

APAARI Expert Consultation on ARD Priority Setting

Bangkok, Thailand, 12-14 November 2001

Regional Research Priorities in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries for the Asia/Pacific Region

In the *APAARI Expert Consultation on ARD Priority Setting* that took place in Bangkok from the 12th to the 14th of November the results of the three sub-regional priority setting workshops were presented and discussed, on the basis of the reports from each of these sub-regional priority setting exercises:

- a) “Synthesis Report of the Meeting on Agricultural Research Prioritization for South and West Asia” (Patancheru, ICRISAT, July 5-7, 2001).
- b) “East and Southeast Asia Regional Priorities: Perspective of the NARS” (Los Baños, IRRI, June 27-28, 2001).
- c) “Research Priorities in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Sectors in the Pacific Region: A Synthesis” (PNG, October 2001)

It is important to point out that a wide range of stakeholders participated in these three sub-regional workshops, including representatives from NGOs and other sectors. Furthermore, NGOs organized a regional workshop in August in Bangkok in which they analysed as well the issue of regional priorities. This report has not yet been received, but it could also be taken into consideration if it is received in time by the APAARI Secretariat.

After these presentations three working groups were established to discuss in a smaller working group environment four questions that the APAARI Secretariat had prepared: (a) What are the next steps that are required for finalizing the sub-regional reports on research priorities? (b) Identify research themes/topics that can be identified as being of importance to all three sub-regions (region-wide research priorities shared by all sub-regions). (c) What observations can be derived from these regional priorities in terms of the ten Challenge Programme proposals that are presently being discussed in the CGIAR? (d) What are the implications of these regional priorities for the current regional research networks and regional collaborative programmes? In the case of topics/themes for possible new areas of cooperation, how can these regional priorities be converted into concrete action proposals with a clear indication of who will do what and how will they be funded?

Each working group discussed these four questions and presented a report in a Plenary Session that was dedicated to a synthesis effort at the region-wide level. The main conclusions and decisions that were taken in this synthesis session are summarized in the following pages.

The first decision is with respect to the structure of the Final Report of this Expert Consultation. It was decided that the report should basically have four chapters: three chapters will present the final versions of the three sub-regional reports in order to highlight the importance of the sub-regional priorities; the fourth chapter will analyse the region-wide

priorities and the region-wide activities that will be pursued in the future, as well as the input that the APAARI region can contribute to the global level (i.e. comments on Challenge Programme proposals, collaboration with other regions and possible ideas for Global Partnership Programmes, etc.).

1. Final Version of Sub-regional Reports

With respect to the sub-regional reports, the following timetable was adopted. The sub-regional coordinators will prepare a revised version of each report by November 26 integrating the comments and observations made in the Bangkok meeting, and will circulate it broadly to all NARS and interested stakeholders in each sub-region. The deadline for feedback from all stakeholders within each sub-region will be that of January 15, so that the sub-regional coordinators can prepare the final version of the sub-regional reports by the end of January. The final version of the sub-regional reports should be in the APAARI Secretariat by January 30. These three sub-regional reports will constitute three chapters of the Final Regional Report.

The rest of these notes will concentrate on the conclusions related to the Regional Priorities and to regional activities to be carried out in the future, that will constitute the content of the fourth chapter of the Final Report of this Expert Consultation. The conclusions can be organized around three basic issues (related to questions 2, 3 and 4 that were posed to the three working groups): (a) region-wide priorities shared by the three sub-regions; (b) inputs to the current process of selecting Challenge Programmes; and (c) next steps in going from regional priorities to concrete action proposals.

2. Regional Priorities:

The comparative analysis that was done among sub-regions led to the identification of seven common areas for research opportunities, that considered to be the regional priorities. Five of them are related to broad research areas, while the last two are cross-cutting support activities that are important for agricultural research in general. These regional priority areas are:

1. Natural resource management
2. Genetic resources
3. Commodity chain development
4. Meeting the protein demand of a growing population
5. Tree and forest management
6. Cross-cutting issue: Information and communication management
7. Cross-cutting issue: Capacity development

These seven regional priority research areas were further broken down into more specific priority research themes within each research area, that were derived from the comparative analysis that was made of the three sub-regional reports. This disaggregated information is presented in Annex 1. One of the problems that were faced in this comparative analysis is that the three sub-regional reports are not formulated at the same level of disaggregation or of specificity. In preparing the final version of the three sub-regional reports, the sub-regional coordinators should keep in mind this region-wide analysis in order to make them more compatible.

