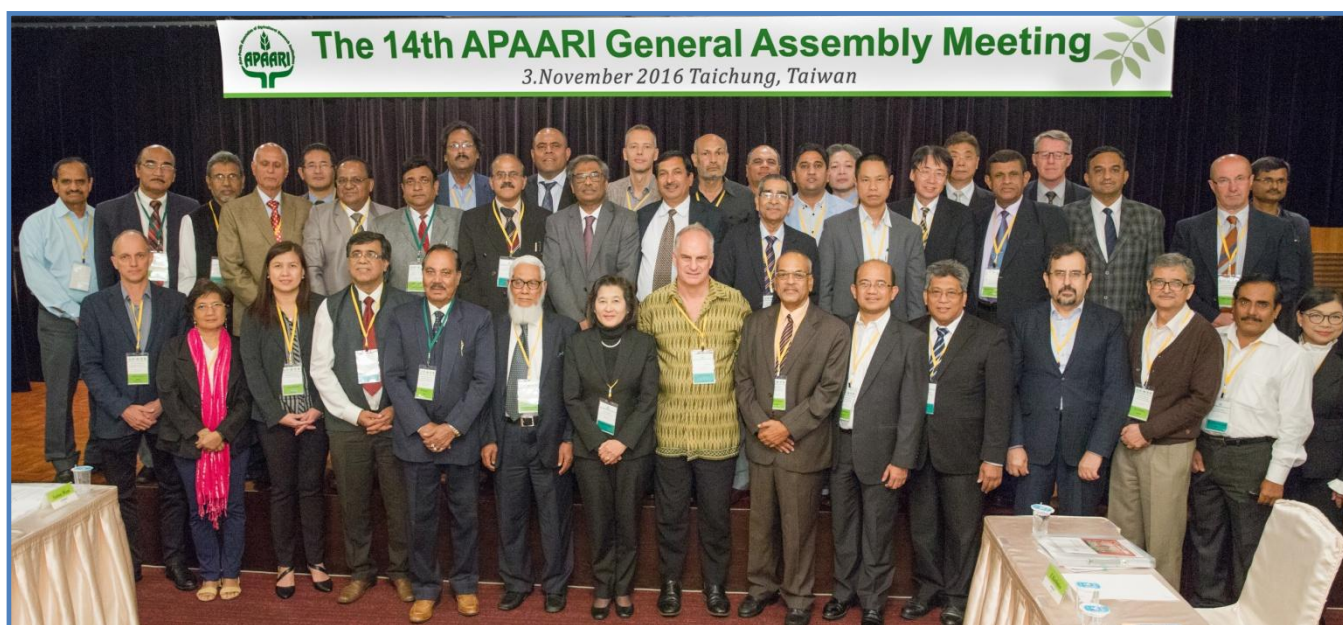




Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI)



Progress Report July – December 2016

C/o Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
FAO Annex Building, 202/1, Larn Luang Road
Pomprab Sattrupai
Bangkok 10110, Thailand

Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI)

Progress Report

(July – December 2016)

The Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) is a unique voluntary, membership-based, self-mandated, apolitical and multi-stakeholder organization in the Asia-Pacific region. It has its headquarters at the FAO Annex building, Larn Luang Road, Pomprab District, in Bangkok. It promotes and strengthens agriculture and agri-food research and innovation systems through partnerships and collaboration, capacity development and advocacy for sustainable agricultural development in the region. APAARI has been active in fostering the overall agricultural development by addressing the concerns of hunger, poverty, environmental degradation and sustainability of agricultural production. It has completed 25 years of its existence with an impressive record of achievements. For more details, please visit: www.apaari.org

During July- December 2016, APAARI organized/co-organized several activities comprising meetings, workshops and conferences. These included: i) Expert Consultation on Best Practices in Agri-food Innovations in Asia and the Pacific; ii) APAARI Executive Committee Meeting; iii) APAARI 14th General Assembly Meeting (GAM); iv) XIV APARIS Steering Committee Meeting; v) XVIII APCoAB Steering Committee Meeting; and vi) Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS); and vii) Advanced Course for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the Agri-food Industry. It also implemented the CRP Dryland Cereals Scholarship Programme, and Knowledge Management Programme.

A brief account of the accomplishments is presented here for information and reference of APAARI members, partners and other stakeholders.

