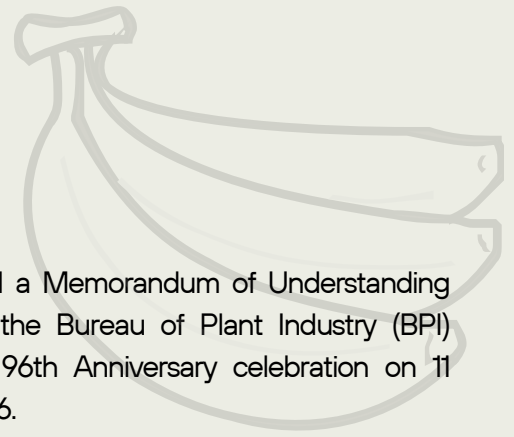
While challenges such as water availability, climate disruptions, economic viability, agroclimatic suitability, labor availability and knowledge dissemination issues may diminish efforts to improve the sector, the project sets the platform for future upscaling and developing a viable and competitive sector.



According to the Project Coordinator from the Institute of Studies and Consultations, King Faisal's University, this project serves as an initiative to enhance the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture's effort in developing the tropical fruit sector to being viable that can ultimately reduce imports and achieve food security. Project consultants from International Tropical Fruits Network (TFNet) have been instrumental in providing technical guidelines and recommendations in their efforts to assist in achieving tangible reality in being self-sufficient in tropical fruit in the coming future. With the project scheduled to end in December 2025, the project consultants from TFNet have expressed confidence in the attainment of its goals, with the continued commitment of King Faisal University and Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture executing their essential roles.



TFNet signs MOUs with BPI Philippines and SEARCA



TFNet signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) during BPI's 96th Anniversary celebration on 11 February 2026.

The MOU aims to strengthen collaboration between the two parties, with a focus on jointly organising capacity-building programmes, providing technical consultancy, promoting information and knowledge exchange, and facilitating discussions related to trade in tropical fruits and related agricultural products.

The MOU was signed by TFNet's Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Muhamed Salim bin Mohd Ali, and BPI's Director, Dr. Gerald Glenn F. Panganiban. The signing was witnessed by Dr. Herminigilda A. Gabertan, Assistant Director of BPI, and Mr. Christian Cangao, Information Officer of TFNet.

TFNet also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) on 12 February 2026 at the SEARCA Headquarters in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines.

The MOU was signed by TFNet's Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Muhamed Salim bin Mohd Ali, and SEARCA's Center Director, Dr. Mercedita A. Sombilla. The signing was witnessed by Dr. Rico C. Ancog, SEARCA's Deputy Director for Administration, and Mr. Christian Cangao, TFNet's Information Officer.

TFNet and SEARCA share similar and complementary objectives, and the MOU reflects their mutual commitment to collaborate in undertaking joint programmes, projects, and consultancies, as well as in exchanging information, research findings, and knowledge products, and expanding their respective networks.



Partnership with CABI

TFNet and CABI BioProtection Portal team up to promote sustainable crop protection for tropical fruit growers

We're proud to announce that the International Tropical Fruits Network (TFNet) has joined the CABI BioProtection Portal as an associate, marking a promising step forward for tropical fruit growers worldwide.

The CABI BioProtection Portal is the largest, free global resource for biological pest management. The Portal's mission is to raise awareness and encourage the adoption of biopesticides among growers and advisors.

What brings us together?

TFNet and the CABI BioProtection Portal share a critical mission: making agriculture more sustainable and resilient. Together, we aim to help farmers shift from heavy chemical use to biological solutions that are safer for people and the environment. With this collaboration, together we aim to:

- Increase awareness of biological control and biopesticide solutions for tropical fruit crops
- Encourage adoption of integrated pest management (IPM) and non-chemical alternatives
- Exchange success stories to illustrate how biological solutions are being applied effectively in real-world situations
- Promote access to science-based information on sustainable crop protection
- Facilitate institutional support for biopesticide approaches
- Support growers and advisors in making more informed pest management decisions



TFNet was invited by CABI to present its programs to delegates from Tanzania on August 15 who came from the Ministry of Agriculture, Cereals and Other Produce Regulatory Authority (COPRA), Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), and Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC).



Biopesticides workshop by CABI

On 15 October 2025, CABI invited the International Tropical Fruits Network (TFNet) to participate on a Biopesticides Awareness Workshop in Tanah Rata, Cameron Highlands, jointly organized by the MAPPS-Education Trust Fund, Cameron Highlands Farmer Associations, and Malaysian Croplife and Public Health Association.

By bringing together farmers, extension workers, associations, pesticide companies, government agencies, and policy makers, this workshop aims to bridge the knowledge gap and build confidence in biopesticides.

During the same workshop, Dr. Malvika Chaudhary, CABI's Global Team Leader for Digital Product Usage, introduced the CABI BioProtection Portal and its functions.

