

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

19 AUGUST 2008

Venue:
Mines Beach Resort, Salengor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia

PROCEEDINGS



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

**Proceedings of the Ninth Steering Committee Meeting
of
Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology
19 August 2008
Mines Beach Resort, Salengor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia**

1. Introduction and Welcome

The ninth Steering Committee (SC) Meeting of Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology (APCoAB) was held on 19 August 2008 at the Mines Beach Resort, Salengor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia. Dr. Raghunath Ghodake, Chairman, APAARI chaired the meeting which was attended by six SC members/representatives and special invitees (Annexure-I). Dr. William Dar, DG, ICRISAT, Mr. Raju Barwale and Dr. Malcolm Hazelman, Sr. Extension, Education and Communication Officer, FAO, RAP, Bangkok FAO could not attend due to other commitments and sent their apologies. Dr. Mangala Rai, DG, ICAR nominated Dr. P. Ananda Kumar, Project Director, National Research Centre on Biotechnology, New Delhi to attend the meeting and Ms. Metanee Sukontarug, DG, DoA, Thailand was represented by Dr. Karsedis Distabanjong, Senior Plant Biotechnologist, DoA. Dr. Abd. Shukor, DG, MARDI, Malaysia and Mr. Raul Montemayor attended the meeting as special invitees.

While welcoming the participants, Chairman Dr. Ghodake highlighted the recent achievements of APCoAB. He made special mention of the recent APCoAB publication entitled "Biosafety Regulations of Asia-Pacific Countries" which provides very useful information about the biosafety regulatory systems operating in most countries of the Asia-Pacific region. The organization of Expert Consultation on Agricultural Biotechnology being held soon after the SC meeting was another important milestone entering in to a new phase of collaboration between APAARI and NARS of the region. Dr. Ghodake expressed his appreciation of the training programs being organized by APCoAB in collaboration with international organizations like ICRISAT and NARS like Indian Council of Agricultural Research and Council of Agriculture, Chinese Taipei. Inter-regional collaboration with AARINENA that has led to bilateral participation in events organized by APAARI and AARINENA is yet another laudable initiative of APCoAB. Dr. Ghodake felt that with a reasonably well-developed foundation, the consortium needs to decide on innovative and strategic decisions so that it finds a niche, attracts adequate resources, grows further substantially and becomes a sustainable mechanism for the advancement of biotechnology in the region.

Dr. Raj Paroda, Executive Secretary, APAARI extended his welcome to the participants and thanked them for their support to APAARI and APCoAB. He gave special thanks to Dr. Shakur Rahman who could attend the meeting despite his heavy engagements with the organization of Expert Consultation. Dr. Paroda detailed the four strategic areas of APCoAB mandate and briefed the Committee about the activities carried out by the Consortium under each of these. He felt that APCoAB though a part of APAARI should grow further and develop into an independent identity of its own.

Dr. Abd. Shakur expressed his pleasure that the SC meeting was being held in Malaysia and he was able to participate in it. He felt that the forthcoming the Expert Consultation on Biotechnology being organized jointly by APAARI and MARDI would be a successful event.

Dr. Ananda Kumar expressed his appreciation of the multifarious activities carried out by APCoAB towards information generation, and capacity and partnership building. He highlighted the need for such initiatives in view of the constraints faced by developing country NARS in obtaining balanced scientific information, developing partnerships for scaling up and field application of biotechnologies.

Dr. Distabanjong expressed his satisfaction over the progress made by APCoAB. With respect to promotion of tissue culture technology, he made a mention of the possible somaclonal variations affecting the uniformity of planting material and the need to highlight adoption of protocols minimizing the occurrence of such variations.

2. Adoption of VIII Steering Committee Meeting Proceedings

The proceedings of the eighth SC Meeting were unanimously approved and adopted. The agenda for the Ninth SC meeting was also adopted unanimously.

