



Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI)



Progress Report November 2016 – June 2017

C/o Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
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PROGRESS REPORT ON APAARI ACTIVITIES

(November 2016 – June 2017)

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 NARS in the Asia-Pacific region through facilitation of intra-regional, inter-institutional, and international cooperation and 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 26 years of its existence with an impressive record of achievements.

During November 2016 and June 2017, APAARI organized, co-organized and participated in several activities comprising various meetings and conferences. These included: i) Expert Consultation on Best Practices in Agri-food Innovations in Asia and the Pacific; ii) APAARI 14th General Assembly Meeting (GAM); iii) XIV APARIS Steering Committee Meeting; iv) XVIII APCoAB Steering Committee Meeting; v) 1st International Agrobiodiversity Congress; vi) Regional Symposium on “Mapping and Assessing University-based Farmer Extension Services in ASEAN through an Agro-ecological/Organic Lens; (vii) Regional Food Security conference: Let's Get to Work - Building a Food Secure Future; and (viii) International Training Workshop on Developing Knowledge Management in Agriculture for Small-scale Farmers; ix) CDAIS Innovation Fair at NAFRI, Vientiane, Lao-PDR; x) GFAR Steering Committee Meetings; xi) Workshop on e-Business Modeling for Women Entrepreneurs; xii) Implementation of CRP Dryland Cereals Scholarship Programme; and xiii) Knowledge Management Programme. A brief account of the accomplishments is presented here for information and reference of APAARI members, partners and other stakeholders.

I. Meeting/Workshops/Conferences

1. Expert Consultation on Best Practices in Agri-food Innovations in Asia and the Pacific

The Expert Consultation on Best Practices in Agri-food Innovations was organized jointly by the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI); the Council of Agriculture (COA), Chinese Taipei (Taiwan); Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR); the World Vegetable Center (AVRDC), Taiwan; and the Asian Farmers Association (AFA), the Philippines, at Taichung City, Taiwan on 1-3, November 2016. It was attended by 87 participants from 14 countries including researchers, policy makers, innovative farmers and representatives of various organizations including national agricultural research institutions (NARIs) and organizations (NAROs), Higher Education Institutions, the private sector, civil society organizations (CSOs) – non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and farmers’ organizations (FOs), women and youth representatives, CG Centers, and International Agricultural Research Centres. The programme was planned in six technical sessions besides inaugural and concluding sessions. It provided a platform to: (i) have in-depth discussions; (ii) develop a road map to catalyze policy/decision makers; (iii) sensitize stakeholders in agri-food research and innovations; and (iv) embrace successful agri-food innovations for upscaling and outscaling in Asia and the Pacific.

On 2 November, a field trip to the genebank and demonstration garden of AVRDC and the Taiwan Orchid Plantation was carried out for further comprehending the international cooperation and development of Taiwan agricultural industry. It was a fruitful and joyful experience where participants from different countries of the Asia-Pacific region could exchange information and knowledge, build up international network on agricultural issues, and strengthen collaboration with each other.

Major Recommendations

Models and Case Studies of Agri-food Innovations

- Partnerships and alliances with new actors are essential in contributing to innovative solutions to achieve scale out.
- There is an urgent need for innovation platforms to share knowledge between various actors, including industry, policy makers and researchers.
- The development of good agricultural practices, which comes under the incremental innovation, will address pesticide residue and food safety concerns.

Partnership for Agri-food Innovations

- There is a need to develop a roadmap to document innovative partnerships between funding agencies, researchers and the end users of research in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Incubation centres should be developed for adoption of good agricultural practices and to promote and upscale local agri-food innovations in a public-private partnership mode.
- Market intelligence should be ensured to strategize production and marketing, and to develop a database on agri-food market chains and post-harvest losses in Asia-Pacific.
- There is a strong need for participation of cooperative societies and NGOs in technology dissemination, and to have fair distribution of profits among all actors in the value chain.

Capacity Development in Agri-food Innovations

- The capacity in agri-food innovations area will need to be built individually to work collectively, must be specific to the time in which it is developed and there should not be any risk in order to safeguard the interest of farmers, as well as enhance their economy.
- Capacity development for innovation should be based on a long-term strategy with plans covering three interconnected dimensions: individual and organizational innovation capacity, and the creation of an enabling environment.
- There is a need to develop platforms for assessment, training, measuring the impacts of different efforts and interventions, and for enabling collective actions and investments in development of capacity for agri-food innovations.
- There is a need for political support in capacity building for sustainable and new concepts and institutional innovations with the emphasis on institutional change and skill development.

Technology Based Agri-food Innovations

- There is a greater need for the collection, documentation, maintenance, and application of information related to all processes in the supply chain.
- Concerted efforts are needed to develop public-private partnership to catalyze private investment in scaling up of agri-food innovations through the development of a business model by which the enterprise delivers value to customers, entices customers to pay for value, and converts those payments to profit.
- Special efforts need to be made on the process of developing a strategy, which should be open, specific to the time in which it is developed, and adaptive. It should evolve over time, incorporate learning, and allow adjustments to the desired course if required.
- Greater thrust needs to be given on the development of new technologies to help improve the productivity of the farming systems, while decreasing their impact on the environment. These technologies should be contextual in nature, location and season specific, minimizing post-harvest and storage losses which will add income to farmers and in value chain.
- There is an urgent need for ICT-led agriculture, training of farmers in agricultural extension, biosafety and quarantine, conservation and profiling of indigenous breeds, strengthening of local institutions and the capacity to maintain and use biodiversity at local levels, product certification and women's empowerment.

