



**ASIA-PACIFIC ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
INSTITUTIONS (APAARI)**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
(2/2017)**

PROCEEDINGS



Bangkok, Thailand

12 November 2017



**ASIA-PACIFIC ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS
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Proceedings

The second meeting of the Executive Committee (EC) of APAARI for the year 2017 was held on 12 November 2017 at Rama Gardens Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand, under the chairmanship of Dr Yusuf Zafar, Chairman, APAARI and Chairman, Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), Islamabad, Pakistan. The meeting was attended by EC members or their representatives, Special Invitees and staff of the APAARI Secretariat. (Annex 1)

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Introduction

Dr Ravi Khetarpal, Executive Secretary (ES), welcomed the Chairman, Vice Chairman and EC members, Special Invitees and APAARI Secretariat staff to the second meeting of the year 2017. Dr Yusuf Zafar, Chairman, formally introduced all the participants of the Executive Committee Meeting (ECM). The ES presented key agenda items: Action Taken Report on recommendations of ECM (1/2017), including responses of EC members on the tenure of ES as per agenda 13 of EC 1/2017; Progress Report of APAARI for July-October 2017; membership fee status (as on 31 October 2017); revised work plan for the biennium 2017-2018; income and expenditure plan for the biennium 2017-2018; APAARI Secretariat – Way Forward, including administrative and finance management reforms, as well as updates and new initiatives including recruitments. Furthermore, presentations to be made by some EC members were highlighted. The ES also stressed that the present ECM would be reviewing only four months of work (July-October 2017) of the Secretariat as the previous EC meeting was held in July 2017.

Agenda Item 2: Opening Remarks by Chairman and Launch of ASTI Project

Dr Yusuf Zafar, Chairman, welcomed all the EC members and participants. In his opening remarks, Dr Zafar appreciated the efforts for recruitment of the Executive Secretary; Coordinator, APCoAB; Coordinator, ASTI; and Coordinator, Knowledge Management. He emphasized to take initiatives for global partnership by APAARI towards achieving SDG #17. He stressed that partnership of APAARI with ASEAN and SAARC countries should be developed. Dr Zafar asserted that APAARI should expand its activities within the framework of the Strategic Plan (2017-2022). He mentioned that there is scope for mobilization of funds to accomplish the additional activities through partnership with COA, ACIAR, IFPRI, CropLife Asia, and enhanced membership of other countries in Asia-Pacific region. To achieve the mandated activities, the APAARI secretariat should be strengthened with transparent finance management system as per international standards.

The Chairman then highlighted the importance of APAARI-IFPRI collaboration on ASTI project (funded by ACIAR), which would finally contribute to developing congenial policies and advocacy tools and establish a resource group to facilitate dialogue on enhanced investments in agri-food innovations in South East Asian countries. He then officially launched the ASTI project.

Agenda Item 3: Approval of Agenda by the Executive Committee

The proposed agenda of ECM (Annex 2), which was circulated to EC members in advance, was presented by the ES and was unanimously approved by the EC without any modification.

Agenda Item 4: Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous EC Meeting (1/2017)

The ES presented the salient features and key decisions from the proceedings of the previous meeting (1/2017), held in Bangkok, on 14 July 2017 (Annex 3).

The EC confirmed the Minutes of the previous meeting with a minor change as addition of word 'FAO' on page # 8 of the Minutes of previous meeting.

Agenda Item 5: Action Taken Report of the Recommendations of EC Meeting (1/2017)

The ES presented the action taken report (ATR), which included the items for which action has been taken and also those for which actions were being taken on various suggestions and recommendations as reflected in the proceedings of different agenda items of the previous EC meeting of 14 July 2017 (Annex 4). He highlighted that a Consultant for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of APAARI activities will be shortlisted soon and a list of M&E specialists has been provided by Dr Mellissa Wood of ACIAR. Also ACIAR has increased funding, which would permit to undertake the task now. The Chairman invited comments and suggestions from the EC members, which were made as follows:

- i. EC complemented APAARI for presenting a comprehensive ATR.
- i. APAARI should develop qualitative indicators for M&E purpose, as the activities of APAARI cannot be quantified.
- ii. A Capability Statement of APAARI should be prepared.
- iii. Asian countries have invested heavily in agricultural biotechnology, therefore, impact of agricultural biotechnology should be assessed.
- iv. Biotechnology is beyond GMOs, therefore, activities should be taken up for application of biotechnology for molecular breeding, sustainable use and management of genetic resources and other areas of agriculture.
- v. Organizations like CropLife Asia may be a good partner to foster the cause of agricultural biotechnology in the region. CropLife Asia is active in ASEAN countries and expressed the desire to work with APAARI for the common interests of both organizations.

