Developing an Innovative Partnership: 
The Coconut Global Research for Development Programme

Abstract

A Coconut Global Research for Development Programme (CGRDP) is being developed at the initiative of three research and development organisations: APCC, BUROTROP, and COGENT. Building on existing partnerships, networks and linkages has been a main asset. By putting their resources together, the three organisations have been able to co-ordinate programme development. The programme is based on a common framework for action which is now being established. The programme relies on regional networks for channelling up-wards and down-wards flows of information and knowledge. Thematic working groups are proposing research priorities to a Co-ordinating Committee which decides the research programme. Stakeholder participatory approach to programme development is essential in fostering ownership and support. Shared vision, mission and objectives are essential to effectiveness.

1. Project Context

1.1. Importance of coconut

Coconut is the most important palm of the humid tropics with over 11 million hectares planted with the crop in 86 countries. About 96% of the crop is grown by more than 10 million resource-poor smallholder and sharecropper families, and in total, more than 80 million people depend directly on coconut and its processing for their livelihood. The coconut industry, from cottage to large mill scales employs millions of low skill labourers. The commodity chain also involves processors, traders, exporters, importers/consumers, researchers and other stakeholders both in the producing and importing countries.

In addition to the traditional products of copra, coconut oil and copra meal, coconut has the advantage of producing a wide variety of food and environment friendly non-food products which are used both domestically and for the export market. In some countries, coconut is the only source of foreign exchange earnings. Coconut has also been a stabilising factor in the farming systems of marginal and fragile environments.

Despite the above potential of coconut, farmers are suffering due to declining yields and decreasing farm productivity. These are caused by ageing palms which need to be replanted with better varieties, natural calamities such as pests and diseases, drought, and typhoons. There is a need to develop improved varieties with high yields and adaptation, and varieties that provide high-value products in order to increase the income of coconut farmers and promote sustainable coconut production.
1.2. Description of the proposed global programme

The Coconut Global Research for Development Programme (CGRDP) is being developed to bring existing partnerships and activities to a global level, covering the whole coconut commodity chain, with a comprehensive participation involving a representation of all the stakeholders, and encompassing all the production areas.

The global programme builds upon existing achievements and is based upon ongoing research initiatives. CGRDP is therefore a mechanism to further maximise the outputs and accelerate the impact of the overall coconut research effort. The programme is an innovative mechanism to bring together research carried out by all the research teams working on coconut research, creating new partnerships between NARS, ARIs, IARCs and other partners.

1.2.1. Objectives

The collaborative programme will operate as a R & D network with the following objectives:

General objectives
- To develop and implement collaborative research and development activities in five areas to address common constraints and opportunities for increasing incomes of coconut farmers through sustainable coconut production and efficient utilisation of coconut products;
- To promote capacity building to strengthen member countries to undertake development and policy initiatives in support of their coconut industry.

Specific objectives
- To foster the development of improved coconut varieties, the control of pests and diseases, the development of coconut-based ecosystems, the improvement of processing techniques, the production of value-added coconut products, and the study of socio-economic issues affecting the coconut sector;
- To strengthen and stimulate partnerships among stakeholders of the coconut community to increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of global coconut research efforts;
- To offer access to information and documentation and disseminate research findings;
- To provide training opportunities to researchers, technicians and other stakeholders to improve their knowledge and skills.

1.2.2. Programme structure

The programme will operate as a series of inter-linked thematic working groups co-ordinated by a Secretariat. The programme will be directed by a Co-ordinating Committee and operate under a Programme Support Group. Regional networks will provide the interface between the global and the local level.

- The thematic working groups are the essential part of the programme. A working group consists of a number of experts on a given research theme. Each group operates as a network, with their own co-ordination mechanism and assignment of responsibility to a leading organisation/co-ordinator on the basis of its capacity to contribute and its comparative advantage. Operating in small subject-specific working groups means that frequent interactions can occur between group members and flexibility is possible in the organisation of group meetings. For example, if the size of a group is too large, a smaller core group will be designated for attending meetings. Research results, information, germplasm etc. are exchanged within each working group. In this way, each working group is able to ensure that it makes the best use of the resources available to the group as a whole and duplication of efforts is minimised. Through the creation of synergies, the total output of the group is bigger than the sum of its component parts. Each working group develops a mechanism for ensuring regular contacts between group members and for facilitating information and material
exchange between group members. Interdisciplinary contacts between the various working groups are also essential to address many of the major research needs and such links are therefore encouraged and facilitated.

