

**SIXTH STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING  
of  
ASIA-PACIFIC CONSORTIUM ON AGRICULTURAL  
BIOTECHNOLOGY  
(APCoAB)**

**8 November 2006**

Venue:  
**National Agricultural Science Centre Complex, New Delhi**

**PROCEEDINGS**



C/o ICRISAT Delhi Office, CG Centres Block,  
National Agriculture Science Complex  
Dev Prakash Shastri Marg  
Pusa Campus, New Delhi – 110 012

# **Proceedings of the Sixth Steering Committee Meeting of Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology held on 8 November 2006**

## **Introduction and Welcome**

The Sixth Steering Committee of APCoAB was held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2006 at National Agricultural Science Centre Complex, New Delhi. The meeting was chaired by Prof. H.P.M. Gunasena, Chairman, APAARI and attended by seven Steering Committee members and special invitees (Annexure I). Prof. Gunasena while welcoming the participants opined that biotechnology holds promise of improving agricultural productivity and farm incomes in the countries of Asia-Pacific region. While conventional biotechnologies like tissue culture have already made an impact, adoption of modern biotechnologies need to be supported by adequate capacities building and appropriate information generation in the genetic modification technology, biosafety and regulatory aspects, and IPR issues. APCoAB has been endeavouring to meet these needs of the regional NARS.

Dr. Raj Paroda, Executive Secretary APAARI, extended his welcome to the participants who despite being busy with several concurrent meetings had found time to attend the Steering Committee meeting. He informed the Committee that Dr. Mangala Rai, DG, ICAR and Member, Steering Committee had expressed his regret in not being able to attend the meeting due to some important commitments. Dr. Paroda thanked Prof. Gunasena for a very distinguished contribution to APCoAB during his tenure as Chairman of the Steering Committee. He also thanked Dr. William Dar, DG, ICRISAT and member Steering Committee for cosponsoring the Workshop on Biosafety Regulations held at ICRISAT. Dr. Paroda expressed his appreciation for the funding support of the Rockefeller Foundation, ACIAR, Mahyco, JIRCAS and FAO. He informed the Committee that despite the commitment of Monsanto to fund APCoAB for three years (2004-2006), the company is yet to release the installment of \$30,000 for the year 2006. This unexpected delay has put the Consortium under considerable financial difficulty.

The Proceedings of the V Steering Committee along with the comments received on these were put up to the VI Steering Committee and the same were unanimously approved. The agenda of the VI meeting was also put up for approval and the same was unanimously adopted.

## **Action Taken Report:**

Dr. J.L. Karihaloo, Coordinator, APCoAB appraised the committee about the action taken on the decisions of V Steering Committee:

1. Summary of APCoAB publication “Bt Cotton in India-A Status Report” along with link to PDF of full document was posted on ISAAA Crop Biotech Update dated 30 June 2006 (([http://www.isaaa.org/kc/CBT\\_News/2006\\_Issues/June/CBT\\_June\\_30.htm#15](http://www.isaaa.org/kc/CBT_News/2006_Issues/June/CBT_June_30.htm#15))).
2. Status Report on “Tissue Culture Innovations for Production of Quality Potato Seed” is under print. Manuscript on “Micropropagation of Sugarcane” is under review.

3. All recommendations of V Steering Committee regarding organization of Workshop on Biosafety Regulations were implemented.
4. Syngenta Foundation was approached for funding support to the proposed training program on Marker Aided Selection. The Foundation has made a contribution of US\$8,023. The amount will partly meet the estimated cost of training (US\$30,000).
5. Activity sheet with required funding for each activity was circulated with the proceeding of V Steering Committee.
6. GFAR was approached for contribution of \$20,000 for public awareness generation on conventional biotechnologies and their adoption by resource poor farmers in the Asia-Pacific and other regions.
7. Proposals for further funding support/collaborative activities have been made to Crop Life, Syngenta, Monsanto, Department of Biotechnology, Govt. of India, Bayer, JIRCAS etc.