Knowledge Management on Agri-food Innovations

- Concerted efforts are required for collection, customization, and dissemination of innovative knowledge and information in order to convert personal knowledge into organizational knowledge and corporate information. To disseminate information there is a need for credible messages in national and simplified language. Technical agri-food associations and extension agencies can be used for transferring knowledge to different stakeholders.
- Focused attention is required for managing knowledge on technical innovations in the production process, postharvest handling, product processing, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, climate change, as well as non-technical innovations in marketing, institutional development and capacity building.
- There is an urgent need for more innovations for technology management, by establishing industry clusters, strengthening agribusiness assistance, enhancing agro-tech marketing, assisting finance in the capital markets, training human resources and integrating industrialization platforms.
- Concerted efforts are needed to organize a series of workshops, which should include skills for partnering and engagement, project logic and theory of change; monitoring evaluation and learning tools for adaptive and managed action and learning, the theory and practice of multi-stakeholder processes, and innovation platforms.
- To promote long-term growth and the jobs of tomorrow, governments must ensure that framework conditions, institutions and policies facilitate business investment in

knowledge-based capitals. Therefore, investment is needed in non-physical assets, such as R&D, data, software, patents, new business models, organizational processes, firm-specific skills and designs, especially for family farmers, service providers, traders and processors, researchers, policy-makers, etc., in developing their capacity to innovate. Special attention to youth and women is important.

Policy Oriented Agri-food Innovations

- There is urgent need for policy of agricultural transformation to revitalize rural community and to increase rural income by encouraging collective actions of multi-sectoral stakeholders by which individual farms shift from highly diversified, subsistence-oriented production towards more specialized production – product- or market-oriented agriculture.
- The poor and less privileged in the country that do not have capacity to pay, should not be neglected. There should be fair treatment and equal opportunities for all people. One of the causes of disunity in a country is when the country neglects a section of its population. This can easily be avoided if a national policy is put in place to address all these issues.
- Special efforts need to be made on facilitating cooperation, networking activities and partnerships among different innovation actors working in the same field – universities, research and technological centers, SMEs and large firms – to achieve synergies and technology transfer.
- Focused attention is needed to provide the necessary financial services and training that will help farmers increase their crop yields, improve income and food security for their families and communities, and create jobs for their neighbors.
- Concerted efforts are needed to develop indicators and tools to evaluate the performance of agricultural innovation systems in general, and innovation policy regularly, taking longer term effects into account, possibly in collaboration with other countries and organizations.
- APAARI should play a major role in sharing knowledge of agri-food innovations across these countries in the Asia-pacific region.
- There is an urgent need to share databases between public and private organizations for upscaling and outscaling technologies in a public-private-partnership mode, keeping in view the interest of smallholder farmers.

2. APAARI 14th General Assembly Meeting (GAM)

The 14th General Assembly Meeting (GAM) of APAARI was hosted by the Council of Agriculture (COA), Taiwan, and held in Taichung, Taiwan, on 3 November 2016. Dr Waraporn Prompoj, Deputy Director General, Department of Agriculture (DOA), Thailand, representing Dr Suwit Chaikiattiyos, Chairman, APAARI, and Director General, DOA, Thailand, chaired the meeting. Dr Sharif Haron, Director General, Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, was requested to act as the Vice-Chair. Forty six members, partners, special invitees and APAARI staff and consultants participated in the meeting.

Dr Waraporn Prompoj appreciated that over the past two years, APAARI has made concerted efforts for developing the APAARI Vision 2030 and Strategic Plan 2017-22. They provide overall guidance to strengthening of agri-food research and innovation systems in the region. She urged APAARI to adopt transformative changes in important areas of governance and its development; especially strengthening its capacity and resources in areas of collaboration, knowledge brokering, capacity building and advocacy. She expressed her hope that the GAM participants will deliberate on various agenda items, including the APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-22 and the collective deliberations and contributions will result in positive outcomes of the meeting. She thanked COA, Taiwan for hosting the meeting in the beautiful city of Taichung, Taiwan. She also thanked all the members for their support and contribution in bringing APAARI at this high pedestal.

The key decisions taken by the General Assembly, which have far reaching progressing implications for the growth and accomplishments of APAARI, are presented below while the detailed proceedings are available on ([www.apaari.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/GAM Proceedings 2-1-2017.pdf](http://www.apaari.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/GAM_Proceedings_2-1-2017.pdf))

- The audit report and audited financial statements for 2014 and 2015 were endorsed. Also endorsed was the audit report and financial statements for the interim period January – September 2016.
- Advanced and refined version of the “APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Pathways to strengthened agri-food research and innovations in Asia and the Pacific”, was unanimously endorsed after systematic deliberation and enriched consultations.
- By considering implications arising of the Strategic Plan, the APAARI Executive Committee and the APAARI Secretariat have been directed to work and progress on the changes that are necessary in the areas of APAARI governance and development.
- As an immediate implication arising through implementation of the APAARI strategy, an enhanced resource (human and financial) mobilization plan was approved for the biennium 2017-18.
- The necessary change to Article 10 of APAARI constitution on the composition of APAARI Executive Committee was approved, providing for two additional members on the Committee representing: i) the Association of International Research Centers for Development in Agriculture (AIRCA) and ii) the Higher Education Sector (Universities).
- As urgency for immediate replacement of Dr Raghunath Ghodake, who would be concluding his assignment effective as of 31 December 2016 due to his ill-health, a decision was made to have an interim Executive Secretary to manage APAARI programmes/activities.