EC approved the ATR including the tenure of ES from two years to three years, which will be put up in next General Assembly Meeting for appropriate amendment in the Constitution of APAARI.

Agenda Item 6: APAARI Progress Report July 2017 - October 2017

The ES presented the progress report to apprise the members about the progress made by APAARI during the period July-October 2017 (Annex 5). The progress report covered major events/preparations undertaken by APAARI, APCoAB, progress in the FAO projects on KM and information sharing, membership drive, project planning and organizing, collaboration, participation in meetings organized by other organizations, general scoping of partnerships, new recruitments, and ASTI project etc.

The EC members were requested to provide comments and suggestions. They also appreciated the new team of APAARI, especially for initiating technical and other activities in a short period of time.

EC endorsed the Progress Report for the period July-October 2017.

Agenda Item 7: Membership and Fee Payment Status (as on 31 October 2017)

The ES presented the membership status of APAARI as on 31 October 2017 (Annex 6a, b). He mentioned that the APAARI Secretariat, its partners and stakeholders continued their efforts to mobilize and broaden membership of APAARI. This paid off in terms of increased membership from which stands as 71 at present, with addition of the Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai, India, which joined as a new affiliate member during October 2017. The membership fee generated until October 2017 was to the tune of USD 229,500 of the total anticipated amount of USD 343,000 for the year 2017, which included the arrears from few members. The ES requested suggestions to help the Secretariat in further mobilization of the membership.

EC endorsed the membership and fee status.

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

The APAARI Secretariat had developed a detailed Work Plan for the biennium 2017-2018, in line with APAARI's Strategic Plan 2017-2022 and presented it in the EC meeting of 14 July 2017. The revised plan (as agreed and suggested in the previous EC meeting) was presented in the current meeting following the structure of APAARI's key programs – Knowledge Management, Partnership and Networking, Capacity Development, Advocacy, Women and Youth, APCoAB and APAARI Governance and Development.

Firstly, the ES presented key elements of the Work Plan focusing on the status and revamping of APCoAB activities, replacing APARIS with the Knowledge Management Program of APAARI, and ASTI project. The following was highlighted:

- The activities and horizons of APCoAB need to be enhanced by including bioresources. As of now, APCoAB may thus be known as the Asia-Pacific Consortium of Agricultural Biotechnology and Bioresources instead of Asia-Pacific Consortium of Agricultural Biotechnology. This change would be of strategic importance for APAARI as it would include an important component of one of the four thematic areas of APAARI (related to

natural resources management), and make the application of biotechnology more relevant for stakeholders.

- The existing Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Information System (APARIS) will be merged under the Knowledge Management (KM) Program of APAARI. There is no need for a separate Consortium, as all APARIS activities are now covered under the KM Program regularly reviewed by the EC. This would also help in economizing the budget without affecting the output and quality of work.
- The ASTI project (APAARI-IFPRI Collaboration) is an important and prestigious project just launched for South-East Asian countries and its Coordinator Ms Norah Omot has just joined APAARI.

The EC agreed with these suggestions to expand the scope and name of APCoAB by including bioresources, include APARIS under the KM Program with no steering committee of its own.

This session was followed by presentations on the revised work plan (Annex 7). The presentations and observations of EC members are highlighted below:

Knowledge Management – The KM presentation included stakeholder mapping of members and potential members, revised work plan related to Partnership and Networking, Capacity Development, Advocacy, Women and Youth. The presentations were made by Martina Spisiakova, KM Consultant, and Celilu Bitong, KM Officer.