### **Recent Progress:**

Dr. J.L. Karihaloo made a presentation of the progress made by APCoAB since the V Steering Committee Meeting. Salient achievements highlighted were:

1. "Bt Cotton in India – A Status Report" was widely distributed among more than 300 national, regional and international individuals/organizations involved in research/application/policy issues of GM technology. Soft copies were similarly distributed very widely as also uploaded on APCoAB website ([www.apcoab.org](http://www.apcoab.org)). The document has received good feedback and was extensively quoted in the background note compiled by the well-known Indian NGO, Down to Earth for a high level discussion on the status of research and economics of cotton in India.
2. The Status Report on "Tissue Culture Innovations for Production of Quality Potato Seed" is under print.
3. Manuscript of "Micropropagation of Sugarcane" has been revised once. The publication will be printed after further review.
4. It is proposed to publish "Biotechnology Case Studies in the Pacific". Comments on the draft manuscript were sent to Dr. Mary Taylor, Regional Germplasm Centre Adviser, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Fiji. The revised manuscript is yet to be received.
5. A three-day regional workshop on "Biosafety regulations for transgenic crops and the need for harmonizing them in the Asia-Pacific region" was held in collaboration with ICRISAT in Hyderabad, India from 31 July to 2 August 2006. The objective of the workshop was to familiarize the national stakeholders with developments in agricultural biotechnology and biosafety regulations in the Asia-Pacific countries and to jointly identify areas of harmonization to facilitate exchange and trade in transgenic crops.

The workshop was attended by 30 participants and observers including crop biotechnology experts and representatives of CBD National Focal Points on Biosafety from 12 countries; Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Nepal, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. The program comprised keynote lectures on crop biotechnology and biosafety, presentation of country reports on biosafety regulations, and group discussion on harmonization of biosafety regulations in the Asia-Pacific region

In its recommendations, the workshop expressed a general consensus that the countries should move towards identifying issues that need harmonization at the regional level while recognizing that every country would have their own regulations and stand on the subject. A strong need was felt for capacity building in areas such as: risk assessment and management, sampling and GMO detection, communication of science-based information and developing mechanisms for information sharing. Both national and regional initiative, the latter through collaborative projects, and bilateral and multilateral agreements would be required to operationalise the recommended actions. It was also recommended that APCoAB should play a leading role in networking and dissemination of information on agricultural biotechnology and biosafety in the Asia-Pacific region.

6. The Highlights and Recommendations of the workshop have been published. The same along with complete set of presentations is available on APCoAB website ([www.apcoab.org](http://www.apcoab.org)). A record for the workshop has also been created in the CBD database on Capacity Building (<https://bch.biodiv.org/database/record.shtml?id=15796>).
7. Coordinator APCoAB participated in the APAARI-GFAR workshop on Regional Synthesis of Research Needs held on 18-19 August in Bangkok. He contributed to development of regional and subregional research priorities on Genetic Resources and Biotechnology.

### **Work Plan for 2007**

The following activities were broadly discussed and approved:

- Compilation of information on biosafety regulations and guidelines in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Facilitate development of regional projects on risk assessment and testing of GM crops.
- Initiate a network for information sharing on biosafety in the region.
- Organization of brainstorming session on “Models of Public-Private Partnership in Agricultural Biotechnology”.
- Organization of training program on “Molecular Aided Selection for Crop Improvement”.
- Publications:
  - (i) “Tissue Culture Innovations for Production of Quality Potato Seed”.
  - (ii) “Micropropagation of Sugarcane”.
  - (iii) “Bt Cotton in China”.
  - (iv) “Biotechnology Case Studies in the Pacific region”.

- Regular updating of APCoAB website.

### **Audited Accounts for January-September 2006**

The Audited Accounts Statement of APCoAB for January to September 2006 was presented to the Steering Committee (Annexure II). The committee examined the statement and unanimously approved the same. A statement of funds received during 2006, expected receipts for 2006-2007 and anticipated expenditure for 2007 was discussed and is attached herewith as Annexure III.

