



***Cooperative Program in Agricultural Research and Technology for the Northern Region
Programa Cooperativo en Investigación y Tecnología Agrícola para la Región Norte***

MINUTES OF THIRTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING

XIII BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF PROCINORTE

18-19th October, 2011 Washington D.C.

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1. Background and Meeting Objectives

The 13th Annual Meeting of the PROCINORTE Board of Directors (BoD), corresponding to the programming year of 2011, took place at the USDA South Building in Washington, D.C., U.S.A. on 18-19th October 2011. Main objectives of the meeting were:

- To review the PROCINORTE Task Forces (TFs): composition, annual progress and results
- To analyze progress made by the TFs in the formulation of their Strategic Plans
- To review the progress and evaluate results achieved by the Executive Secretariat (ES)
- To discuss budget and other relevant issues
- To elect a new President

2. Opening Ceremony

Welcoming remarks were given by Dr. Ann M. Bartuska, Deputy Under Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Research, Education and Economics. Dr. Bartuska highlighted the priorities of USDA including responding to global change and adaptation science, bio-energy and the role of natural resources, food safety (movement of materials from field into production), and connecting research with the private sector for commercialization of results. The issue of innovation, i.e. the development of new products, and new opportunities for developing business, particularly microenterprises, was also stressed. Dr. Bartuska pointed out USDA's commitment to community-based development tied to science. She also spoke about research under the Feed the Future initiative that focuses on sustainable intensification, following three themes; advancing the productivity frontier, transforming production systems and enhancing food safety and nutrition.

Mr. David Hatch, Representative of IICA on the BoD took the opportunity to highlight that IICA in partnership with the Organization of American States (OAS) is organizing the 6th Annual 'IICA Day' event in the format of an OAS Policy Roundtable. The upcoming event titled *The Impact of Youth and Innovation in Agriculture in Latin American and Caribbean* will include guest speakers followed by a panel discussion of four youth entrepreneurs in agriculture development.

Dr. Arturo Cruz opened the meeting on behalf of Dr. Pedro Brajcich, President of PROCINORTE, indicating the commitment of PROCINORTE to promote innovation and cooperation between the three countries. He also highlighted that 2011 has been a



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difficult year for PROCINORTE in terms of budget limitations that have constrained its operations.

3. Approval of the Agenda

As proposed by the Chair, the BOD approved the agenda (Annex 1) with the addition of an item to follow up on the implementation of PROCINORTE Strategic Plan.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the XIIth Meeting and Follow-up

The decisions taken by the BoD during the XII Meeting in San José, Costa Rica, were read out by the Executive Secretary (ES) and were ratified by the BoD with minor adjustments requested by the Canadian Representative, who asked to integrate the relevant PowerPoint presentations in the report.

5. Report of PROCINORTE Activities 2011

The Executive Secretary (ES) presented a Report on the activities of PROCINORTE from October 2010 to September 2011 (Annex 2). She indicated that PROCINORTE and TF activities planned for the first semester could not be carried out due to insufficient funding for operations allocated by IICA (a total of \$27,000 in December 2010). IICA approved an increase of \$39,000 in August 24th, and therefore most TF activities needed to be carried out in the fourth quarter of 2011, where possible.

The members of the BoD expressed their concern about the late approval of PROCINORTE's allocation from IICA and indicated the need to have funds available to TF operations early in the year to avoid delaying execution of their projects. It was pointed out that whereas other PROCIs receive cash contributions from member countries, members of PROCINORTE are providing strong in-kind support instead. The modest allocation from IICA is important to catalyze and leverage a multiple of that budget.

The annual report highlights the efforts made by members of the TFs to carry out their programmed activities even with the funding limitations highlighted. They have worked by video and teleconference to formulate the annual work plans, as well as draft strategic plans (SP) using a template prepared by the ES.

The ES also reminded the members of the BoD that the Library and Information TF was dissolved in June 2011 following the decision of the Canadian National Library (CAL) to withdraw. The Representative from Canada indicated that Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) senior management re-examined its priorities for various activities, and the CAL could not demonstrate benefits of the TF to Canada. However it was indicated that this TF has had many achievements since its formation prior to PROCINORTE, and



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that this situation should not prevent bilateral cooperation and other *ad hoc* activities in support of other TFs. In relation to this, Mr. Jose Ayala representing the IICA Office in Mexico assured the BoD that IICA has provided support to the Red Mexicana de Bibliotecas Agropecuarias (REMBA) since the dissolution of Library and Information TF.

The Representative from Canada encouraged the Chair of PROCINORTE to use the BoD to enrich the North American involvement in FORAGRO and GCARD, and indicated that they intend to attempt to better involve Canadian agriculture scientists and policy-makers that work on research for development.

The BoD also indicated its satisfaction for the renewed membership of the TFs, especially since Mexico selected and appointed representatives that bring a national perspective to their work. The TF composition is shown in Annex 3.

After discussing the changes in the TF composition and their activities, the ES annual report was accepted and the BoD thanked the ES for the presentation.