3. Action Taken Report

Dr. Raj Paroda apprised the Committee on various actions taken on the recommendations of Eight SC meeting:

1. As recommended by the Eight SC, the draft copy of “Biosafety Regulation of Asia-Pacific Countries” was sent to FAO whose comments were incorporated. Further, country regulations were uploaded on the APCoAB website.
2. A format for circulation of news as email dispatch has been developed and was presented in the SC meeting.
3. Regarding the recommendation for consensus building on important issues, the Expert Consultation being held on 20-22 August is one of the initiatives taken to address issues like public awareness, regulatory concerns and intersectoral partnerships related to application of biotechnology in the AP region.
4. APAARI has now appointed an Executive Assistant in ITC with whose support the APCoAB website is being updated. A program to monitor hits on the website and analyze its usage has been included.
5. As recommended, short summaries of APCoAB publications have been compiled and uploaded on the APCoAB website for quick reference by users.
6. A training course on “Molecular Methodologies for Assessing and Applying Genetic Diversity in Crop Plants” is being organized at ICRISAT. ICRISAT has agreed to accommodate four trainees nominated by APAARI in the training.
7. With regard to fund raising efforts, based on the proposals made by APCoAB, a funding support of \$35,000 and \$21,820 has been received from Council of Agriculture, Taipei and GFAR, respectively, during the period under report. As

required, an amount of \$5,000 has been earmarked for consultancy to prepare project proposal.

4. Recent Progress (March 2008 – August 2008)

1. Report entitled “Micropropagation for Quality Seed Production in Sugarcane” has been printed. It presents information on: conventional sugarcane seed production system; micropropagation method based on meristem tip culture; success stories of micropropagation for sugarcane seed production in India, Philippines and Australia; and suggestions for improved production and adoption of micropropagation at farmers’ level.
2. A compilation on “Biosafety Regulations of Asia-Pacific Countries” has been printed. The publication includes chapters on: Status of Agricultural Biotechnology in Asia-Pacific; Biosafety Issues in Agricultural Biotechnology; International Agreements Related to Biosafety; Biosafety Regulations of Asia-Pacific Countries; Overview of Biosafety Regulatory Systems in Asia-Pacific; and Regulatory Management - the Way Ahead. The compilation gives brief details of biosafety regulations existing in 39 countries of the Asia-Pacific region.
3. A technical bulletin on “Production and Cultivation of Virus-Free Citrus Saplings for Citrus Rehabilitation in Taiwan” is under production. It provides detailed methodology for diagnosis and indexing of virus and virus like diseases in citrus; establishment of virus-free citrus nursery system by shoot tip micropropagation and rapid multiplication of pathogen-free foundation seedlings; and cultivation and health management.
4. APCoAB in collaboration with MARDI is organizing an Expert Consultation on Agricultural Biotechnology for Promoting Food Security in Developing Countries” in Malaysia on 20-22 August 2008. The Expert Consultation will bring together about 50 national policy planners, research experts, biosafety managers, representatives of civil society and farmers organizations and other public and the private sector stakeholders to deliberate on issues impacting development and adoption of biotechnology by developing countries. APAARI/APCoAB with funding support from GFAR has sponsored participation of 18 experts in the meeting.
5. A training program on “*In Vitro* and Cryopreservation Technologies for Conservation of Plant Genetic Resources” is being organized in collaboration with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and Bioversity International. Four APAARI members have been invited to nominate scientists for the course being held at the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, New Delhi from 3-15 November 2008.
6. A training course on “Molecular Methodologies for Assessing and Applying Genetic Diversity in Crop Plants” is being held by ICRISAT, India on 17-28 November 2008 in which ICRISAT has agreed to accommodate four nominees from APAARI. Accordingly, nominations have been invited from APAARI institutions for this training course.
7. The Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near-East and North Africa (AARINENA) is organizing a training course entitled “Introductory Course in Bioinformatics” at Agricultural Genetic Engineering Research Institute (AGREI),

Giza, Egypt from 23 November to 2 December 2008. Three APAARI nominees will be admitted to this course on competitive basis. Invitations for nomination of candidates have been sent to all APAARI members.

8. APAARI/APCoAB is collaborating with Council of Agriculture, Taipei is organizing a training course on “Production and Indexing of Pathogen-Free Citrus Seedlings” at Taiwan National University from 13-25 October 2008. The program is under development.
9. Regular weekly updates on news and events related to agricultural biotechnology are being uploaded on the APCoAB website. During January to July 2008, 302 news items related to 26 countries appeared on the website.
10. During the period under report, funding support of US\$ 35,000 was received from CoA, Taipei, US\$ 20, 000 from APAARI, US\$ 10,000 from ACIAR and US\$ 5,126.43 from Mahyco. GFAR has committed a funding support of US\$ 21,820 for organizing the Expert Consultation in Malaysia.

