

**Proceedings
of the
XI APCoAB Steering Committee Meeting
26 October 2009
TARI, Taichung, Chinese Taipei**



**Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology
(APCoAB)
Pusa, New Delhi -110012, India**

Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology

XI STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

PROCEEDINGS

The XI Steering Committee (SC) Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology (APCoAB) was held on 26 October 2009 at Taiwan Agricultural Research Institute, Taichung, Chinese Taipei under the chairmanship of Dr. Abd. Shukor Abd. Rahman, Chairman, APAARI. It was attended by seven other SC members/representatives and special invitees (Annexure 1). Dr. William Dar, DG, ICRISAT was represented by Dr. Mike Butterfield; and Dr. Jackie Hughes, Deputy Director-General, AVRDC and Dr. Manthana Milne, Director, Department of Agriculture (DOA), Thailand attended as special invitees.

Agenda Item 1: Welcome Remarks

Dr. Raj Paroda, Executive Secretary, APAARI welcomed the Chairman and other participants. He informed that Dr. William Dar, DG, ICRISAT, Dr. Wais Kabir, DG, BARC, Bangladesh and Mr. Raju Barwale, Managing Director, Mahyco, India could not attend due to other commitments. Dr. Paroda thanked the SC members for their support to APCoAB and made a special mention of ICRISAT for hosting the APCoAB secretariat and extending logistic and administrative facilities. He also expressed his appreciation to COA and Mahyco for their consistent funding support to APCoAB. Dr. Paroda elaborated upon the key role of APCoAB in biotechnology policy advocacy, capacity building and information generation for the benefit of NARS and other stakeholders in the region. He was also pleased to see the good progress made by APCoAB during 2009.

Agenda Item 2: Address by the Chairman

Dr. Abd. Shukor welcomed the SC members and other participants. He also expressed his thanks to COA for hosting this meeting as well as the Expert Consultation on Biopesticides and Biofertilizers. He noted that the APAARI-COA collaborative program was progressing well and hoped that it would continue with added support from COA.

Dr. Abd. Shukor was happy to note that APAARI and Mahyco have increased their contribution to APCoAB. He pointed out that in pursuance of its much needed emphasis on capacity building in the regional NARS, APCoAB had organized four training programs during 2008-09. Besides, a new status report and a CD have been brought out since the last SC meeting held in January 2009. These are indeed very good achievements.

Agenda Item 3: Approval of Minutes of X Steering Committee Meeting

Dr. J. L. Karihaloo, Coordinator, APCoAB informed that the proceedings of XI SC meeting were circulated. The comments received from Dr. Malcolm Hazelman were incorporated in the revised document. The proceedings were accordingly approved by the members. They also adopted the agenda of XI SC meeting (Annexure 2).

Agenda Item 4: Action Taken Report

Dr. Paroda presented a brief on the action taken on recommendations of X SC meeting and elaborated on the following points:

- APAARI contribution to APCoAB has been raised to US\$ 28,000 per year beginning year 2009 and the amount under Consultancy head of the APCoAB budget was raised to \$ 50,000, as decided in the last meeting.
- ICAR was requested by Executive Secretary, APAARI to support the training programs conducted by APAARI in ICAR institutes. Dr. Paroda informed that while ICAR has agreed to organize training programs for APAARI nominees, there is no intimation about funding support for these trainings. The matter will further be perused.
- As recommended in the X SC meeting, the expert consultation on Biopesticides and Biofertilizers is being organized at TARI, Taichung.
- Dr. Paroda briefed the committee on the actions taken to involve FAO, ILRI, ADB and other organizations in APAARI/APCoAB programs.
- FAO-RAP was approached to participate in and pilot the APAARI TCP on Tissue Culture Business Platform. The proposal is being perused by the Agriculture Production Division at FAO Headquarters.

Agenda Item 5: Progress Report – An Update

Dr. Karihaloo presented a detailed report on the activities carried out during February – October 2009. Following are the highlights:

- **Training course on Rapid Bioassay of Pesticides Residues (RBPR) on Fruits and Vegetables for Market Inspection and Farm Education.**
The training was organized at TARI, Taichung from 17 to 23 May, 2009. Twenty-five trainees from 13 Asia-Pacific countries participated, of whom 10 representing India, Iran, Malaysia, Nepal, New Caledonia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Chinese Taipei (World Vegetable Centre), were sponsored by APCoAB. The training comprised lectures and practical demonstrations on toxicology principles, advantages and limitations of RBPR, and qualitative and quantitative analysis of insecticide residues by ACGE test.
- **Publication on Bt Cotton in India – A Status Report (2nd Edition).**
APCoAB has publishes the second edition of its report on Bt cotton in India. It provides up to date information on development, production and economic impact of Bt cotton, and highlights contemporary issues related to the technology and its adoption. The report is divided into seven chapters: I. Introduction, II. Biosafety Regulatory System, III. Development and Commercialization of Bt Cotton, IV. Performance and Impact of Bt Cotton, V. Concerns and the Way Ahead, VI. Epilogue, VII. Bibliography.
- **CD on Agricultural Biotechnology Institutions of Asia-Pacific.**
A database on agricultural biotechnology institutions existing in the Asia-Pacific countries has been compiled into a CD. It includes information on institution location, contact details, websites, areas of activity and focus areas of R&D in agricultural biotechnology.