6. Task Force Proposed Strategic Plans

Drs. Eileen Thacker (Chair, Animal Health TF), Peter Bretting (NORGEN) and Ricardo Goenaga (Chair Fruits TF, participating by videoconference from Mayaguez, Puerto Rico) presented draft Strategic Plans. Dr. Deb Fravel, Chair of the Plant Health TF presented a summary of the priority topics discussed by the members in their first interaction since the TF has been reconstituted.

A productive dialogue between the BoD and TF members followed on several technical issues:

- The Fruits TF has provided growers and other actors in the value chain with very useful knowledge to improve post-harvest management of mangoes and avocados. Information is disseminated during field trips to producing regions of Mexico and Florida, and through the TF web page. This is an interesting model for the Plant Health and Animal Health TF. The TF should provide more strategic direction in their strategic plan. In particular, it should indicate criteria to change the focus of its work, for example when new knowledge and technologies are used by regulators and/or the private sector.
- New invasive pests in greenhouses and the development of diagnostic techniques of greenhouse viruses are the two topics prioritized by the Plant Health TF. The objective is to develop tools that regulatory agencies could use, and then harmonize those tools between the countries. It was suggested that to make the results more relevant for regulators it is necessary to involve them in priority setting, with a sound action plan focusing on results and outputs. Similarly it is advisable to bring industry representatives to these activities.



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- NORGEN is effectively continuing the training of regional curators in the GRIN-Global documentation tool for genebanks. The work of the TF in genetic resources represents an opportunity to connect with other PROCIs and certain countries in the Americas (Ecuador, Brazil, Costa Rica and Mexico), and the BoD encouraged NORGEN to be more ambitious in its strategic planning regarding such outreach. As a first step in this direction, an Ecuadorian will participate in the upcoming training workshop in Mexico. Also, Dr. José Fernando de la Torre Sanchez, representing NORGEN will attend the Simposio Internacional de Recursos Genéticos para America Latina y el Caribe (SIRGEALC) in November to discuss reviewing the implementation of the Americas Hemispheric Strategy for Plant Genetic Resources formulated with the Global Crop Diversity Trust, and supported by NORGEN.
- The Chair of the Animal Health TF indicated that their workshop in Ames, Iowa, brought together for the first time scientists and regulators from the three countries. Canada flagged the issue of difficult transfers of genetic material. The Representative of the U.S. noted that due to human health considerations, the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) imposes severe controls on access to human pathogen materials. The goal of this TF is to bring scientists and regulators together to discuss harmonization of diagnostic tools, standardize tests (in particular avian and swine influenza) and discuss methodologies for virus exchanges. After the programmed “wet” workshop in CFIA facilities in Winnipeg, Canada, the TF will decide which diseases should be priorities. Collaboration is challenging with Mexico and therefore the Representatives from this country in the BoD agreed to appoint a senior research manager who could work nationally and assign researchers for particular projects.

The BoD discussed briefly with the TF members the budget situation that is affecting their work, especially since the late budget approval by IICA’s management prevented the TF from carrying out more annual planning and follow up activities.

7. Discussion of Possible New Themes

A discussion on three topics of potential relevance for PROCINORTE was held as follows.

- Forest Pests and Diseases

The Representative from Mexico proposed forest pests, diseases and other hazards as a new priority topic for PROCINORTE. They indicated that a tri-lateral commission is looking at this issue but does not carry out research. Mr. Cruz highlighted the importance of forests for Mexico, Canada and the US, since forest areas have decreased considerably. Also for Mexico, forestry forms an integral part of production systems.

The members of the BoD also recognized that forests can be an important element in



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mitigating climate change.

Dr. Mary Allen Dix, Lead National Forest Entomology Research (USDA), participated in the discussion indicating that the Forest Service Research has formed numerous partnerships with Mexican scientists. Scientists get together and discuss other common problems such as gene conservation, pest (especially bark beetles and borers) and diseases, and that these are opportunities to facilitate common research in the future.

The Canadian Representative indicated that his country is concerned about forest diseases and pests. The Canadian Forest Service is a science-based policy organization within Natural Resources Canada, which is not part of the department of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. They would need to be consulted before PROCINORTE might embark on forest research activities.

The North America Forestry Commission (NAFC) was also cited as one of six Regional Forestry Commissions established by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis. NAFC also supports research and sustainable natural resource management activities through working groups. It meets every two years.

- Climate Change

Climate change was discussed as a second theme of interest and relevance for the PROCINORTE stakeholders. The technical question about linkages between increasing invasive species and climate change was also discussed.

USDA works with mitigation and adaptation. Belonging to the Grazenet network, USDA is part of the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases to Combat Climate Change (GRAAGHG). The targeted research areas include developing tools for greenhouse gas and carbon sequestration assessments and other areas related to crop and livestock production (predictability of climate, adaptation, water application, planting time, tillage, crops, and biotic/abiotic stress). It was suggested that if a group would engage in the climate conversation, the Global Research Alliance could use support from IICA to start groups in this topic.