b. The **regional networks** identify research priorities, facilitate the development of research projects of regional significance, create interdisciplinary contacts between working groups. At the interface with the users, they play an essential role in the transmission of the up-wards and down-ward flows, they link the “local” to other levels of the programme, they integrate activities at regional level, enhance the exchange of information and provide feedback to the programme. Five regional country networks already exist within COGENT: networks for Africa, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Latin America and Caribbean, and Pacific. They should enlarge their mandate to cover all five priority research areas.

c. The **Secretariat** is headed by a programme co-ordinator who is responsible to the Co-ordinating Committee for the smooth running of the programme. It prepares reports and compiles lists of priorities, based on technical advice provided by the thematic working groups. It plays a crucial role in the internal communication within the programme. Initially, the Programme co-ordinator will be the COGENT co-ordinator and the secretariat will be provided by IPGRI with the support of BUROTROP. However, to tackle the increase in work load, the secretariat will need to be strengthened; each new activity will have to include resources to support secretariat

d. The **Co-ordinating Committee** consists of representatives from the stakeholders. It has to be limited in size, for practical reasons. It is responsible of proposing direction and overseeing the programme. It sets priorities on problems that have to be addressed at a global level, based on the technical advice of the working groups, and advises donors on the allocation of resources to the programme. It also approves the strategy, medium term plan and annual working plan, commissions external reviews, advocates on behalf of the programme and contributes to seeking funding. The genetic resources issues will continue to be handled by the COGENT Steering Committee. Tentatively, the Interim Co-ordinating Committee could consist of 12 to 14 members.

e. The **Programme Support Group** is composed of major donors and stakeholders. It provides visibility, guidance and support to the programme. It endorses the strategy of the programme and contributes to funding and other resources but it has no direct operational role. It will continue the work of the existing Coconut Support Group which meets every year during the CGIAR-MTM.

### 1.2.3. Nature of issues being addressed

Stakeholders have identified and prioritised five research areas requiring international support. These priorities need to be addressed at a global level and should be the basis for establishing the five proposed thematic groups. The five areas are the following:

- a. Germplasm collection, conservation, evaluation, improvement and utilisation
- b. Control of pests and diseases, especially the lethal diseases
- c. Productivity and sustainability of coconut-based farming systems
- d. Improvement of the efficiency and value-added benefits in post harvest processing and products and by-products utilisation
- e. Socio-economic issues influencing the development of the coconut sector

### 2. History of Stakeholder involvement in the area

#### 2.1. Coconut research

Most of the research on coconut has been conducted under small-scale national programmes and it has suffered from insufficient co-ordination. Little support was provided from official donor development assistance programmes. There were also a few regional and international research activities. The lead
agency among the producing countries is the Asian and Pacific Coconut Community (APCC),
established in 1969, which primarily supports technical meetings, information and publications, and
some specific research projects. Efforts to organise thematic working groups on breeding, processing,
lethal yellowing have indeed taken place, especially with the support of the FAO, but these actions
have somewhat lapsed. Although coconut is essentially a food crop in most countries where it is
grown, it has not, unlike other important food crops, benefited from the international research efforts
sponsored by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

In the mid-1980s, there was a renewal of interest in coconut research. At the beginning of 1985,
several European research agencies agreed to join the EEC in the creation of a bureau, open to all
donor and producer countries. A provisional executive committee was formed in July 1989 and the
bureau, named Bureau for the Development of Research on Tropical Perennial Oil Crops (BUROTROP),
commenced work in March 1990 with a mandate for oil palm and coconut. In 1985 also, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the CGIAR recommended that coconut was a
commodity appropriate for international research support and identified five priority areas for
international support. As a first step, the International Workshop on Coconut Genetic Resources held
in Cipanas, Indonesia, in 1991, called for the implementation of an international coconut genetic
resources network and asked IBPGR, (now the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute, IPGRI)
to be the executing agency. The network, named COGENT, was established in 1992.

BUROTROP has a memorandum of understanding with IPGRI covering the collaboration with
COGENT. APCC is a Board member of BUROTROP and is represented at the Steering Committee
meetings of COGENT. Project proposals of the three organisations are discussed during their
programme meetings in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort, promote complementation
and synergy and sharing of resources. Individual and joint activities are also planned to promote
effective dissemination of results.