### **General Discussion and Recommendations**

Following the presentations on Action Taken Report and recent progress, the Chairman invited the participants to offer their comments on the recent progress, work plan 2007 and sustainability related issues of APCoAB. Dr. William Dar, Dr. Raghunath Ghodake, Mr. Bhagirath Choudhary participated in the discussion besides Dr. Raj Paroda, Executive Secretary. The views related to the following aspects:

1. The Steering Committee expressed satisfaction over the progress made in implementation of the identified programs during the six months under report.
2. The work plan for 2007 was approved.
3. The Steering Committee expressed concern over the delay in release of funds by Monsanto and recommended that the Executive Secretary may pursue the matter with Dr. Jerry Flint, Director of Technology for Asia-Pacific, Monsanto and Member, APCoAB Steering Committee emphasizing the urgent need to release \$30,000 towards the committed installment for 2006. The Committee also felt that Monsanto be requested to continue its membership of the APCoAB Steering Committee besides continuing its funding support to the consortium beyond 2006.
4. Dr. William Dar suggested to carry forward the recommendations of Workshop on Biosafety Regulations by developing regional and South-South collaborations. The program could be synergised by drawing on the strengths of other countries of the regions. Dr. Dar kindly offered the collaboration of ICRISAT in APCoAB capacity building programs on Molecular Aided Selection, Transgenics and Biosafety. Dr. Paroda while thanking Dr. Dar for his support suggested that APCoAB should work together with ICRISAT so that some expenses in conducting the programs could be shared. Dr. Paroda also pointed out that the activities should not be India centric but be well distributed within the region.
5. The training program on Molecular Aided Selection may be conducted in collaboration with IRRI early next year.
6. The members expressed concern over the reduced funding support to APCoAB and its sustainability. The Coordinator was urged to make aggressive efforts towards mobilization of funds from various sources including DFID, Rockefeller Foundation, Syngenta Foundation, Crop Life, Agricultural and Biotechnology related ministries with Government of India etc. Following specific recommendations were made in this regard:
  - i) Discussion be held soon with Crop Life for possible funding support/collaborative programs.

- ii) Proposal to be submitted and pursued with the Rockefeller Foundation for support beyond 2006, though possibility is rather remote.
  - iii) Further support to be sought from Syngenta Foundation for specific programs like Molecular Aided Selection, etc.
  - iv) Mr. Bhagirath Choudhary felt that funding support could be sought from various Indian and International agencies. It was agreed that the Coordinator should work together with Mr. Choudhary in approaching funding agencies for support. Advice of Dr. Prabhat Kumar in getting support from Ministry of Agriculture could also be sought in this regard.
7. In view of the limited funding available for training programs on MAS, only selected countries with on-going programs on MAS should be invited for training.
  8. Recognizing that limited manpower was a constraint in the functioning of APCoAB, the Steering Committee recommended to outsource the development of concept notes, project proposals and technical status reports. It also agreed to have an appointment of a full time Research Fellow to help the Coordinator in technical matters and for compilation of web based information.