I. Meeting/Workshops/Conferences

1. Expert Consultation on Best Practices in Agri-food Innovations in Asia and the Pacific

The Expert Consultation on Best Practices in Agri-food Innovations was organized jointly by the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI); the Council of Agriculture (COA), Chinese Taipei (Taiwan); Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR); the World Vegetable Center (AVRDC), Taiwan; and the Asian Farmers Association (AFA), the Philippines, at Taichung City, Taiwan on 1-3, November 2016. It was attended by 87 participants from 14 countries including researchers, policy makers, innovative farmers and representatives of various organizations including national agricultural research institutions (NARIs) and organizations (NAROs), Higher Education Institutions, the private sector, civil society organizations (CSOs) – non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and farmers' organizations (FOs), women and youth representatives, CG Centers, and International Agricultural Research Centres. The programme was planned in six technical sessions besides inaugural and concluding sessions. It provided a platform to: (i) have in-depth discussions; (ii) develop a road map to catalyze policy/decision makers; (iii)

sensitize stakeholders in agri-food research and innovations; and (iv) embrace successful agri-food innovations for upscaling and outscaling in Asia and the Pacific.

On 2 November, a field trip to the genebank and demonstration garden of AVRDC and the Taiwan Orchid Plantation was carried out for further comprehending the international cooperation and development of Taiwan agricultural industry. It was a fruitful and joyful experience where participants from different countries of the Asia-Pacific region could exchange information and knowledge, build up international network on agricultural issues, and strengthen collaboration with each other.

Major Recommendations

Models and Case Studies of Agri-food Innovations

- Partnerships and alliances with new actors are essential in contributing to innovative solutions to achieve scale out.
- There is an urgent need for innovation platforms to share knowledge between various actors, including industry, policy makers and researchers.
- The development of good agricultural practices, which comes under the incremental innovation, will address pesticide residue and food safety concerns.

Partnership for Agri-food Innovations

- There is a need to develop a roadmap to document innovative partnerships between funding agencies, researchers and the end users of research in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Incubation centres should be developed for adoption of good agricultural practices and to promote and upscale local agri-food innovations in a public-private partnership mode.
- Market intelligence should be ensured to strategize production and marketing, and to develop a database on agri-food market chains and post-harvest losses in Asia-Pacific.
- There is a strong need for participation of cooperative societies and NGOs in technology dissemination, and to have fair distribution of profits among all actors in the value chain.

Capacity Development in Agri-food Innovations

- The capacity in agri-food innovations area will need to be built individually to work collectively, must be specific to the time in which it is developed and there should not be any risk in order to safeguard the interest of farmers, as well as enhance their economy.
- Capacity development for innovation should be based on a long-term strategy with plans covering three interconnected dimensions: individual and organizational innovation capacity, and the creation of an enabling environment.
- There is a need to develop platforms for assessment, training, measuring the impacts of different efforts and interventions, and for enabling collective actions and investments in development of capacity for agri-food innovations.
- There is a need for political support in capacity building for sustainable and new concepts and institutional innovations with the emphasis on institutional change and skill development.

Technology Based Agri-food Innovations

- There is a greater need for the collection, documentation, maintenance, and application of information related to all processes in the supply chain.
- Concerted efforts are needed to develop public-private partnership to catalyze private investment in scaling up of agri-food innovations through the development of a business

model by which the enterprise delivers value to customers, entices customers to pay for value, and converts those payments to profit.

- Special efforts need to be made on the process of developing a strategy, which should be open, specific to the time in which it is developed, and adaptive. It should evolve over time, incorporate learning, and allow adjustments to the desired course if required.
- Greater thrust needs to be given on the development of new technologies to help improve the productivity of the farming systems, while decreasing their impact on the environment. These technologies should be contextual in nature, location and season specific, minimizing post harvest and storage losses which will add income to farmers and in value chain.
- There is an urgent need for ICT-led agriculture, training of farmers in agricultural extension, biosafety and quarantine, conservation and profiling of indigenous breeds, strengthening of local institutions and the capacity to maintain and use biodiversity at local levels, product certification and women's empowerment.

Knowledge Management on Agri-food Innovations

- Concerted efforts are required for collection, customization, and dissemination of innovative knowledge and information in order to convert personal knowledge into organizational knowledge and corporate information. To disseminate information there is a need for credible messages in national and simplified language. , Technical agri-food associations and extension agencies can be used for transferring knowledge to different stakeholders.
- Focused attention is required for managing knowledge on technical innovations in the production process, postharvest handling, product processing, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, climate change, as well as non-technical innovations in marketing, institutional development and capacity building.
- There is an urgent need for more innovations for technology management, by establishing industry clusters, strengthening agribusiness assistance, enhancing agro-tech marketing, assisting finance in the capital markets, training human resources and integrating industrialization platforms.
- Concerted efforts are needed to organize a series of workshops, which should include skills for partnering and engagement, project logic and theory of change; monitoring evaluation and learning tools for adaptive and managed action and learning, the theory and practice of multi-stakeholder processes, and innovation platforms.
- To promote long-term growth and the jobs of tomorrow, governments must ensure that framework conditions, institutions and policies facilitate business investment in knowledge-based capitals. Therefore, investment is needed in non-physical assets, such as R&D, data, software, patents, new business models, organizational processes, firm-specific skills and designs, especially for family farmers, service providers, traders and processors, researchers, policy-makers, etc., in developing their capacity to innovate. Special attention to youth and women is important.