Martina Spisiakova presented the key conclusions of the stakeholder mapping exercise. The exercise has been conducted to (i) determine and assess key stakeholders within AFRIS; (ii) understand stakeholders' key business areas; (iii) target and prioritize APAARI stakeholders for future partnership and activities (projects, resource mobilization, webinars, moderated discussions, participation in events); (iv) identify gaps within membership and recommend strategies for (re)engagement; (v) mobilize new members; and (vi) develop targeted communication and engagement strategies.

The previous list of all primary stakeholders has been modified to assess both members and non-members. Firstly, basic information was collected in terms of (i) institutional category; (ii) key focus; (iii) areas of contribution to APAARI's collective action (KM, CD, partnership, advocacy); and (iv) expectations from APAARI (KM, CD, partnership, advocacy). In addition, for members, the information also included the current status in APAARI, year of joining APAARI, membership fee, status of payment of membership fee for the last three years, and unique facts e.g. extent of involvement in APAARI activities, EC membership.

Secondly, interest in APAARI's collective action was assessed in terms of high, medium and low: (i) for members, based on the regularity of membership fees, communication on withdrawal from APAARI, participation in APAARI activities, completion of stakeholder survey; and (ii) for non-members, based on their feedback in the stakeholder survey, website research (synergies in mission and vision with that of APAARI), past/current relations with APAARI.

Thirdly, influence over agri-food research and innovation systems (AFRIS) was assessed in terms of high, medium and low: for members and non-members, based on organizations' outreach (national and international), funding from their governments or international donors (ref. APAARI

country papers on investment), references in publications, and university ranking (national and international).

Potential members have also been identified in terms of high, medium and low based on: (i) expressions of interest in membership, partnership and collaboration in/with APAARI by e-mail or in various meetings; (ii) initiated scoping activities for membership by APAARI; and (iii) past and/or current involvement in joint activities.

The preliminary results showed that out of 70 members (as of beginning of October 2017): (i) 56, 9, 5 showed high, medium, and low interest in APAARI, respectively; (ii) 49, 4, 17 showed high, medium, low influence over AFRIS, respectively. This indicates the need for different (targeted) engagement strategies to sustain the current membership. Other (non-member) stakeholders that were subject to the assessment have come to 484 and include: NARS, HE, CSO – NGOs, FOs, WO/YOs, IARCs, international development organizations, regional and global fora, and the private sector. Out of these, the assessment identified 42 potential members on which APAARI needs to focus its efforts for membership/partnership mobilization. The stakeholder mapping sheet has become APAARI's primary tool for monitoring stakeholders. It is a living document that will be continuously updated as a basis for action and stakeholder engagement.

Celilu Bitong updated the participants on KM activities related to website upgradation, publications and other KM projects, and presented the Work Plan for the 2018 with the following highlights:

- As part of APAARI's efforts to improve KM, making it more effective to facilitate and share knowledge among its partners and stakeholders, a continuous implementation of existing activities on development and dissemination of information through the Newsletter, APAARI Network Highlights (ANH), progress reports, and constant updates of the website and social media platforms, will be ensured in 2018.
- The APAARI website now has more organized and formatted content, which will require more improvement for 2018. Social media icons are already integrated on all pages of the site including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Blog. Managing the contents of the site includes integration of old resources and publications into archives, and now puts more focus on harvesting stories, particularly related to capacity development for agricultural innovation systems (CD for AIS) and e-agriculture, as planned for 2018. The migration of the old APCoAB website from the previous APCoAB server to the APAARI server is also under way. Continuous improvement and updating of the website is therefore planned for 2018. An integration of APCoAB KM within APAARI KM Program is also considered.
- The Community of Practice (CoP) of KM has already been established through the focal points of member and partner organizations. APAARI staff's attendance at various meetings will enable to more networking facilitating connections for future engagement.
- The draft KM and Communication Strategy will be finalized and enforced in 2018. Apart from current online and face-to-face interactions, finding the right online platform to connect is planned for the first quarter of 2018.
- For the e-Agriculture project with FAO-RAP Bangkok, a new Letter of Agreement (LoA) is being signed with increased budget and new capacity development activities on the use of drones in agro-advisory services.

- APAARI is also implementing the Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS) project under the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) hosted by FAO Rome. A webinar with universities to raise awareness about the Common Framework on CDAIS and the importance of functional capacities ('soft skills') has been organized by APAARI to take place after the ECM. FAO, GCHERA and GFAR are important partners in this activity.

