PROCORD
Global Coconut Research for Development Programme

PROCORD will facilitate the collaboration of different groups, or stakeholders, to address problems and opportunities which are researchable at the global level by “promoting innovative global partnerships”, covering the whole coconut commodity chain, from production to consumption.

Background

“Coconut is the oil crop most in need of international research support. International research on the crop is currently under-funded and it has the potential for high pay-off.” (Technical Advisory Committee-CGIAR).

Main challenges faced by the coconut sector:
- maintaining the copra sector by increasing its competitiveness and strengthening the profitability of coconut cultivation for growers – 12.8 million hectares, 95% on smallholdings under 4 hectares;
- preventing the risks of coconut plantations disappearance through lethal diseases;
- improving the income of producers who depend on coconut cultivation, especially in coastal and insular areas;
- restructuring the coconut commodity to develop end-uses other than copra and oil, with local added-value – 70% for domestic consumption in producing countries.

Partnership

Activities

Six thematic groups work in close relationships with five regional networks: Southeast and East Asia, South Asia, South Pacific, Africa and the Indian Ocean, Latin America and the Caribbean.

W orking Groups

1. Germplasm collection, conservation, evaluation and improvement.
2. Socio-economics and policy support.
3. Control of diseases and pests, especially the lethal diseases.
4. Productivity and sustainability of coconut-based agro-forestry systems.
5. Improvement of the efficiency and value-added benefits in post-harvest processing and utilisation.

Outputs

- Agreement among all the stakeholders on a common agenda to address research issues in the coconut sector at a global level; participation of stakeholders not directly involved in research broadened the debate.
- Better cooperation and integration in and support for coconut research.
- Promotion of complementation and synergy of research activities, and sharing of resources, to avoid unnecessary duplication of research efforts.
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Lessons learnt

- The real complexity of stakeholders’ interactions within a commodity chain; agendas and cultures are different, and relationships are often competitive and/or antagonistic. Without an active “honest broker”, there are little possibilities of “neutral” exchange for a better mutual understanding, even in organised commodity institutions.
- The main building blocks (APCC, BUROTROP and COGENT) of the new partnership were initially afraid of losing part of their prerogatives, or even to disappear as an institution in a global programme.
- The importance of a strong “buy in” by participants: global programmes can only build on strong good will as an institution in a global programme.
- The lack of one ideal structure for Global Programmes, means that an adapted and accepted structure has to be developed for each GP.
- The importance of an active secretariat/coordination to foster the exchange of information and the establishment of collaborative initiatives.
- The importance of funding possibilities; there is a need to mobilise funding both for transaction costs, and for new projects that could emerge from these new partnerships.

Next steps

Consolidation of the technical working groups and preparation of common projects to be submitted for funding.