AAFC undertakes research on mitigation, adaptation and monitoring climate change and its impact on agriculture, including co-chairing the GRAAGHG and contributing to the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

IICA Mexico has formed a network of scientists from universities and the private sector, comprised of 11 countries and Spain to work on climate change issues. The emphasis is on opportunities in the carbon market through afforestation, reforestation, managed forests, and forest conservation projects.



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It was suggested that the PROCINORTE prepare a questionnaire in coordination with specialists from the three countries to identify research gaps, organizations working on these issues, science of relevance for PROCINORTE, and interest in participating in a potential workshop next year. Results of the questionnaire should indicate the need for a meeting in 2012.

- Invasive Alien Species

Dr. John Lyndon, of ARS Invasive Species Program, spoke about this effort that began in 2002 with a conference in Arizona to address the problem of weeds from an expanded, continental perspective. He emphasized that because weeds do not abide by political boundaries, extended cooperation and new partnerships are necessary. In the years since its inception, Weeds Across Borders conferences have been held in Canada, Mexico, and the United States and have attracted participants and presenters from across each nation. Members include AAFC in Canada; the Fish & Wildlife Service, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Bureau of Land Management in the United States; and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico (UNAM)..

The link between this topic and the trade objective of PROCINORTE was discussed by the BoD members. The BoD recognizes that diseases in three countries move with the live plants through importation and there is considerable inter-agency work on transported microbials across borders that could be used to control invasive alien species, however there are difficulties moving these across borders (quarantine issue).

The North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) has identified emerging issues and would be useful to explore potential collaboration. IICA has a cooperation agreement with NAPPO which might facilitate interactions with PROCINORTE.

BOD Decision: PROCINORTE will carry out a consultation on a general theme on invasive alien species with strong aspects of forest health and climate change to reach out to professionals from these areas. The objective of this consultation is to identify if there is a niche for PROCINORTE's activities in these topics, avoid duplication and explore synergies. A budget of \$3,000 was allocated for this activity that will be carried out before year end 2011.

8. Discussion about Task Force Strategic Plans

The BoD discussed the draft Strategic Plans prepared by three TFs (NORGEN, Animal Health and Fruits) agreeing that all three draft plans are basically sound. However, the BoD indicated that the SPs have to be more strategic, demonstrate a clearer idea of



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direction, should provide answers to strategic questions such as niche, performance indicators, and be explicitly linked to PROCINORTE's Strategic Plan.

It was acknowledged that the limitations for formulating draft Strategic Plans included the fact that there have been changes in TF membership and it was difficult to meet during the year due to budget restrictions. The BoD invited members of the TFs to seek assistance in planning from the ES and BoD representatives, if needed.

BOD Decision: Request that the TFs improve their Strategic Plans indicating their proposed niche(s), strategic objectives, performance indicators, and explicit linkages to PROCINORTE's Strategic Plan. Request the Plant Health TF to provide a first draft Strategic Plan.

9. Follow up to PROCINORTE's Strategic Plan

The BoD reviewed PROCINORTE's Strategic Plan as posted in the web page. They requested that the section on composition of the TF's be removed from the document, because these change over the life span of the Plan. Other changes include reflecting the dissolution of the Library-Information TF.

BOD Decision: Request that the SE makes the appropriate modifications to the SP document in regards to TF composition and that the updated document is posted in the web page.

10. Financial Issues

In Dec. 2010, IICA allocated US\$27,000 for PROCINORTE operations in two lines, training and official travel, as compared to an allocation of over US\$125,000 in previous years. IICA also contributes 40% of the time of the ES to PROCINORTE; she also serves as IICA liaison with FONTAGRO and Specialist in Management of Technological Innovation for the Northern Region.

As the funding allocated was insufficient to cover PROCINORTE's Annual Plan for 2011, the BoD negotiated a higher allocation with IICA's management. The ES guided the members of the BoD through a series of communications between the President of PROCINORTE and IICA's management requesting a complement to the initial allocation. These negotiations resulted in the approval of an additional \$39,000 for operations on August 24th. The communication from IICA's management also asked that the three



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countries make efforts to provide monetary funding to PROCINORTE beyond the actual in-kind contributions.

As a result, the total budget allocated for 2011 amounted to US\$66,000 (the initial \$27,000 plus the \$39,000 complement), of which is \$14,790 remains to cover additional work in 2011.

BOD Decision: to use the \$14,790 as follows:

- ***Meeting of the Fruits TF 2011 (US\$5,000)***
- ***Consulting mechanism (questionnaire) for possible new topics (\$3,000)***
- ***Participation of Central American curators in NORGEN's GRIN- Global (US\$3,000)***
- ***Opportunity for one or more TFs to make a request for an important activity in 2011 (\$4,700)***

The BoD also discussed the planning and budgeting exercise that is to be carried out by each TF, including format harmonization, timing, etc. It was clear that this step will require a more rigorous exercise in alignment with PROCINORTE's Strategic Plan. Additionally each TF will need to submit a budget on time so as to minimize any delays in the approval process.