New Executive Committee for the Biennium 2017-2018

Chair: Dr Yusuf Zafar, Chairman, PARC, Pakistan
Vice-Chair: Dr Sergie Bang, DG, NARI, Papua New Guinea
Members: Dr Suwit Chaikiattiyos, DG, DOA, Thailand
Dr Grace- Lin, DG, COA, Taiwan
Dr Y.R. Pandey, Executive Director, NARC, Nepal
Mr David Hunter, CEO, MAF, Western Samoa
Dr Marco Wopereis, DG, AVRDC – The World Vegetable Center (AIRCA)
Dr K.M. Bujarbaruah, President, IAUA, India (Higher Education Sector)

Dr Mark Holderness, Executive Secretary, GFAR
Dr Barbara Wells, DG, CIP
Farmers Associations (to be decided by EC)
NGO (to be decided by EC)
Private Sector (to be decided by EC)

3. XIV APARIS Steering Committee Meeting

The XIV Steering Committee (SC) meeting of the Asia-Pacific Agricultural Research Information System (APARIS) for 2016 was held at Taichung, Taiwan on 31 October 2016. Dr Raghunath Ghodake, Executive Secretary, APAARI, welcomed the participants. Dr Waraporn Prompoi, Deputy Director General, Department of Agriculture (DOA), Thailand, chaired the meeting on behalf of Dr Suwit Chaikiattiyos, Director General, DOA, Thailand. Dr Andrew Campbell, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Australia, was the Vice-Chair. Dr S G Abbas, Consultant, represented Ms Martina Spisiakova, Knowledge Management Coordinator, APARIS, and presented the APARIS progress report. He emphasized that there was a need for improved communication and exchange of knowledge on agriculture and natural resources, improving the efficiency of the research-extension interface and keeping abreast with the continuous changes in technologies. The chairperson showed her satisfaction on current and past achievements of APARIS, as well as on the work plan for 2017. The following main recommendations emerged during the SC Meeting:

- Under the APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-2022, APARIS should bring its members, partners and other stakeholders closer together to address priority needs of the agri-food system through strengthening of agri-food research and innovation systems.
- Knowledge management should become an overarching strategy of APARIS.
- Facebook is getting more popular in the social media and thus, APARIS should focus on increasing its number of followers on Facebook.
- Focal points from the NARS should increasingly share information with APAARI for further dissemination.
- The CEO, ACIAR, assured continued support for the APARIS future work plan and activities.

4. XVIII APCoAB Steering Committee Meeting

The XVIII Steering Committee (SC) Meeting of Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology (APCoAB) was held on 31 October 2016 in Taichung, Taiwan. The meeting was attended by 11 participants, comprising SC members, their representatives, special invitees and observers. APAARI Chairman, Dr Suwit Chaikiattiyos, Director General (DG), Department of Agriculture (DOA), Thailand, was represented by Dr Waraporn Prompoj, DDG, DOA, while Vice-Chair, Dr Chun-yen Chen, DG, International Affairs, Council of Agriculture (COA), Taiwan, was represented by Ms Rose, Dong-chong Hsiou, DDG, Department of International Affairs, COA. Other participants included Dr Reynaldo V. Ebor, Acting Executive Director, Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD), Philippines; Prof Andrew Campbell, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Australia, and Dr Raghunath Ghodake, Executive Secretary, APAARI. Dr Jawahir Karihaloo, Sr. Consultant, APAARI, representing APCoAB Coordinator, presented a report on background, progress and proposed future programmes of APCoAB. He also introduced the outline of proposed extension of APAARI-COA collaborative programme for the period 2017-2020. Prof Andrew Campbell, Dr. Waraporn Prompoj and

Ms Rose, Dong-chong Hsiou, made important observations and suggestions on APCoAB programme, progress and future plan. As a result of in-depth discussions, the following major recommendations emerged:

- The outputs of APCoAB workshop on communication strategies to be utilized by APCoAB and APAARI member organizations to develop future strategies for public engagement and debate on agricultural biotechnology.
- Appointment of new APCoAB Coordinator to be taken up on priority. Notification to be sent to all member organizations so that they could nominate candidates for the post.
- APCoAB Progress Report for 2016 to be submitted to COA by the end of December 2016.
- COA has agreed to continue funding support to APCoAB. New proposal for the next phase of APAARI-COA (2017-2020) collaborative programme based on newly developed APAARI Strategic Plan to be submitted soon. Decision on the requested enhancement of funding support shall be taken by COA after a review of the proposal.
- Activities for 2017 will be initiated soon after the new Coordinator joins. It is expected that larger number of activities shall be taken up during this year since there would be some additional savings available due to absence of APCoAB Coordinator during 2015.
- ACIAR-FAO project on regional consultation meetings on biotechnology is presently under discussion and APCoAB will also be involved in its implementation.

5. 1st International Agrobiodiversity Congress

The International Agrobiodiversity Congress (IAC) 2016 was organized by the Indian Society of Plant Genetic Resources (ISPGR) and Bioversity International in collaboration with Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Right Authority (PPV&FRA), Government of India, National Biodiversity Authority, Government of India, Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Science (TAAS), National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS), MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) and APAARI along with many national and international sponsors. The Congress was held from 6 to 9 November 2016 in New Delhi, India.