5. Work Plan for 2008

Following revised work plan for 2008 was presented and discussed:

(a) Publications

- (i) Success Stories:
 - Sugarcane Tissue Culture
 - Virus-Free Citrus planting material
 - Proceedings of Expert Consultations on Biotechnology for Food Security
- (ii) Special Report on Biosafety Regulations of Asia-Pacific Countries.
- (iii) CDs: Agricultural Biotechnology Research Institutes of Asia-Pacific Region.

(b) Website Development and Regular Updating of (i) News and Events, and (ii) Agricultural Biotechnology Institutions in the Asia-Pacific region.

(c) Meetings:

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| (i) APCoAB Steering Committee Meeting | February, Delhi |
| | August, Malaysia |

(d) Expert Consultation:

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| (i) Biotechnology for Food Security | August, MARDI, Malaysia |
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6. Audited Accounts and budget for 2008

The Steering Committee examined the audited accounts statement of APCoAB for period 1 January to 30 June 2008 (Annexure II), which was unanimously endorsed. The proposed revised budget for 2008 was discussed and approved (Annexure III & IV).

7. General Discussion and Recommendations

Following the presentation of Action Taken Report and Recent Progress, the Chairman invited comments from the participants.

Dr. Abd. Shakur expressed his appreciation of the activities carried out by APCoAB especially with respect to its efforts for promoting of public-private participation. He

informed the Committee about the success of MARDI in linking public organizations with private sector for up scaling, pre-commercialization and commercialization of biotechnology products and processes.

Dr. Distabanjong gave an update on locating a resource person for writing status report/success story on some important achievements made by Thailand in application of agricultural biotechnology. He assured to continue the search and inform about the decision soon.

Dr. Ananda Kumar offered to host a training program for APAARI/APCoAB nominees in 2009 on genetic transformation technology. He also accepted to update the APCoAB status report on Bt Cotton in India.

Dr. Karihaloo explained the objective of starting Weekly News and Events on the APCoAB website also mentioning the difficulties experienced in obtaining first hand information from the stakeholders in the region. Dr. Ghodake suggested approaching middle level personnel as focal points in the NARS who may be directly involved in biotechnology activities and could provide information more readily for wider dissemination.

Dr. Randy Hutea mentioned that APAARI has good rapport with national government organizations in the Asia-Pacific region, which could be utilized for high-level policy advocacy. He also suggested organizing discussions on food safety issues.

Dr. Paroda mentioned the need to develop links with APEC and similar agencies working for promotion of agriculture and biotechnology in the region. Public awareness meetings could be held in collaboration with International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA). He informed that the achievements of APAARI and APCoAB would be projected in the next AGM meeting of GFAR.

Following decisions were taken:

1. The Steering Committee expressed satisfaction over the good progress made during the last six months.
2. The revised work Plan for 2008 was approved.
3. It was recommended to reconstitute the APCoAB Steering Committee. Bangladesh, Malaysia and New Caledoni would replace the existing country members. Other members are GFAR, FAO, ICRISAT, ISAAA and private sector representative (Mahyco).
4. The core funding of APCoAB from APAARI would be raised by \$ 10,000.
5. The publication on Bt Cotton in India needs to be updated. As agreed, Dr. Ananda Kumar would help in this work.
6. A training program on Transformation Technology to be held in 2009 at NRCPB, New Delhi. Program to be organized in collaboration with Dr. Ananda Kumar.
7. A CD on Agricultural Biotechnology Institutes of the AP region to be brought out.

8. APAARI and APCoAB efforts in regional and interregional promotion of agriculture research and development to be presented in the next GFAR meeting.
9. Public forum meetings also involving media, farmer organizations and NGOs to be organized in collaboration with ISAAA, CG centres and public sector organizations.
10. High level policy meeting on agricultural biotechnology to be organized in 2010.
11. Efforts need to be continued for developing collaborations and seeking funding support from agencies like Syngenta Foundation, APEC, and international and national seed and biotechnology companies.

8. Any other item:

The meeting was closed with a vote of thanks to the Chair.