BOD Decision: Request that each TF improve its Work Plan and Budget proposal for 2012.

BOD members will send the formats used by their institution in reporting results so the ES can prepare a harmonized form for use by the TFs.

BOD Decision: Request that for 2013 each TF submit its work plan and proposed budget well before the annual BoD meeting using the harmonized format, so the BoD can decide PROCINORTE's overall budget during its annual meeting.

The BoD deliberated about the financial needs of the TFs in view of their technical accomplishments and new opportunities for collaboration. Also, the BoD reflected on the efforts made during the current year to optimize TF themes and composition, streamlining the TFs and making them more relevant for the needs of the three countries as stated in the Strategic Plan. The need to pursue in-kind funding for TF activities was also discussed.

After an in-depth discussion, the BoD agreed that the current level of funding received from IICA is unsatisfactory and that this should be increased much closer to the levels prior to 2010.

BOD Decision: Request from IICA a budget of \$108,000 for operations 2012, to be allocated as follows:



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- ***Workshop on new topic \$20,000***
- ***BoD and ES activities \$8,000***
- ***TF annual plans (\$20,000/ each): \$80,000***

The need to seek complementary funding for TF activities was also discussed. In this regard, the ES indicated that IICA is implementing the DG-Fund, an initiative to promote collaboration between IICA's offices in a topic of common interest for the countries. The opportunity exists that in coordination with the PROCINORTE member organizations, a proposal could be submitted for 2012.

BOD Decision: The ES in coordination with relevant TF will prepare and submit a project proposal to the DG-Fund for the call for proposals 2012

11. Revision of Business Plan

Given that the current year has been one of delays in funding decisions, and also of financial constraints to the country members of PROCINORTE, the BoD did not review the Business Plan proposal presented by the ES in the XII BoD meeting. Both the Representatives from Canada and the US indicated that their countries face severe budget constraints that will likely affect their agricultural research organizations. As such, providing financial contributions to PROCINORTE becomes a difficult task, especially since these two countries are the largest contributors to IICA's quota. Therefore, the proposed Business Plan that calls from monetary contributions to PROCINORTE should be revised in light of these realities.

Unlike other PROCIs, in-kind contributions from member countries are a significant source of funding for the network's activities. The BoD discussed the importance of accurately quantifying the in-kind contributions to reflect the support from the member organizations to PROCINORTE activities. The Representative from Canada indicated that AAFC has provided an estimated \$160,000 to the work of the Fruits TF, an impressive sum leveraged by the budget allocated by IICA. He indicated that there is more input to the TF, and other TFs might be underestimating their contributions to PROCINORTE.

It was stated that for the member countries of PROCINORTE, it is less important to mobilize cash contributions than to leverage in-kind support provided to projects and TFs. It was suggested that this is a better way of taking government contributions into account than the additional proposal made in the proposed Business Plan.

BOD Decision: Members of the BoD will send to the ES the estimated in-kind contributions from their organizations to PROCINORTE in order to use these figures in budget negotiations with IICA's management



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BOD Decision: the BoD agreed to communicate quarterly by video or teleconference to discuss relevant issues

- ***November 2011: approve TF plans and budgets 2012***
- ***First quarter 2012: evaluate results from TFs, and revise Business Plan***
- ***Second quarter 2012: revise and discuss proposed Business Plan***

12. Outreach

The BoD discussed how best to improve outreach with other regions and PROCIs, acknowledging that during the year there have been efforts to include representatives from other regions in PROCINORTE's activities, such as the GRIN-Global genetic resources training workshop in Mexico.

The ES pointed out that during the 2011 meeting of the Foro de las Américas para la Investigación y Desarrollo Tecnológico Agropecuario (FORAGRO) in Peru, it was agreed that FORAGRO will work and submit a position paper on Climate Change and Food Security at the GCARD-2 meeting in Montevideo, 2012. The BoD acknowledged the participation of the President of PROCINORTE and the ES in the past FORAGRO meetings; however, it called for more representation from the three countries in the consultations.

Representatives from Canada and the US indicated that the invitations to participate in GCARD meetings should be addressed to the pertinent officials in their countries:

- USA: Dr. Cathie Woteki, Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics, USDA
- Canada: Jody Aylard, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Research Branch, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; and Dr. Yvon Martel, Chief Scientist (International) at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

BOD Decision: the ES will communicate with the ES of FORAGRO to enquire about the mechanism for participation of these two countries in GCARD as active members of the agricultural forum for research and technology in the Americas

13. Formulation of PROCINORTE's Annual Work Plan 2012

The BoD revised the PROCINORTE Annual Work Plan 2012 using a matrix prepared by the Secretary (Annex 4). With some amendments, the plan was approved.