Policy Oriented Agri-food Innovations

- There is urgent need for policy of agricultural transformation to revitalize rural community and to increase rural income by encouraging collective actions of multi-sectoral stakeholders by which individual farms shift from highly diversified, subsistence-oriented production towards more specialized production – product- or market-oriented agriculture.
- The poor and less privileged in the country that do not have capacity to pay, should not be neglected. There should be fair treatment and equal opportunities for all people. One of

the causes of disunity in a country is when the country neglects a section of its population. This can easily be avoided if a national policy is put in place to address all these issues.

- Special efforts need to be made on facilitating cooperation, networking activities and partnerships among different innovation actors working in the same field – universities, research and technological centers, SMEs and large firms – to achieve synergies and technology transfer.
- Focused attention is needed to provide the necessary financial services and training that will help farmers increase their crop yields, improve income and food security for their families and communities, and create jobs for their neighbors.
- Concerted efforts are needed to develop indicators and tools to evaluate the performance of agricultural innovation systems in general, and innovation policy regularly, taking longer term effects into account, possibly in collaboration with other countries and organizations.
- APAARI should play a major role in sharing knowledge of agri-food innovations across these countries in the Asia-Pacific region.
- There is an urgent need to share databases between public and private organizations for upscaling and outscaling technologies in a public-private-partnership mode, keeping in view the interest of smallholder farmers.

2. APAARI Executive Committee Meeting

APAARI Executive Committee (EC) Meeting was held at Bangkok on 8 September 2016.

The key highlights of the EC meeting are given below:

- i) Audit Report and Audited Financial Statements as audited by APAARI External Auditor for financial year 2015 was endorsed.
- ii) The EC approved the Strategic Plan 2017-2022 subject to endorsement by GAM in November 2016.
- iii) The EC approved the proposal to have two seat – one for AIRCA and another for the higher education sector - for final endorsement by the General Assembly in November 2016.
- iv) The rejuvenation and strengthening of the APCoAB programme focusing on advanced biotechnology was approved by the EC.
- v) The EC approved the recruitment additional positions and also existing vacant positions and use of USD 75,000 per annum for two-year period, beginning in early 2017 to help APAARI grow and the secretariat strengthened to deliver.

2. APAARI 14th General Assembly Meeting (GAM)

The 14th General Assembly Meeting (GAM) of APAARI was hosted by the Council of Agriculture (COA), Taiwan, and held in Taichung, Taiwan, on 3 November 2016. Dr Waraporn Prompoj, Deputy Director General, Department of Agriculture (DOA), Thailand, representing Dr Suwit Chaikiattiyos, Chairman, APAARI, and Director General, DOA, Thailand, chaired the meeting. Dr Sharif Haron, Director General, Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, was requested to act as the Vice-Chair. Forty six members, partners, special invitees and APAARI staff and consultants participated in the meeting.

Dr Waraporn Prompoj appreciated that over the past two years, APAARI has made concerted efforts for developing the APAARI Vision 2030 and Strategic Plan 2017-22. They provide

overall guidance to strengthening of agri-food research and innovation systems in the region. She urged APAARI to adopt transformative changes in important areas of governance and its development; especially strengthening its capacity and resources in areas of collaboration, knowledge brokering, capacity building and advocacy. She expressed her hope that the GAM participants will deliberate on various agenda items, including the APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-22 and the collective deliberations and contributions will result in positive outcomes of the meeting. She thanked COA, Taiwan for hosting the meeting in the beautiful city of Taichung, Taiwan. She also thanked all the members for their support and contribution in bringing APAARI at this high pedestal.