The EC was pleased to note the progress made on KM and APPARI's participation in key projects of FAO. The importance of the stakeholder mapping that was just concluded was also stressed. The EC members noticed that the mapping indicated about 40 per cent of the potential members being at the level of medium/low importance. As such, the membership drive may need more attention by APAARI and membership expansion should be centre-productive. It was also pointed out that knowledge sharing with the Pacific requires different strategies to be explored by APAARI due to poor internet connectivity in this sub-region. Many activities such as webinars might not be accessible.

Recommendations

- i. On the basis of stakeholder mapping, gap analysis and lessons learned from this exercise, APAARI should develop a stakeholder mapping tool and a strategic plan to fill the existing gaps, to foster future partnerships and enroll new members.

APCoAB – The APCoAB presentation was made by Dr Rishi Tyagi, Coordinator, APCoAB, and it included the expansion of activities under the APAARI-COA Program for 2018, additional requirements of the funds and proposal of Steering Committee of APCoAB.

The EC was pleased to see the new dimension given to APCoAB in APAARI. They were convinced that APAARI's presence in Asia-Pacific should increase by enhanced activities on biotechnology and bioresources. CoA, the main sponsor of APCoAB also supported this new dimension of APCoAB. It was felt that a needs assessment for agricultural biotechnology and bioresources management needs to be conducted for the Pacific region while developing a future work plan. EC also appreciated the proposed idea for initiating APAARI-CropLife Asia partnership in capacity building on regulatory system, non-GMOs technology and advocacy. CropLife Asia has members from 91 countries including 15 countries from Asia-Pacific. It is working in the areas of trade compliance in the seed sector, capacity building and advocacy of policies in biotechnology and seeds, where collaboration with APAARI can be effectively developed to serve the common interests of both organizations in the region. The EC also agreed on making the Steering Committee of APCoAB to be functional at the earliest, as per the Terms of References of the Steering Committee.

Recommendations

- i. The expansion of scope of APCoAB mandate with additional activities related to bioresources should be considered under APAARI-COA work plan (2018-2020), as Asia-Pacific region is very rich in bioresources. The additional activities may be implemented in 2018, subject to availability of funds.

- ii. Since COA budget for 2018 has already been approved by the Taiwan government, it will be difficult for COA to financially contribute for expanded activities during 2018. However, for 2019 and 2020, COA agrees in principle to enhance the budget under the APAARI-COA program.
- iii. Content management window of APCoAB should remain separate on the APAARI website to manage the content of APCoAB with useful information and databases related to agricultural biotechnology and bioresources.
- iv. Amelioration of underutilized crops may be deleted in the work plan of 2018, as the Expert Consultation is being organized immediately after this meeting from 13-15 November 2017.
- v. Perspective ‘Success Stories’ should be planned and eminent researchers should be identified in advance.
- vi. Documentation of Bt brinjal in Bangladesh and Rice Biotechnology in Asia-Pacific is important, which will be useful for other countries in the region.
- vii. Biotechnology experts from advanced universities of Japan, South Korea or Taiwan should be included in the Steering Committee of APCoAB (2018-2019).
- viii. The following Steering Committee of APCoAB (2018-2019) was recommended by the EC:

Chairman, APAARI, Thailand	Chairman
Director General, International Affairs, COA, Taiwan	Vice Chairman
Representative of ACIAR	Member
Representative of NARS	Member
Representative of CG Centre (Bioversity International)	Member
Expert in Agriculture Biotechnology from Advanced University	Member
Representative from CropLife Asia	Member
Executive Secretary, APAARI	Member
Coordinator, APCoAB	Member Secretary

ASTI – The presentation was made by Ms Norah Omot, ASTI Coordinator, which included the project background and quarter-wise tentative work plan. The highlights of the ASTI presentation are as follows:

- ASTI data is important to monitor agricultural R&D resources to understand trends, identify gaps, set future investment priorities, better coordinate agricultural R&D across institutes, regions and commodities, and assess the contribution of agricultural R&D to agricultural and economic growth in general.
- The project is supported by ACIAR and jointly led by APAARI and IFPRI in close collaboration with NARIs of South East Asian countries and the Pacific.
- The country coverage includes: Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.
- The project comprises of 3 components: Data collection and reporting; Analysis; and Capacity engagement & outreach.
- APAARI will be the long-term home of ASTI in Asia-Pacific.

