

**Northern Regional Center (NRC)**  
**PROCINORTE**  
**First Task Force Meeting**

**SUMMARY**

**I. BASIC INFORMATION**

Date: February 22 and 23, 1999  
Place: IICA office in Washington, D.C.

*See also  
Task Force*

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**INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR  
COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE (IICA)**

**NORTHERN REGIONAL CENTER (NRC)**

**FINAL SUMMARY REPORT  
PROCINORTE  
FIRST TASK FORCE MEETING**

**Washington, D.C.  
February 22-23, 1999**

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***Objectives:***

To create a task force able to define priority actions,  
common to the three countries, under the scope of  
PROCINORTE and discuss its concept and  
possible operation (see attached agenda)

**II PRESENTATIONS**

***2.1 Organizational overview***

- The Director of the NRC provided background information and presented an overview of the NRC's

Strategic Plan, 1999 goals and priorities, and expectations of the meeting, including IICA's role throughout the process of this initiative.

- IICA presented the thematic and operational framework supporting the PROCINORTE initiative, e.g. the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and Areas of Concentration.

## 2.2 *Hemispheric Perspectives*

- Dr. Phil Pardey from IFPRI provided an overview on the impact and economic benefits of international cooperation in agricultural research.
- Dr. Edgardo Moscardi from FONTAGRO provided an overview of financing for research, with regard to the creation of a regional research trust fund.
- Dr. Enrique Alarcon from IICA provided an insight as to the creation and support of cooperation networks among countries in the hemisphere.

2.3 Information was presented on the development of the PROCINORTE mentioning, among other elements, a) a consultation process to allow the presentation of the initiative to the NRC Regional Council, which met in San Jose, Costa Rica in October 1998, b) the preparation of base documents on what PROCINORTE could be and c) a proposed methodology.

## 2.4 *Brainstorming on PROCINORTE*

Based on the above, the participants discussed the following items:

- The need to improve multinational action
- Major needs and interests of the participating countries

- The role of the mechanisms: its added value
- Perception of the nature and characteristics of the PROCIs

### III RESULTS

3.1 Each country presented a statement (attached) on the PROCINORTE initiative, outlining its importance and interest, and pointed out high priority areas.

3.2 The participants reached consensus on a number of critical points related to the current and future scope of PROCINORTE:

- PROCINORTE will follow an on-going development process (stepwise fashion) starting from the identification of common priorities to be developed in a simplified manner and concluding with practical proposals of action.
- A bottom up process is needed to identify common and specific actions in order to activate this mechanism.
- PROCINORTE will focus on trilateral actions among the three countries' institutions.
- PROCINORTE's activities must encompass links to other projects and research organizations to carry out specific actions with other mechanisms for mutual benefit.
- The PROCINORTE task force will identify topics for action, on a preliminary level and further consultation will be carried out at the country level.
- PROCINORTE's task force will be the body which is the catalyst for identifying and developing future collaborative actions.

## IV CONSENSUS ON KEY ELEMENTS OF PROCINORTE

### 4.1 *Nature*

- PROCINORTE is not an organization. It is a concept – a catalyst to facilitate cooperative actions of mutual interest to the three countries, including the private and private sectors (see Chart).
- PROCINORTE will generate a number of task forces which will work in specific areas.
- The Executive Secretary of each Task force will be comprised of a lead country and a person from the IICA office in that country.
- Potential participating institutions:
  - ✓ Federal, State/Provincial universities, civil societies, and private sector organizations
  - ✓ Regional and international organizations
- It is not anticipated that any staff or office space will be specifically assigned to PROCINORTE on a dedicated basis in the near term.

### 4.2 *Goals*

- Strengthen the effectiveness and capacity of agricultural research through linkages and exchanges and partnership efforts in a cost-effective way
- The initiative should facilitate the relationship among the three countries and promote the same with other regions of the Americas.

#### 4.3 *Specific Objectives*

- To facilitate the exchange of experiences, information and training
- To link countries of the NRC to the regional and international organizations
- To promote transfer of technology
- To facilitate cooperation between research institutions
- To convene joint activities among participating institutions in solving problems of mutual interest

#### 4.4 *Common Priorities*

Priorities will be identified in a consultative process that include input from each country such as in the case of the Library and Information Sciences Initiative, that received the support of the task force.

The group reached initial consensus on the following priorities:

- Library Science and Information - *Task -*
- Genetic Resources - *Task*

An additional list of potential priorities was prepared based on the suggestions made by one or two of the three countries. This list includes:

- Aquaculture
- Processing tropical and subtropical fruits and vegetables
- Water conservation and climate change
- Plant and animal health research (Bio-control)

- Forestry
- Biotechnology
- Soil conservation and tillage
- Food safety research

## **V ACTION ITEMS**

5.1 Finalize the meeting report on the consultative process and report to the May meeting of the IICA Northern Regional Council.