The key decisions taken by the meeting, which have far reaching progressing implications for the growth and accomplishments of APAARI, are presented below while the detailed proceedings are available on [www.apaari.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/GAM Proceedings 2-1-2017.pdf](http://www.apaari.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/GAM_Proceedings_2-1-2017.pdf)

- The audit report and audited financial statements for 2014 and 2015 were endorsed. Also endorsed was the audit report and financial statements for the interim period January – September 2016.
- Advanced and refined version of the “APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Pathways to strengthened agri-food research and innovations in Asia and the Pacific”, was unanimously endorsed after systematic deliberation and enriched consultations.
- By considering implications arising of the Strategic Plan, the APAARI Executive Committee and the APAARI Secretariat have been directed to work and progress on the changes that are necessary in the areas of APAARI governance and development.
- As an immediate implication arising through implementation of the APAARI strategy, an enhanced resource (human and financial) mobilization plan was approved for the biennium 2017-18.
- The necessary change to Article 10 of APAARI constitution on the composition of APAARI Executive Committee was approved, providing for two additional members on the Committee representing: i) the Association of International Research Centers for Development in Agriculture (AIRCA) and ii) the Higher Education Sector (Universities).
- As an urgency for immediate replacement of Dr Raghunath Ghodake, who would be concluding his assignment effective as of 31 December 2016 due to his ill-health, a decision was made to have an interim Executive Secretary to manage APAARI programmes/activities.

- **New Executive Committee for the Biennium 2017-2018**

Chair:	PARC, Pakistan
Vice-Chair:	NARI, Papua New Guinea
Members:	DOA, Thailand
	COA, Taiwan
	NARC, Nepal
	MAF, Western Samoa
	The World Vegetable Center (AIRCA)
	IAUA, India (Higher Education Sector)
	Executive Secretary, GFAR
	CGIAR (to be nominated by CGIAR Systems Office)

Farmers Associations (to be decided by EC)
NGO (to be decided by EC)
Private Sector (to be decided by EC)

3. XIV APARIS Steering Committee Meeting

The XIV Steering Committee (SC) meeting of the APARIS programme for 2016 was held at in Taichung, Taiwan on 31 October 2016. Dr Raghunath Ghodake, Executive Secretary, APAARI, welcomed the participants. Dr Waraporn Prompoi, Deputy Director General, Department of Agriculture (DOA), Thailand, chaired the meeting on behalf of Dr Suwit Chakiattiyos, Director General, DOA, Thailand. Dr Andrew Campbell, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Australia, was the Vice-Chair. Dr S G Abbas, Consultant, represented Ms Martina Spisiakova, Knowledge Management Coordinator, APARIS, and presented the APARIS progress report. He emphasized that there was a need for improved communication and exchange of knowledge on agriculture and natural resources, improving the efficiency of the research-extension interface and keeping abreast with the continuous changes in technologies. The chairperson showed her satisfaction on current and past achievements of APARIS, as well as on the work plan for 2017. The following main recommendations emerged during the SC Meeting:

- Under the APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-2022, APARIS should bring its members, partners and other stakeholders closer together to address priority needs of the agri-food system through strengthening of agri-food research and innovation systems.
- Knowledge management should become an overarching strategy of APARIS.
- Facebook is getting more popular in the social media thus, APARIS should focus on increasing its number of followers on Facebook.
- Focal points from the NARS should increasingly share information with APAARI for further dissemination.
- CEO, ACIAR, assured continued support for the APARIS future work plan and activities.

4. XVIII APCoAB Steering Committee Meeting

The XVIII Steering Committee (SC) Meeting of Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology (APCoAB) was held on 31 October 2016 in Taichung, Taiwan. The meeting was attended by 11 participants, comprising SC members, their representatives, special invitees and observers. APAARI Chairman, Dr Suwit Chakiattiyos, Director General (DG), Department of Agriculture (DOA), Thailand, was represented by Dr Waraporn Prompoj, DDG, DOA, while Vice-Chair, Dr Chun-yen Chen, DG, International Affairs, Council of Agriculture (COA), Taiwan, was represented by Ms Rose, Dong-chong Hsiou, DDG, Department of International Affairs, COA. Other participants included Dr Reynaldo V. Ebor, Acting Executive Director, Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD), Philippines; Prof Andrew Campbell, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Australia, and Dr Raghunath Ghodake, Executive Secretary, APAARI. Dr Jawahir Karihaloo, Sr. Consultant, APAARI, representing APCoAB Coordinator, presented a report on background, progress and proposed future programmes of APCoAB. He also introduced the outline of proposed extension of APAARI-COA collaborative programme for the period 2017-2020. Prof Andrew Campbell, Dr. Waraporn Prompoj and Ms Rose, Dong-chong Hsiou, made important observations and suggestions on APCoAB

programme, progress and future plan. As a result of in-depth discussions, the following major recommendations emerged:

- The outputs of APCoAB workshop on communication strategies to be utilized by APCoAB and APAARI member organizations to develop future strategies for public engagement and debate on agricultural biotechnology.
- Appointment of new APCoAB Coordinator to be taken up on priority. Notification to be sent to all member organizations so that they could nominate candidates for the post.
- APCoAB Progress Report for 2016 to be submitted to COA by the end of December 2016.
- COA has agreed to continue funding support to APCoAB. New proposal for the next phase of APAARI-COA (2017-2020) collaborative programme based on newly developed APAARI Strategic Plan to be submitted soon. Decision on the requested enhancement of funding support shall be taken by COA after a review of the proposal.
- Activities for 2017 to be initiated soon after the new Coordinator joins. It is expected that larger number of activities shall be taken up during this year since there would be some additional savings available due to absence of APCoAB Coordinator during 2015.
- ACIAR-FAO project on regional consultation meetings on biotechnology is presently under discussion and APCoAB will also be involved in its implementation.

II. Activities Undertaken

1. Developing APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-2022

The APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-2022 was developed. It delivers the key pathways to strengthen agri-food research and innovation systems (AFRIS), in order to develop agri-food systems and to bring about sustainable agricultural development in Asia and the Pacific. These developments are considered fundamental requirement in the post-2015 development agenda and in realization of the sustainable development goals by 2030 in the Asia- Pacific Region.

Based on the framework provided by the APAARI Vision 2030, the Strategic Plan has been designed by adopting an inclusive and structured process, comprising i) inception deliberations and conceptualization; ii) online and e-consultations on the challenges, opportunities and needs for interventions; iii) advanced face-to-face consultation on articulation of strategies and activities; and iv) a number of consultative interactions, seeking suggestions and interventions by the APAARI members, the agri-food research and innovations systems, and their partners and primary stakeholders. The purposefully designed Task Team, consisting of APAARI staff and selected consultants, steered the articulation and construction of the Strategic Plan that provides broad strategic elements and also gives directional guidance in terms of specific strategies and actions for implementation through biennial operational plans. The Strategic Plan has been enriched and approved through the statutory processes of the APAARI Executive Committee Meeting on 8 September 2016 and the 14th APAARI General Assembly Meeting of 3 November 2016.

The Strategic Plan directs APAARI, its partners and other stakeholders to focus on four main themes and their respective outcomes and to contribute to the development of agri-food systems (AFS) in the Asia-Pacific region. These themes are: i) Mobilization, management and use of natural resources for sustainability; ii) Management of risks and uncertainties; iii) Inclusive development and integration of value chains targeted at benefiting smallholders;

and iv) Analysis, strengthening and formulation of public policies and overarching regulatory frameworks in support of the transformation and development of AFS.

The main implementation focus areas of APAARI and its partners, termed as APAARI programmes are: i) Knowledge management, ii) Partnership and networking, iii) Capacity building, and iv) Advocacy and two cross-cutting areas of i) Women and youth, and ii) Foresight and visioning. Each of these programmes and cross-cutting areas are adequately enriched with key strategies, specific strategies and indicative activities that can be pursued as both guidance and directions in implementing the Strategic Plan through subsequent biennial operational plans.

The APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-22 is a starting point for many subsequent actions of APAARI in delivering on its Vision 2030 and sustainable agricultural development which will contribute to the realization of the sustainable development goals. Successful implementation of the Strategic Plan will depend on effective partnership and cooperation between APAARI, agri-food research and innovation organizations, and primary stakeholders as identified in the Plan. .

In successfully developing the Strategic Plan 2017-2022 and the APAARI Vision 2030, APAARI has realized a watershed accomplishment in strategically addressing the post-2015 development agenda towards 2030.

2. Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS): Advanced Course for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the Agri-food Industry

APAARI jointly with COA and Asia Productivity Organization (APO) organized a Training Course on Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS): Advanced Course for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the Agri-food Industry, from 3 to 7 October 2016 in Taipei. Six participants from five countries, namely: Lao PDR, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, , and Thailand, were sponsored by APAARI. Food safety that has become a global issue as contaminated food causes widespread health problems with serious implications for families as well as public healthcare systems. It also causes reduced workforce productivity. Both developed and developing countries share concerns over food safety as international food trade and cross-border movements of people increase.

The training course comprised lectures on overview of food safety regulation, various national food regulatory systems, approaches and project plans for FSMS, case studies and assessment of FSMS. Site visits to food manufacturing and processing facilities were also organized. All the participants felt that the lectures, group activities and discussion were immensely useful in enhancing their knowledge for implementing the modern FSMS.

