



Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI)



Progress Report July- December 2015

C/o Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
FAO RAP Annex Building, 202/1, Larn Laung Road
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Bangkok 10110, Thailand

PROGRESS REPORT ON APAARI ACTIVITIES

(July - December 2015)

The Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) is an apolitical, neutral, non-profit forum of National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) in the Asia-Pacific region and was established in 1990 at the initiative of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It has its headquarters at the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok. The main mission of APAARI is to promote the development of national agricultural research systems in the Asia-Pacific region through facilitation of intra-regional, inter-institutional, and international cooperation/partnership. APAARI has been active in fostering the overall agricultural development by addressing the concerns of hunger, poverty, environmental degradation and sustainability of agricultural production. It has completed 25 years of its existence with an impressive record of achievements.

APAARI organized/co-organized/ participated in several activities comprising meetings/policy dialogues/ workshops during July-December 2015. These include: i) APAARI Executive Committee Second Meeting; ii) High Level Policy Dialogue on Investment in Agricultural Research for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific; iii) Implementation of CRP Dryland Cereals Scholarship Program; iv) Implementation of the Action Plan of the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) in the Asia-Pacific Region; v) Development of APAARI Vision 2030; vi) Regional Consultation on Agroforestry: The Way Forward; vii) GFAR Constituent Assembly; viii) APCoAB Steering Committee Meeting; ix) Workshop on Development of Communication Strategies for Adoption of Agri-Biotechnology in the Asia-Pacific Region; x) International Symposium on Biopesticides and Biofertilizers for Sustainable Agriculture; xi) International Conference on Prevention and Control of Avian Influenza; xii) Multi-Country Observational Study Mission on Revitalizing Rural Economies for More Inclusive Development; xiii) APARIS Steering Committee Meeting; and xiv) Capacity Development Workshop on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation towards Measuring Outcomes and Impact.

A brief account of the accomplishments is presented here for kind information of APAARI members and partners.

I. Meetings/Expert Consultations/Conferences and other Activities

1. APAARI Executive Committee Meeting

The APAARI Executive Committee Meeting (ECM) was held at the Rama Gardens Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand on 10 December 2015 under the Chairmanship of Mr Somchai Charnnarongkul, Chairman, APAARI and Director General, DOA, Thailand. The meeting was attended by 44 participants including APAARI EC members, APAARI members and special invitees.

The following are the highlights of decisions and outcomes of the meeting.

- APAARI Progress Report May - November 2015 was endorsed and relevant aspects of this report will be included in the Progress Report: January - July 2016.

- During the period January-November 2015, two new Associate Members joined APAARI. One university upgraded its membership status from Affiliate to Associate Category. Besides, one university joined as new Affiliate Member.
- Audit Report and Audited Financial Statements as audited by APAARI External Auditor for the period January- October 2015 were endorsed.
- The APAARI Vision 2030 was presented, discussed and approved
- The Work Plan for January – April 2016 was endorsed by the Executive Committee. Further detailed Work Plan for the entire year 2016 will be developed and presented to the EC Meeting in May 2016. APAARI should take lead role in GCARD 3 since all donors, CGIAR centers, international agricultural research institutions (IARC's) and other stakeholders will be participating. This opportunity needs to be cashed by APAARI by raising all the relevant issues and highlighting the role of APAARI in the region.
- The Strategic Plan 2017-22 will be developed in the first half of 2016 by focussing on the key thematic thrusts as contained in the Vision 2030 document. The thematic thrusts will be addressed through the following APAARI implementation focus areas: foresight and visioning, promoting and advocating, partnership and collaboration, strengthening and developing capacities, knowledge management, and inclusion of women and youth.
- The proposal to create additional seat on the Executive Committee for the Higher Education Sector represented by the universities was endorsed.
- The proposal for recruitment of Administrative Assistant was endorsed.
- GCARD 3 will be held in Johannesburg South Africa on 5-8 April, 2016 and the national consultations are being organized by CGIAR in Bangladesh, Nepal and Vietnam. The High Level Policy Dialogue organized in Bangkok on 8-9 December 2015 is also a part of GCARD 3 process. The details on GCARD 3 are available on GFAR website. APAARI needs to identify representatives under some constituencies from the Asia-Pacific region for participation in GCARD 3.
- The COA, Chinese Taipei volunteered to host the next General Assembly Meeting which was supported by Dr Dyno Keatinge, AVRDC and Ms Esther, Penunia, AFA. It was agreed that the topic of Regional Expert Consultation will be decided later. A suggestion was made on consulting on successful agricultural innovations and lessons learned.