5.2 Consultation on priorities:

- Circulation of more detailed information (a 2 page paper) on the priorities identified in section 4.4 by the countries which proposed them
- Bottom-up consultation within each country to identify further issues

5.3 Genetic resources priority:

- A new task force on Genetic Resources will be organized.
- Countries will appoint a representative to the task force. Participants suggested (i) facilitating the participation of representatives from the other two countries of the region in national meetings on genetic resources and (ii) facilitating collaboration with the genetic resources components of the PROCIs.
- Countries will prepare a 3-4 page paper describing a) the interest of the country in the genetic resources area, b) what they see as the objective of the task

force to be organized and c) what specific issues they would like to pursue.

- IICA will convene a meeting of the Genetic Resources Task Force sometime during the summer of 1999 to finalize the objectives, terms of reference and actions for the group

#### 5.4 *Next task force meeting*

The Representative from Mexico offered to host the next meeting of the PROCINORTE task force in Mexico at a date to be determined later.

# **NORTHERN REGIONAL CENTER**

## **PROCINORTE FIRST TASK FORCE MEETING**

**DATE:** February 22 and 23, 1999

**PLACE:** IICA Office  
1775 K Street, N.W., Suite 320  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
Telephone: (202) 458-3767

### **AGENDA**

#### **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1999**

- Northern Regional Center Strategic Action Plan
- International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
- Regional Fund for Agricultural Technology (FONTAGRO - IDB/IICA)
- PROCINORTE Initiative
- Presentations by each country on priority areas of interest
- Brainstorming Session
  - ➔ Areas of cooperation
  - ➔ Institutional Issues
  - ➔ Methodology to prepare the proposal
  - ➔ Terms of reference
  - ➔ Others

#### **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1999**

- Consensus on key issues related to PROCINORTE
- Agreement on Working Program
- Products
  - ➔ Terms of Reference for Task Force
  - ➔ Plan of Action
  - ➔ Resource identification

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***CANADA STATEMENT***

The Canadian participant noted that the three countries have a long history of interaction, particularly at the bilateral level. Canada welcomes the opportunity for PROCINORTE to address agricultural research issues identified by all three countries. Agriculture and Agri-food Canada wishes to consult more with research partners in Canada to discuss potential specific issues, and to further consider themes proposed by the U.S. and Mexico. So far, Canada has identified the following:

- >Library information sciences
- >Genetic resources
- >Aquaculture
- >Processing tropical and subtropical fruits and vegetables

Documentation about Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector, and the AAFC Research Branch business plan was distributed to participants.

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***MEXICO STATEMENT***

Mexico is in the process of creating the National Agricultural Research System (NARS) with nearly 180 institutions, organizations and private sector companies, under the leadership of INIFAP. A task force organizing NARS recently discussed PROCINORTE's proposal and found it potentially useful to add value to the already existing cooperation among the three countries of the region, and recommended to support the creation of PROCINORTE.

Mexico has had a long and productive cooperation on agricultural research with the United States, and wishes to continue this cooperative effort. Mexico is interested in expanding research collaboration with Canada. Mexico wishes to offer some infrastructure to PROCINORTE to be physically located (headquartered) in Mexico City. Mexico is interested in agricultural research, particularly in the following topics:

- >Water conservation
- >Climate change
- >Genetic resources
- >Plant and Animal Health (Bio control)

- Forestry
- Bio-Technology
- Soil Conservation and Tillage
- Food Safety

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***U.S. COUNTRY STATEMENT***

U.S. organizations (Federal, State, non-profit, and private sector) have had many cooperative agricultural projects with Canada and Mexico. Nearly all have been in a bilateral mode. The most high-level activity has been the Agriculture Committee of the U.S.-Mexico Bilateral Commission.

The Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the USDA's research arm, and the Foreign Agricultural Service-International Cooperation and Development (FAS-ICD), have had numerous project-level initiatives. ARS has worked with Mexico to establish projects such as cotton winter nursery, rangeland management, animal diseases and other activities. The National Plant Genetic Resources System has been heavily involved with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

There are many *ad hoc* scientific collaborations between scientists on a bilateral basis. However, there are some general, as well as many specific areas where a tripartite approach would be beneficial and enhancing. Such areas include genetic resources management, and plant and animal health issues. Currently, many forestry issues are covered by a tripartite group of the three countries. The National Agricultural Library

along with the library coordinator for Canada now are working with Mexico, the linkage made with the assistance of IICA.

The USDA's National Plant Germplasm System, in cooperation with IICA, supported a consultation on plant genetic resources with a number of countries in the hemisphere. The USDA also participated in a joint FAO-IICA sponsored consultation on animal genetic resources diversity in the Americas.

**PROCINORTE IS NOT A FORMAL ORGANIZATION  
IT IS A CONCEPT - A CATALYST TO FACILITATE  
COOPERATIVE ACTIONS OF MUTUAL INTEREST  
TO THE THREE COUNTRIES**

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