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14. Election of the New President of PROCINORTE

On behalf of the Board, David Hatch expressed appreciation for the important work of Dr. Pedro Brajcich, President of PROCINORTE and Dr. Arturo Cruz who also in representing INIFAP provided valuable insights and contributions to PROCINORTE on behalf of Dr. Brajcich for two years. The other members of the Board also indicated their satisfaction with the support and leadership demonstrated by the President during his tenure.

Mr. Hatch recommended that Dr. Caird Rexroad (USA) be elected President for a two year term (eligible for a third year). The motion was unanimously accepted and Dr. Rexroad accepted this nomination acknowledging the support and follow-up provided by Mr. Ryan Moore, Specialist in International Relations in the Office of International Research Programs (USDA/ARS) who collaborates with the ES in matters of PROCINORTE in the US.

15. Various Issues

The Board members expressed their satisfaction with PROCINORTE's activities during 2011 despite the difficult financial situation. They also congratulated the ES for her work in providing support to the TF.

The BoD agreed to meet in Guadalajara, Mexico tentatively planned for late September 2012, an activity that will be planned in coordination with Board member Dr. Pedro Brajcich of INIFAP.

The list of participants in the meeting is Annexed (Annex 5).

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. AGENDA XIIIth ANNUAL MEETING BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF PROCINORTE

ANNEX 2. REPORT OF PROCINORTE, 2011

ANNEX 3. TASK FORCE COMPOSITION 2011

ANNEX 4. PROCINORTE ANNUAL WORK PLAN 2012

ANNEX 5. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS



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ANNEX 1. AGENDA XIII ANNUAL MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF PROCINORTE

AGENDA TENTATIVA DE LA XIII REUNION ANUAL

JUNTA DIRECTIVA DE PROCINORTE

WASHINGTON, D.C., 18-19 OCTOBER 2011 / 18-19 OCTUBRE, 2011

USDA South Building

Entrance on the corner of 12th and Independence Ave. S.W. Conf Rm S-3109

Washington, D. C. 20560

Monday October 17 /Lunes 17 Octubre	
Arrival of participants: Members of the BOD, IICA staff	
Tuesday, October 18 / martes 18 de Octubre	
9:00 – 9:20	Welcoming remarks / Palabras de bienvenida <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARS authority TBD
9:20 – 9:30	Opening session/ Apertura de la reunión <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Pedro Bracjich, President of PROCINORTE
9:30 – 9:35	Approval of draft agenda / Aprobación de la agenda propuesta <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Pedro Bracjich/Arturo Cruz
9:35 – 9:45	Approval of Minutes XII Meeting of PROCINORTE BOD and follow up/ Aprobación Memoria XII Reunion PROCINORTE y seguimiento a acuerdos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Pedro Bracjich • Dra. Priscila Henríquez, Executive Secretary of PROCINORTE / Secretaria Ejecutiva de PROCINORTE
9:45 – 10:15	Report PROCINORTE activities 2010/ Informe de actividades de PROCINORTE 2010 Dra. Priscila Henríquez
10:15 – 10:45	Coffee break / Café
10:45 – 12:00	Task Force Proposed Strategic Plans Presentations by Task Force representatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruits Task Force: Dr. Ricardo Goenaga via teleconference • Plant Health Task Force: Dr. Deb Fravel • Animal Health Task Force: Dr. Eillen Thacker • NORGEN: Dr. Peter Bretting
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 14:30	Discussion about Task Force Plans Board of Directors
14:30 – 15:00	Coffee break / Café
15:00 – 16:00	Proposal & Discussion of new themes for PROCINORTE Dr. Arturo Cruz or P. Bracjich) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest pest, diseases and other hazards • Climate change Dr. Caird Rexroad: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invasive species
18:00 Official dinner Georgia Brown Restaurant, Washington D.C.	
Tuesday October 19 / martes 19 de Octubre	
9:00 – 9:30	Follow up Implementation Strategic Plan/ Seguimiento a la Implementación del Plan Estrategico



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9:30 – 10:00	PROCINORTE financial issues PROCINORTE 2012/ Work Plan / Plan de Trabajo 2012 Dra. Priscila Henríquez
10:00 – 10:20	Coffee break / Café
10:20 – 10:30	Election of President of PROCINORTE BoD/ Elección de Nuevo Presidente de PROCINORTE
10:30– 11:30	Additional Business / Asuntos Adicionales <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next PROCINORTE meeting (Date & Place) / Próxima Reunión del PROCINORTE (Fecha y Lugar)
11:30 - 12:30	Closing

ANNEX 2. ANNUAL REPORT 2010-11

Cooperative Program in Agricultural Research and Technology for the Northern Region

Priscila Henríquez, Executive Secretary

I. Introduction

This report covers the activities carried out by PROCINORTE and its Task Forces (TF) between October 2010 and September 2011.