The portal is the largest, free global resource for biological pest management.



Its mission is to raise awareness and encourage the adoption of bioprotection among growers and advisors. The International Tropical Fruits Network (TFNet) recently joined the CABI BioProtection Portal as an associate.

Dr. Chaudhary demonstrated the features of the portal, which has a comprehensive database of registered biopesticides that are searchable by country, crop, and pest.

To wrap up the workshop, a panel discussion on increasing the use of biopesticides in Malaysian agriculture was moderated by Datuk Dr. Mohammad Roff, former Expert Member of the TFNet Board of Trustees.



On October 16, Dr. Malvika Chaudhary, CABI's Global Team Leader for digital tool promotion, visited the TFNet office to discuss possible collaborations to promote the BioProtection Portal.

One of the activities that was discussed was a possible webinar with Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries to promote how the BioProtection Portal and expand the use of biopesticides.

Other meetings with CABI and AARDO



(LEFT) - Dr. Feng Zhang, Regional Director, East & South-East Asia, CABI visited TFNet on 3 February 2026. Both parties discussed ongoing plans and activities, including updates on the progress of the jointly organised Biopesticides Workshop for the Middle East region.

(RIGHT) - On 5 August 2025, Ms. Chin Sing Yun, the newly appointed Country Director of CABI Malaysia also paid a courtesy visit to TFNet. Both organisations agreed on the importance of strategically enhancing the visibility of their activities, pursuing funding opportunities. She was joined by Dr. Sathis Sri Thanarajoo, Scientist at CABI.



(LEFT) - H.E. Dr. Manoj Nardeosingh, Secretary General of the African Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO), paid a courtesy visit on 22 July 2025.

Since signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with TFNet on 18 November 2005, AARDO has remained a key Associate Member of TFNet

Strategic engagements with organizations and universities in the Philippines

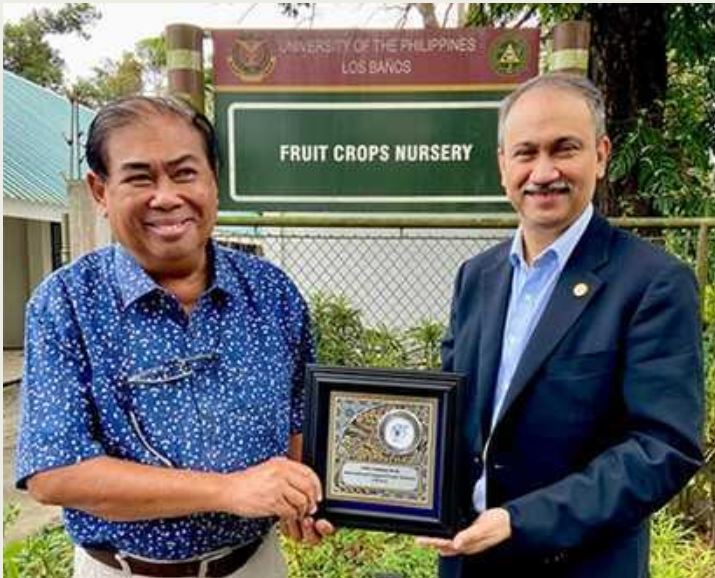


PHOTOS (LEFT) - TFNet CEO Mr. Muhamed Salim bin Mohd Ali met with Dr. Jose V. Camacho, Jr, Chancellor of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) on 13 February 2026 to discuss TFNet's programs and activities, with a particular focus on the FruitNext initiative. Chancellor Camacho agreed to sign an MOU with TFNet and plans to join as an Associate Member.

(RIGHT) - Prior to visiting the Chancellor, Mr. Salim also met with Dr. Amado Angeles, Dean of the UPLB College of Agriculture and Food Science on 19 November 2025. Present in the meeting were Dr. Eureka Teresa Ocampo, Director of the Institute of Crop Science and Dr. Matilde Maunahan, Director of the Postharvest Horticulture Training and Research Center.



(LEFT) - Mr. Salim also paid a courtesy visit to the Philippine Food Processors and Exporters Organization (Philfoodex) on 12 February 2026 and was received by Director Fernando Esguerra, who expressed strong interest in TFNet's initiatives, especially capacity-building programmes that can help enhance the knowledge of Philfoodex members. Mr. Esguerra also believed the importance of a reliable trade database and agreed to include Philfoodex members.



(LEFT) - While in UPLB, Mr. Salim also met with Dr. Pablito Magdalita, President of the Philfruits Association (PFA) at the Fruit Crops Nursery of CAFS-UPLBon 13 February 2026. The Philfruits Association is a leading organization in the Philippines focused on advancing the fruit industry through research, technology, and industry collaboration. PFA expressed their willingness to help TFNet by providing expertise in tropical fruits for symposiums, conferences, webinars, and international consultancies, including the FruitNext Youth Initiative.