The Congress brought together about 900 experts in genetic resources, genetics and breeding, biotechnology, human nutrition, ecology and environmental science, information management, law and policy analysis, economics and other social sciences from 60 countries who deliberated on system-wide approach for in situ and ex situ conservation, use and sustainability of agrobiodiversity, including plants (crops, horticulture, agroforestry), animals, fish, insects and microbes. APAARI was represented at the Congress by Dr. Raghunath Ghodake, Dr. Bhag Mal and Dr. Jawahir Karihaloo who chaired sessions/moderated panel discussions/presented key note papers. Dr. Ghodake APAARI presented paper on Conservation and Use of Genetic Resources through Implementation of Suwon Agro-biodiversity Framework and Partnerships in Asia and the Pacific.

The objective of the Congress was to provide a platform to all the stakeholders engaged in genetic resource conservation and management to deliberate on thematic issues of global importance, with major emphasis on rational and effective use of agrobiodiversity for food, nutrition and environmental security. Congress delegates discussed various aspects of conservation, management, access and use of agrobiodiversity in 16 technical sessions, four satellite sessions, a genebank roundtable, a public forum, a farmers' forum and poster sessions. Based on detailed deliberations, the delegates unanimously adopted "Delhi Declaration" in the concluding session on 9 November 2016.

6. Regional Symposium on “Mapping and Assessing University-based Farmer Extension Services in ASEAN through an Agro-ecological/Organic Lens, Bangkok, Thailand

Mainstream monocrop-based agriculture remains one of the world’s greatest contributors to global environmental problems, such as pollution, desertification, deforestation, drought, depleting aquifers, water diversion, biodiversity loss, land degradation and more. Agriculture may also be the world’s single greatest contributor to climate change. Moreover, this largely agrochemical-dependent industrial, market-driven agri-food system has still not provided food or nutritional security for some 800 million of the world’s poor, mostly rural people. What universities have done to mitigate these problems through extension services with farmers was the topic of the Regional Symposium on “Mapping and Assessing University-based Farmer Extension Services in ASEAN through an Agro-ecological/Organic Lens, which took place in Chulalongkorn University School of Agricultural Resources (CUSAR) in Bangkok, Thailand, on 23 February 2017.

The Symposium was supported by Chulalongkorn University UNISEARCH Fund (“ASEAN Cluster” Project Grant); Agroecology Learning Alliance in South East Asia (ALiSEA); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); and Chula’s ASEAN Studies Center (ASC). The event aimed to present the university research on the roles universities play in either exacerbating or mitigating environment, food security, poverty reduction and agricultural development challenges in ASEAN and how they contribute to social or rural transformation. It also shared quantitative empirical evidence combined with good qualitative analysis, how, why and to what degrees Southeast Asian universities inhibit or support agro-ecological and organic approaches in teaching, research and extension services. Finally, it provided policy, programme and curricular recommendations for future education, research and extension services and rural development planning in response to perceived knowledge and capacity gaps.

APAARI was invited to make a presentation in the Symposium, and particularly to provide a regional perspective on the research-extension gap in Asia-Pacific; stress opportunities for university-based extension to reduce the research-extension gap; share the role of regional networks in reducing the research-extension gap and highlight the areas of how regional networks can better support university-based education and research-extension systems. The opportunities for university-based extension stressed by APAARI included: adaptation to a new research-extension environment; creation of space for research-extension interface; engagement in farmers’ fields; enhancement of the quality of extension services; resource mobilization; engagement with other stakeholders; improvement of the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the delivery of extension services through ICT; and supporting transformative learning and youth leadership development. The presentation also highlighted APAARI’s Strategic Plan 2017-2022, specifically the youth-related activities that it is planning to undertake in the future.

7. Regional Food Security conference: Let's Get to Work - Building a Food Secure Future, Hanoi, Vietnam

APAARI participated in the Regional Food Security Conference: Let's Get to Work - Building a Food Secure Future, held in Ha Noi, Viet Nam on 22-23 March 2017. The conference was built around a two-day experts’ segment and a high level round table discussion providing specific fields for further action based on the current challenges and

constraints, as well as good practices. The conference also set a first step of action with a set of concrete Food Security Deals. These deals were concrete, cross-sectorial deals made by different configurations of stakeholders which committed themselves to action in new solutions to contribute to achieving SDG2. The deals seek to reinforce and prompt real actions.

‘Let’s start implementing SDG 2 and let’s do it together’ was the main message of the conference. It was stated that SDG2 does not stand independently, but is interconnected with all other SDGs. That’s why the conference focused on the following themes: (i) Climate Smart Agriculture - SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; (ii) Reducing Food Losses – SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; (iii) Food Safety – SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; and (iv) Sustainable Aquaculture – SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

APAARI presented its contribution to respective SDGs in line with the Strategic Plan 2017-2022. Its focus in the conference was specifically on climate-smart agriculture (CSA). As such, it shared strategies to promote CSA through collective action to strengthen agri-food research and innovation systems. APAARI stressed that it: (i) recognizes climate change as a critical challenge to agriculture; provides knowledge-sharing mechanisms to discuss good practices in CSA to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change, and reduce stress on natural resources; advocates for increased and improved investment in CSA research, and other critical areas supporting sustainable agricultural development; creates an environment for increased resource allocation and congenial policy and institutional support; and facilitates partnerships to strengthen collective action in CSA. One of the recent examples is the High-level Policy Dialogue on Investment in Agricultural Research for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific that APAARI organized in collaboration with ACIAR, Government of Thailand, FAO, GFAR, IFPRI, and other partners in December 2014.

In addition to the presentation made, APAARI also participated in the working group on fisheries where it made a ‘deal’ with SNV Vietnam, Fresh Studio, Research Institute for Aquaculture No. 1 (RIA 1), and Vietnam Farmer Union (VNFU), to advocate the role of aquaculture in farmers’ socio-economic development and share innovative practices to facilitate learning and scaling up of aquaculture innovations.