II. Task Forces composition

In accordance with the Board of Directors (BOD) decision to revise the composition of the TF and appoint representatives that fulfill the agreed terms of reference, four new members were appointed by their respective institutes:

- Dr. Deborah Fravel- National Program Leader for Plant Health ARS/USDA was appointed to the Plant Health TF. She was later elected chair of this TF
- Dr. José Isabel López Arroyo, Principal Researcher, Campo Experimental General Terán, INIFAP was appointed to the Plant Health TF
- Dr. José Fernando De la Torre Sánchez – Director Centro Nacional de Recursos Genéticos (CNRG-INIFAP) was appointed as Representative from Mexico in NORGEN. He was later elected chair of NORGEN
- Dr. Ken Richards, Research Manager, Plant Genetic Resources of Canada from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada was appointed to NORGEN. He replaces Dr. Campbell Davidson who has retired from AAFC

Immediately after these new appointments were announced, the Executive Secretary sent the appropriate welcoming letters to each new member, updated the PROCINORTE directory as well as reports and information about previous TF activities. These appointments were also posted in www.procinorte.net. Annex 1 presents the current composition of the TF.

III. Task Forces Work Program 2011

In accordance with BOD decision, early in the year the ES requested that the TF prepared their annual work plans and budgets. The Animal Health, Fruits and NORGEN TF submitted their Work Plans for 2011 which were approved by the BOD. The work plan of the Plant Health TF was prepared later in the year the TF was fully reconstituted as is presented in this meeting.

Despite that the work plans called for activities to be carried out during the year, due to budgetary issues (below), these activities were re-programmed for the last quarter of 2011 until budgets were approved.

A brief report of the activities of PROCINORTE’s Task Forces from October 2010 to September 2011 follows.

1. Tropical and Sub-tropical Fruits

The TTF annual plan focused on continuing two field projects, publish results in scientific journals, maintaining the web page and establish linkages with other PROCIS to promote research collaboration.

Due to budget constraints, this TF could not carry out its annual meeting programmed in coordination with the Annual Conference of the American Society for Horticultural Science (ASHS) in Hawaii (Sept.). However, the members of the TF communicated frequently by email and teleconference and formulated their annual work plan.

At the time of this report, IICA has transferred funds for two projects according to the budgets allocated to this TF:



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- *Evaluation of mango maturity in cultivars Ataulfo, Keitt and Tommy Atkins cultivars using hyperspectral imaging.* This activity is coordinated by Drs. Samuel Salazar and Ricardo Osuna (INIFAP). A total of US \$2,500 were transferred to INIFAP in Sept.
- *Field evaluation of hyperspectral protocol and development of a portable spectral analyzer to measure avocado maturity in-situ.* The budget from PROCINORTE is of \$10,000, of which \$1,750 were transferred to INIFAP and \$8,250 to AAFC in Oct.

The in-kind contribution from INIFAP, AAFC and ARS/USDA to the TF activities is estimated in \$27,000

A recent estimate by AAFC indicates that this organization is providing an estimated minimum contribution by AAFC (in kind) at least \$160 000 (Annex 2).

2. NORGEN

NORGEN held its annual meeting during the Annual Meeting of USDA/ARS's Plant Germplasm Operations Committee meeting in ARS, Beltsville (June, 22). During the NORGEN meeting, the members of this TF welcomed Dr. De la Torre Sanchez and later elected him as Chair. The group updated the NORGEN objectives as (1) Encourage the communication and collaboration among personnel involved in NORGEN national genetic resources (GR) systems, (2) promote opportunities for training and education in priority GR topics. (3) integration with other genetic resources networks within the America and (4) encourage reciprocal participation of national experts in each country's operational and advisory committees.

Currently, in close coordination with Dr. Fernando De La Torre Sanchez, Director of the National Genetic Resources Center (CNRG, Mexico) NORGEN is organizing the *Grin-GLOBAL Training Workshop*. This workshop will provide Mexican and Canadian curators with tools to manage genebank documentation. Specialists from ARS will act as trainers. A curator from Ecuador will also attend sponsored by PROCINORTE. The workshop will take place at CNRG in Jalisco (Oct 31 to November 11).

The Chair of the TF will participate in the meeting of the genetic resources networks REGENSUR, TROPiGEN, REMERFI and NORGEN to be celebrated during the VIII Simposio Internacional de Recursos Fitogenéticos para America Latina y el Caribe (SIRGEALC) to be held in Quito (Ecuador) Nov. 21-23.

3. Animal Health

- (a) The AHTF held a workshop on influenza H1N1 and other influenzas on October 13 & 14, 2010 in Ames, Iowa, USA. The meeting was attended not only by members of PROCINORTE, but also by representatives from the regulatory authorities of the three countries: the Servicio Nacional de Sanidad, Inocuidad y Calidad Agroalimentaria (SENASICA, Mexico), the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and the Animal and Plant Inspection Services (USDA/AHIS).

A number of areas for tri-national collaboration and action items were identified to address gaps in research and diagnostics for H1N1 and other animal influenzas: (1) Standing agreements for exchange of viruses and reagents, (2) Organized network for tri-lateral exchange of animal health info, (3) Harmonization of swine flu diagnostics, (4) Antigenic, molecular and geographical characterization of swine viruses, (5) Vaccine research and development and (6) Training needs.