It is in this framework that the Board of BUROTROP, including representatives of APCC and
COGENT, started discussing a global research programme for coconut, on the model of PROMUSA
and limited to genetic resources management and breeding, at its Manila meeting in June 1999.

2.2. The GFAR-2000 Conference

When the Global Forum on Agricultural Research invited proposals to be presented at the GFAR-2000
Conference held in Dresden, Germany, in May 2000, it was an excellent opportunity to draw the
attention of the international research community to the needs of coconut research and to float the
concept of a global research programme. BUROTROP was invited to make two presentations in the
sub-plenary session “International Co-operation on Commodity Chains”:

“BUROTROP: A Global Network for the Development of Research on Tropical Perennial Oil Crops”
which was presented as a case study of a Successful Research Partnership; and

“PROCOCOS - Creation of a Global Research Programme on Coconut”, which was presented as an
Innovative Research Partnership, and to which the Global Forum reacted positively.

A case study presenting COGENT was integrated in the PROCOCOS presentation which was prepared in close collaboration with COGENT and APCC, and underlined the strong links between the
three organisations. Following on the presentations in Dresden, the case of BUROTROP is exposed in
more details, to show how the global programme evolved from an existing set of networks, but the
essential roles of APCC and COGENT are also described in their specific aspects.

2.3. Primary stakeholders

As indicated above, the three primary stakeholders are APCC, BUROTROP, and COGENT (See also
leaflets in Annex 1).
BUROTROP is an association with an equal representation of European and producing countries, which provides regular opportunities for the participants to meet and interact. It is an example of a balanced North-South network where the developing countries fully participate in decision making and management functions.

BUROTROP helps identifying researchable constraints and opportunities for its two mandate crops, oil palm and coconut, and determining and formulating priorities and research strategies. That is being done, in consultation with producers and consumers, through a series of regional meetings with the participation of the stakeholders. After priorities have been defined, the role of BUROTROP is to help finding expertise relevant to the proposed research and to put the interested institutions in contact for developing the research priorities from the conceptual stage to detailed project proposals. Then, it helps identifying funding donors and supports the submission of proposals in a form acceptable to them. Having the support of BUROTROP for a proposal is a clear indication to donors, international, regional and national programmes, that it has been evaluated for priority, avoidance of duplication, relevance and value for money. Project management is the responsibility of the participants, within the rules fixed by the funding donors. BUROTROP, however, can provide a service as an executing agency for project management, monitoring and evaluation.

The results of BUROTROP activities are disseminated through its Bulletin and Web site. Most of the scientific and technical information, however, is derived from the knowledge of its members and associated institutions, which have their own mechanisms of dissemination.

As a network with a large number of stakeholders, a main role of BUROTROP is co-ordination. It is difficult to initiate and maintain the relationship between many persons and institutions which are often located in different regions of the world, have widely different views on the details of the work as well as on strategic objectives, and may have very different institutional requirements for any co-operative effort. Making it work depends on a thorough common understanding of each partner expectations and objectives. It is where BUROTROP takes on the role of mediator and facilitator between the other parties.

The added value of the partnerships established with the support of BUROTROP is reflected mainly in the excellent spirit of co-operation which now exist among the participants. Starting from priorities established by the users, BUROTROP has contributed to the development of joint projects between European teams and partners from developing countries under the STD2, STD3 and INCO-DC programmes of the European Union as well as projects funded by other bilateral and multilateral donors. European institutions concerned with the mandate crops or with relevant applicable technologies now work as partners, using their comparative advantages in co-operative project activities. Previously, they frequently competed for funding by formulating individual projects which did not always use European expertise to the best advantage of the parties involved. NARS are gaining access to the sophisticated infrastructure and skills of European centres of excellence. Funding donors are obtaining the necessary information that help them select the best research and development proposals.

In the last 30 years, APCC, an inter-governmental body with 14 member countries, with expertise in processing and marketing, has generated information and provided efficient processing technologies and marketing policy guidelines to its member countries. It has also galvanised inter-governmental support to the coconut industry of the Asia Pacific.

In the last 10 years, COGENT, with its 38 member countries and expertise in coconut genetic resources conservation and use, developed a substantial body of knowledge and resources to promote the conservation of coconut genetic resources. It has funded through IPGRI I25 country projects in 32 countries; conserved and characterised 1,338 accessions in 22 countries and established a multi-site International Coconut Genebank. It has also developed technologies and strategies for characterising
and deploying coconut genetic resources as poverty reduction strategies to help resource-poor farmers and socio-economically disadvantaged women in coconut growing communities.