IX STEERING COMMITTEE

19 August 2008

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<p>Dr. Raghunath Ghodake Chairman, APAARI Director General National Agricultural Research Institute Sri Alkan Tololo Research Centre P.O. Box 4415, Lae 411 Morobe Province E-mail: raghunath.ghodake@nari.org.pg</p>	<p>Dr. R.S. Paroda Executive Secretary APAARI FAO RAP of the UN Maliwan Mansion 39 Phra Atit Road Bangkok 10200 Thailand E-mail: raj.paroda@apaari.org</p>
<p>Dr. Randy A. Hautea Center Director and ISAAA Global Coordinator C/o IRRRI DAPO Box 7777, Metro Manila, The Philippines E-mail: r.hautea@cgiar.org</p>	<p>Dr. P. Ananda Kumar Director, National Research Centre on Plant Biotechnology Lal Bahadur Shastri Building IARI, Pusa Campus New Delhi 110012 E-mail: polumetla@hotmail.com</p>
<p>Dr. Karsedis Distabanjong Sr. Plant Biotechnologist Office of Biotechnology Research and Development Department of Agriculture Thailand E-mail: karsedis@hotmail.com</p>	<p>Dr. J.L. Karihaloo Coordinator APCoAB C/o ICRISAT, NASC Complex DPS Marg, New Delhi 110 012 E-mail: j.karihaloo@cgiar.org</p>
<p>Special invitees</p>	
<p>Dr. Abd. Shukor Bin Abd. Rahman Director general MARDI Malaysia E-mail: arshukor@mardi.gov.my</p>	<p>Mr. Raul Montemayor IFAP, 41 Highland Drive Blue Ridge Quezon City 1109 Philippines E-mail: freefarm@mozcom.com</p>



Annexure II

SUMMARY ACCOUNT STATEMENT OF APCoAB
01 January – 30 June 2008
(Amount in US Dollars)

ITEMS	RECEIVED	DISBURSEMENTS		BALANCE
		Budget	Actual Used	
Amount B/F				36,744.29
1. Contributions (COA, ACIAR , APAARI and Mahyco)	70,126.43			
2. Interest Income	225.07			
3. Other Income:	-			
3.1 Refund	-			
4. Secretariat Support:		10,000.00		
4.1 Office Stationery & Office equipment			1,697.38	
4.2 Miscellaneous / Communication			949.68	
5. Publications		10,000.00	1,207.66	
6. Consultancy , Salary of Assistant		40,000.00	22,565.14	
7. Travel		10,000.00	1,720.75	
8. Training		20,000.00	-	
9. Meetings		20,000.00	-	
9.1 Expenses of Steering Com/General/High Level Meetings			4,531.68	
TOTAL	70,351.50	110,000.00	32,672.29	
				74,423.50

Remark: Expenditure on behalf of APAARI US\$ 8,628.22

Total amount in BKK office:	US\$ 26,891.06
Total amount in New Delhi office:	US\$ 38,904.22

Grand Total:	US\$ 65,795.28
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Dr. Raj Paroda
 Executive Secretary, APAARI

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Ms. Urairat Rujirek
 Accountant, APAARI

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Mr. Rattanachai Dumnernsawat
 External Auditor

INCOME FOR 2008

S.No.	Particulars	Amount (US\$)
1.	Balance 2007	36,744.29
2.	Interest on income	225.07
3.	Contributors	
3.1	APAARI	20,000.00
3.2	ACIAR	10,000.00
3.3	Mahyco	5,126.43
3.4	FAO	5,000.00
3.5	COA, Taipei	35,000.00
	Total	75,126.43
4.	Expected Contributions	
4.1	GFAR	21,820.00
4.2	FAO	2,500.00
	Total	24,320.00
5.	Grand Total	1,31,415,79

BUDGET FOR 01 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER, 2008

1.	Income				1,31,415.79
2.	Expenditure	Estimate 2008	Expenditure till 31 June 2008	Revised Estimate 2008	
2.1	Secretarial Support	10,000.00	2,647.06	7,000.00	
2.2	Publications	10,000.00	1,207.66	10,000.00	
2.3	Consultancy	40,000.00	22,565.14	50,000.00	
2.4	Travel	10,000.00	1,720.75	5,000.00	
2.5	Training	20,000.00	–	10,000.00	
2.6	Meetings (Steering Committee, Expert Consultancy)	20,000.00	4,531.68	26,000.00	
	Total	1,10,000.00	32,672.29	1,08,000.00	23,415.79 (Expected Balance)