Acknowledging the importance of promoting more collaboration with SENASICA, IICA's Director General, Dr. Victor Villalobos requested that SENASICA delegated a focal point for PROCINORTE. To that effect, Dr. MVZ. MC. Margarita A. Arreguín Nava, SENASICA's Deputy Director Risk Analysis, was appointed to facilitate communication with PROCINORTE.

Currently, with the leadership of Dr. Jose Lopez (CFIA) the TF is planning to carry out the *Wet Workshop Influenza A Virus Molecular Diagnostic Techniques*, in Winnipeg, Dec. 4-6. The objective is to provide the researchers with sensitive tools to diagnose influenza and other animal diseases. It is also expected that this activity will contribute to developing a network of researchers and regulatory authorities between the three countries that will increase communication and knowledge sharing.

4. Plant Health

In 2011, there were membership changes in the Mexican and U.S. representatives of the TF. The current membership has coordinated their work through conference calls and e-mail. Two of the task force members met with additional scientists in Beltsville, MD on September 26, 2011. Unfortunately, due to an injury the Mexican delegate could not attend this meeting.

The Task Force agreed to focus on research efforts on invasive plant pathogens, insect pests, and weeds of high agronomic or environmental consequence that are common to all three countries (attachment). Initial emphasis will



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be on facilitating research on spotted winged drosophila, brown marmorated stink bug, or psyllid-transmitted diseases such as zebra chip of potato.

5. Library and Information Services- LibraryPROCI

The Library-PROCI was discontinued in June following the decision of Canada to withdraw from since the transition from capacity building to a focus on activities with specific trilateral benefits prompted the Canadian Agriculture Library (CAL) to re-examine their role. Instructed by the BOD, the SE sent letters of recognition to the TF members. IICA will continue supporting the efforts of REMBA through its Office in Mexico.

IV. Task Forces Strategic Plans

As agreed by the BD during its XII Annual Meeting in Costa Rica, the TF have formulated Strategic Plans (SP) in accordance with the PROCINORTE SP. To facilitate the process, a template was prepared by the ES to be used as a guide.

To date, three task forces have submitted their SP, while the Plant Health TF has prepared a document highlighting the proposed regional priorities. The documents containing these plans are attached to this report.

V. Budget issues

In Dec. 2010, IICA's management approved US \$148,195 as contribution for PROCINORTE's activities in 2011. Of this amount, US\$27,000 was for operations (training and official travel), since the rest includes the salary of the ES who works 40% of her time with PROCINORTE.

However, this funding was insufficient to cover PROCINORTE's Annual Plan, and therefore the BOD negotiated a budget increase with IICA's management through a series of communications issued by PROCINORTE's President directed to IICA's DG (Annex 2). These efforts resulted in an approval in August 2011, of an additional budget of \$39,000 for PROCINORTE's operations. At the time of approval, IICA's management indicated that the PROCINORTE members should make an effort to increase its monetary contributions to PROCINORTE beyond the in-kind. The funds allocated to IICA for PROCINORTE were received by the IICA Office in the US in August 26.

Based on the TF work plans the BOD approved a budget 2011 (Annex 3) for a total of US\$114,740, of which US\$63,530 are contributions from the three member countries and US\$51,210 from IICA.

The IICA Office in the US holds a total budget of US\$66,000 for PROCINORTE activities during 2011, which is \$14,790 in excess to cover the work plan 2011.

VI. Communications

The PROCINORTE Board of Directors held several teleconferences early in 2011, to discuss issues of budget, programming, task force composition and other.

It was suggested that the TF would meet face-to-face at least once a year during the Board of Directors annual meeting and use teleconferences as needed. This unfortunately has not been possible and the representatives from the member countries primarily communicate via email or teleconferences. The ES and Mr. Ryan Moore (ARS/USDA) have participated in these teleconferences. Some teleconferences have been facilitated using phone line for audio and the ATT iMeeting of ARS/USDA.

VII. Web Page

The PROCINORTE web page is being constantly updated with events and activities, and with the support of the IICA Office in the US, Mrs. Kristyn Nanlal, consultant.

. However, the page lacks technical content which needs to be provided by the TF as has been agreed by the BOD.

VIII. Outreach

The ES participated in the LVI Annual Meeting of the Central American Cooperative Program for the Improvement of Crops and Animals (PCCMCA). The meeting was held in El Salvador from 25-29 April 2011 and brought together agricultural researchers and policy-makers from Mexico, Central America and the Dominican Republic. During the meeting the SE explained how PROCINORTE is linking researchers from Canada, Mexico and the US in themes of tri-lateral interest, including genetic resources, plant and animal health, fruits and knowledge management. The PCCMCA is the mechanism for dissemination of agricultural scientific knowledge in the Central American region with more than fifty years of existence. This SE participation was not funded by PROCINORTE.