8. International Training Workshop on Developing Knowledge Management in Agriculture for Small-scale Farmers

The Food and Fertilizer Technology Center (FFTC) for the Asia- Pacific Region and the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD) of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) organized the International Training Workshop on Developing Knowledge Management in Agriculture for Small-scale Farmers held on May 9-11, 2017, at PCAARRD, Los Banos, Laguna. It served as a venue for sharing experiences in various KM strategies/programmes being implemented by agricultural organizations in the Asia-Pacific region. The main objective was to draw insights and enhance the functional guide for KM in agricultural development for possible adaption of the invited participants in their respective organizations/countries.

APAARI presented a regional overview of the issues facing agri-food systems and the key pillars of trend in KM in Asia-Pacific region. The presentation also highlighted the needs for improved KM to support the strengthening of agri-food research and innovation systems, and APAARI's role in this process – its contribution to sustainable development goals. APAARI's latest KM achievements and activities, and the introduction of Strategic Plan 2017-2022 were also emphasized during the workshop. A day visit to relevant institutions like the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the Department of Agriculture was also organized for the benefit of participants.

9. CDAIS Innovation Fair at NAFRI, Vientiane, Lao-PDR

The TAP/CDAIS project in Lao PDR organized an Innovation Fair on 19 May 2017 to create opportunities for the actors representing agricultural innovation systems to meet and share experiences. The meeting also highlighted future programmes/projects for strengthening functional capacities to innovate, discuss needs and action plans on capacity development, and potentially establish partnerships. The aim was to broker partnerships to speed up agricultural innovation at the country level and bring together a range of different initiatives and projects that are supporting the development of agriculture. The marketplace also aimed to compare and understand different stakeholders' capabilities and resources, and achievements, as well as to create synergies based on the partners' organizational experiences and current complementary activities.

The CDAIS Innovation Fair was an important avenue for facilitating the linkages between initiatives working on capacity development in agricultural innovation systems in Lao PDR, based on the needs of major agricultural innovation actors in the country. APAARI presented its role in TAP/CDAIS in the context of its key programmes from Strategic Plan 2017-2022, namely Knowledge Management, Capacity Development, Advocacy and Partnership and Networking.

10. GFAR Steering Committee Meetings

Dr Ramakrishna Akkinapally, Deputy Director General, National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), Papua New Guinea represented APAARI in GFAR Steering Committee in Rome on 8-9 February 2017. The expected outcomes of the meeting were: i) orient partners to new role, ii) shared understanding of GFAR Charter & Partnership Strategy, iii) approve GFAR Partnership Strategy and iv) identify Communication needs/Mechanisms. The major issues discussed included: i) how to make cost effective and efficient in the context of large SC, ii) funding contributions by members and other agencies to GFAR, iii) Comprehensive and Inclusive actions in all the regions with good indicators, iv) evaluation of GFAR in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and relevance, v) Bridging the gap between science and society, vi) impact and scale of collective actions, and vii) challenges and/or constraints to be addressed moving forward with new collective actions.

APAARI's Vice Chair Dr Sergie Bang, DG, NARI, Papua New Guinea attended the GFAR Steering Committee (SC) Meeting held in Rome on 13-15 June 2017. The objective of the SC Meeting was to complete the Medium Term Plan (MTP) with Key Focus Areas and Collective. The SC identified success criteria for Collective Actions (CAs), discussed the 4 Key Areas of Focus and reviewed the Collective Actions provided. The four Key Focus

Areas (KFAs) are; i) Communities determining their needs, ii) Turning knowledge and innovation into enterprise, iii) Strengthening organizational and individual capacities and iv) Demonstrating impact and improving investments. The SC reviewed the CAs provided by the GFAR Secretariat, and also considered the recommendations collated from the survey. Selected CAs were assessed for their potential in improving the livelihoods of targeted farming communities and whether it was feasible to do so.

In the proposed Medium-Term Plan, the Collective Actions are envisaged to be implemented by GFAR and SC Members to empower farmers (targeting women and youth) in each region/country of the world through the Innovation Platforms where agriculture technologies developed through research are made easily accessible to farmers for use so their livelihoods can be improved. Furthermore, policy platforms will be held to demonstrate positive impact on improved farmer livelihoods and to engage policy makers to direct greater investment into agriculture.

11. Workshop on e-Business Modeling for Women Entrepreneurs

APAARI jointly with COA and Asia Productivity Organization (APO) organized a workshop on e-Business Modeling for Women Entrepreneurs in Taipei, Taiwan on 19-23 June 2017. Ten participants from Lao PDR, Pakistan, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal, Afghanistan, India, Vietnam and Bhutan were sponsored by APAARI for attending this workshop. Nine participants attended the workshop but the candidate from Bhutan could not attend as she could not get the approval of the Govt. of Bhutan in time. The objectives of the workshop included: i) to review the recent trends in e-commerce and e-business in the era of digital agriculture; ii) to share successful e-business models, strategies, and practices utilizing digitized tools and methodologies and identify e-business markets for women entrepreneurs; and iii) to develop action plans for scaling up online business and e-commerce applicable to SMEs to integrate socially and economically less-privileged groups for inclusive development.

The workshop comprised presentation of resource papers/country papers, on-site visit and group workshop exercise/presentation on e-Business Modeling for Women Entrepreneurs. All the participants felt that the papers presented, group activities and discussions were immensely useful in enhancing their knowledge for implementing e-Business in their respective countries. On successful completion of the workshop, the participants were also awarded the certificates.