2. APCoAB Steering Committee Meeting

The XVII Steering Committee (SC) Meeting of Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology (APCoAB) was held at the Rama Gardens Hotel, Bangkok on the 10 December 2015. The SC was attended by eight members comprising SC members or their representatives and one special invitee and four observers.

The Chairman APAARI Mr Somchai Charnnarongkul, Director General (DG), Department of Agriculture (DOA), Thailand as Chair of SC APCoAB, announced that Thailand was in the process of getting their Biosafety Law to be presented to Parliament after Cabinet approval and stressed the importance of biotechnology. He then handed over the chairmanship to Dr Surmsuk Salaketch, DDG, DOA, Thailand, as he had to leave to attend another important meeting. Dr Surmsuk Salaketch chaired the APCoAB SC Meeting.

The APCoAB Coordinator, Dr Vilasini Pillai presented the activities under the various agenda items and the following are the major outcomes and decisions of the meeting.

- APCoAB Progress Report: May 2014 - November 2015 was endorsed.
- Audit Report and Audited Financial Statements as audited by APAARI External Auditor for the period January- October 2015 were endorsed.
- The Steering Committee approved the APCoAB Work Plan until April 2016 for implementation. As there will be another SC meeting in May 2016, the details of the other planned activities will be presented in that meeting. The major activities to be undertaken in the first quarter of 2016 include: i) redesigning of the APCoAB website; ii) regular update of the latest news in agricultural biotechnology developments; and iii) dialogue on Bt Brinjal in Bangladesh in collaboration with BARC/BARI/ ISAAA/ABSPII/MABIC on the 23-25 February 2016.
- One of the decisions made was to use the Theory of Change to chart the future of the APCoAB Program.

3. APARIS Steering Committee Meeting

The XII Meeting of the APARIS Steering Committee was held on 10 December 2015 at the Rama Gardens Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand under the chairmanship of Dr Surmsuk Salakpetch, Deputy Director General, Department of Agriculture, Thailand who represented the Chairman, APAARI. Besides, five members of the committee and special invitees Ms Jintawee Thaignam and Dr Margaret C. Yoovatana of DOA Thailand, and Dr Junne-Jih Chen of Taiwan Agricultural Research Institute (TARI) of COA, attended the meeting.

The Major outcomes and decisions taken are as follows:

- Dr Surmsuk proposed the agenda for approval of minutes of the XII meeting of the APARIS held on 22 April, 2014 at Hotel Royal Princess, Bangkok, Thailand, and the same were approved by the Committee Members.
- Ms Chanerin Maneechansook, Program Assistant, APARIS presented the Progress/Action Taken Report for the period May 2014 - November 2015. The Steering Committee appreciated the progress made by APARIS and approved the progress and action taken report.
- The Work Plan 2016 was approved which comprised: i) Collection of success stories on ICT in agriculture in Asia-Pacific region; ii) Regional Workshop on Open Journal System; (OJS); iii) maintenance of APARIS web space; iv) APAARI on CD-2016 development and distribution; and v) APAARI Newsletter: bi-annual (2 issues).
- APAARI should establish strategy to follow-up results/feedbacks on its activities as to show evidence and impact of activities to donors and sponsors. Also, the need was felt for improving APARIS capacity by recruiting an expert to implement APARIS programs and activities.
- Dr Raghunath Ghodake apprised the Committee on the progress of recruitment of Knowledge Management Coordinator. He informed that three applicants were shortlisted and invited for interview to be held on 11 December 2015. It was expected that the successful candidate would join APAARI in January 2016.

- The Steering Committee was apprised on the detailed Work Plan for 2016. A revised and appropriately planned budget for 2016 will be presented to the next SC meeting in May 2016 when a new Knowledge Management Coordinator joins APAARI.

4. High Level Policy Dialogue on Investment in Agricultural Research for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

APAARI in collaboration with the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Department of Agriculture (DOA), Thailand, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) organized the High Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on Investment in Agricultural Research for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific on 8-9 December 2015 at Rama Gardens Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand. The dialogue was also supported by Syngenta and Agricultural Research Technology Institute, Chinese Taipei.

