

**The First Steering Committee Meeting of  
Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology  
(APCoAB)**

**Venue: The Royal Princess Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand**

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> April 2004**

**PROCEEDINGS**



**Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions**  
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific  
39 Phra Atit Road, Bangkok, Thailand

## **Background**

The seventh APAARI Executive Committee meeting, held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2003 at the Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand, decided to accelerate the process of establishing APCoAB. In view of general endorsement in a special session on APCoAB organized on 3<sup>rd</sup> December afternoon, it was decided to move ahead and establish APCoAB with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004. In this regard, the APAARI Executive Committee had taken the following decisions:

- 1) To start APCoAB through APAARI office in Bangkok and explore the possibilities of having a Secretariat located either with some member NARS or with some CG Centers.
- 2) APAARI to contribute a matching support of US\$ 30,000 for the year 2004.
- 3) Establish a regular member-driven Steering Committee of APCoAB which includes APAARI chairperson and two other regular members and have its meeting convened during the first half of 2004.
- 4) Initiate some selected activities based on a well-planned Road Map and Work Plan to be finalized in consultation with APAARI members.

As a follow up of above decisions, the APAARI Executive Secretary, in close consultation with the APCoAB steering committee member candidates, developed a draft road map and work plan for 2004. The members also decided to have its first meeting to deliberate on Agenda items such as the composition of steering committee; location of APCoAB Secretariat; finalization of workplan and budget for 2004; development of ToR for APCoAB Coordinator; and appoint a consultant for the first six months to initiate APCoAB operations and activities.

## **First Steering Committee Meeting**

Accordingly, the steering committee member candidates met on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2004 in Bangkok, Thailand as per the attached agenda (Appendix I) under the chairmanship of Dr. Mutsuo Iwamoto. The meeting participants are listed in Appendix II. The meeting deliberations continued the whole day and following is a brief account of the discussions and decisions taken:

Dr. Mutsuo Iwamoto delivered the Chairman's address and welcomed all the participants to the meeting. He expressed his satisfaction on this new initiative and desired to move forward with the support of all APAARI partners. The meeting agenda as shown in Appendix I was adopted unanimously. Dr. R. S. Paroda presented a brief account of the earlier APCoAB related expert consultations and meetings. The Minutes of these meetings were circulated in advance among the participants for required background.

## **Composition of Steering Committee**

As per the decisions of the seventh APAARI Executive Committee, the composition of the steering committee was modified to increase NARS representation so as to have one member from South-East Asia and one from South Asia. Dr. William Dar, Director General, ICRISAT, proposed ICAR, India and DOA, Thailand to be included in the steering committee in view of fast developments in biotechnology in these countries and also in view of the location of APCoAB and APAARI for effective interface and needed support. Dr. Ola Smith, GFAR Executive Secretary, suggested that NGOs and farmers organizations should be represented through two separate categories as is done by GFAR. Dr. Malee Suwana-Adth of SVITA Foundation, representing NGOs, suggested that ANGOC, being a regional coalition of NGOs, is better suited as an APCoAB steering committee member. Above proposals were adopted unanimously. Hence, the steering committee strength gets increased to 11 as per following composition:

1. Chairperson – Chairman, APAARI (Dr. Matsuo Iwamoto)
2. Southeast NARS – DOA, Thailand (Dr. Somchai Channarongkul)
3. South Asia NARS – ICAR, India (Dr. Mangala Rai)
4. FAO – Dr. Malcolm Hazelman
5. CG Centers – ICRISAT and IRRI (by rotation) – Dr. William Dar
6. GFAR – Dr. Ola Smith
7. ISAAA – Dr. Rendy Hautea
8. Private Sector – Monsanto (initially) – Dr. Eric Johnson
9. NGOs – ANGOC – Mr. Roel Ravanera
10. Farmers Organizations – (To be decided)
11. Member Secretary – APCoAB Coordinator (To be represented by Executive Secretary, APAARI till appointment)