- Brief annual plan for 2018 was proposed and will include: preparations for data collection (Q1); initiating data collection (Q2); undertaking processing survey (Q3); and initiating country publications (Q4).

The EC remarked that ASTI project is very important since its outcomes will be helpful to policy makers in national systems. Dr Vincent Lee expressed his desire to explore the possibility of COA partnership with ASTI project to join and/or sponsor ASTI project.

Regarding overall presentations of the Work Plan, the EC complimented the APAARI team for their outstanding accomplishments made during a very short period (July-October 2017). The EC approved the Revised Work Plan for implementation during 2017-2018 with some suggestions/and subject to availability of additional funds.

Agenda Item 9: Income and Expenditure Plan for the Biennium 2017-2018

The ES presented income and expenditure figures as compiled under various major heads summarized to have an insight into and estimates of the status and position of financial resources, as well as how these could be managed effectively for efficient functioning of APAARI. (Annex 8). Besides, a shift to a new financial management system was also presented to improve APAARI's effectiveness and efficiency. This includes accounting for income and expenditures from 2018 onwards, while meeting the international standards and donor requirements.

The carry-over of the budget was USD 155,531 during 1 August 2017. The balance amount to carry forward to 2018 is estimated at USD 161,624 (as against USD 196,198 presented in the ECM 1/2017 of July 2017), and the available reserve (fixed deposit) to remain at USD 914,293 (Annex 6 a).

It was highlighted that the total revenue expected to be generated during the year 2017 (from membership, partners and projects) will be to the tune of USD 420,831 and the total expenses foreseen until December will be to the tune of USD 259,107.

The following suggestions were made by the EC:

- i. Indirect/direct cost ratio is high even without including the overhead, therefore, partition of budget needs be done to reduce the ratio of indirect/direct cost.
- ii. The prediction of budget for 2019 and 2020 is very conservative as the indirect costs are too high. The ES and Coordinators need to be actively engaged in fund raising to increase the top line. APAARI should develop a strategy to raise funds, which may be presented in the next EC meeting.
- iii. Reserved amount should be used in case of emergency only and it should not be projected as income.

The EC approved the income expenditure plan for 2017-18 and improvements as per suggestions may be presented in next ECM.

Agenda Item 10: APAARI/Secretariat – Way Forward

The ES highlighted that:

- There is a need to set up a strong accounting system to facilitate day-to-day operations, for effective financial oversight and to provide accurate and timely financial information to both internal and external stakeholders. This is also pivotal in strengthening the process of planning, decision making, monitoring and control. Hence, the reforms were being envisaged for financial management along with certain administrative matters that were discussed (Annex 9). The new financial system, to be made effective from January 2018, was thus presented.
- The current chart of accounts does not have classification of direct and indirect costs. Besides, direct costs cannot be identified and matched with revenue to monitor progress and submit reports as per donor contracts. Desired financial information is not available for preparation of financial statements, budgeting, monitoring, decision making and control.
- Chart of accounts has been revised to provide the requisite financial information for both internal and external reporting. Budget format has been developed to enable progress monitoring, control and medium term planning.
- Keeping in view the expansion of APAARI activities and staff positions, APAARI needs to explore the availability of additional space preferably nearby the existing office or in premise of some academic institution.
- The recruitment status and the need for a Finance, Administrative and Membership (FAM) Coordinator and also for a Technical Officer for APCoAB was presented.
- Need for a small enhancement in salaries of selected staff, their tenure (from existing 2-3 years to 5 years) and need for sick leave for staff was discussed. Besides, some updates and new initiatives and important areas of partnerships, program and fund mobilization were shared.
- A strategy on membership and resource mobilization will be presented in the next EC meeting.

The EC appreciated and approved the financial reforms that are being brought in by the Secretariat and highlighted that it would be the key for managing funds efficiently and transparently. It further mentioned that keeping the budget and activities in view, expansion of the APAARI Secretariat should be done at slow pace.

