

PATSCO Newsletter



PATSCO senior team leader, Soren Moestrup, (right) and staff visiting one of the BSOs established by the project.

PATSCO I: A highly regarded tree seed project

The first phase of the Provision of Adequate Tree Seed Portfolios (PATSCO) project, PATSCO I, ended on March 31st, 2022. It has been a highly regarded tree seed project in Ethiopia. 'The project has been implemented effectively and efficiently, with overall positive interactions and collaborations with a broad range of stakeholders,' the reviewers of the project, who interviewed various stakeholders, wrote in their end report.

PATSCO I, which was implemented from May 2017 to March 2022, has achieved a lot in five years. 'Within a remarkably short period, the project has helped catalyse transformation of the formal tree seed sector in Ethiopia,' the reviewers said in their report

Seed orchards established



A *Hagenia abyssinica* BSO established by PATSCO.

PATSCO has so far established 31 seed orchards of priority indigenous and exotic tree species of 14 species, consisting of 26 Breeding Seed Orchards (BSOs) and five Seedling Seed Orchards (SSOs), which will serve as sources of high-quality seeds.

'One of the major achievements, I could say "the flagship of PATSCO", is the establishment of seed orchards,' said Senior Team Leader of PATSCO, Soren Moestrup. 'We have established more than 30 BSOs together with our main collaborators. It is a visible major achievement. It is a new thing for Ethiopia, a little bit advanced, and a good approach combining tree breeding and seed procurement at the same time.'

Deputy Director-General Kedir Nino of Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise said, 'PATSCO's intervention with regard to establishing BSOs has changed local thinking to a technologically advanced one. It can hugely transform the Enterprise and ensure its survival.'

Tree seed centers strengthened

PATSPO played a key role in strengthening tree seed centers in Addis Ababa and four regions of Ethiopia. It provided equipment and furniture to the seed laboratories, maintained cold rooms and renovated the seed extraction units. It also trained the staff of the centers. After testifying the crucial support generously provided by the project to the seed centers, Alamirew Workie, a laboratory technician working at the Bahir Dar Tree Seed Center said, 'PATSPo is a mother to tree seed centers.'



Alamirew Workie working in the tree seed laboratory in Bahir Dar.

National Tree Seed Network established

PATSPO has established a national Tree Seed Network in collaboration with Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission to enhance collaboration and coordination among all stakeholders in the tree seed sector, including the private sector. PATSPO financially supported the building of the tree-seed network website. The network comprises a wide range of stakeholders sharing information on tree seed matters.

PATSPO supported the Commission in preparing a tree-seed proclamation and a tree-seed policy as the legal foundation to support the collection of high-quality tree seeds in Ethiopia.



During one of the several trainings PATSPO gave to staff of its major stakeholders.

Seed sources described and registered, atlas repared, app designed

More than 200 tree seed sources were described and registered across the country with the support of the project. A website has been built to provide information on the registered seed sources. Preparations of the tree species distribution atlas for Ethiopia that covers 150 species is also another key achievement of PATSPO I. And an online application on 'What trees to plant where' (habitat distribution map) has been designed for use by the seed sector in Ethiopia.

Support provided to other projects

The PATSPO project helped the Gullele Botanical Garden expand its nursery and helped the Garden establish conservation stands of 14 endangered endemic plant species. It also supported projects like the JUPRET, a project that was aimed at conserving the genetic resources of *Juniperus procera* in Ethiopia.

Various trainings provided



Farmers' training is believed to help improve the quality of seed

The project provided various trainings and built the capacity of people working in the formal and informal tree seed sectors. PATSPO trained farmers' trainers and together with its major stakeholders organized tree seed collection and handling training to nearly 1500 farmers. It also provided seed collection tools to 38 farmer seed collector groups.

Publications prepared and published

PATSPO has also published various helpful publications. For example, farmers have testified the training posters and manual prepared by the project are very useful. There were also several other important publications that will improve the knowledge and skill of various professional staff in the areas of seed collection and handling, BSO establishment and others. All the publications are available for free download on the PATSPO website.



Tools provided to farmer seed collector groups by PATSPO.

PATSCO II starts 1 April 2022

All PATSCO stakeholders had agreed on the need for a second phase, which is expected to be implemented for four years from 2022 to 2025. 'A second phase is important because projects working with tree breeding and seed procurement are long term projects,' said Soren Moestrup. 'We [University of Copenhagen and ICRAF] have had similar projects in 25 countries around the world. And the countries where such a project has been most successful are the countries where there has been project collaboration for 8-to-10 years.'



A seed extraction unit renovated by PATSCO.



A cold room repaired by PATSCO.

More responsibility to be given to the owners

PATSCO II will be giving increasing responsibility to collaborating partners so that they will be able to assume full technical and financial responsibility for implementation and continuation of PATSCO II's activities beyond 2025 and ensure sustainability. Moestrup said, 'PATSCO is now quite well-established and our partners know who we are, what we work with and how we operate. The partner institutions are interested in the work and now there is a need for more direct involvement and taking over of project activities by them.'

A greater attention will also be given to increase engagement and involvement of the informal tree seed sector, the private seed dealers, relevant farmer groups and women engaged in tree seed procurement.



A *Cordia africana* BSO established by PATSCO.

Major activities to be implemented during PATSCO II

The establishment of many more BSOs will be one of the major activities of the second phase of the project. PATSCO II will increase the number of species in the BSO/SSO program to cover additional priority tree species. It will also be identifying and registering additional existing tree seed sources. PATSCO II will prioritize and undertake gene resource conservation. The project will continue to support and strengthen the Tree Seed Network. It will provide further training and capacity building to various stakeholders of the tree seed sector including the Regional Tree Seed Centers (RTSCs), relevant farmer groups and private seed dealers, with an increased emphasis on training women.



BSOs of *Grevillea robusta* (left) and *Moringa stenopetala* (right) established by PATSCO.