3. Input into the Selection of CPs

The second main issue that was analysed is that of the inputs APAARI can provide to the current process of selecting Challenge Programmes (CPs) that is being carried out by the CGIAR. The regional input into this process is being envisaged in two steps. The first one is to make a contribution to the selection of two or three topics/themes from the list of 10 that were recently discussed at AGM-2001 in Washington, in order to have the Asia/Pacific regional priorities reflected in those two or three initial cases that will be selected in the short term by the CGIAR. The second step is to generate new or additional ideas that may be derived from the Asia/Pacific regional priority setting process, and present them to the consideration of the CGIAR as “*new proposals*” for Challenge Programmes (CPs), through the Science Council. This is in response to the “call for ideas” that the CGIAR Executive Committee made in its first meeting. In this way, the regional priority setting process will make an input in setting the global agenda.

After discussing the possibility of selecting the “top three candidates” from the list of ten topics currently being considered for CPs (see Annex 2), as seen from the perspective of the Asia/Pacific regional priorities, it was decided that in this stage of the process it was better to take a different route. It was felt that it was better to identify how the ten CP proposals relate to the seven regional priorities that were identified. In doing this analysis, it was identified that seven of the ten CP proposals are closely related to the seven APAARI regional priorities; in some cases, a CP proposal is related to more than one regional priority, as can be seen in the summary table that is presented in Table 1.

4. Next Steps

The third main issue that was analysed in the synthesis session was that of the identification of the next steps to be carried out in order to take the regional priorities mentioned above (and in Annex 1), and convert them into concrete action proposals. Five main steps were identified:

- a) **Gap Analysis:** Analyse current portfolio of regional research networks and regional cooperation programmes to identify congruence or differences with regional priorities. From this analysis it should be feasible to identify which regional and sub-regional priorities (see Annex 1 and sub-regional chapters) are been addressed by existing regional networks and cooperative programmes, and which priorities are not being worked on (gaps between present collaborative efforts and regional needs/priorities).
- b) **Implications for existing regional networks and regional collaborative programmes:** The second step is to make a critical assessment of the existing regional networks and other modes or regional cooperation in agricultural research and development activities, in order to determine to what extent they are really contributing to address these regional needs. In doing so, it is possible to determine what topics or activities should be adjusted and/or strengthened in order to better meet the priority needs.

Table 1 - APAARI Regional Priorities and CP Proposals

Regional Priorities:	CP Proposals:
1. NRM	Water and Agriculture
	Desertification
	Climate Change
	Mountain Agriculture
2. Genetic Resources	Climate Change
	Biofortification
	Global Genetic Resources and Genomics
	Mountain Agriculture
3. Commodity Chain Development	Biofortification
4. Meeting the Protein Demand	Animal Health and Production
	Mountain Agriculture
5. Tree and Forest Management	Water and Agriculture
	Desertification
	Climate Change
	Mountain Agriculture
6. Information Management	A common issue to all CPs
7. Capacity Development	A common issue to all CPs

- c) **Development of new proposals for regional and/or global collaboration:** The gap analysis mentioned above will also identify those topics/themes that are not being covered by existing regional networks or projects, and that should lead to *new proposals* for collaboration at the regional and/or global level. In order to operationalise these ideas and to convert regional priorities into concrete action proposals, a *core group of institutions/stakeholders* interested in the respective topic should be identified along with a *lead-organization*, who will be responsible for taking the idea further and convert it into a viable and feasible project or action proposal. This process should involve NARS, IARCs, NGOs, farmers' organizations, regional organizations and other stakeholders in the development of collaborative partnerships. At the global level, these ideas could lead either to new proposals for Challenge Programmes, or for Global Partnership Programmes along the lines that GFAR is facilitating.
- d) **Funding Strategy for each new proposal:** Any new proposal that is brought up should be based on a viable and sustainable funding strategy. Given the constraints in ODA (donor) funds available, these new proposals should be strongly based on cost-sharing among partners/stakeholders, who are sufficiently interested in the proposed initiative that they "buy into it" by contributing to its funding. At the same time, the requirements for the additional funding support that is required from donors should be clearly established, along with the identification of the potential donors to contact, both regional and global donors. If an important part of the collaborative programme can be assured with the own funds of the stakeholders, it will be easier to mobilize the additional funding from donors.¹
- e) **Preparation of Guidelines for the development of proposals:** It was pointed out that in order to facilitate the above process it was important for any stakeholder interested in presenting a proposal for a "new initiative", either at the regional or the global level, to take into consideration the guidelines that potential funders or potential donors have. This information is available from funding organizations.