2.4. Other stakeholders

The International Coconut Conference (ICC) 2000, held in Chennai, India, discussed the participation of other stakeholders, beside APCC, BUROTROP and COGENT. They can be divided into two categories as follows:

a. traditional partners of coconut research and development, often already involved in the instances of the primary stakeholders. These include NARS from producing countries, regional organisations with an interest in the crop, advanced research institutions (ARIs), international centres. These partners have been informed and consulted. They are actively participating in the formulation and development of the global programme;

b. other stakeholders that, until now, have not been offered a proper role in the formulation and implementation of the coconut research agenda. These include farmers, producers, processors, traders and their professional organisations as well as NGOs. Although they have their own access through the NARS, which advocate on their behalf, they need to participate more actively and directly in the global programme. Procedures have to be established to ensure that they are represented at all levels of the programme, up to the Co-ordinating Committee.

2.5. Historical build-up

The collaboration between APCC, BUROTROP and COGENT, three international organisations with their own national partners, promoted equity, subsidiarity, complementarity and added value in coconut research.

Initially, the three organisations implemented their respective mandates until they have developed a critical mass of results and active national co-operators. In the last two decades, coconut farmers have been suffering due to declining coconut productivity and unstable market for the traditional coconut products. Thus country governments and coconut farmers sought from research institutions and organisations a progressive development application of research results in farmers’ fields and more innovative ways of addressing common problems and opportunities. These urgent demands on the research organisations required the effective development of a platform for the broader aspects of research and development to include not only the use of innovative research strategies but also the deployment of research results to immediately benefit resource-poor coconut farmers and socio-economically disadvantaged women.

A major problem faced by this new R & D paradigm was the lack of adequate resources to implement and fast track relevant priority projects. However, it was realised that by working together, APCC, BUROTROP and COGENT could effectively put their resources together to address urgent and long-term problems and opportunities. This could be achieved through complementation and synergy and sharing of resources from germplasm, information, expertise and funds. It was also envisioned that by developing a common programme, the three organisations could convince more national co-operators, partner organisations and donors to support this new initiative beyond the traditional resources allocated to coconut research.

2.6. Participation by the main stakeholders

The three organisations have pledged their technical and institutional support to implement the Coconut Global Research for Development Programme that will address five priority areas namely: coconut genetic resources, agronomy and coconut-based farming system, crop protection, processing and marketing.
By agreeing to collaborate on the CGRD Programme, they have agreed to continue their work as in the past but guided by an agreed agenda to be developed collaboratively. They have also agreed for COGENT to take a leadership role in co-ordinating the programme in close collaboration with the other two organisations and their partner countries. APCC will operate through its ministerial-level Session; BUROTROP through its Board of Administrators; and COGENT through its Steering Committee and IPGRI, its executing agency.

3. Process and Mechanisms to Formulate and Manage Global Partnership Programmes

The proposed CGRD Programme is still in its infancy. Two main levels of the structure have not been established yet: the working groups and the interim co-ordinating committee. Other levels are only starting to integrate participation in the global programme in their strategy and planning. But a strong basis has already been established by the three primary stakeholders. Therefore, only part of this presentation is factual while the rest is still at a conceptual stage.

3.1. Formulating a research agenda

The process of putting together and formulating a programme, more or less global in nature, has been part of the activities of the three organisations and their partners for many years. The scope and the thematic coverage of the programme were already defined as explained above. Opportunity was a decisive factor for moving toward a global programme. Increased participation of all stakeholders should improve the formulation and prioritisation of the research agenda.

Decision making within the programme follows a ‘bottom-up’ approach and participating scientists are fully involved in this process. Decisions are based on scientific priorities identified by programme participants and based on users’ needs. The Regional Coconut Networks play a major role in this regard, providing a mechanism for the two-way exchange of information between NARS and research programmes. They also provide a useful channel through which information from national programmes is fed back to the global programme. The provision of feedback information regarding farmers’ needs is of particular importance in setting research priorities.