12. Master Class in Agricultural Research Leadership and Management

The 1st Master Class in Agricultural Research Leadership and Management was organized by The Crawford Fund, Kingston, Australia. APAARI nominated 7 participants from its members countries, namely, Bhutan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Lao PDR, Vietnam and Nepal. The purpose of the course was to: i) understand the key processes required to manage research programs; ii) understand and appreciate their roles as leaders in the research environment; iii) appreciate the demands of managing and leading research; iv) understand the importance of effective outputs to create desired impacts; v) able to apply processes: a) to identify priorities and establish strategies for agricultural research; b) to plan and evaluate activities; c) to manage finances and program logistics; and d) to identify and access resources; vi) understand the importance of people management, and associated HR processes; vii) appreciate the need for effective communication; and viii) have a clear understanding of their future development need. The participants were immensely benefitted

from this course.

13. Implementation of CRP Dryland Cereals Scholarship Programme

Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between APAARI and ICRISAT for a collaborative CGIAR Research Program (CRP), the Dryland Cereals Scholarship Program was implemented. 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, are pursuing their Ph.D. research work under this collaborative programme.

As per the Letters of Agreements between APAARI and the respective universities and institutions, the total allocated scholarship grant was USD 94, 212 out of which USD 64,212 allocated for scholarship of these six candidates has been disbursed. The CRP-DC Programme has now been concluded and the liquidation statement has been submitted to ICRISAT. Out of six, two students have already submitted their Ph.D. Thesis and the remaining four students will also submit their theses as soon as their work is completed.

14. Knowledge Management Programme

14.1. Knowledge Management and Communication Strategy

The two strategic objectives of the APAARI Knowledge Management (KM) Programme, as stated in the Strategic Plan 2017-2022, are to: (i) make AFS more knowledge intensive to effectively contribute to sustainable agricultural development; and (ii) strengthen AFRIS through more effective knowledge management. These two KM strategies integrate communication, ICT, partnership and networking, capacity development and advocacy, and together contribute to APAARI's thematic areas. To provide further guidance on APAARI's KM Programme, in line with the SP 2017-2022, a KM and Communication Strategy has been prepared aiming to:

- define the term 'knowledge management' in the context of agri-food systems
- outline APAARI's key and specific strategies as per the Strategic Plan (SP) 2017-2022;
- present 'Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)' analysis;
- recommend a KM and communication approach and processes to support the implementation of SP 2017-2022;
- assess target audience;
- specify communication and outreach activities;
- suggests the way to measure KM and communication progress; and
- presents KM and Communication plan and performance framework.

The strategy is currently under review and will be finalized soon.

14.2. APAARI Website

The APAARI website has been the Association's key information tool since its establishment in 1990. To keep abreast with technology trends, it is important to ensure that

the website’s infrastructure is up-to-date and user-friendly to ensure that APAARI stakeholders can have easy and immediate access to information and knowledge on agri-food research and innovations. The assessment of the APAARI website conducted in January 2016 identified key issues and made recommendations that led to the development of a new APAARI website between January and June 2017. The new website is based on Wordpress mobile-friendly content-management software, with new design and re-organized content. The new software will allow integration of Social Media and other interactive features to enable two-way communication, and make stakeholders’ access to information and knowledge easier than before. The new website will be launched in July 2017.

The current APAARI website has been regularly updated while the new website is being developed. The table below presents web statistics between November 2016 and June 2017.

APAARI Website Statistics (November 2016 – 15 June 2017)

Month	Unique Visitors	Number of Visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Nov 2016	8,836	17,664	170,740	283, 659	18.14 GB
Dec 2016	10,856	21,971	269,814	365,820	15.71 GB
Jan 2017	15,695	23,749	122,545	239,633	23.30 GB
Feb 2017	11,682	18,457	149,743	238,248	15.57 GB
March 2017	9,495	16,147	306,221	412,702	16.51 GB
April 2017	10,686	19,520	382,065	467,265	15.80 GB
May 2017	7,564	14,848	306,790	392,290	15.26 GB
June 2017	4,043	7,790	110,266	158,136	7.41 GB

Source: Awstats apaari.org web panel

14.3. APAARI Social Media

Efforts have been made to share increased number of stories through Facebook, Twitter and the new APAARI social media tool – Linked In. On Facebook, the number of ‘likes’ have been growing, though the tool needs to be systematically monitored in terms of its followers, users and the number of downloads of the content. As of 16 June 2017, APAARI Facebook page had 320 likes (more than double since 31 December 2016 when the page had 149 likes). Since January 2017, a total of 279 posts were shared by APAARI (compared to 35 posts published between 1 July and 31 December 2016).

APAARI Twitter also shared 297 tweets since January 2017 (as compared to 20 posts tweeted between 1 July and 31 December 2016). The total number of Twitter followers as of 16 June 2017 is 94 (as compared to 39 followers on 31 December 2016).

APAARI Linked In platform was established in March 2017 with 126 followers by 16 June 2017. It shares vacancy announcements and other opportunities for stakeholders working in

agri-food research and innovation systems. Connected to Linked In is Slideshare – a platform to share powerpoint presentations. APAARI Slideshare has been established and includes one presentation About APAARI to enable people to learn about the Association. More presentations will be shared following APAARI-supported events.

14.4. APCoAB website

Following the Executive Committee (EC) meeting in September 2016, APAARI made major changes to the APCoAB website where there was inactivity since the programme coordinator left at the end of 2015. The website has been updated with new content related to biotechnology, including latest news and articles. The table below on APCoAB website statistics shows that the number of visits increased since last year.

