# APRICOT 2025 Malaysia Fellowship Report

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**Introduction**

This APRICOT 2025 was my first time attending an APRICOT workshop (as well as the first time attending one out of the country on my own). It was also the first time I have earned a fellowship. By a happy co-incidence I was able to make the trip with another fellow NOG member and friend— Tuwan Jaleel—who had also managed to earn the fellowship. It was unfortunate for both of us that several reasons prevented us from joining the conference, but receiving the fellowship was a happy opportunity still.

After co-ordinating flight with the help of John and despite several mishaps (to do with AirAsia's management), we both were able to leave from Colombo on the 18th of February and land in Kuala Lumpur without a hitch.

**KINDNS workshop**

Since my organization is a ccTLD operator, this was an obvious selection for a workshop as we were looking to modernize and bring our ccTLD infrastructure up-to-date.

Two of the instructors for this workshop; Philip and Champika were well known to me. Both of them had attended previous LKNOG/SANOG workshops in Sri Lanka, and Champika himself had visited and assisted our organization several times.

One of the best parts about this workshop was the extensive operational experience by both Philip and Champika. A number of burning questions that I had about DNS and several misconceptions were answered. In addition to this, Philip himself brought up good practices such as version-control and utilizing multiple software stacks; all things that I had intentions of doing before, but didn't have the necessary confidence/backing to convince my organization to do so.

It was also a great opportunity for me to help my peers from other DNS operators that were present in the workshop. It was very fulfilling to help my fellows from Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives, Thailand, and Indonesia. We were also able to exchange experience on our operations on a technical level.

Overall this workshop did give me a lot to learn from and I have already started in implementing and teaching my team back at LK about everything I've learned here.

**Social-skills workshop**

As someone that is very technical, workshops such as these tend to annoy me to no end. It was a pleasant surprise then that this workshop was enjoyable and engaging to me.

As someone with an interest in linguistics, the first part by William was interesting, the stand-up performances by the students were entertaining. The next part by Terry was interesting and engaging as someone who has an interest in psychology. A lot of the concepts were things I had already gone through, but it was interesting to see the instructor ask the students for their opinions and discuss these, the points brought up by the students themselves helped make this a more engaging session.

The next part exposed some flaws in myself, especially my tunnel-vision and inability to come down to the level of others (in my defense "Explain AI to a 5-year-old" isn't a simple task). Aftab rightly pointed these flaws. I admit that I did not lead my team well.

The last part was a fun exercise in the fashion of internet governance debates. We had a lot of laughs and some interesting back-and-forth between the teams as we tried to defend our given positions. It was a nice experience of how governance would look like. Robbie and Aftab explained to us that despite being engineers, that we had to have some interest in the internet governance as it affected us; a position I never considered.

Overall this workshop was a fun and experience that taught me a lot and changed some biases and flaws I had in my thinking. I would look forward to such a workshop again.

**On networking and community**

Perhaps the best part of this fellowship is the connections I made with all my fellows and other attendees. The DNS workshop itself helped me make connections with fellow ccTLD operators like Ismail of Maldives, Tshering of Bhutan, Aris of Indonesia and Al-Mahmud of Bangladesh. We were able to talk and discuss about our shared problems and exchange on our experiences and become friends.

I had the additional chance of making connections with others that didn't necessarily belong on the same path as I was, but it was interesting to hear their experiences. It was also a nice experience for my expat soul to have met with and talked with people from so many points of the Earth, my multi-lingual nature seemed to have made this somewhat easier.

The social dinner at the end was a nice touch as it allowed us to interact in a way that was not technical or occupational, and wind down and get to know each other as people. I'd say this made our connections more close, and also made it a memorable afternoon.

**Thanks**

I'd first like to thank APNIC and the APRICOT conference, both for facilitating this meetup and providing people such as me with a fellowship to attend what I otherwise wouldn't be able to. My thanks to the NSRC for financing and facilitating the workshops that I attended and have attended prior.

Thank you to the instructors of the KINDNS workshop: Philip Paeps, Champika Wijethunga, and Nyamkhand Buluukhuurn for making the DNS workshop a great learning experience. Thank you to the instructors of the Social-skills workshop: William Stockbridge, Terry Sweetser, Aftab Siddiqui, and Robbie Mitchell for an engaging and fun learning experience.

My gratitude to John Rattray as fellowship support for being very helpful and understanding, particularly in assisting me as a first time solo traveler and ensuring that Tuwan and I would have no problems with returning home on our last day.

Thank you all for making my first APRICOT experience a memorable learning, and socializing experience.