



ASIA-PACIFIC ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS (APAARI)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
(1/2017)

PROCEEDINGS



Bangkok, Thailand

14 July 2017



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The first meeting of the APAARI Executive Committee (EC) for 2017 was held on 14 July 2017 in Bangkok, Thailand under the Chairmanship of Dr. Yusuf Zafar, Chairman, APAARI, and Chairman, Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), Pakistan. The meeting was attended by 21 participants including EC members, special invitees and staff of the APAARI Secretariat (Annex. I).

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and introduction

Dr. Bhag Mal, Interim Executive Secretary, APAARI, welcomed the Chairman, Vice Chairman, EC members and special invitees. He then formally introduced the participants to the first Executive Committee Meeting (ECM). The Interim Executive Secretary elaborated on key agenda items, including APAARI Progress Report for November 2016 – June 2017, Biennial Work Plan for 2017-2018, Income and Expenditure Plan 2017-2018, and ASTI project update. The Interim Executive Secretary also apprised the members about the documents/papers made available for the meeting and the important publications provided/displayed for participants' information.

Agenda Item 2: Opening remarks and release of publications by Chairman, APAARI

Before his opening remarks, Dr. Yusuf Zafar, Chairman, APAARI, released the following APAARI publications: (i) APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Pathways to Strengthened Agri-Food Research and Innovation Systems in Asia and the Pacific (full and abridged versions); (ii) Proceedings of the Expert Consultation on Best Practices in Agri-food Innovations in Asia and the Pacific; and (iii) Investments in Agricultural Research for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific: Country Status Reports.

In his opening remarks (Annex. II), Dr. Zafar emphasized the need for continuous efforts to strengthen APAARI and the collective actions, to effectively contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He stressed the need for continuity and regularity of APAARI activities to implement the APAARI

Strategic Plan 2017-2022. He welcomed the APAARI's new team to be led by the new Executive Secretary and also appreciated the contribution of the Interim Executive Secretary to APAARI during the transition period.

Mr. Vincent Lin, Deputy Director General, Department of International affairs, Council of Agriculture (COA), Taiwan, informed that he has been designated by COA as the member of EC and the arrangement should be treated accordingly by APAARI. He also conveyed COA's agreement to continue supporting APAARI and the APAARI-COA collaborative project on biotechnology.

Agenda Item 3: Approval of the Agenda by the EC

The proposed meeting agenda (Annex. III) was presented by the Interim Executive Secretary and was approved by the ECM with no additional agenda items suggested.

Agenda Item 4: Approval of Minutes of the Last Executive Committee Meeting (ECM)

The Interim Executive Secretary, APAARI, presented the salient features and key decisions from the proceedings of the last ECM (1/2016) held in Bangkok on 8 September 2016 (Annex. IV). These included:

- Proceedings of ECM held on 10 December 2015 approved
- Audit Report and Audited Financial Statements for January- December 2015 approved
- Financial Statement for 1 January – 15 August 2016 endorsed
- APAARI Work Plan for September – December 2016 approved
- APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-22 approved
- Additional members representing AIRCA and the higher education sector approved
- Strengthening of APCoAB programme endorsed
- Organization of the Expert Consultation on Best Practices in Agri-food Innovations approved

The EC members perused the minutes and these were formally approved.

Agenda Item 5: APAARI Progress Report: November 2016 – June 2017

The APAARI Progress Report for period, November 2016 – June 2017 (Annex.V) was presented by the Interim Executive Secretary. It highlighted the activities undertaken during this period. The presentation covered progress on the key topics of strategic importance to APAARI, including, APAARI knowledge management (KM) programme, key meetings organized by APAARI, APAARI's participation in the meetings organized by partners, APAARI's membership status, project planning, collaboration and partnership, as well as staff changes. The following are the key suggestions:

- The resource mobilization plan for 2017-2018 is an important area APAARI needs to focus on.