Constraints and opportunities suggested by the various stakeholders will be formalised by and channelled through the regional networks, or addressed directly to the programme. They will be submitted to the working groups which will be formed in the five research areas, based on the mandates assigned to the three research organisations, namely: coconut genetic resources, agronomy, crop protection, processing and marketing. The working groups will propose priority research areas for which project proposals will be developed upon approval of the Co-ordinating Committee (CC) of the programme. The CC will review and integrate the priority research areas into a balanced and cohesive programme that addresses the short-term as well as the long-term expected outputs of the programme. Once this balanced programme is finalised, specific project proposals will be generated and funding sourced.

3.2. From local to global

The link between local and global is facilitated by the matrix arrangement between regional networks and working groups. Consultation of the local, including village-level, and national stakeholders is undertaken by the regional networks. A first screening will take place at the level of the networks which will identify location-specific issues that can be addressed at the national level. Regional constraints and opportunities common to several countries, or that cannot be addressed at national level, will be referred to the programme for advice by the appropriate working groups and prioritisation. The programme will determine the issues for which results are ready to be transferred, with possibly some adaptive research, and the issues which require the establishment of a collaborative regional or international research project.
Where results are available and issues are common to other regions, inter-regional collaboration will be promoted with results from the more advanced region transferred in the weaker regions. This will increase the information, expertise and capacity of other regions quicker and prime them for greater involvement and contribution to the common project. The formation of such partnerships will also contribute to strengthening the capacity of NARS to conduct coconut-related research.

The global programme is not a research centre and does not own research facilities. Regional or international research activities are conducted by partner research institutions and most of the experimental work is site-specific. Participation in the global framework will have two main advantages in this respect:

- Insure that research projects are, from the onset, designed for being of wider relevance than site-specific problem solving;
- Allow research institutions to participate in the generation of knowledge beyond the means of most national programmes.

Since APCC, BUROTROP and COGENT are committed to reduce poverty in coconut growing communities through enhanced income and food security, the programme will include research, development and policy intervention components. This will ensure that constraints and opportunities from the community level are fed upwards the R&D process. Since all three organisations have their member countries, and regional sub-networks for COGENT, the up-ward and down-ward flows of activities will be further enhanced by horizontal transfer of both research activities and results.

### 3.3. A common framework for action

The global programme will be a common framework for action. It will start by building on the existing collaborative achievements of the stakeholders and making the best possible use of the existing structures and resources. The three organisations agreed to take a lead in the identification of priority research in their respective assigned areas, in consultation with their member countries and partner organisations as follows: COGENT for coconut genetic resources; BUROTROP for agronomy and crop protection; and APCC for processing and marketing. The genetic resources issues will continue to be handled by the COGENT Steering Committee. They will form the corresponding working groups which will propose project design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment mechanisms which the programme as a whole will review and approve. They have also agreed to form a common management team in the Secretariat to oversee the integration and coordination of the programme.

The option of a common framework for action was selected because it is best adapted to the existing situation of the coconut R & D. Most of the participants are not willing to join a “fully structured programme” while they have, for years, been co-operating very closely on a wide range of activities. This was a clear message of the ICC-2000 meeting.

### 3.4. Defining priorities

At the present stage of the project, the selection/prioritisation criteria of the research proposals have to be developed and agreed upon by the stakeholders. As indicated above, this process will be multi-staged. Regional networks will do a first screening before moving upwards the results of consultations with grass-root level. The working groups will propose priority research areas. These priorities will be considered during the integration process at the Co-ordinating Committee level to effect complementarity, balance, and effectiveness. Project proposals will be developed for agreed priority areas.

A major criterion in selecting projects will be the relevance to farmers/producers, in order to reach the first objective of the programme: increasing incomes of producers. The programme should maintain a
proper balance between short-term projects with a high “chance of success” and longer term projects, so important with a perennial crop like coconut, and which contribute to the generation of knowledge.

Evaluation of project proposals will be conducted by the thematic working groups for science, and by the users for relevance and application to development. Stakeholders and participating organisations have also their own procedures of evaluation which can be used to assess their proposals to the global programme. Donors and funding agencies have also their own criteria which have to be taken into account. The Co-ordinating Committee will check how project proposals fit in the global set of priorities of the programme before taking a final decision.

3.5. Information and knowledge management

The global programme will develop a database of projects and project leaders, activities and results and locations/opportunities for development applications. Effective monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment mechanisms will also be put in place. A number of stakeholders, including the three organisations, have their own publications and Web sites which will include information and knowledge from the programme.

COGENT has successfully developed a large training and education component for its members. APCC and BUROTROP have also supported workshops, conferences and training activities on coconut research and development. These activities should be continued and developed under the global programme.