Dr. Arturo Cruz (INIFAP) represented PROCINORTE in Annual Meeting of the Foro de las Américas para la Investigación y Desarrollo Tecnológico Agropecuario (FORAGRO), in September. The meetings was attended by the Presidents of the PROCIS, representatives of the CGIAR centers based in LAC (CIAT, CIMMYT and CIP), representatives from universities, NGO's, rural youth organizations and the private sector. The group deliberated on how to improve technical collaboration between the PROCIS in the key priority areas: climate change and food security. Dr. Cruz participation was sponsored by FORAGRO. The ES also participated providing technical inputs.



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To promote outreach between PROCINORTE and other PROCIS/Regions, Dr. Ricardo Andrade, Curator of the National Department of Plant Genetic Resources and Biotechnology (DENAREF) of the National Research Institute in Ecuador will participate in the Global-GRIN workshop. Dr. Andrade’s participation is the first step in establishing collaboration with DENAREF for exchanging information in this theme.

The ES participated in the Taller Metodológico de Innovación Agropecuaria, organized by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in August. The objective of this technical workshop was to provide BID with inputs to improve for the formulation of the Bank its strategy on technological innovation. Several research platforms were analyzed, including the PROCIS.

IX. Work Plan 2012

The proposed Work Plan 2012 for PROCINORTE is presented in Annex 4. This will be complemented with the proposed work plans of the four TF.

Approved budget 2011

Task Force and Activity	In-Kind contributions	PROCINORTE Budget-US\$	Total Budget US\$
Animal Health TF Wet Workshop: Influenza A Virus Molecular Diagnostic Techniques (Winnipeg, Canada, Nov. 2011).	Canada: US\$13,800 In-kind (México y USA): US\$5,000 TOTAL: US\$18,800	20,960	39,760.00
NORGEN Workshop: GRIN-Global Genetic Resource Information Management System (Guadalajara, Mexico, Nov. 2011).	INIFAP: US\$7,670 ARS/USDA: US\$10,000 Bioversity US\$1,500 In-kind contributions (tres países): US\$4,560 TOTAL: US\$23,730	10,750	34,480.00
Tropical and Sub-Tropical Fruits Projects: 1. Evaluating mango maturity using hyperspectral imaging (Araulfo, Keitt and Tommy Atkins)” 2. Field evaluation of hyperspectral protocol and development of a portable spectral analyzer to measure avocado maturity in-situ.	In-kind: US\$15,000	12,500	27,500
ES and BOD activities	US\$6,000 (in-kind)	7,000	13,000
TOTAL	US\$63,530	51,210	114,740.00

IICA total budget of US\$66,000 2011, which is \$14,790 in excess to cover the work plan 2011.



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ANNEX 3. TASK FORCE COMPOSITION

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TROPICAL AND SUBTROPICAL FRUITS TASK FORCE	
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ANNEX 4. PROCINORTE ACTION PLAN 2012

OBJECTIVE 1: Promote dialogue to identify priority research issues common to the three countries and to influence the regional, hemispheric and global agendas.

ACTIONS/ACCIONES	RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
1.1 Implement PROCINORTE activities as indicated in the Strategic Plan	The Executive Secretary & BOD	December 2012
1.2 Take advantage of opportunities at relevant meetings to present PROCINORTE purpose, progress and accomplishments	ES & BOD	December 2012
1.3 Complete Business Plan in view of its adoption	The Executive Secretary & BOD	TBD by BOD

OBJECTIVE 2: To facilitate the exchange of experiences, information and training through the building of linkages among public and private country institutions of the Northern region (PROCINORTE) and between the major research and technology transfer actors in the region, hemisphere and the world.

ACTIONS/ACCIONES	RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
2.1 Present the accomplishments of PROCINORTE at meetings of agricultural research and technology fora (i.e. FORAGRO and GFAR)	President & ES	December 2012



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2.2 Continuously improve and update the PROCINORTE web site with the Task Forces information and BOD reports and other relevant information	ES, IICA, Task Forces	Ongoing
2.3 Identify issues PROCINORTE wants to collaborate with other PROCI via teleconference with PROCI or other means. Request Executive Secretariats of other PROCIs and FORAGRO to provide information on their activities, programs and priorities.	ES and IICA	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 3: To facilitate collaboration among the countries to solve problems of mutual interest.

ACTIONS/ACCIONES	RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
3.1. Proactive development of means to address new emerging issues (e.g. videoconferences, calls for proposals, others)	ES	December 2012
3.2. a. Send a general communication to TF Chairs regarding national consultations (e.g. the need to focus on issues of tri-lateral interest, results-based work plan and budget, M&E mechanism)	ES	January 2012
3.2. b. Teleconference with Task Forces' Chairs to follow up on Strategic Plan implementation	Task Forces	Ongoing
3.4. Support Action Plans proposed by Task Forces within the allocated budgets	ES	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 4: Definition of PROCINORTE's institutional issues

ACTIONS/ACCIONES	RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
4.1 Prepare a mid year report for the BOD emphasizing accomplishments & constrains, both technically and financially, and other updates as necessary	ES	July 2012

ANNEX 5. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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