The focus of the Dialogue was on discussing the direction, needs and mechanisms to enhance and improve investments (financial, infrastructure, capacity development and policy support) in agricultural research and innovation systems (including extension and education) that can contribute to improving the region's overall agriculture and agri-food systems and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The immediate purpose of the Dialogue was to catalyze policy/decision makers, re-sensitize NARS, and create an environment for increased resource allocation and congenial policy environment for agricultural research and innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.

The Policy Dialogue was inaugurated by Dr Sakchai Sriboonsue, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Government of Thailand in presence of Dr Kundhavi Kadiresan, ADG, FAO-RAP, Mr Somchai Charnnarongkul, Chair, APAARI and DG, DOA, Thailand, Dr Surmsuk Salakpetch, DDG, DOA, Thailand, and Dr Raghunath Ghodake, Executive Secretary, APAARI, and other participants.

A total of 131 participants from 31 countries attended the Policy Dialogue. The participants included high level policy makers, leaders of NARIs and NAROs, CG centres, research, innovation and extension experts, representatives of NGOs, farmers, youth and the private sector. These included 20 representatives from government departments/divisions, 35 representatives of the NARIs and NAROs, and 28 representatives of CSOs including NGOs. These came from the following countries: Australia (4), Bangladesh (5), Bhutan (2), Cambodia (1), China (1), Fiji (2), India (17), Indonesia (5), Iran (1), Japan (4), Lao People's Democratic Republic (2), Malaysia (2), Mongolia (2), Nepal (2), New Caledonia (1), Pakistan (1), Papua New Guinea (3), the Philippines (7), Republic of Korea (1), Singapore (2), Sri Lanka (1), Taiwan (2), Thailand (13) and Viet Nam (2). In addition, 23 representatives from international research organizations e.g. CGIAR centres, 8 from international development organizations e.g. the UN and IFIs, 11 from regional organizations e.g. APAARI, 3 from the private sector and 3 independent international consultants also participated.

The technical program was organized into seven theme-based plenary and parallel sessions as follows: Session I: Status and Outlook for Investment in Agricultural Research and

Innovation; Session II: Scoping Investments in Agricultural Research and Innovation - Addressing Current and Emerging Challenges; Parallel Session III (A): Scoping Investments in Agricultural Research and Innovation - Climate Smart and Sustainable Agriculture; Parallel Session III (B): Scoping Investments in Agricultural Research and Innovation - Knowledge Management for Sustainable Agriculture; Parallel Session III (C): Scoping Investments in Agricultural Research and Innovation - Capacity Development for Sustainable Agriculture; Session IV: Plenary – Discussion on outputs of Sessions II and III presented by rapporteurs; Session V: Impact Expectations from Investment in Agricultural Research and Innovation; Session VI: Innovative Funding Mechanisms; Session VII: Final Plenary - Reports featuring summary, highlights and recommendations from four Thematic Sessions presented by rapporteurs of different Sessions and General Discussion and Final Recommendations.

Twenty six keynote and resource papers were presented at the Dialogue. In addition, 14 panellists led the discussions in three sessions. Outputs and recommendations of each session were further discussed and finalized in the Final Plenary Session. Besides, 24 posters from NARS partners, CG Centers, Universities, NGOs and Private Sector were displayed highlighting their respective achievements.

Three major concluding statements emerged from the Policy Dialogue are as follows: i) Firstly, innovation needs to be central to a new paradigm – research outcomes in partnership for development and a small number of successes are the successes of the whole system; ii) Secondly, data, information and knowledge are power – baseline data, information and knowledge and trusted partnerships as part of the knowledge continuum in support of socioeconomic growth; and iii) Thirdly, impact is the end game and capacity building is the legacy – delivery on capacity building and effectively going through impact pathways.

The way forward and follow-up actions to contributing to the SDGs in the Asia-Pacific region were charted. These include: feed the Dialogue results into GCARD 3 global event; refine country reports and synthesis paper for an independent print; establish resource group in the Asia-Pacific region for advocacy and assistance; develop advocacy toolkit for structured application; and establish platform for on-going dialogue and enhancement

The further advanced way forward actions will include assessment and documentation of innovative funding mechanisms; refined and comprehensive scoping of investment options and priorities under different scenarios; and demand and partnership based efforts in national, sub-regional and regional strategic ARI4D planning for improved delivery and investment

5. Regional Consultation on Agroforestry: The Way Forward

World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), South Asia Regional Program, in collaboration with Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS), Indian Society of Agroforestry, Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) and National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS) organized a Regional Consultation on “Agroforestry: The Way Forward” on 8-10 October 2015 at NASC Complex, New Delhi - 110012.