- APAARI's reserve funds could be used strategically and in line with international standards of keeping a four-month (120 days) reserve to fund critical areas of work that will improve APAARI's efficiency and effectiveness and fund raising ability.'
- APAARI needs to consider integrating the innovation framework into its operations. The framework was presented at the Expert Consultation in Taiwan and has been tested by ACIAR. It is based on three innovation approaches: (i) incremental, (ii) breakthrough, and (iii) transformational.
- APAARI needs to actively promote women's participation and engagement as they are key contributors to farming and other agricultural activities.
- EC members should be considered to represent APAARI in key meetings of partners in case APAARI is unable to participate.

The EC endorsed the progress report for the period November 2016-June 2017.

Agenda Item 6: Membership and Fee Payment Status (as on 31 May 2017)

The Interim Executive Secretary presented the membership and fee payment status as on 31 May 2017 (Annex. VI). He highlighted that during 2015-2017, the APAARI Secretariat and its partners continued APAARI's drive to mobilize membership to broaden representation in APAARI. During the period November 2016 – June 2017, two new members joined APAARI in the Associate category. These are: i) Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University, Hyderabad, India; and ii) Dr Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, India. With addition of these two new members, the total number of members rose to 70 as against 68 in 2016. The following suggestions were made in the ECM on membership mobilization:

- Some members, namely, BAR from the Philippines, and AREEO from Iran, have not paid their membership fee for the last 3 or more years. EC needs to review and develop guidelines to take decision whether to cancel membership of those organizations that have not paid their membership fee contribution to APAARI for more than 3 years.
- To a query about nature of some members, it was clarified that IAUA represented the higher education sector (universities) on the EC and not as an individual organization.
- Mrs Jintawee Thaingam, Director of International Agriculture Affairs Group, Department of Agriculture (DOA), Thailand, conveyed the advice of DOA to use the correct title for the King of Thailand as "His Majesty" and not "His Excellency". This needs to be changed in the GAM report and followed in all future APAARI communications.

The EC endorsed the membership and fee payment status.

Agenda Item 7 : Audit Report and Audited Financial Statements January-December 2016

The audit report and audited financial statements for 1 January – 31 December 2016 were prepared by the GAAP Professional Audit Co. Ltd based in Bangkok, Thailand (Annex. VII). The audit report and audited financial statements were

presented by Mr. Rattanachai Dumnernsawat, the external auditor. During the period 1 January – December 2016, APAARI spent USD 606,035.92 and received USD 581,304.82 in the form of membership and partnership contributions and thus overspent USD 24,731.10. However, this was within the budgeted amount of USD 795,838. The audit report and financial statements were found unqualified and satisfactory in all respects and were accepted.

The audit report and audited financial statements for 2016 were endorsed by the EC.

Agenda Item 8: Work Plan for the Biennium 2017-2018

The Interim Executive Secretary introduced the agenda by giving a brief background and mentioned that the detailed Work Plan for the Biennium 2017-2018 was developed in line with APAARI's Strategic Plan 2017-2022. The work plan was developed following the structure of APAARI's key programmes and was presented by respective persons as follows:

- Knowledge Management, Partnership and Networking, Capacity Development, Women and Youth (Annex. VIIIa) – Ms. Martina Spisiakova
- APCoAB activities including COA-APAARI Collaborative Project (Annex. VIIIb) - Dr. J. L. Karihaloo
- APAARI Governance and Development - Dr. Raghunath Ghodake
- ASTI Project Update - Dr. Gert-Jan Stads

The presentation also included the detailed plan for the APAARI-COA collaborative programme on biotechnology – APCoAB.

The EC made the following suggestions/recommendations:

- Collaborative research activity between all sub-regions – South Asia, South-east Asia and the Pacific needs to be included in the plan.
- Working with partners who are monitoring the implementation of the Paris commitment on mitigating the effects of climate change needs to be considered in APAARI's knowledge dissemination activities.
- APAARI needs to consider dissemination of new and attractive knowledge products such as op-eds.
- The women and youth programme needs to be addressed more proactively and can potentially attract more funding from donors. Gender champions have been identified in different countries. APAARI can take the lead in identifying such champions in the Asia and Pacific region and facilitate capacity development.
- Different stakeholders possess different knowledge sets and require different communication channels to share this knowledge. The knowledge-sharing strategies of different stakeholders need to be reflected in the stakeholder mapping and the KM and Communication Strategy.
- APAARI needs to learn from existing KM platforms, such as the Science-dev.net, on how to make its stories of agricultural research more attractive.