3. Implementation of CRP Dryland Cereals Scholarship Programme

Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between APAARI and ICRISAT for a collaborative CGIAR Research Program (CRP), the Dryland Cereals Scholarship Program was implemented. The objective of the program is to: i) develop a new cadre of scientists with core competencies, knowledge and experience in advanced science and technologies that address productivity and quality enhancements, post-harvest value and policy

interventions for the dryland cereals; ii) encourage and develop excellence in fundamental and practical research capabilities of women and early-career scientists in developing countries to address global challenges in agriculture, with a focus on dryland cereals, and iii) strengthen and enhance human resource capacities of national agricultural research institutions in the developing countries in Asia.

Six candidates from Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, Sri P.V.N. Telangana State University for Veterinary, Animal, Fishery Sciences. Hyderabad; Field Crops Research & Development Institute, Mahailuppallama, Sri Lanka; Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University, China; and B.A. College of Agriculture, Anand Agricultural University, Anand, are pursuing their Ph.D. research work under this collaborative programme.

As per the Letters of Agreements between APAARI and the respective universities and institutions, the total allocated scholarship grant was USD 150,000 which was subsequently reduced to 94, 212 out of which USD 64,212 is allocated for scholarship of these six candidates. Out of this allocated amount, USD 50, 000 has been disbursed and the remaining amount of USD 14, 212 will be disbursed in January 2017. The CRP-DC Programme will now be closed and the liquidation statement will be submitted to ICRISAT by 31 January 2017.

4. Knowledge Management Programme

APAARI website

The APAARI website has been updated with new and more diverse contents to reflect the changes in APAARI's strategic direction and the revamping of APAARI's KM programme. The home page has been regularly updated with the latest news and publications, upcoming events, and network news. The section 'About APAARI' was updated with new information regarding the APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-2022. A new improved and user-friendly website is being developed in 2017.

i) APAARI Web Space

The APAARI website is maintained under Wordpress content management system and hosted on a server with technical specification listed below:

Custom Dedicated Server - apaari.org
OS : Linux CentOS 64-Bit
CPU : Intel® Core™ i5 - 4 cores
RAM : 4 GB
Storage: 2 x 300 GB hard drives
Bandwidth: 10 TB per month
Service:- FULLY Managed

ii) APAARI Website Usage Statistics






















Month	Unique Visitors	Number of Visits	Pages	Hits
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Jul-16	3,275	7,560	279,080	347,151
Aug-16	8,997	13,578	136,105	207,115
Sep-16	6,502	11,288	185,882	293,097
Oct-16	6,551	11,068	141,150	260,158
Nov-16	8,836	17,664	170,740	283,659
Dec-16	10,856	21,971	269,814	365,820
Total	75,457	145,617	1,884,234	2,903,541

Source: Awstats apaari.org web panel

iii) Database Platforms

The APAARI website is currently running seven MySQL databases on its server as shown in the figure below:

Current Databases			
<input type="text" value="Search"/>	<input type="button" value="Go"/>		
Database	Size	Privileged Users	Actions
apaario_apaariweb	2.24 MB	apaario_apusr 	 Rename  Delete
apaario_aparis	1.02 MB	apaario_apusr 	 Rename  Delete
apaario_ard	0.75 MB	apaario_ard 	 Rename  Delete
apaario_contacts	0.68 MB	apaario_contact 	 Rename  Delete
apaario_db	0.68 MB	apaario_db 	 Rename  Delete
apaario_sitenew	54.98 MB	apaario_apusr 	 Rename  Delete
apaario_wrdp1	0.72 MB	apaario_wrdp1 	 Rename  Delete

APAARI social media

In addition to the APAARI's website, APAARI's existing Facebook link has been renamed to 'APAARI Community' to enable faster search by users. Efforts have been made to follow and connect with Facebook accounts of APAARI members and partners. The number of 'likes' have been growing, though the tool needs to be systematically monitored in terms of its followers, users and the number of downloads of the content. As of 31 December 2016, APAARI Facebook page had 149 likes, which increased by 71 per cent since June 2016. Thirty-five posts were published between 1 July and 31 December 2016, which more than doubled since June 2016.

APAARI Twitter name has also been changed to enable users to find APAARI faster. Information from events e.g. GCARD 3, as well as articles posted on Facebook, have been promoted through Twitter to raise awareness of what is happening in the agri-food research and innovation systems. As of 31 December 2016, APAARI Twitter page had 39 followers, which doubled since June 2016. APAARI has been following 44 institutions. Twenty posts were tweeted between 1 July and 31 December 2016.

APAARI Blog to share short articles from the events has been created, though it still needs to be promoted among the members and partners as a tool that allows users to comment on the content.

