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Inauguration of Thailand Bioresource Research Center
A driving engine of Thailand's bio-based economy

Pathumthani, Thailand, 20 February 2015 – Thailand Bioresource Research Center (TBRC) was officiated as witnessed by over 100 local and international guests from the scientific community of bioresources research and management.

"In the global knowledge-based bio-economy, building a competitive biotech industry needs centers of excellence capable of mastering the scientific, technical, administrative and legal challenges on the way to innovation," remarked by Dr. Philippe Desmeth, President of World Federation for Culture Collections. "That requires appropriate infrastructure that brings together human, financial and technical resources; merges the necessary expertise for the production, processing, exploitation and dissemination of scientific data; as well as masters the legal, administrative, and quality management systems."

"TBRC will serve as a foundation for the development of the nation's bio-industry and bio-economy," said Dr. Kanyawim Kirtikara, Executive Director of BIOTEC. "The Center is fully equipped with a system that complies with the Nagoya Protocol (NP), to effectively facilitate access and benefit sharing (ABS) of genetic resources to industry under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Through the linkage developed with the Thailand Network of Culture Collections and academic and research institutes, TBRC currently has a membership of 130 institutes from Thailand and overseas, and therefore is able to provide access to comprehensive and diverse biological material to serve the needs of industries."

BIOTEC founded BIOTEC Culture Collection (BCC) in 1996 as a depository and distribution center for microorganism, providing services with international standards. BCC currently has in its collection more than 70,000 microbial strains, some of which have thoroughly been studied and licensed for commercial use as starter culture in the food industry or for enzyme production in animal feed industry, for instance.

However, due to the high diversity of microorganisms, it is very difficult for one single culture collection to manage all types of microorganisms as well as other biological materials. "TBRC is therefore, positioning itself to serve as a central body to preserve and manage Thailand's national biological resources, through networking with various academic and research institutes, making these biological materials accessible for further research and development to realize their potential use," added Dr. Lily Eurwilaichitr, BIOTEC Deputy Executive Director and Director of TBRC.

TBRC is supported by a comprehensive database of information corresponding to individual strains. Information such as nucleotide and protein sequences, genome sequence and references citing a particular strain is automatically extracted from various sources, including Genbank, Pubmed and SwissProt, using specially-designed tools. Therefore in addition to biological material, TBRC can provide access to the comprehensive microbial resource information and thus promote the use of microbial resources in various industries.

TBRC will operate in compliance with the legal framework to ensure the fair and equitable access and benefits-sharing. Documentations such as Material Transfer Agreement (MTA), Material Acquisition Agreement (MAA) and Licensing Agreement are among the tools that will be used.

"TBRC, as a new center of excellence not only in Thailand but also in Asia, has much to contribute to promoting utilization of genetic resources through a solid network of Biological Resource Centers with which TBRC has proactively worked together," said Yasushi Noto, Director-General of NITE Biological Resource Center (NBRC) in his congratulatory remark.

As the year 2015 marks the launching of ASEAN Economic Community. Dr. Malee Suwana-adth, Advisor to BIOTEC, re-affirmed that “not only Thailand, but ASEAN Community as a whole, will undoubtedly benefit from the bioresource reference materials, the knowledge gained, and the services of TBRC.”

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