(RIGHT) - On 18 November 2025, Mr. Salim visited the Asian Development Bank and met with Dr. Jiangfeng Zhang, Director of the Southeast Asia and the Pacific and Resilient River Basin Team, Agriculture, Food, Nature and Rural Development Sector. Dr. Zhang, shared examples of ADB's agriculture-related initiatives in TFNet Member Countries, such as value chain integration for smallholders, development of postharvest and logistics infrastructure, financing mechanisms for agro-based enterprises.



(LEFT) - While visiting Manila, Mr. Salim also met with Mr. Norjufri Nizar Edrus, Deputy Chief of Mission on 11 February 2026. Mr. Norjufri expressed his support for TFNet's initiatives, offering to facilitate introductions between TFNet and key stakeholders in the tropical fruit industry in the Philippines.

Strategic engagements with organizations and universities in Indonesia



PHOTOS (LEFT) - TFNet CEO Mr. Muhamed Salim bin Mohd Ali and Senior Technical Officer Mr. Yacob Ahmad visited the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia on 5 February 2026.

They were warmly welcomed by Dr. Dwinita Wikan Utami, Head of the Research Center for Horticulture and Plantation. The meeting served to reaffirm and update the long-standing collaborative relationship between TFNet and BRIN, with discussions focusing on enhancing cooperation through joint work programmes planned for 2026, particularly in the areas of research, innovation, capacity building and knowledge exchange within the tropical fruits sector.



Both parties expressed their commitment to establishing a more structured and official mechanism to further formalise and strengthen the working relationship between TFNet and BRIN, including the possibility of developing a framework for future collaborative projects.

(RIGHT) - Mr. Salim also to paid a courtesy visit to the Director General's Office of Horticulture, Ministry of Agriculture, Indonesia, at the Ministry's office in Jakarta 4 February 2026.

He was received by Mr Hotman Fajar Simanjuntak, Director of Horticultural Product Processing and Marketing.

Both sides exchanged views on ongoing collaborations and explored future possibilities for jointly organised programmes.



International Tropical Fruits Network (TFNet)

(RIGHT) - A meeting was held between the International Tropical Fruits Network (TFNet) and Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) in Bogor, Indonesia on 6 February 2026, to explore potential collaboration in TFNet's upcoming programmes, particularly through the exchange of information, expertise, and technical support in areas of mutual interest related to the tropical fruit sector.



(LEFT) - The Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN) received a courtesy visit from Mr. Salim on 4 February 2026, to discuss issues pertinent to the tropical fruit trade and industry. The KADIN delegation was led by Mr. Christian Wanandi, Chairman of the Malaysia - Indonesia Bilateral Committee. Both sides discussed potential areas for future collaboration, such as capacity building and the development of a trade database.

(RIGHT) - While in Jakarta, Mr. Salim also paid a courtesy visit to Ms. Zuriana Ibrahim 4 February 2026, the Economic Official attached to the Permanent Mission of Malaysia to ASEAN at the Embassy of Malaysia in Jakarta, Indonesia.



During the meeting, both parties agreed to collaborate and support each other on matters related to trade and industry cooperation between Malaysia and Indonesia, particularly in the tropical fruits sector.

Strategic engagements with organizations and universities in Vietnam

(RIGHT) - A meeting was held at the Fruit and Vegetable Research Institute (FAVRI) on 21 April 2026 between the CEO of the International Tropical Fruits Network (TFNet), Muhamed Salim Mohd Ali, and Prof. Dr. Nguyen Hong Son, President of the Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences (VAAS), together with Dr. Nguyen Quoc Hung, Director General of FAVRI.



(LEFT) - The CEO of the International Tropical Fruits Network (TFNet), Muhamed Salim Mohd Ali, held a productive meeting with the Vietnam National University of Agriculture (VNUA) on 21 April 2026, where he was received by Mrs. Le Thi Bich Lien, Vice Director of the International Cooperation Office and Vice Director of the Centre for Foreign Languages and International Education. VNUA expressed interest in joining TFNet's youth program.

(RIGHT) - While in Vietnam, Mr. Salim also paid a courtesy call to H.E. Dato' Tan Yang Thai, Ambassador of Malaysia to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, at the Embassy of Malaysia in Hanoi on 20 April 2026.

The Embassy expressed its strong support for TFNet's initiatives and welcomed efforts to enhance cooperation between Malaysia and Vietnam in this important agricultural domain.



Field Visit to Hai Duong: Understanding Vietnam's Litchi Farming Model

TFNet CEO, Muhamed Salim Mohd Ali, was hosted by Director General of FAVRI, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nguyen Quoc Hung, along with accompanying officers, on a field visit to Hai Duong Province, widely regarded as the heart of litchi production in Vietnam.