3.6. Funding strategy

The programme will operate as a consortium and rely on a range of funding mechanisms.

Initially, the programme will use the resources of the three organisations for its co-ordinating costs. However, additional funding will have to be generated quickly for collaborative activities, i.e. meetings and workshops and co-ordination, i.e. the operation of the Secretariat and the Co-ordinating Committee.

Partners in the programme are expected to contribute in-kind their own research and, in addition, the programme will seek further resources in order to address priority research needs, as identified by the programme partners.

The co-ordination of research efforts should facilitate contacts with donors and funding agencies. Competitive research can only address certain aspects of the problems. For the long term, global partnership offers a framework to help donors have a better understanding of the needs and the stakes, and to put competitive research in a wider perspective.

3.7. Critical factors of effectiveness

The effectiveness of the programme depends on a number of conditions and management factors.

The following management factors could hinder effectiveness of the global programme

a. **Lack of a shared vision, mission and objectives by the participating organisations and stakeholders.** This is a sensitive factor, mostly at the start of the programme. It is difficult for stakeholders to conceptualise the proposal and they may have widely different visions of the programme. Even for coconut where a strong foundation existed, it took lots of efforts to get the proposal accepted. Although an agreement in principle existed among the three organisations to launch the programme at the ICC-2000, it was not possible to do so. Intense negotiation had to take place during the meeting to clarify and settle a number of important
issues. The amended proposal had to go back to decision-making instances. The programme should now be launched at the next COCOTECH meeting in July 2002.

b. **Lack of institutional support from collaborating organisations.** In their efforts for surviving competition, many organisations have to adapt to changing objectives, priorities and means. It was a cause for the lack of continuity which affected so severely coconut research in the past. The existence of the global programme should be an incentive for participating organisations to sustain their support to coconut research.

c. **Lack of funding.** The global programme is co-ordinating existing coconut activities which have their own budgets. The three organisations have committed their support to co-ordination costs. Additional funding will mostly be required for collaborative and longer term projects. The global approach should be more attractive for donors and funding agencies which will be able to make much better informed decisions.

The following factors will increase the effectiveness of the programme:

a. **Existence and commitment of the three organisations.** The pre-existence and the commitment of the three organisations, bringing to the programme their partnerships, networks, and linkages is a main asset. It establishes strong foundations for development of the proposed programme.

b. **Effective Co-ordinating Committee and Programme Co-ordinator.** To be effective, the Co-ordinating Committee will have to be representative of the stakeholders and committed to the programme.

c. **A sound programme with the following characteristics:**
   a) Problems/opportunities clearly defined and widely shared by participating countries;
   b) Strong national interest and support, and members contributing solutions to common problems and committing resources;
   c) Strong donor support;
   d) Project proposals developed to address each major problem or opportunity; and
   e) Free exchange of information, technology and germplasm materials.

4. **Conclusion and Lessons Learned**

Two main lessons have been learned from developing the CGRD Programme, although it may still be early to draw firm conclusions:

a. **Stakeholder participatory approach** to development of programme is essential in fostering ownership and support. The stakeholders have to be involved at an early stage and to contribute to the formulation of the programme. Participation is on a voluntary basis. Consensus is the rule for resolving issues.

b. **Shared vision, mission and objectives are essential to effectiveness.** The stakeholders have to share a vision if consensus is to be negotiated effectively. Mission and objectives have to be clearly defined, formulated, and agreed upon if the programme is to move forward.

Developing the programme has created great expectations among the stakeholders. Things are moving and the CGRD Programme is planned to be launched by mid-2002.
Annex 1: Presentation of the three primary stakeholders

ASIAN AND PACIFIC COCONUT COMMUNITY

The Asian and Pacific Coconut Community (APCC) is an intergovernmental organization of thirteen full member countries namely: Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vanuatu and Vietnam. Republic of Palau is an associate member.

Established in 1969 as the first intergovernmental commodity organization in the region, the APCC is tasked to promote, coordinate and harmonize all activities in the coconut industry which sustain the lives of millions of coconut farmers as well as those engaged in the processing, marketing and other sectors in the industry. Of an estimated 11.9 million hectares planted to coconut in the world (1998), 10.5 million hectares are found in the APCC member countries.

The APCC member countries account for 90% of the world’s coconut production and export of coconut products. The latter brings in more than US$ 1.5 Billion a year.