A total of 126 participants from 12 countries, namely, India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and

Vietnam attended the Regional Consultation. The Conference was inaugurated by Shri Siraj Hussain, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Govt. of India, Dr Tony Simons, Director General, World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), Nairobi, Kenya was the Guest of Honour, while Dr R.S. Paroda, Former Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education, Govt. of India chaired the session. The consultation was organized in five Technical Sessions and five concurrent Panel Discussion Sessions apart from Inaugural and Plenary Sessions.

The participants of the Regional Consultation have agreed on the plan of action for promoting agroforestry in both Indian and regional contexts which was adopted as New Delhi Declaration.

6. Workshop on Development of Communication Strategies for Adoption of Agri-Biotechnology in the Asia-Pacific Region

The Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) and its program on biotechnology, the Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology (APCoAB), organized a workshop on Development of Communication Strategies for Adoption of Agri-Biotechnology in Asia and the Pacific on 28-29 September, 2015 at Chiang Rai, Thailand. The workshop was organized in collaboration with International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), Malaysian Biotechnology Information Centre (MABIC) and supported by Council of Agriculture (COA), Chinese Taipei. Dr Alongkorn Korntong, Deputy Director General, Department of Agriculture (DOA), Thailand who represented the Director General, DOA in the workshop, emphasized on the importance of plant biotechnology in enhancing agriculture productivity in a sustainable manner in the Asia-Pacific region but its successful adoption and implementation will depend on a number of critical factors including the public awareness and acceptance.

International experts from nine countries together with twenty-four agriculture researchers from 15 countries in Asia and the Pacific participated and shared their experiences as resource persons, scientists, regulators and communicators and deliberated on issues and bottlenecks in the adoption of agri-biotechnology in the Asia-Pacific region. They also discussed on policies, regulations and communication strategies that can expedite the adoption of agri-biotechnology in the Asia-Pacific region. It was emphasized that the key problems are no longer based around not having an adequate flow of technology in the region, but are based around not having commensurate communication and understanding of agri-biotechnology opportunities.

Proceedings of this workshop as well as a Communications Framework have been published. This framework is designed for research agencies and partners to assist them in developing strategies for communicating about agri-biotechnology and come up with recommendations and communication strategies that could expedite the adoption of biotech crops to harness its benefits in the Asia-Pacific region.

7. International Symposium on Biopesticides and Biofertilizers for Sustainable Agriculture

The Agricultural Technology Research Institute (ATRI) co-organised with APCoAB, COA and China Productivity Center, the International Symposium on Biopesticides and

Biofertilizers for Sustainable Agriculture at Chinese Taipei on 13-15 October 2015. A total of 120 participants from industry, regulators, and scientists from Universities and Research Institutes in Chinese Taipei as well as experts and officials from Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Indonesia attended the Symposium. The main objective of this Symposium was to understand registration systems, policies, regulation rules, development, management and marketing of biopesticides and biofertilizers of Southeast Asian countries.

The presentations covered the respective country laws and regulations on registration of biofertilizers and biopesticides as well as the latest research and development on biofertilizers and biopesticides. APAARI nominated Dr. Ganesan Krishnan from Malaysia to participate in the Symposium. The major outputs and recommendations emerged from the Symposium will be very useful to the NARS in the region.

8. International Conference on Prevention and Control of Avian Influenza

The Animal Health Research Institute (AHRI), APCoAB and COA, co-organised the International Conference on Prevention and Control of Avian Influenza at Chinese Taipei on 21-22 October 2015. The conference, discussed the issues about enhancing communication and collaboration among Asian countries to fight against the disease and provided opportunities to share information and experiences on prevention and control of avian influenza for government officials, researchers and stakeholders. The output of the conference was to establish a communication network for the international collaboration on co-defence mechanism, and to achieve the goal of fighting invasion and spread of avian influenza. The experts came from Japan, Chinese Taipei, USA and Korea participated. APAARI supported one participant from Vietnam, Dr Raghunath Ghodake, Executive Secretary of APAARI also attended this conference.