Hai Duong is a key production hub, with approximately 9,000–10,000 hectares dedicated to litchi cultivation, driven largely by well-organized farmer cooperatives. The visit focused on operations managed by Amei Vietnam Cooperative, a farmer-led entity that works closely with export companies to access international markets.

The litchi production plot visited during the mission holds GlobalG.A.P. certification, a critical standard that enables exports to high-value markets such as Japan, Australia, the United States, and the European Union. This certification ensures compliance with stringent food safety, sustainability, and traceability requirements.

During the field visit, technical experts and farmers shared practical insights on orchard management, including methods to control tree height for easier harvesting, techniques to improve yield, and integrated approaches to pest and disease management. These practices reflect a strong combination of traditional knowledge and modern agricultural standards.

TFNet sees strong potential in replicating and adapting such models across its member countries and aims to facilitate further study visits for stakeholders interested in litchi cultivation and cooperative-based export systems.



Field Visit to Central Horticultural Experiment Station, Hirehalli, India

After attending the 11th Indian Horticultural Congress held from 6–9 November 2025, TFNet CEO Mr. Muhamed Salim bin Mohd Ali visited the Central Horticultural Experiment Station (CHES), Hirehalli, under the guidance of Dr. Ganesan Karunakaran of ICAR-IIHR.

The visit included discussions and field observations on dragon fruit, jackfruit, and other tropical fruit research plots. CHES Hirehalli serves as a key centre for developing improved varieties and production technologies for tropical and subtropical fruits. The team observed the dragon fruit test plots, part of India's Centre of Excellence on Kamalam (Dragon Fruit), and reviewed research efforts on varietal performance, agronomic practices, and value addition.

The visit provided valuable insights into India's tropical fruit research initiatives and opened opportunities for collaboration between TFNet and ICAR-IIHR in advancing sustainable tropical fruit development and innovation.



Meetings and activities in Malaysia

The International Tropical Fruits Network (TFNet) continues to strengthen its strategic engagement with national authorities in Malaysia following a courtesy visit by its Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Muhamed Salim bin Mohd Ali to the Office of the Director General, of the Department of Agriculture (DOA), Malaysia, YBhg. Dato' Nor Sam binti Alwi on 13 January 2026. The meeting served as an opportunity to reaffirm mutual commitment towards advancing sustainable development, innovation, and international positioning of Malaysia's tropical fruit sector.

During the meeting, both parties expressed strong support for closer collaboration, particularly in areas related to varietal protection, market development, and international cooperation.



The discussions encompassed initiatives concerning varietal protection, the development of geographical indications (GI), market access, capacity building, and international cooperation. This included efforts to renew industry engagement with previously established jackfruit market access arrangements for China and to support the responsible transfer of plant material to countries such as the Maldives.

The International Tropical Fruits Network (TFNet) Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Muhamed Salim bin Mohd Ali, paid a courtesy call on the Director General of the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA), Mr. Abdul Rashid bin Bahri on 20 August.



The International Tropical Fruits Network (TFNet) was invited to participate in a meeting with IFEMA Madrid, Qube Integrated Malaysia, and the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre (MITEC) to discuss a proposal for organizing an international fruit trade exhibition in Malaysia.

Courtesy visits to Embassies and High Commissions in Malaysia

(RIGHT) - The TFNet Secretariat led by CEO Muhamed Salim bin Mohd Ali, paid a courtesy visit to the Embassy of Peru in Kuala Lumpur on 22 July 2025. They met with His Excellency Ambassador Ricardo Morote and Deputy Head of Mission Carlos Castillo. The discussion extended beyond trade, encompassing potential collaboration in knowledge sharing programs, consultancy projects, and access to genetic resources.



(LEFT) - Mr. Salim also paid a courtesy visit to Mdm. Zainab H. Angovi Mrutu, Head of Chancery at the High Commission of Tanzania in Malaysia on 19 August 2025. Through TFNet, collaborative projects and initiatives can be developed to strengthen and diversify Tanzania's tropical fruit industry.

(RIGHT) - International Tropical Fruit Network (TFNet) Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Muhamed Salim bin Mohd Ali, paid a courtesy visit to the Embassy of Cuba in Malaysia on 19 August 2025 to explore potential partnerships in the tropical fruits sector. Mr. Salim met with Her Excellency Mdm. Yadira Ledesma Hernández, Ambassador of Cuba to Malaysia, the Philippines, and Brunei.



(LEFT) - Mr. Salim also paid a courtesy visit to H.E. Maria Angela A. Ponce, Ambassador of the Philippines to Malaysia. Also present at the meeting was Mr. Roussel Reyes, Consul General of the Philippines.

During the meeting, the Ambassador was briefed on TFNet's mandate and ongoing activities, particularly in the Philippines.



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