### **Finalization of Workplan and Budget for 2004**

Based on the draft work plan, APCoAB activities were grouped into two categories: immediate and regular activities. The immediate activities were those that need to be taken up before the end of the year 2004 so that APCoAB starts functioning and becomes visible to a wider group of stakeholders. These activities should include:

1. Establishment of the Secretariat
2. Organizing National Workshops on biotechnology related important initiatives in selected NARS
3. Building of NARS biotechnology related database
4. Establishment of APCoAB Website
5. Preparation of a marketable project proposal and approaching NARS and donors for resource generation and support
6. Popularizing APCoAB among all Stakeholders – Flyer, News and circulars
7. Planning process for the Ministerial level dialogue (including preparation of a concept note)
8. Developing MoUs with concerned partners

It was felt that some of these activities could not be completed before the end of 2004. However, preparatory work relating to these should be started immediately under the guidance of the APAARI Executive Secretary.

The second group of activities defines the regular work program of APCoAB as proposed in the draft work plan prepared by APAARI Executive Secretary in close consultation with the steering committee members. It was agreed that these activities could further be categorized under the three main thrust areas of APCoAB as follows:

- i) Policy Advocacy
  - Minister Level Dialogue – to be organized by mid 2005 in partnership with FAO-RAP, GFAR, CGIAR etc.
- ii) Public Awareness and Capacity Building
  - Success story dissemination
  - Translation of Public Awareness Documents
  - Scientific awareness and capacity building programs
  - Curriculum development for biosafety
  - Organizing Public Fora Meetings for Better Awareness
- iii) Research Partnership and Information Dissemination
  - Public-Private Partnership Consultations/ Meetings
  - Research Partnerships among Institutions

It was suggested that APCoAB should also embark upon its regular work program as early as possible involving member NARS, and potential partners and care be taken to avoid duplication of effort such as FAO Biosafety Program, efforts of ISAAA *etc.* and to give consideration to the diversity of Asia-Pacific region and its research needs. A general budget of USD110,000 for the year 2004 was approved, in principle, with tentative allocations for various activities as shown in Table 1. It was also decided that a separate account be opened for APCoAB by the APAARI Secretariat and have proper procedures for accounting/auditing put in place. The Executive Secretary may have an oversight function as per overall approved allocations.

**Table 1. APCoAB: Estimated Work Programme Budget for 2004**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Cost (US\$)</b>
APCoAB Steering Committee Meeting	a) One in April b) One in December	3,000 10,000
Consultant for Operational/Preparatory Work	May - October	15,000
Appointment of APCoAB Coordinator (Salary + Medical Package)	August - December	15,000
APCoAB Website Development in partnership with APARIS	July - December	10,000
Success Stories (Preparation, Printing and Distribution Cost)	May- October	5,000
Public Awareness Documents (Preparation, Translation in Selected Languages, Printing & Distribution)	June - December	5,000
Public Forum Meetings for Better Awareness and Sensitization of NARS	August - December	5,000
Preparation for Ministerial Level Meeting in Collaboration with FAO-RAP, GFAR, ISAAA and Selected NARS	August - December	5,000
NARS Activity Database (Preparation of Directory of Biotech Institutions / Senior Level Scientists and Important Donor Funded Programs)*	April – October	10,000
Training in Selected Areas (Biosafety regulations and Procedures, GM Seed Detection <i>etc.</i> )*	September - December	7,000
Fund Raising Activities and Related Travel Costs		10,000
General Operating Cost (GOE) and Miscellaneous Expenses including equipment	January – December	10,000
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>110,000</b>

\* These activities to be initiated/undertaken in partnership with FAO Biosafety Project as well.

### **Establishment of Secretariat**

The formal offers from ICRISAT and ABRII, Iran to host the APCoAB secretariat were discussed in details including pros and cons for functional efficiency and long-term sustainability. Finally, Steering Committee decided that ICRISAT, being in close cooperation with several of APAARI member NARS, be given this opportunity to host APCoAB Secretariat in view of generous offer extended by Dr. Dar for free office, equipment, communication facilities including a free flatlet/house for the Coordinator on the ICRISAT Campus. The operational costs would, however, be met from the APCoAB budget, including the salary of the Coordinator/Consultant.