Through conferences, meetings, seminars and a number of regular and adhoc publications, APCC promotes increased coconut production, improvement in farm income and productivity, improved processing and marketing systems, and product and market diversification.

In the 37th COCOTECH Meeting/International Coconut Conference in Chennai, India on July 14–18 2000, the participants endorsed, for consideration of member countries of APCC in its 37th session in Fiji on November 14–17 2000, the initial proposal to establish a global research program on coconut
BUROTROP was created in 1989. It is a non-profit-making, international association, registered in France. Its mandate is to assist, strengthen and further develop research on tropical perennial oil crops: coconut and oil palm.

General objective:
To strengthen the capabilities of member countries in research on and development of mandate crops by promoting and co-ordinating networks, in order to benefit producing countries, farmers, users, and consumers by contributing to increased coconut and oil palm production.

Specific objectives:
To identify and address researchable constraints and opportunities for the development of the sustainable production of coconut and oil palm.
To help formulating research and development projects, to identify funding for their implementation, and to monitor and evaluate the outputs of the funded projects.
To catalyse the advanced research community to effectively collaborate with each other and with producing countries in research, training, technical support and assistance.

To co-ordinate the global network, providing advice to donors on priorities, avoidance of duplication, relevance and value for money, and to provide a service for project management, monitoring and evaluation, to donors and international, regional or national programmes.
To disseminate information using all media and to transfer technologies to the end-users.
To be a permanent forum for consultation and discussion between all the parties concerned with its mandate crops: producers, processors, traders, researchers, developers, and donors.

Activities:
BUROTROP undertakes the following activities:
Organising, sponsoring or co-sponsoring meetings, seminars and workshops.
Supporting specific research projects (as an executing agency for projects implemented by members and associates, subject to being provided with the necessary resources).
Training and human resources development.
Publishing a Bulletin and other publications.
Maintaining a Web site and database on the Internet.

BUROTROP is now a regular forum for consultation and discussion between all parties concerned with its mandate crops and a leading agency among the respective research networks which include the International Coconut Genetic Resources Network (COGENT) and the Latin American Oil Palm Council. BUROTROP has initiated and supported many activities which would not have taken place without its initiatives. BUROTROP and its partners have created increased awareness in, and greater recognition of, its mandate crops by joint efforts through the overall network (with the CGIAR Coconut Support Group, donor community, regional support organisations, etc.). BUROTROP has successfully completed research projects financed by donors (with BUROTROP’s endorsement) on both mandate crops. This has strongly contributed to the partnerships established in and through BUROTROP and has improved the effectiveness of research by co-ordinating the decision making and operational structure. BUROTROP actively participated in the formulation of the PROCOCOS global coconut research programme, in consultation with partners and associates, and presented it to the international research community at the GFAR-2000 meeting in Dresden.

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The International Coconut Genetic Resources Network (COGENT)
The coconut, Cocos nucifera L., is a smallholder crop, grown on about 11.6 million hectares in 86 countries. It is widely known as the ‘tree of life’ because it provides more than 100 separate products, including food, drink, fuel, livestock feed, fibre and building materials. If the coconut were to be exploited to its full potential, it would increase food production, improve nutrition, generate income, create employment opportunities, enhance equity and help conserve the environment. But the coconut, however, faces several problems that affect its production and competitiveness such as low yield, unstable market for its traditional products, pests and diseases, natural calamities, aging of palms, and genetic erosion. National research capabilities to address these problems are limited and patchy and need to be strengthened.

In 1992, IPGRI, with the endorsement of the CGIAR, established COGENT to promote a worldwide programme for the conservation and use of the genetic resources of this important crop. The network’s goal is to help national programmes address their common problems and opportunities around coconut.

COGENT’s priority action areas include the establishment of an international coconut genetic resources database, collecting, conserving and evaluating representative diversity and promoting its use; and developing strategies and techniques for efficient germplasm conservation and use. At present, COGENT has 35 member countries, which have committed to collaborate in research, and share germplasm and information.

COGENT’s current workplan includes the development of an international coconut genetic resources database, collecting and conservation of representative diversity in all member countries; development of improved techniques for embryo culture, cryopreservation, in situ conservation and development of molecular markers techniques for locating diversity and for promoting safe movement of germplasm; the establishment of a multi-site International Coconut Genebank; and studies of diversity in coconut traits including drought resistance, suitability for high value products, and compatibility for intercropping.