APCoAB website

Following the Executive Committee (EC) meeting in September 2016, APAARI made major changes to the APCoAB website where there was inactivity since the programme coordinator left at the end of 2015. The website has been updated with new content related to biotechnology, including latest news and articles

Knowledge partnership

The partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and APAARI on e-agriculture that was implemented through a Letter of Agreement, completed in August 2016. APAARI's role in this activity was to: (i) facilitate the E-agriculture Solutions Forum that took place from 29-31 August and Training of Trainers held from 1-2 September 2015 in Nonthaburi, Thailand; and (ii) collect, compile and publish success stories on ICTs from Asia-Pacific Region. The two events mentioned above were successfully organized by FAO, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and other partners, with APAARI providing administrative support. The success stories have been collected and will be published in March 2017.

The activity on knowledge partnership between APAARI and FAO on the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) and its Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS) project was completed in December 2016. It was completed following the Expert Consultation on Successful Agri-Food Innovations in Asia and the Pacific that took place from 1-3 November 2016 in Taichung City, Chinese Taipei, Taiwan, where TAP/CDAIS was presented, fliers were distributed and a poster was displayed to promote the programme's activities. APAARI's role was to raise awareness on the TAP to promote CDAIS by sharing relevant information, showcase good practices, facilitate contacts and linkages, reproduce TAP-related communication and advocacy material and promote online communication.

Courtesy meetings in the APAARI Secretariat in Bangkok, Thailand, were also held to share and learn about ongoing and planned activities and identify synergies for partnership. Firstly, a meeting with a delegation from Fiji took place on 15 July 2016. Discussions centred around Fiji's involvement in APAARI's Executive Committee Meeting, Expert Consultation on Successful Agri-Food Innovations in Asia and the Pacific, and APAARI General Assembly Meeting. Other possibilities for partnerships that were discussed included: (i) development of capacity of researchers to undertake basic research; (ii) a possible regional meeting on strategic considerations and research/innovation priority setting for the Pacific to take place in 2017 with Fiji taking the lead; (iii) development of an autonomous research organization

for Fiji; and (iv) strengthening of knowledge creation, sharing and engagement of Fiji within and across the Pacific sub-region and the Asia-Pacific region.

To explore partnership with other regional fora, a meeting with Dr. Yemi Akinbamijo, Executive Director of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) also took place on 21 July 2016 as a follow up to GCARD 3 discussions. The meeting focused on areas of possible collaboration between Asia and the Pacific and Africa. Following Dr. Ghodake's presentation of APAARI activities, Dr. Yemi highlighted FARA's activities, particularly its three programmes – Climate Smart Agriculture, UniBRAIN and the Platform for African European Partnership on Agricultural Research for Development (PAEPARD), as well as future projects. Synergies and partnership opportunities were explored.

APAARI Network Highlights

APAARI Network Highlights is a new communication product published bi-monthly. It aims to highlight, promote and share the latest news from among the APAARI network. It is based on a short editorial and links under headlines such as news and announcements, upcoming events and opportunities, latest publications and success stories. The content is being researched by APAARI KM staff but increasingly, stakeholders have also been sending news directly to APAARI. Feedback received to date shows that this new communication tool has been received well by the APAARI community. Two issues were prepared and published by 31 December 2016. One issue was missed (November 2016) due to heavy workload and lack of staff in APAARI.

Publications

During the reporting period, APAARI produced, published and disseminated the following publications:

Publication	Month in which published	Cover page
Development of Communication Strategies for Adoption of Agri-Biotechnology in the Asia Pacific: A Framework for Engagement with Key Stakeholders about Agri-Biotechnology – A Paradigm Shift http://www.apaari.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2016/04/Development-of-Communication-Strategies-for-Adoption-of-Agri-Biotechnology-in-the-Asia-Pacific_compressed2.pdf	July 2016	
Proceedings of the High Level Policy Dialogue on Investment in Agricultural Research for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific http://www.apaari.org/news/high-level-policy-dialogue-on-investment-in-agriculturalproceedings.html	August 2016	

Publication	Month in which published	Cover page
High Level Policy Dialogue on Investment in Agricultural Research for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific – Papers Presented http://www.apaari.org/news/high-level-policy-dialogue-papers-presented-2.html	August 2016	
APAARI Newsletter Vol 25 (2), December 2016, http://www.apaari.org/publications/apaari-newsletters/apaari-newsletter-vol-25-2-december-2016.html	December 2016	
APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Pathways to Strengthened Agri-Food Research and Innovation Systems in Asia and the Pacific http://www.apaari.org/publications/apaari-strategic-plan-2017-2022.html	December 2016	
Proceedings of 14th General Assembly Meeting http://www.apaari.org/publications/14th-general-assembly-proceedings.html	December 2016	
APAARI bracelet with latest publications and meeting-related information replaced the APAARI on CD	November 2016	

The above publications available on the APAARI website have been shared with all APAARI member and partner organizations, participants of respective meetings and other stakeholders.