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



## **List of participants in VI Steering Committee Meeting**

<p><b>Dr. H.P.M. Gunasena, Chairman</b> Chairman APAARI &amp; Executive Director Sri Lanka Council for Agricultural Research Policy (CARP) Wijerama Mawatha, Colombo 07, Sri Lanka <b>E-mail: <a href="mailto:gunasenah@yahoo.com">gunasenah@yahoo.com</a></b></p>	<p><b>Dr. William D. Dar</b> Director General ICRISAT, Patancheru, Andhra Pradesh-502324, India <b>E-mail: <a href="mailto:w.dar@cgiar.org">w.dar@cgiar.org</a></b></p>
<p><b>Dr. Raghunath Ghodake</b> Director General National Agricultural Research Institute Sri Alkan Tololo Research Centre P.O. Box 4415, Lae 411, Morobe Province <b>E-mail: <a href="mailto:raghunath.ghodake@nari.org.pg">raghunath.ghodake@nari.org.pg</a></b></p>	<p><b>Dr. R.S. Paroda</b> Executive Secretary (APAARI) &amp; Head, PFU and Regional Coordinator International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Area, Central Asia and Caucasus Regional Programme, P.O. Box 4564, Tashkent 700 000, Uzbekistan <b>E-mail: <a href="mailto:pfu-tashkent@cgiar.org">pfu-tashkent@cgiar.org</a></b></p>
<p><b>Dr. J. L. Karihaloo</b> Coordinator, APCoAB Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology National Agriculture Science Complex Dev Prakash Shastri Marg (Near Todapur) Pusa, New Delhi –110012 India <b>Email: <a href="mailto:j.karihaloo@cgiar.org">j.karihaloo@cgiar.org</a></b></p>	<p><b>Mr. Pijush K. Saha</b> Liaison Officer Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) Maliwan Mansion, 39 Phra Atit Road Bangkok 10200, Thailand <b>Email: <a href="mailto:pksaha@apaari.org">pksaha@apaari.org</a></b></p>
<p><b>Special Invitee:</b></p>	
<p><b>Mr. Bhagirath Choudhary</b> National Coordinator ISAAA South Asia Office NASC Complex, DPS Marg New Delhi-110012 India <b>Email: <a href="mailto:b.choudhary@cgiar.org">b.choudhary@cgiar.org</a></b></p>	



**SUMMARY ACCOUNT STATEMENT OF APCoAB**  
**01 January – 30 September 2006**  
**(Amount in US Dollars)**

ITEMS Amount B/F	RECEIVED	DISBURSEMENTS		BALANCE
		Budget	Actual Used	
1. Contributions	75,054.17			52,840.08
2. Interest Income	1,089.16			
3. Other Income:				
3.1 Refund	679.93			
3.2 Profit and Loss on Transfer				
4. Secretariat Support:				
4.1 Office Stationery & Office equipment		25,000.00		
4.2 Miscellaneous / Communication			152.14	
5. Publications		10,000.00	5,944.42	
6. Consultancy		40,000.00	1,456.85	
7. Travel		15,000.00	24,800.01	
8. Training		20,000.00	5,764.57	
9. Meetings		50,000.00		
9.1 Expenses of Steering Com/General/High Level Meetings			30,570.05	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76,823.26</b>	<b>160,000.00</b>	<b>68,688.04</b>	<b>68,975.30</b>

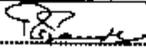
Total amount in BKK office:

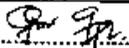
US\$ 37,523.76

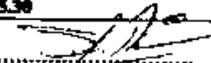
Total amount in New Delhi office:

US\$ 23,451.54

**Grand Total:****US\$ 60,975.30**

  
 Dr. Raj Paroda  
 Executive Secretary, APAARI

  
 Ms. Uralrat Rujirek  
 Accountant, APAARI

  
 Mr. Rattanasakul Dammersawat  
 External Auditor

**(A) Funds received during 2006**

<b>Organization/Company</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Mahyco	\$5,054.17
Rockefeller Foundation	\$30,000
ACIAR	\$10,000
APAARI	\$30,000
FAO	\$5,000 (to be included in the accounts statement)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$80,054.17</b>

**(B) Funds expected in 2006-2007**

Monsanto 2006 2007	\$30,000?? ??
APAARI 2007	\$20,000
ACIAR 2007	\$10,000
Mahyco 2007	?
Syngenta Foundation 2006	\$8,023 for MAS training program to be held in 2007
Rockefeller Foundation	?

**(C) Budget 2007**

1. Secretarial Support: 1.1 Office Stationery & Office Equipment 1.2 Miscellaneous/Communication	10,000.00
2. Publications	10,000.00
3. Consultancy	40,000.00
4. Travel	10,000.00
5. Training	20,000.00
6. Meetings 6.1 Expenses of Steering Com/Meetings/Trainings 6.2 Expenses of special programs	20,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>110,000.00</b>