



2nd Steering Committee Meeting of Asia- Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology (APCoAB)

November 30, 2004

Rama Garden Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand

Background

The first steering committee meeting of APCoAB was held on 8th April 2004 under the chairmanship of Dr. Mutsuo Iwamoto. Dr. R. S. Paroda, the Executive Secretary, APAARI presented the draft road map and the work plan for the new initiative. Dr. William Dar, Director General, ICRISAT offered to host the secretariat in their New Delhi office. Also, TOR for the appointment of APCoAB's coordinator was finalized and it was decided to appoint immediately Dr. Vibha Dhawan as consultant from 1st May, 2004.

Second Steering Committee Meeting

The steering committee members and some observers met on 30th Nov. 2004 in Bangkok, Thailand as per the agenda (Annex 1) under the chairmanship of Dr. Iwamoto. The list of members who attended the meeting is also attached (Annex 2).

Dr. Iwamoto delivered the chairman's address and welcomed all the participants. For the benefit of the new members/their nominees, Dr. Iwamoto gave a brief on the genesis of APCoAB and expressed his satisfaction over establishment of its Secretariat. The meeting agenda (Annex 3) was unanimously adopted.

Dr. R.S. Paroda, APAARI Executive Secretary welcomed Dr. Greg Johnson from ACIAR, Dr. Rupert Best from GFAR, Dr. Jill Montgomery from Monsanto, Dr. Rendy Hautea from ISAAA, and all the steering committee members. The presence of all the members was indicative of the support APCoAB is privileged to enjoy. He extended his gratitude to Dr. William Dar for hosting the Secretariat and providing all the infrastructure support for the office and extending required secretarial assistance. He briefed the steering committee members regarding the global recruitment process that was followed for the appointment of coordinator. The selection committee comprised of Dr. William Dar, Dr. R..S. Paroda and Dr. I. R. Nagaraj (HR Head, ICRISAT), met in Hyderabad on 7th October, 2004. Other members of the selection committee could not attend the meeting due to prior commitments. Three short listed candidates were invited for the interview and recommendations were sent to other members of the steering committee. The offer was made to Dr. Vibha Dhawan, earlier working as consultant. She joined as coordinator on 1st November for a term of three years.

Dr. Paroda briefed the members about the progress made since the last meeting and re-emphasized the need to develop stronger partnerships/linkages with other institutions/initiatives. Citing example of FAO's programme on Biosafety and ISAAA, working with similar broad objectives, developing collaborations with them will avoid duplication and result in better utilization of limited resources that are available. APCoAB is a unique initiative and its strength lies in the NARS support group and involvement of all stakeholders including the private sector, farmers and NGO's, thus providing a neutral platform for all. Later, Africa and Latin America may also set up similar initiatives.

Dr. Dhawan made a detailed presentation on the objectives and the progress made since the last

meeting (Power point presentation, Annex 4). She also outlined the possibilities of future activities and scope of collaboration with other organizations. Dr. Paroda supplemented the presentation and briefed the members regarding APCoAB's preparation for the ministerial level consultation, proposed for the year 2006. It will be based on the current status on issues related to implementation of Cartagena Protocol; Regional regulatory mechanisms, biosafety, etc. This consultation could possibly be organized along with the FAO's regional conference in 2006. Dr. Hazelman suggested that since programme for this consultation will be finalized by December end, APCoAB must submit the concept note in next couple of weeks.

Dr. Somchai Chnnonrungskul suggested that APCoAB may contact APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) and visit their workplan.

Dr. Rupert Best suggested that APCoAB may avoid using the expression 'policy advocacy' as it is a neutral forum. It was also voiced that APCoAB should develop its own niche by helping NARS in the region regarding "when, where and how much to invest in agricultural biotechnology". Diagnostic tools aiding conventional breeding can also play an important role for crop improvement in the region and thus awareness and consultations on this subject can be organized. To start with, few countries can be considered namely India, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Philippines etc.

It was expressed clearly by the group that while APCoAB should attempt to generate its own resources and be self sustainable, it should remain an integral and important program of APAARI and draw its strength from NARS and other stakeholders.

Dr. Jill Montgomery mentioned that future consultations should reflect on the needs of the private sector by providing a forum where there is an exchange of views between the private sector and policy makers. Meetings in biosafety regulations at individual country or regional levels will help in confidence building by other countries.

Dr. Paroda agreed with the suggestions of the Steering Committee members and desired that APCoAB should be owned by all the stakeholders and partners. We must focus on activities where we have comparative advantage. Also, in the 8th General Assembly meeting of APAARI, the issue shall be raised as how best NARS could be associated for APCoAB's activities.