The EC approved the proposal that provision of sick leave, salary hikes, and health insurance of the family members of APAARI staff should be made as per international norms. The tenure of the administrative, finance/accounts and technical posts should be minimum of 5 years and salary of the above staff should be reviewed by the ES during the finalization of the new contract.

Recommendation

- The EC recommended that the proposed recruitment of FAM may be deferred due to the current limitation of financial resources. Instead, existing suitable staff, if any, may be trained, or a consultant deployed for a short term to install/operate the financial software. However, the EC also emphasized that the ES may decide as per the availability of funds and justified need.

- The post of the Coordinator, Outreach and Partnership (approved earlier) and of Technical Officer – APCoAB (proposed) may be considered to be recruited, subject to the need and availability of resources.
- It was also highlighted that on the basis of availability of the budget and need, the ES may hire project staff in APAARI. The EC should not be involved in micro-management of APAARI.

Agenda Item 11: Presentations by EC members on updates and new areas of interest for APAARI

The ES requested EC members to present the relevant information comprising new themes and updates with a focus on strengthening APAARI's technical program and scoping for new programs and fund mobilization. Special invitees – Dr Raj Paroda, Former Executive Secretary, APAARI, and Ms Sonny Tababa from CropLife Asia, Singapore, were also requested to make a presentation on critical areas for strengthening APAARI activities, and possible collaboration between APAARI and CropLife Asia, respectively.

The presentations were made by Dr Marco Wopereis (WorldVeg Centre, Taiwan) entitled as AIRCA and APAARI, Mr Vincent Lin (COA, Taiwan) entitled as APAARI/APCoAB – A COA Perspective, and Ms Sonny Tababa entitled as CropLife Asia: Biotech/Seed Program. For strengthening APAARI activities and collaboration, valuable thoughts were shared by Mr Siwapon Choochim (on behalf of Dr Suwit Chaikiattiyos, Director General, DOA, Thailand) and Dr Raj Paroda. Dr Ravi Khetarpal shared the views of Dr. Mark Holderness, GFAR, Rome.

The following are the highlights of the above presentations and discussions:

Dr Marco Wopereis presented the details about the Association of International Research and Development Centers for Agriculture (AIRCA), its memberships, vision, mission and strength. His presentation also included building the partnership under the Global Action Plan for Agricultural Diversification (GAPAD). The following areas of collaboration between APAARI and AIRCA were identified:

- Facilitating knowledge exchange events such as the 'Regional Expert Consultation on Underutilized Crops for Food and Nutritional Security in Asia and the Pacific'.
- Knowledge management – e.g. setting up a knowledge base on agri-food systems development with suitable metrics
- Promoting strengthened partnerships and networking (e.g. with APCoAB in particular through CFF and WorldVeg).
- Capacity building – facilitating individual and group training for students from the Asia-Pacific region and promoting visiting scientists schemes.
- Advocacy – lobbying to get funding for agricultural research to tackle big issues and achieve transformational change (e.g. GAPAD).

Mr Vincent Lin presented the details about APAARI-COA collaboration through APCoAB. The following recommendations were made through this presentation:

- Expansion of activities in strategic areas e.g. capacity building, policy advocacy and general awareness in areas of agricultural biotechnologies and bioresource management.
- Evaluation of the outcomes and benefits of activities carried out in the past.
- Design long-term and mid-term visions and programs under the APAARI-COA program.
- Strengthen collaboration with stakeholders, especially international organizations and fora, and related private sectors.
- Enhance capacity building for island countries in the Pacific region.
- Encourage participation of APAARI's Members in expert consultations, brainstorming, seminars, symposia etc.
- Reinforce multi-channel dissemination of information and achievements.

Ms Sonny Tababa shared the objectives of the Biotech/Seed program of CropLife Asia. The potential areas of collaboration between APAARI-CropLife Asia were identified as mentioned below:

- Capacity Building - stewardship, seed science, biosafety, regulatory science, regulatory harmonization, multi-media science communication.
- Research e.g. Institute Risk Management (IRM) studies.
- Pilot Demo Project e.g. pest risk analysis, commercial demo of biotech crop, detection methods.
- CropLife Stewardship Program e.g. capacity building for responsible use, container management, IRM, soil conservation and via Excellence Through Stewardship.

