

PROPOSED COGENT STRUCTURE, STEERING COMMITTEE NOMINATION , ITAGs LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP GUIDELINES

A. COGENT'S CORE FUNCTIONS

1. **PLAYS** a pivotal role in ensuring more effective conservation and use of coconut genetic resources.
2. **BUILDS** coconut stakeholders' capacity and resilience across the value-chain for conservation, exchange and use of genetic resources.
3. **OFFERS** a golden opportunity to link coconut genetic resources conservation more effectively with their use.
4. **IMPROVES** coconut-based livelihoods for coconut-growing households and communities through using valuable genetic resources.
5. **ENSURES** that the capacity to conserve coconut genetic diversity of is preserved for future use.

B. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

- COGENT is one of the major programs of ICC with a designated coordinator to handle the activities of the network, who shall be reporting directly to the ICC Executive Director.
- COGENT programme priorities and activities are decided by its Steering Committee, which provides oversight and policy recommendations.
- ICC reviews policy recommendations to enhance complementarity and effectiveness.
- The COGENT Coordinator coordinates the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of COGENT's strategy, programme, projects and activities for submission to ICC.
- The COGENT Coordinator establishes links with collaborating institutions, programmes and donors for collaboration, fund sourcing and networking.

C. UPGRADING COGENT ORGANIZATION

- The composition and the role of the Steering Committee (SC) was modified in order both to increase its stability and to allow other member-countries to fully participate ~~to~~ in decision making.
- The frequency of COGENT SC meetings was fixed as biennial and linked with the COCOTECH meetings of ICC, in order to reduce costs and increase interactions with stakeholders from the coconut value chain.
- The further development of the international thematic action groups (ITAGs), and the possibility remote decision-making using two distinct processes, namely remote consensus and remote voting.
- Strengthening ITAG collaboration through joint research projects among ITAGs and unified directions through the crafted COGENT Road Map.

- Designation of the new ITAG Team Leaders and Expert Advisers to reaffirm and reactivate the functions of each ITAG and enhance collaborative efforts.
- Expanding COGENT membership to inclusion the academe, research institutions, and private-sector and farmers' organizations.
- Establishing the constitutional by-laws and policy guidelines to ensure a strong institutional foundation linking to ICC policies.

D. STEERING COMMITTEE (SC) MEMBERSHIP

- SC membership to have a single representative from each ICG within each of the five regions: Africa and the Indian Ocean (AIO) - Côte d'Ivoire; Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)- Brazil; south Asia and the Middle East (SAME) - India, South-east Asia (SEA) - Indonesia, and the South Pacific (SP) – Papua New Guinea (PNG); and adding a representative each from the more active/ important national collections in Jamaica, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka.
- The Executive Director of ICC and its technical working group chairperson shall be automatically become member of the COGENT SC.
- The SC shall also invite non-voting, observer membership from international organizations: the CGIAR, the Pacific Community (SPC), the CropTrust, the UN Treaty, CIRAD, ACIAR, FAO-Genetic resources Div. and Crop Protection Div.), who may provide technical oversight and guidance.
- A new vice-chair is voted once in two years ,who becomes the chairperson by default for the next two years.

E. STATUS/UPDATES

- ICC supports the expansion of COGENT membership to include academic institutions
- Presented for approval of the SC Members during the 2022 Annual Meeting on November 12, 2022 in Hotel Impiana, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia after the COCOTECH Conference.
- ITAG Team Leaders were designated upon consultation with members in consideration that ITAGs Team Leaders should be from coconut growing countries and the expert support to the Team leaders was based on their professional expertise.
- They will be endorsed for concurrence of ICC and to be formally recognised in the upcoming virtual SC meeting.
- Drafted the ITAG membership guidelines and nomination of ITAG leadership for SC approval.
- Designation of ITAGs Team Leaders and Expert Advisers was finalized through consultation with members and as presented in Table 1.

ITAG	TEAM LEADER	AFFILIATION	CO-TEAM LEADER	AFFILIATION
ITAG 1	Niral Vittal (PhD) (Coconut Breeding)	ICAR-CPCRI-India	Jean Louis Konan-Konan (PhD) (Breeding)	CNRA- Cote d'Ivoire
ITAG 2	Siwaret Arikrit (PhD) (Genetics and Molecular Biology)	Kasetsart University Dept. of Agronomy, Bangkok, Thailand	Andrea Guyot (PhD) (Genetics and Biotechnology)	CIRAD, Montpellier, France
ITAG 3	Wayne Myrie (PhD) (Plant Pathology and Molecular Biology)	Coconut Industry Board, Jamaica	Carmel Pilotti (PhD) (Plant Pathology and Genetics)	SPC
ITAG 4	Vijitha Vidhanaarachchi (PhD) (Tissue Culture & Biotechnology)	Coconut Research Institute of Sri Lanka (CRISL)	Bart Panis (PhD) (Tissue Culture & Biotechnology)	Bioversity-CIAT , KU, Leuven, Belgium

F. RECOMMENDED POLICY GUIDELINES ON COGENT MEMBERSHIP

(Note : For endorsement of ICC to COGENT Steering Committee for guidance and final decision)

1. COGENT member countries to become members of ICC (currently only 16 are ICC members out of the 39 COGENT members) membership policies to be aligned to the ICC membership policies and guidelines
2. COGENT membership to be expanded to include the research institutions, academe, private sector and donor agencies. (DELETE)
3. If COGENT member country is an ICC member, no registration fee, only non-ICC member to pay COGENT membership registration fee. (DELETE)
4. Inclusion of the scientific communities such as academe, research institutions and private sector working on coconut R & D to qualify as member of COGENT.
5. Regular members will be considered also as members of ITAGs based on their areas of expertise.
6. Selection of ITAG Leaders should consider their institutional affiliation and must come from the coconut growing countries. . Expert advisers can be tapped from the support agencies with notable thematic expertise according to the designated ITAG.
7. Regular members will be considered in collaborative research projects which should be deliberated with the involved ITAGs and ICC-COGENT endorsement to donor agencies is a must.
8. COGENT members from the academe, research institutions, private sector and government agencies shall be endorsed by the ICC National Liaison Officers of the ICC member countries.
9. New members will be subject to a probationary period with regular membership being granted after a year of active participation in COGENT's activities, such as quarterly regular meetings, webinars and conferences.

10. COGENT members can access the COGENT website free of charge and can contribute to website information uploading and can submit scientific articles to the semestral issue of the newsletter.

PREPARED BY:

ERLENE C. MANOHAR
COGENT Coordinator