9. Multi-Country Observational Study Mission on Revitalizing Rural Economies for More Inclusive Development

The Council of Agriculture (COA), Executive Yuan, China Productivity Center and the Asian Productivity Center together with APAARI co-organised a Multi-Country Observational Study Mission on Revitalizing Rural Economies for More Inclusive Development on 14 -18 September 2015 in Chinese Taipei. The aim of the study mission was to study the policy and institutional settings for better revitalization of rural economies as well as to learn from the strategies, approaches, and successful models used to revitalize the host country's rural economies. The participants would then be able to formulate strategic action plans to utilize for the revitalization of their own rural economies and disseminate findings of the study mission in their own respective countries. The study mission consisted of visits to sites of successful cases of revitalization of local economies in the host country, theme presentations, sharing of experiences among member countries, and individual/ group exercises. APAARI nominated six participants from Vietnam, Nepal, the Philippines, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

10. Capacity Development Workshop on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation towards Measuring Outcomes and Impact

APAARI in collaboration with Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) and Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) jointly organized the Capacity Development

Workshop on 3-7 August 2015 at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Workshop provided the opportunity to participants to share their experiences in undertaking research projects in their respective countries. Presentations on necessary background information and evaluation concepts were made. Hands-on training helped the participants to orient themselves to PM&E framework and tools for better design, implementation and evaluation of projects. The workshop was attended by 31 project team leaders who are involved in orientating, planning and evaluating agricultural R&D projects from 18 countries in Asia and the Pacific. Four resource persons representing ACIAR and GFAR provided valuable inputs in the workshop.

Using the impact pathway framework to formulate project design and delivery will be challenging, but the participants showed a strong commitment to use these new skills in the future. Besides, the workshop provided an excellent opportunity to build supportive networks. Such networks are expected to assist in overall knowledge development, throughout the Asia-Pacific region that will be used in the future to continue to build the region's capacity to effectively undertake suitable evaluation of agricultural research projects.

The salient recommendations are as follows.

- It is necessary to consider developing a follow-up strategy to ensure that the knowledge gained from the workshop is being used, and that this use is valued.
- There is a need for similar workshops to be conducted periodically to train the new groups at both national and regional levels to enhance their knowledge and skills.
- A series of PM&E workshops should be conducted in order to continue to build the region's capacity to effectively undertake suitable evaluation of agricultural research projects.
- The training session on the use of economic impact assessment is every important. It is suggested to extend time on learning the "DREAM" software package, and there is a need to organize the workshop on this topic itself.
- There is an urgent need to strengthen collaboration in advocacy and capacity building at the national, sub-regional and regional level which is very crucial to assist in overall knowledge development throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

11. GFAR Constituent Assembly

The GFAR Constituent Assembly organized in Bangkok on 24-26 August 2015 brought together over 100 representative stakeholders from all sectors and all regions, to consider and renew the role, purpose and governance of GFAR. APAARI facilitated the organization of the Constituent Assembly. This landmark Assembly formed a key step in a process of governance review, reform and renewal of the Global Forum, responding to the fact that much has changed in the world of agricultural research and innovation since the Forum was first established in 1996.

Participants in the Assembly were selected from each region by regional fora and networks, and globally, as involving a legitimate and representative cross-section of organizations and networks, as identified by the multi-stakeholder Strategic Governance Working Group. They included farmers' organizations, consumer associations, NGOs/CSOs, the private sector in various forms, national public research and rural advisory services, higher education, regional fora for agricultural research and innovation, FAO and other multilateral organizations,

international agricultural research centres, women's groups, youth groups, development banks and foundations, and financing and technical partners.

12. Implementation of CRP Dryland Cereals Scholarship Program

The objective of the CGIAR Research Program (CRP) on Dryland Cereals Scholarship Program is to: i) develop a new cadre of scientists with core competencies, knowledge and experience in advanced science and technologies that address productivity and quality enhancements, post-harvest value and policy interventions for the dryland cereals; ii) encourage and develop excellence in fundamental and practical research capabilities of women and early-career scientists in developing countries to address global challenges in agriculture, with a focus on dryland cereals, and iii) strengthen and enhance human resource capacities of national agricultural research institutions in the developing countries in Asia.