¹ A good example of how this is already being done in the APAARI region is reflected in the funding strategy of the *Asia/Pacific Regional Agricultural Research Information System (APARIS)* that was reviewed during one of the sessions of this Expert Consultation meeting. On this point see: "*First APARIS Activity Report*"; APAARI, November 2001.

Annex 1
Regional Priorities for the Asia/Pacific Region

1. Natural Resource Management
 - 1.1. Integrated NRM and Integrated Crop Management (ICM)/IPM
 - 1.2. Policy development and institutional issues related to NRM
 - 1.3. Watershed management
 - 1.4. Land management and soil fertility
 - 1.5. Rehabilitation of degraded and marginal lands
2. Genetic Resources Enhancement and Agrobiodiversity Conservation
 - 2.1. PGR conservation and improvement
 - 2.2. Livestock selection and improvement (includes fisheries)
 - 2.3. Microbial functional agrobiodiversity
 - 2.4. Bio-safety issues/policy/GMOs/IPRs
3. Commodity Chain Development (Linking Farmers to Markets)
 - 3.1. Commercialisation, marketing and trade
 - 3.2. Policy – International agreements
 - 3.3. Input/supply and demand analysis (industry and macro level)
 - 3.4. Production and marketing economic analysis (firm/farm and micro level)
 - 3.5. Value adding
 - 3.6. Competitiveness
 - 3.7. Product/quality improvement and standards
 - 3.8. Quarantine and bio-security
4. Meeting the Protein Demand of a Growing Population (Animal)
 - 4.1. Feed resources: fish, poultry, ruminants and non-ruminants (forage, pasture, fodder, grain, constituted feedstocks and crop residues)
 - 4.2. Disease management (poultry, ruminants, non-ruminants, aquaculture)

- 4.3. Production systems (crop/livestock, aquaculture, mariculture)
- 4.4. Waste management and by-product utilization
5. Meeting the Protein Demand of a Growing Population (Plants)
 - 5.1. Grain legume productivity improvement
 - 5.2. Legumes in farming systems
 - 5.3. Quality and nutrition improvement (human)
 - 5.4. Food safety: aflatoxins and anti-nutrition factors
6. Tree and Forest Management for Landholders
 - 6.1. Natural forest management:
 - Harvesting regime and regeneration
 - Cutting cycle analysis
 - 6.2. Forest plantation, productivity and health
 - 6.3. Agro-forestry in production systems
7. Cross-cutting Issue: Information Management for Agricultural Development
 - 7.1. Packaging, access and use: Research, methodologies and modalities
8. Cross-cutting Issue: Capacity Building
 - 8.1. Human resources development
 - 8.2. Institutional development
 - Research management, stakeholder management
 - Technology transfer facilitation
 - 8.3. Research policy development:
 - Food insecurity and poverty mapping

Annex 2
Proposals for CGIAR Challenge Programmes (CPs)

Proposed CP:	Proponent Institution (s):
Climate Change	ICRAF
Agriculture and Combating Desertification	ICRISAT, ICARDA
Global Genetic Resources: Conservation, Management and Improvement for Food and National Security, Agrobiodiversity and Sustainable Livelihoods (includes Genomics)	IPGRI, CIMMYT, IRRI
Water and Agriculture	IWMI
Biofortified Crops to Combat Micronutrient Malnutrition	CIAT, IFPRI
Animal Health, Market Access, Food Safety and Poverty Reduction	ILRI, IFPRI, OIE, FAO, WB, ICLARM
Global Mountain Programme	CIP, ICRAF, ICIMOD, CONDESAN
Global Initiative on HIV/AIDS, Agriculture and Food Security	ISNAR, IFPRI, WARDS, FAO
Challenge Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa	FARA
Development of Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems in Central Asia and the Caucasus (CAC)	ICARDA and CAC Regional Forum