- Animal science, particularly livestock, has been advancing as its contribution to the GDP increases. APAARI needs to integrate animal science into its programme in addition to focusing on crops.
- In the list of work plan activities and their budgeting, it is important to show the respective APAARI partners, the source of budget, and the likely beneficiaries of outputs.
- Agriculture faces a serious issue in developing KM models. APAARI needs to assess different KM models and determine whether and how they can fit in members' organizations. Development of such KM model and digitization of agriculture could also be pursued in partnership with members and partners to better manage agricultural knowledge.
- Establishing a community of KM and communication focal points from different member and partner organizations is a very good initiative by APAARI. An action plan or a road map should be provided in the KM and Communication Strategy on how these focal points can help enhance KM within AFRIS.

The comments and suggestions for APCoAB-specific activities included:

- The next expert consultation planned by APCoAB needs to be linked to the regional consultation on biotechnology to be organized by FAO and supported by ACIAR.
- Many communication strategies on promoting agri-biotechnology exist but whether they are effective is questionable. APAARI needs to take into consideration communication capacities of targeted stakeholders and learn about local contexts in which biotechnology is promoted.
- KM platforms are important but not all are effective. APAARI needs to pick up emerging issues in biotechnology and document lessons learned and success stories. For example, this includes documenting the adoption of genetically-modified (GM) and non-GM crops, and the reasons why Bt. Brinjal is adopted in Bangladesh but not in India. These lessons require visibility to attract interest of stakeholders.
- Agri-biotechnology programme needs to put more focus on bio-prospecting of bioresources.

The EC approved the Work Plan for implementation during 2017-2018.

Agenda Item 9: Project Ideas for APAARI Governance and Development

Dr Raghunath Ghodake, Senior Advisor, APAARI presented the agenda item relating to project ideas for APAARI governance and development (details in Annex. IX). He emphasized that one of the fundamental requirements for delivering APAARI's mission and vision and its strategic and biennial work plans, is to reform and develop APAARI in terms of good governance, capacity development and effectiveness.

To meet this challenge, APAARI's Strategic Plan emphasizes the basic and fundamental changes in improving APAARI governance and development. These changes will be the principal driver of making APAARI more efficient and effective

in its collective efforts with members, partners and other stakeholders, to strengthen agri-food research and innovation in Asia and the Pacific. Four key projects and their ideas for further development and implementation, during the biennium 2017-2018, were presented as follows:

1. Develop and implement strategies, structures and standards for efficient mobilization, management and use of resources for APAARI's effective performance.
2. Develop APAARI as more diverse multi-stakeholder platform with wider equitable and inclusive stakeholder involvement, representation and ownership in collective actions in strengthening agri-food research and innovation systems (AFRIS).
3. Realize effective involvement and partnership of APAARI members, AFRIS and primary stakeholders in benefit and resource sharing in APAARI collective actions.
4. Develop and implement an effective planning, monitoring and evaluation/learning system to assure timely adjustments and efficient derivation of results, as well as an assessment of how such results are contributing to the desired outcomes and outcome pathways.

It was further emphasized that the systematic APAARI reform will have some pertinent and crucial implications for appropriate changes to APAARI's existing constitution. Without due constitutional changes, such efforts cannot be effectively implemented and cannot have positive effectiveness on APAARI performance. Furthermore, there are quite a few ambiguities and flaws in the current constitution and, if not addressed, these would bring severe limitations to improving APAARI governance and development. Therefore, APAARI will need to plan and implement systematic and progressive changes/ amendments to APAARI constitutions, in accordance with the provision of Article 16 of its constitution.