Dr. Sahdev Singh, Assistant Executive Secretary (APAARI) made a presentation on APCoAB's website. Dr. Dar, while appreciating the initiative, mentioned that in the homepage, in addition to the crop as a background, we should also have a human face. Also, the pacific region should be indicated clearly on the globe.

Members voiced their views regarding involvement of NARS and CG centers especially in the area of capacity building. Those with established systems/infrastructure can be entrusted with responsibility of training scientists from lesser developed NARS/other institutions. APCoAB can help in developing such linkages.

Dr. Paroda suggested that apart from planned publications on present status of Bt Cotton and Maize information can also be gathered on conventional biotechnologies such as use of micropropagation for seed production in potato/ sugarcane and put them on the web. Datepalm story from Iran and marker assisted breeding in pearl millet from ICRISAT can also be made available. Initially these reports can be put on the APCoAB webpage and later published in the form of a technical bulletin.

For the next year, Steering Committee agreed that APCoAB may prioritize its work on:

- a) Developing models for Public-Private partnership for which first meeting is likely to be scheduled in January 2005 in New Delhi, India and based on experience so gained, similar meeting can be organized in other countries
- b) Regional harmonization of biosafety protocol (planned with Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India)

- c) Catalyzing Policy Makers for adoption/commercialization of biotechnologies (planned with FAO-RAP)
- d) IPR's in agricultural biotechnology (concept being discussed with ADB)
- e) Preparation for a ministerial level conference on agricultural biotechnology.

The budget for 2005 was presented (Annex 5). It was noted that presently there is an existing gap of US\$55,000, which APCoAB team is confident of generating during the year from donor agencies on activity based projects. While there are some savings in the current year, they may be reserved for the future and attempts be made to generate additional resources. After detailed deliberations, the budget for 2005 was approved alongwith the workplan. It was also suggested that efforts be made to prioritize the activities for better visibility and APCoAB Coordinator should make efforts to generate additional resources.

It was agreed upon that steering committee should have representation from the Pacific region. Dr. Menesson was requested to have a name suggested, after consulting other members, to serve on this Committee (subsequently, General Assembly of APAARI approved PNG to represent on this Committee, which will be represented by Dr. Ghodake, Director General, NARI). Also, dialogue with NGO's be reinitiated, and ANGOC be reapproved.

On the issue of technical advisory group, it was agreed that for the time being steering committee may serve this purpose, whereas technical experts as focal points from countries be identified to develop? suitable work plans. To begin with, it can be an informal relationship but later specific MoU's can be developed with institutions/organizations.

The next meeting of the steering committee will be held on 14th April' 2005 in Bangkok.

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

Annexure I

Asia –Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology (APCoAB)
2nd Steering Committee Meeting
30th November 2004
Bangkok

Agenda

09:00 – 09:30	Welcome address by the Chairman APAARI
	Adoption of Agenda
	A brief update and Introduction of APCoAB Coordinator – Executive Secretary, APAARI
09:30- 10:30	Progress made – APCoAB Coordinator
	Presentation on the website – Assistant Executive Secretary, APAARI
10:30 – 11:15	Coffee Break & Group Photograph
11:15 – 13.00	Work Plan 2005
	Budget for 2005
	Composition of Steering Committee (Representation from Pacific Region, Farmer's Association, Other Stakeholders)
	Date and Venue for the next meeting
	Any other items (MoUs, Legal Status etc.)
	Concluding Remarks
13:00 – 14: 30	Lunch

Annexure II

List of Participants

Steering Committee Members:

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Annexure III: PowerPoint presentation

Annexure IV**PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2005**

Description	Amount (US\$)
APCoAB Steering Committee Meeting (i) June (ii) December	15,000
Coordinator's Salary + benefits (January – December)	40,000
APCoAB Website (Upgradation)	5,000
Success Stories/Public Awareness Documents	10,000
Public Forum Meetings	20,000
Preparation of Ministerial Level Meeting	5,000
Training in selected areas	20,000
Travel costs	15,000
General Operating Costs	20,000
	1,50,000
Unplanned activities	10,000
TOTAL	1,60,000
Committed funding	1,05,000*
Existing gap	55,000

* Details of Presenting Funding

Organization	Amount (US\$)
ACIAR	10,000
APAARI	30,000
Rockefeller Foundation	30,000
Monsanto	30,000
MAHYCO, India	5,000
Total	105,000