APCoAB Website Statistics (November 2016 – 15 June 2017)

Month	Unique Visitors	Number of Visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Nov 2016	1,108	1,344	2,902	6,954	15.15 GB
Dec 2016	1,181	1,640	4,552	8,600	14.84 GB
Jan 2017	3,135	3,753	6,113	10,809	9.51 GB
Feb 2017	2,645	2,914	4,987	8,775	8.35 GB
March 2017	2,278	2,782	5,657	10,195	7.56 GB
April 2017	2,363	3,119	8,087	11,653	6.68 GB
May 2017	2,426	2,907	5,832	10,977	8.54 GB
June 2017	255	274	398	861	557.85 MB

14.5. Knowledge Partnership

In 2017, APAARI signed two new Letters of Agreement (LoA) with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Firstly, APAARI will continue to collaborate with FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) on the use of ICT in agriculture (e-agriculture). In particular, APAARI will be an implementing partner in the organization of the E-agriculture Solutions Forum 2017, and co-author of success stories on e-agriculture.

Secondly, APAARI will continue its knowledge partnership with FAO in Rome, Italy, on the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) and its Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CD for AIS) project in 2017. This year’s activities will include: (i) participation in the national marketplace events in Bangladesh and Lao PDR, which allow for showcasing good practices and for creating opportunities for cooperation; (ii) participation in the TAP Partners Assembly – Lao PDR, 18-22 September 2017; (iii) raising awareness on TAP and promote the CD for AIS in additional countries (non-pilot countries

of the CDAIS project) and facilitation of the participation of TAP/CDAIS representatives from Bangladesh and Lao PDR in APAARI-supported events planned in 2017, such as the Expert Consultation on Underutilized bioresources and their potential for food and nutrition security of Asia and the Pacific; (iv) promotion of the Common Framework on CD for AIS through the printing and dissemination of TAP promotional materials (e.g. factsheets) and presentations at various events, meetings and in online communications; (v) coordination of TAPipedia webinars and facilitation of the expansion of TAPipedia network; (vi) facilitation of knowledge and experience sharing on CD for AIS within NARS; (vii) advocacy with higher education institutions to include the Common Framework on CD for AIS in university curricula; (viii) integration the Common Framework on CD for AIS in APAARI-supported activities and projects; and participation in virtual TAP SC meetings.



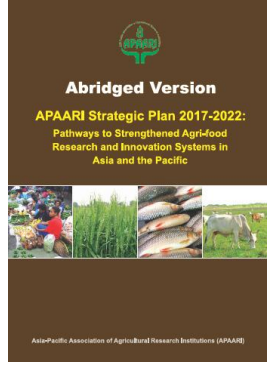

14.5. APAARI Network Highlights

APAARI Network Highlights has been published bi-monthly. It aims to highlight, promote and share the latest news from among the APAARI network. It is based on a short editorial and links under headlines such as news and announcements, upcoming events and opportunities, latest publications and success stories. The content is being researched by APAARI KM staff but increasingly, stakeholders have also been sending news directly to APAARI. Feedback received to date shows that this new communication tool has been received well by the APAARI community. Two issues have been prepared during the reporting period. One issue was missed (November 2016) due to heavy workload and lack of staff in APAARI.

14.6. Publications

During the reporting period, APAARI produced, published and disseminated the following publications:

Publication	Month published	Cover
Investment in Agricultural Research for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific: Country status Reports	June 2017	
Expert Consultation on Best Practices in Agri-food Innovations in Asia and the Pacific, Taichung, Taiwan; 1-3 November 2016 Proceedings and Recommendations http://www.apaari.org/publications/expert-consultation-on-best-practices-november-2016.html	May 2017	

<p>APAARI Flyer http://www.apaari.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2017/03/APAARI-Flyer-2017-FINAL.pdf</p>	<p>March 2017</p>	
<p>9th General Assembly Meeting, 7 November 2016 – Proceedings http://www.apaari.org/publications/proceedings/9th-gam-2016.html</p>	<p>December 2016</p>	
<p>APAARI Newsletter Vol. 25 (2), December 2016, http://www.apaari.org/publications/apaari-newsletters/apaari-newsletter-vol-25-2-december-2016.html</p>	<p>December 2016</p>	
<p>APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Pathways to Strengthened Agri-Food Research and Innovation Systems in Asia and the Pacific http://www.apaari.org/publications/apaari-strategic-plan-2017-2022.html</p>	<p>December 2016</p>	
<p>Abridged Version - APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Pathways to Strengthened Agri-Food Research and Innovation Systems in Asia and the Pacific http://www.apaari.org/news/abridged-version-apaaari-strategic-plan-2017-2022.html</p>	<p>December 2016</p>	
<p>APAARI bracelet with latest publications and meeting-related information replaced the APAARI on CD</p>	<p>November 2016</p>	

The above publications available on the APAARI website have been shared with all APAARI member and partner organizations, participants of respective meetings and other stakeholders.

III. Membership Drive

During the period November 2016 – June 2017, efforts were made to increase the membership base of APAARI. Two new members joined APAARI the Associate member category during this period. These are: i) Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University, Hyderabad, India and ii) Dr Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, India. With addition of these two new members, the total number of members rose to 70 as against 68 in 2016.

IV. International/Regional Collaboration

During the period under report, APAARI had close collaboration with GFAR, CGIAR Centres, ACIAR, Australia, COA Taiwan, and FAO RAP and organized several activities/programmes including organization of workshops, conferences and training programmes with their funding support. This included the programmes on agro-biotechnology and research information systems.