The EC members provided the following suggestions on the presented project ideas:

- APAARI is now becoming action-oriented and through its M&E system, it needs to track impact by looking at intermediary outcomes of member and partner activities.
- The operational plan is subject to change. The new management will need to look at what is feasible with what partners.
- APAARI governance is the General Assembly that needs to consider external panel reviews. Mid-term reviews of APAARI have been indicated in the Strategic Plan 2017-2022, but they should be undertaken only after reaching some point in achieving the goals.
- Human resources management improvement is needed for the member organizations, the APAARI Secretariat and all others involved in collective actions.
- Recognizing the activities for improving APAARI governance and development in terms of needed funds and efforts, HR development can be straightforward while PM&E can be extremely complicated. It is recommended to recruit an M&E officer to focus on PM&E since indicators

in the Strategic Plan 2017-2022 require more work to make them practical and realistic. ACIAR could assist APAARI to find an appropriate M&E consultant to help in this work as ACIAR is currently undertaking similar work.

The ECM endorsed the ideas presented under the four projects for further refinement, finalization and implementation of these projects. The ECM also endorsed the much needed amendments and modifications to APAARI constitution, to be undertaken in a progressive and systematic manner.

Agenda Item 10: Income and Expenditure Plan for the Biennium 2017-2018

The Interim Executive Secretary presented the Income and Expenditure Plan for the Biennium 2017- 2018. For the ease of understanding of EC members, the income and expenditure plan was presented for 4 distinct periods (details given in Annex. X)

- 1 January 2017 – 31 May 2017
 - 1 June 2017 - 31 July 2017
 - 1 August 2017 - 31 December 2017
 - 1 January 2018 – 31 December 2018
- It was informed that the new Executive Secretary is likely to join APAARI the first week of August 2017 and will have an opportunity to review and re-assess the income and expenditure plan for 2017-2018. The Executive Secretary will consult the Executive Committee when it meets next and modify/adjust the plan as per the approval of EC.

The following suggestions were made on the income and expenditure plan:

- Contribution of members, partners and donors is incorporated in the Income and Expenditure Statement.
- The Regional Expert Consultation on Underutilized Crops is to be organized back-to-back with APCoAB Steering Committee and APARIS Steering Committee Meetings which will take place in Bangkok in November 2017.

The EC approved the Income and Expenditure Plan for 2017-2018.

Agenda Item 11: Launch of APAARI New Website

Ms Martina Spisiakova made a presentation on the new website of APAARI to apprise the EC members. The APAARI website has been the Association's key information tool. To keep abreast with technology trends, it is important to ensure that the website's infrastructure is up-to-date and user-friendly to ensure that APAARI stakeholders can have easy and immediate access to information and knowledge on agri-food research and innovations.

Following the guidance provided in the APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-2022, suggestions made during the Steering Committee Meeting of APARIS held on 30 October 2016, as well as the website assessment conducted in March 2016, the

APAARI Secretariat developed a new improved website that is envisioned to become an effective information-sharing and communication tool within the APAARI community and beyond. The EC members were impressed by the fresh and well-organized look of the new website and made the following suggestions:

- The link on “How to become an APAARI member” needs to be integrated to each page and sub-page for easy reference.
- TAP is a platform supported by the CDAIS project, financed by the European Union and implemented by Agrinatura and FAO. This needs to be reflected in the text and inclusion of the organizations’ logos.
- The main programmes need to be placed on the home page.
- APAARI needs to make use of its Blog.
- The KM/Communication Community to review the website and provide critical feedback to ensure linkages with member and partner organizations of APAARI.

The EC approved and launched the new website of APAARI

Agenda Item 12: Membership and Representation of NGOs, FO’s and Private Sector on APAARI

The Interim Executive Secretary presented the agenda item on membership and representation of NGOs, FOs and the private sector on the Executive Committee of APAARI. The APAARI Secretariat needs to systematically develop the necessary processes and approaches to implement decisions on APAARI membership of organizations, such as civil society organizations (NGOs and FOs), and the private sector, and to have their appropriate representation on the APAARI EC.