Dr Siwapon Choochim assured full support of DOA to APAARI and enhanced collaboration between APAARI and DOA. He mentioned that DOA will participate actively in the ASTI project as per the project work plan.

Dr Raj Paroda expressed his gratitude to APAARI for giving him an opportunity to participate in the EC meeting and present his views for addressing critical areas for strengthening the APAARI program which need to be prioritized as follows:

- Existing partnership and networking e.g. with CG centers to be strengthened and existing network e.g. South Asia Vegetable Network with WorldVeg Centre and Cereal Legume Agricultural Network (CLAN) with CG Centres (ICRISAT, ICARDA) should be revived. APAARI also needs to revive networks for the implementation of Suwon Declaration for conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity for food and nutritional security in the region.
- An expert consultation meeting for scoping new niches for APAARI may be organized e.g. with emphasis on research to innovation; linking farmers to market; ICT; role of APAARI to achieve SDGs; and use of agrobiodiversity for food security.
- Revisit Tsukuba Declaration for climate change action, how APAARI can play its role to address the climate change issues.
- Public-private partnership should be fostered for out scaling innovations.

- Vigorous efforts are needed for developing partnership with ASEAN, SAARC, and GFRAS.
- APAARI should develop policy briefs on specific issues e.g. based on the outcomes of the Expert Consultation on UUC.
- Aggressive membership drive is needed with support from Chairman, members of EC and the Executive Secretary. Membership with China, Indonesia and New Zealand needs to be revived.
- Non-members and potential members may also be invited as special invitees in EC meeting e.g. from Myanmar, Singapore etc., to apprise them on the activities of APAARI.

Dr Ravi Khetarpal shared the views as received from Dr Mark Holderness, GFAR, which are as follows:

- GFAR under its new plan has an increased focus on transformational learning and for that matter higher educational institutions, such as universities have to be targeted.
- Transformational learning and student leadership development in undergraduate universities at the global level is a key focus area of GFAR for the years 2018-2021. This is due to the fact that reforms of agricultural and life science universities and departments around the world are needed so that universities adapt to changes in their dynamic environments, and to mend the gap in producing the right caliber of university graduates, who can meet societal demands, and fulfill their own future aspirations. The universities of Africa, together with their clients and key stakeholders, met in Nairobi in September 2017 at the invitation of GFAR, in collaboration with RUFORUM and the University of Nairobi. Their aim was to develop a model of reform of their departments of agriculture towards transformational learning and student leadership development. GFAR then took the outputs of the Nairobi meeting to the RUFORUM meeting in Malawi in October 2017.
- This initiative received high buy-in among stakeholders in Africa and GFAR is developing a proposal for funding, in order to start the implementation in pioneer universities in Africa.
- GFAR would like to partner with APAARI in implementing this approach in coming year.

Agenda Item 12: Concluding Remarks by Chair

Based on the deliberations and discussions during the meeting and by considering the ‘Way Forward’ for APAARI’s strategic operations, plans, opportunities and challenges as presented by the new management, Dr Yusuf Zafar, Chairman, APAARI, presented his concluding remarks. He advised that the expansion of APAARI should be done at slow pace considering all dynamics of the management e.g. planned activities and availability funds. He emphasized that several valuable suggestions have been made by the EC members and special invitees, which is not possible to implement all at a time, therefore, APAARI need to prioritize in accordance with the human and financial resources available with APAARI. He stressed that all possible efforts should be made to make all small Pacific Island countries as members of APAARI. He suggested that different global donors may be approached for increasing funding to accomplish the expanded activities of APAARI in the region. APAARI should foster the partnership and networking in order to achieve the SDG#17. Finally, Dr Zafar appealed to all national partners to extend full support to APAARI and thanked all the members of EC, special invitees and staff members of APAARI for their cooperation and active participation in the EC meeting.

Agenda Item 13: Vote of Thanks by Executive Secretary

The ES extended vote of thanks to Chairman, Vice-Chairman and all the EC members and special invitees for their participation and valuable inputs, as well as to those who helped directly/indirectly in organizing the meeting. He assured that under the guidance of EC, APAARI will continue to grow further through partnerships and networking and work vigorously for achieving the SDGs in Asia-Pacific region.