Six candidates from Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, Sri P.V.N. Telangana State University for Veterinary, Animal, Fishery Sciences. Hyderabad; Field Crops Research & Development Institute, Mahailuppallama, Sri Lanka; Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University, China; and B.A. College of Agriculture, Anand Agricultural University, Anand were selected for their Ph.D. research work.

The Letters of Agreements between APAARI and the respective Universities/Institutions have been signed. The total allocated scholarship grant is USD 150,000 out of which USD 64,212 is allocated for scholarship of these six candidates. Out of this allocated amount, USD 19,263 (30%) amount has been disbursed in the first tranche to the respective Universities/Institutions to support the Ph.D. research work of the selected candidates. The CRP DC program has now been scaled down by ICRISAT due to financial constraints and therefore the applications invited in the second round will not be entertained.

13. Implementation of the Action Plan of the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) in the Asia-Pacific Region

The Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) has entered into agreement with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) since September 2015 to support the implementation of the action plan of the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) in the Asia-Pacific region. The agreement focuses on increasing capacities of public and private institutions, and strengthening organizations and networks to support innovation and the transition toward more sustainable agricultural production systems. The details of activities carried out during September – November 2015 are as follows: i) Reproduction of TAP brochure, ii) Reproduction of TAP flyer, iii) Production of TAP poster, iv) TAP awareness raising activities during the Regional Workshop on Development of Communication Strategies for Adoption of Agri-Biotechnology in Asia and the Pacific on 28-29 September 2015 at Chiang Rai, Thailand and v) TAP awareness raising activities during the International Conference on Prevention and Control of Avian Influenza, 21-22 October 2015, Taiwan.

14. APAARI Vision 2030

Keeping in view the key needs, key challenges and emerging opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region, APAARI Vision 2030 was developed following the agreed step-wise action

plan involving the development of initial draft by the resource person, receiving the comments and assimilating these in the draft, face-to-face brainstorming exercise, refinements in the light of comments and, suggestions from the group, circulation of draft to wider group including APAARI members, partners and other relevant stakeholders, incorporating the suggestions, articulating the terms and messages based on approved SDGs, finalization of the draft and circulation to APAARI members for any final suggestions/refinements, presentation and approval by the Executive Committee. The salient points of Vision-2030 include: APAARI's core values; vision, mission, goal statements; APAARI's ambitions; new competencies; and strategic framework including thematic thrusts and implementation focus areas. The key elements of APAARI Vision are as below:

Vision: Strengthened Research and Innovations for Sustainable Agricultural Development in Asia and the Pacific.

Mission: Promoting, coordinating and strengthening agriculture and agri-food research and innovation systems through partnerships and collaboration, capacity development and advocacy for sustainable agricultural development in Asia and the Pacific.

Goal: The Asia-Pacific region benefits from and values APAARI's leadership and contributions to developing agriculture and agri-food research and innovation systems.

II. Information Dissemination and Publications

1. APAARI progress report

Six monthly progress report of APAARI for the period January – June 2015 was prepared and widely circulated to APAARI members, partners and stakeholders. It was also posted on APAARI website at <http://www.apaari.org/publications/apaari-progress-report-january-june-2015.html>

2. APAARI website

The APAARI website is being regularly updated with APAARI's news and activities, and general events of specific interest on agricultural research and development in Asia-Pacific region. APAARI reports and proceedings have all been uploaded on the website for free access. Other contents and database were also updated regularly. Besides, APAARI's account on Facebook has also been created to widen communication channels and to capture the views of young professionals.

3. Web-based and CD Information

i) APAARI Web Space

APAARI Website www.apaari.org provides access to 41 success stories and status reports, 48 issues of APPARI Newsletter, and 62 reports and proceedings of expert consultations. The website provides links to NARS in Asia and the Pacific region, partners like ACIAR, FAO, CGIAR, GFAR, AARINENA, FARA, CACAARI and directories such as research networks, projects database, ASTI databases, regional research networks, etc. The website is being updated on regular basis with upcoming events, activities completed and latest publications with introduction of discussion forum, RSS feed Web 2.0 and social networking tools for dissemination of agricultural research information efficiently.

To improve effective dissemination of information, APAARI has been implementing a communication strategy in phased manner. The APAARI website domain and dedicated webhosting services have been renewed.