The exercise of scoping and mapping currently being undertaken by the APAARI Secretariat will greatly help in selecting these organizations for membership of APAARI and deciding on their representation in the EC. There is a need to identify key attributes and features of such organizations, such as type of organization, scope of work, geographic coverage, sectoral coverage, and willingness, which in turn will help identifying right type of organizations to be considered eligible for membership and representation.

The following suggestions were made by the EC:

- APAARI should focus on mobilizing membership from umbrella organizations that work with NGOs, FOs and the private sector, and not the individuals, to secure seats on APAARI EC.
- NGOs and other organizations to be considered for representation on EC should first become members of APAARI.
- Membership fee for these groups of stakeholders needs to be lower than that of affiliate members to attract them to join APAARI.
- The profile of targeted institutions needs to be studied for their suitability for APAARI membership and representation on EC.

- Expanding the APAARI partnership by targeting more organizations and institutions should be a priority.
- The constitutional change which may be required for the above purposes should be undertaken in a progressive manner.

The EC approved the development of processes and criteria to identify the representatives of civil societies (NGOs, FOs) and the private sector groups for APAARI membership and for representation on the Executive Committee.

Agenda Item 13: Tenure of Executive Secretary

The agenda item regarding the extension of tenure of Executive Secretary from two to three years was presented by the Interim Executive Secretary. It was clarified that in the vacancy announcement for the position of Executive Secretary, the tenure was given as three years as applicable to other professional staff of APAARI. The minimum three year-tenure was necessary to attract, recruit and retain qualified and well experienced professional from the regional and international markets for this key position. It was emphasized that the United Nations has the provision of 3+2+2 years for professional staff. Hence the three-year tenure of Executive Secretary was considered very appropriate. However, the APAARI constitution at present has a provision of two-year tenure and, therefore, APAARI issued the offer of employment with a two-year tenure to the new Executive Secretary - Dr Ravi Khetarpal. There was some discussion on how best to resolve this issue of satisfying the constitutional provision on one hand, and smoothly recruiting and retaining the new Executive Secretary appointed by the current EC on the other hand.

After appropriate discussions and due considerations, the EC decided to recommend to the APAARI General Assembly an amendment of Article 12 (Paragraph 22) of the APAARI constitution, to allow the new Executive Secretary to avail the three-year tenure during his current tenure of employment.

As per the Agenda Item 9, it is of paramount importance to amend /modify and bring appropriate changes to the APAARI Constitution so that APAARI improves its governance and development for its effectiveness in delivering on its vision and mission. There are quite a few ambiguities in the current constitution which need to be addressed.

The EC further considered the practical reality of the need to have three-year tenure and decided to issue a revised appointment letter with three-year term to the new Executive Secretary, subject to the above referred change in the APAARI Constitution by the General Assembly by the end of 2018.

Agenda Item 14: Update of the ASTI project

Dr Gert-Jan Stads, Senior Program Officer, IFPRI presented the agenda item regarding the update of ASTI Project. This project will be funded by ACIAR and will be jointly implemented by IFPRI and APAARI. The purpose of this presentation was to seek the views and endorsement of the EC for implementation of AST Project.

IFPRI found a big gap in Southeast Asia in terms of funding of the ASTI project. In June 2015, APAARI approached IFPRI on how much Southeast Asia invests in agricultural research and innovation. As there was no data available, this led to the development of a joint proposal to collect data and build capacity at the country level to monitor agricultural research at the national level. ACIAR in principle committed AUD one million for 2 years. The outputs of this project will help investment decisions at the country level. ASTI will facilitate access to the data through online tools. It will also examine performance, strengths, weaknesses and challenges of agricultural R&D in the region and evaluate the impact of past and future R&D investments. IFPRI is also looking for funding to include the Pacific in the project, as part of APAARI-IFPRI-ACIAR collaboration.

As part of APAARI-IFPRI-ACIAR collaboration, APAARI will recruit ASTI Coordinator, set up long-term collaborative alliances with NARS in participating countries to collect data, conduct an inception workshop, facilitate data collection, validate the data and prepare country publications, prepare a regional synthesis report, and facilitate stakeholder access to data and publications. Analysis will be done by IFPRI research fellow to assess strengths and weaknesses of national research systems in Southeast Asia, identify alternative future paths to overcome challenges, and set priorities for allocation of resources in agricultural research. ASTI will build a network of country focal points to ensure that in-country institutions submit data at regular intervals. Large-scale outreach will need to be done, to eventually embed ASTI in broader agricultural policy or M&E frameworks. Partnerships are critical to this project.