APAARI-COA collaborative programme on biotechnology has been in operation since 2008. Initially approved for three years (2008-2010) with a funding support of USD 35,000 per annum, the programme was extended twice (2011-2013, 2014-2016) and funding raised to USD 50,000 per annum. In view of the excellent performance of this APAARI-COA collaboration it was felt necessary by both APAARI and COA to continue the Programme for another term. The commitment of COA to continue supporting this programme was conveyed during the XVIII APCoAB Steering Committee Meeting held on 31 October 2016 in Taiwan. Accordingly, APAARI-COA Collaborative Programme (2017-2020) was approved with annual budget of USD 140,000 to be shared equally by the two partners.

V. APAARI Participation in Meetings organized by other Fora

- Dr Raghanath Ghodake, Executive Secretary, Dr. Bhag Mal, Senior Consultant and Dr. J.L. Karihaloo, Senior Consultant, APAARI participated in 1st International Agrobiodiversity Congress at New Delhi, India on 6-9 November 2016
- Dr Ramakrishna Akkinapally, Deputy Director General, National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), Papua New Guinea represented APAARI in GFAR Steering Committee in Rome on 8-9 February 2017
- Ms Martina Spisiakova, Knowledge Management Coordinator, APAARI represented APAARI in Regional Symposium on “Mapping and Assessing University-based Farmer Extension Services in ASEAN through an Agro-ecological/Organic Lens, Bangkok, Thailand, Bangkok, Thailand on 23 February 2017
- Ms Martina Spisiakova, Knowledge Management Coordinator, APAARI represented APAARI in Regional Food Security conference: Let's Get to Work - Building a Food Secure Future, Hanoi, Vietnam, in Ha Noi, Viet Nam on 22-23 March 2017
- Ms Celilu Bitong, Knowledge Management Officer, APAARI, represented APAARI

in International Training-Workshop on Developing Knowledge Management in Agriculture for Small-scale Farmers at PCAARRD, Los Banos, Laguna on 9-11 May 2017

- Ms Celilu Bitong, Knowledge Management Officer, APAARI, represented APAARI in CDAIS Innovation Fair, at NAFRI, Vientiane, Lao-PDR on 19 May 2017
- Dr Sergie Bang, Director General, National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), Papua New Guinea represented APAARI in GFAR Steering Committee in Rome on 13-15 June 2017

VII. Other Items

New Appointments

Executive Secretary, APAARI

The position of Executive Secretary had fallen vacant when the previous Executive Secretary, announced his decision in the General Assembly meeting (GAM) held in Taiwan on 3 November 2016 to conclude his tenure on 31 December 2016 due to health reasons. The Interim Executive secretary took over the charge on 1 January 2017. The announcement for recruitment of Executive Secretary was made on 4 January 2017. A total of 27 applications were received out of which 7 applications were rejected due to non-fulfillment of specified qualification and experience. Based on critical assessment and evaluation, five candidates were short listed for personal face-to-face interview by the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee was constituted in consultation with the Chairman, APAARI and the interview was held on 3 June 2017. The Selection Committee unanimously recommended the appointment of Dr. Ravinder Kumar Khetarpal, Regional Advisor (Strategic Science Partnerships) CABI South Asia - India for the position of Executive Secretary, APAARI. The appointment letter has been issued to Dr Ravinder Kumar Khetarpal and he has accepted the offer and is likely to join in the first week of August 2017.

APCoAB Coordinator

The position of APCoAB Coordinator had fallen vacant in January 2016 when the previous Coordinator resigned. Announcement for recruitment of Coordinator was first issued on 23 December 2016. Fourteen applications were received, based on evaluation of which four candidates were short-listed for personal interview by the Selection Committee. The letter was constituted by the Interim Executive Secretary, APAARI in consultation with Chairman, APAARI and the interview was held on 31 May 2017. The Selection Committee unanimously recommended the appointment of Dr. Rishi Kumar Tyagi, Principal Scientist, National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, New Delhi for the position of APCoAB Coordinator. The appointment letter has been issued to Dr Rishi Kumar Tyagi and he has accepted the offer and is likely to join sometime in August 2017.

Outgoing Staff

Knowledge Management Coordinator

Ms. Martina Spisiakova has worked as APAARI's Knowledge Management Coordinator since December 2015. She has made a major contribution to APAARI's strategic planning, through the development of the APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-2022, Work Plan for the biennium 2017-2018, Knowledge Management and Communication Strategy, as well as stakeholder mapping. Martina also coordinated the implementation of APAARI's Knowledge Management Programme, particularly the development of a new APAARI website; introduction of a new communication tool – APAARI Network Highlights; enhancement of APAARI's presence and knowledge sharing on Social Media through Facebook, Twitter, Linked In, and Slideshare; improvement of APAARI's outreach and advocacy through enhanced communication materials (publications and posters); and strengthened partnership with APAARI members, partners, and other stakeholders, particularly collaboration with FAO. All these activities have become critical pillars of APAARI's future operations and will be pursued by the APAARI Secretariat. Martina will be leaving APAARI at the end of June 2017 for personal reasons but will continue her involvement with APAARI for some time on a consultancy basis.

VIII. Epilogue

As is evident from this report, APAARI activities are being expanded and effectively addressing the expectations of its constituencies. This has been possible due to their great support and cooperation extended by all APAARI members, partners and other stakeholders, which is duly acknowledged. APAARI looks forward to have more activities/collaboration with the partners in fulfilling its mandate following the APAARI Strategic Plan 2017-2022, and its biennial work plan for 2017-18 with details of prioritized programmes and activities to be undertaken.