## **Recruitment of APCoAB Coordinator**

The Steering Committee members discussed in detail the Terms of Reference (ToR), qualifications and the procedure for selection for the proposed position of the APCoAB Coordinator. Considering various suggestions, the ToR and qualifications as well as last date of application were finalized and the same are given in Appendix III.

It was also suggested that since ICRISAT will be hosting APCoAB, the recruitment procedure for hiring the APCoAB coordinator should be in accordance with those of the ICRISAT. In this regard, the DG, ICRISAT was requested to guide the recruitment process. The APAARI Executive Secretary suggested that a Vacancy Announcement (Appendix III) could be circulated to APAARI members, CG Centers, FAO-RAP and other contacts and the prospective candidates could be asked to send their applications directly to ICRISAT, so that a short list could be prepared by the institute and circulated to all Steering Committee members. It was also suggested that the announcement should be advertised and widely publicized. For interview and selection process, the following committee was constituted:

Dr. William Dar	- Chairman
Dr. R.S. Paroda	- Member
Dr. Eric Johnson	- Member
Dr. Malcolm Hazelman	- Member
Dr. Mangala Rai	- Member
Dr. Somchai Channarongkul	- Member

It was also agreed that the Committee may arrange for an interview of the short listed candidates, if considered necessary, and Chairman may decide the date as per his convenience. Other members could attend, if convenient to them, or else they could be kept informed from time to time. The recommendations of the selection committee be put up to the Steering Committee for final approval through circulation on no objection basis.

## **Appointment of a Consultant**

To accelerate the process of APCoAB functioning, it was considered necessary to hire a consultant on short-term basis so that preparatory activities could immediately be started before a regular APCoAB Coordinator is appointed. The members were requested to propose suitable candidate, if any, for this consultancy assignment. The Executive Secretary, APAARI suggested the name of Dr. Vibha Dhawan, Director of Biotechnology Program at The Tata Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi, India, who has the requisite experience to serve APCoAB. Dr. Dar and Dr. Paroda were asked to move forward in this regard, considering available options.

## **Date and Venue for the next meeting**

It was decided that the next APCoAB steering committee meeting be held a day prior to the Eighth General Assembly of APAARI, which is planned to be organized from 1-4 December 2004 along with an expert consultation on post-harvest technologies in the Asia-Pacific region. This would help in reporting the decisions of the Steering Committee to the General Assembly and Executive Committee of APAARI and would also save time as well as travel cost. Also by then, APCoAB would have substantial progress, which could be reviewed.

The steering committee meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM with a vote of thanks to the Chair.



**Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology  
(APCoAB)**

**Steering Committee Meeting  
8<sup>th</sup> April, 2004  
Royal Princess Hotel, Bangkok**

**Agenda**

- 09:00 – 09:10    1. Welcome Address by the Chairman, APAARI  
                       2. Adoption of Agenda  
                       3. Briefing on earlier meetings  
                       4. Composition of Steering Committee

10:30 – 11:00	Coffee Break and Group Photograph
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5. Finalization of Workplan – 2004  
 6. Budget for 2004

13:00 – 14:30	Lunch
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7. Establishment of Secretariat – Offer by ICRISAT  
 8. ToR for APCoAB Coordinator  
 9. Appointment of a Consultant  
 10. Date and Venue for the next meeting  
 11. Any other item