APAARI website (<http://www.apaari.org>) has more than 300 linkages to various national, regional and international institutions, networks and other relevant organizations.

ii) APAARI Website Usage Statistics

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits
Jul 2015	4,849	10,496	97,127	191,943
Aug 2015	4,162	8,810	66,981	165,919
Sep 2015	8,349	17,091	61,534	152,642
Oct 2015	7,566	15,229	51,244	149,704
Nov 2015	5,550	11,937	87,936	157,578
Dec 2015	5,068	11,677	97,447	165,898
Total	76,915	148,917	968,955	2,138,492

APAARI website had received more than 2.14 million hits during the last six months. Among the total number of 148,917 visits, more than half were unique visitors indicating that the website also attracted new comers. On an average, the numbers of pages that visitors accessed per visit were seven. APAARI website attracted visitors from many countries mainly form USA, Ukraine, Germany, India, China, France, and Japan. Top ten downloads from the site were publications on Success Stories highlighting the best practices of agricultural development in many countries from Asia-Pacific region. This reflects usefulness of APAARI’s efforts made so far in popularizing the good agricultural practices in various fields of agriculture for their faster adoption elsewhere.

iii) Database Platforms

Under the implementation of APAARI Communication Strategy 2010-2015, APAARI launched Contact Database on its website. It helps to search contact details of APAARI Members by sub-region, country, category, area of activity etc., and allows downloading of contact information. NARS and National Information Nodal Points (NINPs) are welcome to register in this platform and add contacts of their constituencies. The design of databases on ARD Experts and ARD Projects was also completed. The database platforms are available at APAARI website: <http://www.apaari.org/ard-database>. The database development is progressing by adding more information on experts and projects.

4. APCoAB Website

APCoAB website (www.apcoab.org) provides information on APCoAB organization, objectives, activities, and news and events on agricultural biotechnology. It provides access to APCoAB publications comprising success stories, status reports and proceedings of expert consultation and other group meetings. Databases of agricultural biotechnology institutions in Asia-Pacific and biosafety regulations of Asia-Pacific countries are also available at this website. These resources are updated on regular basis and all stakeholders are being kept fully apprised of new developments.

5. Publications

Following new publications were brought out by APAARI during the period under report:

i) APAARI Newsletter (half yearly)

APAARI Newsletter, January – June, 2015 issue was published and widely circulated to its members and other stakeholders and was also posted on APAARI website at <http://www.apaari.org/publications/newsletter-december-2015.html>

ii) Workshop on Development of Communication Strategies for Adoption of Agri-Biotechnology in the Asia-Pacific Region: Proceedings and Recommendations

The publication reports the proceedings of the workshop on Development of Communication Strategies for Adoption of Agri-Biotechnology in the Asia-Pacific Region held at Chiang Rai, Thailand on 28-29 September, 2015 and details are available on APAARI website at <http://www.apaari.org/publications/apcoab-chiangrai-2015.html>

iii) Capacity Development Workshop on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation towards Measuring Outcomes and Impacts: Proceedings

The publication reports the proceedings of the Capacity Development Workshop on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation towards Measuring Outcomes and Impacts held at MARDI, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 3-7 August, 2015. This includes the outcomes, feedback and recommendations. Details are available on APAARI website at <http://www.apaari.org/publications/pme-2015-proceedings.html>

iv) Success Stories on Information and Communication Technologies for Agriculture and Rural Development

This publication showcases seven case studies: (i) Digital Green: Leverage social networks for agricultural extension (ii) e-Krishok: Making ICT work for farmers-a 360 degree ICT-enabled solution to empower farmers (iii) Adapting consumer technology to combat illegal fishing in Timor-Leste (iv) Mobile GAP Assessment System : New technology for family farms involved in quality assurance schemes (v) The revolutionary PRIDETM model by mKRISHI – empowering farmers to live with dignity (vi) Mobile Market Information Service: A Pilot project of ICT use for smallholder farmers in Papua New Guinea (vii) Nano Ganesh – a revolutionary ICT tool for farm irrigation. Details are available on APAARI website at http://www.apaari.org/publications/icts_17_sep_2015.html

v) HLPD - Abstracts of Presentations

This publication includes 26 abstracts of keynote and other invited presentations from the resource persons. This was made available to the participants of high level policy dialogue in advance for their information and was posted on APAARI website. The details are available on the website at <http://www.apaari.org/publications/hlpd-abstracts-of-presentations-2015.html>

vi) HLPD - Scoping Paper

This publication gives the introduction, changing role of agriculture in development, changing demands on agriculture in Asia and the Pacific, future of agriculture research and innovation and the policy dialogue including its goal, purpose, organization, participants' representation, organizers and sponsors and expected outputs and outcomes. The details are available on the website at <http://www.apaari.org/publications/hlpd-scoping-paper-2015.html>