III. Membership Drive

By the end of 2016, APAARI had 21 members under the NARS category (number increased by 1 from that of 20 in 2014); 27 members under the associate category (number increased by 11 from that

of 16 in 2014); 9 under the affiliate category (number remaining the same as in 2014); and 11 under the reciprocal membership category (increased by one). Thus the total membership stood at 68, an increase of 13 over the year 2014.

During the period July – December, 2016 PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, Pakistan and Dr Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth Dhapoli, India, approached APAARI to become Associate Member and the invoice and application form have been made available to them. Besides, a few other organizations are also in contact to become member of APAARI.

IV. International/Regional Collaboration

During the period under report, APAARI had close collaboration with GFAR, CGIAR Centres, ACIAR, COA, CAPSA, ASEAN and FAO RAP and organized several activities/programmes including organization of workshops, conferences and training programmes with their funding support. This included the programmes on agro-biotechnology and research information systems.

V. Forthcoming APAARI-supported Meetings/Workshops

- APAARI Executive Committee (EC) Meeting at Bangkok in April 2017
- Regional Workshop on Bt Brinjal in Bangladesh in April- May 2017

VI. APAARI Participation in the Meetings Organized by other Fora

- Dr. Raghunath Ghodake participated and presented paper on Conservation and Use of Genetic Resources through Implementation of Suwon Agro-biodiversity Framework and Partnerships in Asia and the Pacific in the 1st International Agro-biodiversity Congress (IAC), in New Delhi, India 6-9 November 2016.
- Dr. Bhag Mal chaired technical sessions and Dr. J.L. Karihaloo moderated panel discussion in the 1st International Agro-biodiversity Congress (IAC), in New Delhi, India 6-9 November 2016.

VII. Other Items

APAARI Staff Changes

Dr Raghunath Ghodake concludes his assignment as APAARI Executive Secretary

Dr Raghunath Ghodake concluded his two-year assignment as APAARI Executive Secretary on 31 December 2016 due to his ill-health. Dr Raghunath Ghodake joined APAARI as its Executive Secretary in January 2015, when APAARI was to deal with the challenges of the post-2015 development agenda. The challenges were that of how APAARI would be relevant and effective in strategically and meaningfully contributing to the sustainable agricultural development and to the realization of the sustainable developments goals in the Asia-Pacific Region.

During this crucial two-year period, Dr Ghodake led APAARI superbly well in designing APAARI Vision 2030, which affirmatively focuses on strengthened agri-food research and innovations in Asia and the Pacific; the consideration being APAARI's unique position, as regional platform of its kind, in contributing to the overall development of humankind in the region. Further articulated directions and guidance were provided by way of the APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-2022, which charts the pathways to the strengthened agri-food research and innovation systems in Asia and the Pacific. In successfully developing the Strategic Plan, APAARI has realized a watershed accomplishment in systematically addressing the post-2015 development agenda towards 2030. Dr Ghodake strongly believed that APAARI must move away from business as usual and must change its governance and development and implement the Strategic Plan with sincerity, conviction and rigor. That would prove APAARI to be a successful platform in addressing and contributing to the 2030 development agenda in Asia and the Pacific.

The two-year period also saw APAARI's targeted focus given to the major fundamental issues of policy advocacy and improved investment in agri-food research and innovations in Asia and the Pacific region and leading on these issues at the Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD 3). He also addressed and consistently followed the well streamlined and high priority areas through a series of complementary and synergistic events and actions.

Dr Bhag Mal takes over the charge of Executive Secretary

Dr Bhag Mal has joined as Interim Executive Secretary, APAARI effective 1 January, 2017. He is well versed with the functioning of APAARI as he has a good experience of working as Senior Consultant in APAARI for the past six years. He has taken over the charge of roles and responsibilities and planned programme activities of APAARI from Dr Raghunath Ghodake. Besides executing these activities during the interim period of 6 months, Dr Bhag Mal will be facilitating the appointment of a new Executive Secretary of APAARI and middle level management positions.

VIII. Epilogue

As is evident from this report, APAARI activities are being expanded and effectively addressing the expectations of its members, partners and other stakeholders. This has been possible due to cooperation extended all by all APAARI members, partners and others concerned, which is duly acknowledged. APAARI looks forward to have more activities/collaboration with the partners in fulfilling its mandate following the APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-2022, and its biennial work plan for 2017-18 with details of prioritized programmes and activities to be undertaken.