17:00            12. Adjournment



**Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology  
(APCoAB)**

**First Steering Committee Meeting  
8<sup>th</sup> April, 2004  
Royal Princess Hotel, Bangkok**

**List of Participants**

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| 2. Mr. Satoru Miyata<br>Development Research Coordinator<br>Japan International Research Center for<br>Agricultural Sciences<br>1-1, Ohwashi, Tsukuba<br>Ibasraki Pref. 305-8686 | Tel : 81-298-838 6704<br>Fax : 81-298-838 6337<br>E-mail : <a href="mailto:samiyata@jircas.affrc.go.jp">samiyata@jircas.affrc.go.jp</a> |
| 3. Dr. Ola Smith<br>Executive Secretary<br>GFAR Secretariat<br>c/o FAO, SDR, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla,<br>00100 Rome, Italy                                                | Tel : 39-06 570 55047<br>Fax : 39-06 570 53898<br>E-mail : <a href="mailto:ola.smith@fao.org">ola.smith@fao.org</a>                     |
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**Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology  
(APCoAB)  
Bangkok, Thailand**

**Vacancy Announcement for the APCoAB Coordinator  
Deadline for Application: 31 July 2004**

**Background**

An Expert Consultation on the Status of Biotechnology in Asia and the Pacific, jointly organized by FAO and the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) in Bangkok from 21-23 March 2002, unanimously recommended for the establishment of an “Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology (APCoAB)” involving the key stakeholders in the region to pool their synergies, harness cooperative advantages and ensure judicious use of limited resources to promote application of biotechnology for sustainable agricultural development in the region.

In compliance with above objective, APAARI identified three priority areas: (i) Policy Advocacy, (ii) Public Awareness and Capacity Building, and (iii) Research Partnership and Information Dissemination, which are now to be attend to by APCoAB over the next three years of its first phase. Executing cost of these priority areas of APCoAB would be contributed by concerned national, regional, and international organizations, Private Sector and Foundations, under the umbrella of APAARI.

**Position Description**

APCoAB Coordinator has to be a well qualified and experienced person whose duty station would be based at ICRISAT, India. Under the guidance and general direction of the Steering Committee of APCoAB and the overall supervision of the Executive Secretary of APAARI, the incumbent will have the following responsibilities:

- Assist in identifying the priority action program elements in line with the objectives of APCoAB in cooperation with all stakeholders and partners
- Coordinate and implement various activities of APCoAB, as per approved Workplan and establish close liaison with national, regional, international, FAO, Private Sector, NGO and other stakeholders
- Initiate development support activities through meeting with collaborating Biotech Centers and organizations in the participating countries
- Represent APCoAB in related Fora: Workshops, Seminars, Expert Consultations, or Conferences as considered necessary to pursue APCoAB objectives
- Assist in organizing APCoAB Expert Consultations, Training Programs related to HRD, and organize regularly the Steering Committee Meetings and serve as its Member Secretary
- Bring out status reports, reviews, meeting reports, training guidelines, Success Stories and synthesis reports in line with APCoAB objectives and approved work program
- Develop research partnerships, information dissemination channels such as APCoAB Website
- Initiate appropriate activities/actions to generate required resources
- Emphasize on the documentation of the APCoAB program of work accomplishments and Progress Report and disseminate the achievements widely.

- Perform other duties as assigned by the APCoAB Executive Committee and APAARI Executive Secretary.

### **Qualifications and Experience**

- \* Ph.D. degree in agriculture or related fields, having specialization in biotechnology, with a minimum of 5 years post-doctoral experience.
- \* Experience of inter-disciplinary and multi-institutional and international projects and programmes.
- \* Ability to prepare technical reports and publications in English and familiarity with computer based desktop publishing.
- \* Must be an enthusiastic, self-motivated individual with good inter-personal and communication skills.

### **Terms of Appointment**

The appointment shall be for an initial period of two years, renewable thereafter subject to the availability of funds. The commensurate salary will be paid in US Dollars. Benefits would include annual leave and health insurance package.

### **Application**

Qualified applicants are invited to send:

- (a) a cover letter of interest, including recent salary history;
- (b) Curriculum vitae, with a recent photo;
- (c) Names, addresses, fax numbers and E-mail addresses of three professional referees;
- (d) Photocopies (non-returnable) of other relevant supporting certificates/documents;

at the following address before 31 July 2004:

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