Membership Drive

During the period July – December 2015, Assam Agricultural University (AAU), Jorhat, India joined APAARI as Associate Member. The Central Agricultural University (CAU), Imphal, India upgraded its membership from Affiliate to Associate category and the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Dharwad, India joined APAARI as Affiliate Member. Currently, APAARI has 64 members including 20 NARS members, 24 Associate Members, 10 Affiliate Members, and 10 Reciprocal Members.

III. APAARI Participation in Meetings organized by Other Fora

Dr Raghunath Ghodake, Executive Secretary, APAARI

- Regional Consultation on Agroforestry: The Way Forward at NASC Complex, DPS Marg, New Delhi; 8-10 October, 2015
- International Conference on Avian Influenza Prevention and Control at New Taipei City, Taiwan; 21-22 October 2015

Dr Bhag Mal, Senior Consultant, APAARI

- Regional Consultation on Agroforestry: The Way Forward at NASC Complex, DPS Marg, New Delhi; 8-10 October 2015
- XXIII International Grassland Congress – IGC 2015 at New Delhi; 20-24 November 2015
- National Dialogue on “Innovation Extension Systems for Farmers Empowerment” at New Delhi; 17-19 December 2015

Dr J.L. Karihaloo, Senior Consultant, APAARI

- Regional Consultation on Agroforestry: The Way Forward at NASC Complex, DPS Marg, New Delhi; 8-10 October 2015
- National Dialogue on “Innovation Extension Systems for Farmers Empowerment” at New Delhi; 17-19 December, 2015

Dr Vilasini Pillai, APCoAB Coordinator

- Multi-Country Observational Study Mission on Revitalizing Rural Economies for More Inclusive Development” at Taipei, Chinese Taipei, 14-18 September 2015
- International Symposium on Biopesticides & Biofertilizers for Sustainable Agriculture at Taipei, Chinese Taipei, 13-15 October 2015
- Stakeholder Workshop: Strategic Planning to Accelerate Agri-biotechnology Agenda in Malaysia, 27-28 October 2015.

IV. International/Regional Collaboration

During the period under report, APAARI had close collaboration with GFAR, FAO RAP, CGIAR Centers, ACIAR, COA, CAPSA, and organized several activities/programs including

organization of workshops/ conferences/ training programs with funding support from them including the APCoAB and APARIS programs.

V. Forthcoming APAARI Meetings/Workshops

The following APAARI meetings/policy dialogues/workshops are planned to be organized during January-June 2016.

- Policy Dialogue on Transforming towards Knowledge Based Agriculture in Southeast Asia, Laos, February/March 2016
- APAARI Executive Committee (EC) Meeting at Bangkok in May 2016
- APCoAB Steering Committee (SC) meeting at Bangkok in May 2016
- APARIS Steering Committee (SC) Meeting at Bangkok in May 2016

VI. Other Items

APAARI Staff Changes

Ms Martina Spisiakova joined APAARI as Knowledge Management Coordinator on 21 December 2015. She is a Slovak national and has over 15 years of international experience in knowledge management and other related areas. She has the responsibility of execution of programs/activities relating to knowledge management under Asia-Pacific Agricultural Research Information system (APARIS), a program of APAARI.

Ms Khattiya Ounjai joined APAARI on September 2015 and Ms Thunsitaram Thanaphatrujira joined as Administrative Associate in November 2015. Ms Chanerin Maneechansook left APAARI on 31 December 2015 and joined at UNESCAP, Bangkok.

VII. Epilogue

In view of the emerging challenges and the tremendous opportunities available, APAARI activities are being expanded to effectively address the expectations of its members and other stakeholders in the region. This has been possible due to cooperation extended all by all stakeholders, which is duly acknowledged. APAARI looks forward to strengthened collaboration with its members and partners in undertaking joint programs/activities to achieve its goals under the new vision 2030.

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