

## GlobalSeaweedSTAR Capacity Building Fund Completion Report

### Awardee Details

<b>Grant reference ID</b>	GSS/CBF/018
<b>Full name/title</b>	Zae-Zae A. Aguinaldo
<b>Position held</b>	University Researcher II
<b>Organisation</b>	Marine Environment Resources Foundation, Inc (MERF), The Marine Science Institute



### Details of Capacity-Building Activity

<b>Name of activity</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> Conference for the International Society for Applied Phycology (ISAP 2021)
<b>Date held</b>	May 13 – 14 August 2021
<b>Organiser/provider</b>	International Society for Applied Phycology

### Biography

I am Zae-Zae A. Aguinaldo, and I currently work as a Science Research Specialist II at The Marine Science Institute in the University of the Philippines-Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines. I am also an MS student at the same institute taking the Marine Biotechnology track. I've been working as an RA for six years now, and I have been involved in projects that cover molecular systematics, genomics, and metagenomics of marine organisms. With these, I published five (5) peer-

reviewed journal articles and was able to present them in two scientific conferences, most of which are related to seaweed phylogenetics. I am planning to do Ph.D. studies once I finish my MS, although I am not yet sure which field to pursue. I am confident to say that I learned not just the morphology and taxonomy of macroalgae in my six years of being an RA. There's more to their genetic information that mainly has impacted their phenotypes, aside from environmental factors, and that's where my interests come in.

## **Report on Capacity-Building Activity**

I attended the 7th Conference for the International Society for Applied Phycology which ran from May 14 to August 13, 2021. The conference was hosted by Japan and was conducted on a virtual platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event also showcased oral and poster presentations, plenaries from pioneers of the seaweed research and industry, training and opportunities for researchers, aspiring students, and attendees involved in the field of phycology. I participated in the conference through an oral presentation under the category of Seaweed Ecology. The study I presented briefly talks about recognizing and discovering known and new haplotypes from wild samples of two economically important species of red algae, *Kappaphycus alvarezii* and *Kappaphycus striatus*, by using means of molecular markers. Being a participant and an audience during the conference helped me gain a lot of knowledge that is limited to what I know, especially of macroalgae. I was also able to acquire and discover many interesting techniques and approaches done by several studies that I could share with my present institute, especially to some of the labs that perform similar protocols in culturing red algae that could later be applied in improving the Philippines' seaweed industry. I think that this conference has expanded my professional network and other researcher's networks that could allow future collaborations between different organizations, institutes, and countries with similar interests in the field of phycology.

I am looking forward to attending such conferences in the future, and I am excited to learn more and share the recent studies and discoveries I have made that could help the seaweed industry. Lastly, I am grateful to the event organizers and executive committee for hosting such a meaningful event. I also thank GlobalSeaweedSTAR for granting me and the other awardees this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to attend the conference.