EC endorsed the proposal for implementation of the ASTI Project.

Agenda Item 15: Expanding the APAARI Network to Pacific Island Countries

The agenda item for expanding the APAARI Network to Pacific Island Countries was presented by the Dr Sergie Bang, Director General NARI, PNG and Vice Chairman, APAARI.

He highlighted that there are 22 small island countries and territories within the Pacific region. Out of these, 15 are independent states. Malnutrition is a silent emergency in Papua New Guinea, with one child in 13 dying before reaching the age of 5. Key issues and trends are low agricultural and food productivity, difficult access to rural finance, technology and markets, food price volatility, as well as issues of climate resilience and environmental sustainability.

The following suggestions were made to extend the APAARI network to the Pacific: i) special emphasis to be given to Pacific research priorities; ii) effective and meaningful engagement through collaborative research to be facilitated; iii) invitation for membership and increased participation to be made; and iv) technical personnel from the Pacific to join the APAARI secretariat and R4D programmes. The EC appreciated the suggestions and advised that APAARI should make necessary efforts to expand its activities in the Pacific region

Agenda Item 16: Remarks by incoming Executive Secretary, APAARI

The newly appointed Executive Secretary, Dr Ravi Khetarpal was invited to the ECM and familiarize himself with the organization and its management. In his remarks, he presented his vision to lead APAARI in its mission of strengthening agri-food research and innovation systems of Asia and the Pacific. He emphasized that APAARI needs to focus on the following:

- Design and implementation of innovative funding strategy
- Change in the perception of APAARI activities – implementing them as projects
- Diversification of partner portfolio to create a donor platform, taking into consideration political factors and learning about potential partners before APAARI brings them on board
- Identification of strategy for those members that cannot afford to pay membership
- Identification of operational targets for all APAARI strategies and prioritization of activities
- Determination of how each outcome leads to specific SDGs to ensure better funding
- Making APAARI a one-stop-shop in the field of Knowledge Management in agricultural research and development
- Business development for APAARI to be included in the terms of reference of the Outreach and Partnership Coordinator to better scope partnerships
- Mobilization of new member organizations
- Include in its programmes the role of certain unaddressed areas, such as microbial resources, marine biodiversity
- Enhancement of APAARI's visibility through greater engagement with the media

Agenda Item 17: Concluding Remarks by the Chair

Based on deliberations and discussions during the meeting and by considering the way forward for APAARI's operations, plans, opportunities and challenges, the APAARI Chairman, Dr Yusuf Zafar presented his concluding remarks. He reminded that the EC Meeting had reached a number of milestones, including: approving the biennial work plan for 2017-2018, income and expenditure plan 2017-2018, the audit report and financial statements, launching the new APAARI website, and endorsing new APAARI staff. He thanked all the EC members and special invitees for their cooperation and hoped that the incumbent staff would implement the recommendations made by the EC. He also reemphasized APAARI's need for continuous support and cooperation.

Agenda Item 18: Vote of Thanks by Interim Executive Secretary

Dr. Bhag Mal, Interim Executive Secretary, APAARI extended vote of thanks to the Chairman, Vice Chairman and all EC members, and special invitees for their active participation and valuable inputs, as well as those in the APAARI Secretariat who

directly or indirectly helped in organizing the meeting. He also expressed sincere thanks to Dr. Ravi Khetarpal, incoming Executive Secretary, and Dr. R. K. Tyagi, incoming APCoAB Coordinator for attending the meeting and sharing their opinions and vision for APAARI. He expressed satisfaction about the success of the meeting which could only be possible due to the support and cooperation of all the EC members, special invitees and staff colleagues. He expressed that there is no doubt that APAARI will continue to grow and make faster progress in the years ahead.

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