- **Web-based information dissemination.**
Agricultural biotechnology related news items and events relevant to the AP region are being regularly uploaded on the APCoAB website. Important APAARI and APCoAB announcements and publications are also uploaded on a regular basis.
- Dr. Karihaloo provided an update on the organization of “Expert Consultation on Biopesticides and Biofertilizers for Sustainable Agriculture” being held at TARI on 27-29 October. He apprised about the good response to APAARI invitation informing that about 70 persons representing NARS, CG centres, other public and private agencies, farmer organizations and CSOs were expected to attend. He thanked COA and TARI for their excellent support in organizing the event.
- The members were also informed about the status of forthcoming training course on “*In vitro* conservation and cryopreservation for Conservation of Plant Genetic Resources” being held at National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, New Delhi. Four trainees from MARDI, Malaysia; NARI, PNG; COA, Taipei; and DOA, Thailand were being sponsored by APCoAB.

Agenda Item 6: Work Plan

The following work plan for 2010 was proposed for discussion and approval.

Expert Consultations/Symposia/Meetings

- Policy Dialogue/Brainstorming/Public awareness on GM Technology for Increasing Agricultural Productivity in Asia
- APCoAB Steering Committee Meeting (April & October, 2010)

Publications

- Banana tissue culture in the Philippines
- Banana tissue culture in India
- Bt Cotton in China

Training Courses

- “*In Vitro* and Cryopreservation Techniques for Conservation of Plant Genetic Resources”, to be held at National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, New Delhi.
 - “Assisted Reproductive Technologies for Livestock Genetic Improvement” in collaboration with COA and ILRI to be held in Chinese Taipei.
 - “Edible Mushroom Production for Asian Farmers and Entrepreneurs” in collaboration with COA to be held in Chinese Taipei.
- As regards the activities under APAARI-COA collaboration program, it was clarified that the proposed activities had been tentatively agreed to. A formal

proposal would be submitted to COA in January 2010 for finalization of the dates.

- Dr. Karihaloo also apprised the SC about the request from ILRI for support of APAARI to its capacity building programs. In this regard, Executive Secretary, APAARI had written to DG, Department of International Affairs, COA who, in principle, has agreed to accommodate ILRI nominees in the APAARI-COA training course on “Assisted Reproductive Technologies for Livestock Genetic Improvement” scheduled to be held during 2010.

Agenda Item 7: Audited Accounts

The audited accounts statement for the period January-September 2009 was presented by the Coordinator for review of the SC (Annexure 3). The same was duly approved. He also presented the details of expected income and expenditure for the remaining part of 2009 and the tentative budget for 2010 (Annexure 4). Members noted the details with satisfaction that available funds will possibly meet the required funds for 2010.

Agenda Item 8: General Discussion and Suggestions of Members

- Discussion was held on the TCP on Tissue Culture Business Platform submitted to FAO for funding. It was suggested that FAO AGP Division, Rome be approached to have this proposal processed for funding.
- Dr. Paroda suggested to explore the possibility of organizing training for farmers on field maintenance of propagating material with the help and cofunding of agencies like IFAP and DOA, Thailand. Dr. Jackie Hughes emphasized the importance of involving farmers in technology implementation at the field level.
- It was suggested that the publication on biosafety regulations should be updated at regular intervals. For this purpose, FAO may be requested to waive its copyright, if required, or agree to its revision with needed funding support.
- In view of fund constraints, it was advised to seek cofunding of training costs from organizations whose nominees are selected for APAARI trainings.
- Dr. Mike Butterfield offered to explore possibilities of ICRISAT coorganizing events related to translational research in biotechnology and elaborated on the facilities at ICRISAT. It was also suggested that in view of its extensive experience in business incubation centres, ICRISAT will be pleased to consider coorganizing with APCoAB a regional meeting on business partnership models in biotechnology.
- Dr. Randy Hautea felt that in view of the recognition that APAARI has gained as a leading organization on agricultural policy advocacy, it should try to consolidate and foster exchange of information on biotechnology and apprise the leadership on issues that are important for harnessing biotechnology in the region.

Agenda Item 9: Any Other Business

No specific item under this Agenda was discussed

Agenda Item 10: Concluding Remark

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Abd. Shukor, Chairman, thanked all the members for their support and cooperation. He congratulated Dr. Karihaloo, APCoAB Coordinator for being able to achieve all set targets for the year 2009. Dr. Paroda thanked the members for their guidance and active support which are most essential to sustain the consortium on a long-term basis. While thanking COA, he in particular requested COA to consider extending its funding support for the next three years beyond 2010.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the chair.