



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

## MINUTES OF TWELVE ANNUAL MEETING

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF PROCINORTE

27-28<sup>TH</sup> September 2010, San Jose, Costa Rica

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#### 1. Background and Meeting Objectives



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The 12th Annual Meeting of the PROCINORTE Board of Directors (BoD), corresponding to the programming year of 2010, took place at the headquarters of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) located in San Isidro de Coronado, Costa Rica, on 27-28<sup>th</sup> September 2010.

Main objectives of the meeting were:

- To review the PROCINORTE Task Forces (TF's) progress and evaluate results achieved
- To review the progress and evaluate results achieved by the Executive Secretariat (ES)
- To analyze progress made with the formulation of the PROCINORTE Strategic Plan
- To review the proposed PROCINORTE Business Plan

## 2. Opening Ceremony

Welcoming remarks were given by Ms. Karen Lezny, IICA's Deputy Director General on behalf of Director General Victor Villalobos. Ms. Lezny indicated that IICA focus on promoting innovation and cooperation between countries and regions, and stressed that the PROCIS are an effective mechanism to address regional needs for agricultural research, and share resources and knowledge. She emphasized that PROCINORTE is a different mechanism from the other PROCIS, as it is made up of three organizations with much expertise in agricultural research and that this expertise can be shared with other PROCIS for the advantage of the national innovation systems and agricultural research organizations in LAC.

Dr. Pedro Brajcich, President of PROCINORTE opened the meeting stressing the need that PROCINORTE becomes a solid mechanism to promote greater scientific exchange among the countries.

## 3. Approval of Proposed Agenda

As proposed by the Chair, Dr. Brajcich, the BOD approved the proposed agenda (see Annex 1) with the addition of an item requested by the President of SICTA to sign an agreement between SICTA and INIFAP.

## 4. Approval of Minutes XI Meeting of PROCINORTE BOD and Follow up

Highlights of the Minutes XI Meeting of PROCINORTE BOD in Ottawa were read



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and the agreements reached during the meeting were ratified.

## 5. Report of PROCINORTE Activities 2010

The Executive Secretary (ES) presented the Report on the activities of PROCINORTE from November 2009 to September 2010. The BOD thanked the Secretary for her report and presentation. The report was accepted unanimously.

## 6. Strategic Plan: Decision on Outstanding Issues

The BOD reviewed the updated version of the Strategic Plan presented by the ES and came to agreement on its critical strategic elements, including the mission. The formal strategic plan will be finalized by the end of 2010 following the receipt of Board comments by the end of November.

The BOD agreed that two key issues that needed attention were how to promote coordination and strategic partnerships among national stakeholders in the three member countries, and how to overcome financial limitations. The BOD requested the Secretary to provide documentation on the support IICA provides to all the other PROCIs, their main work activities, and their level of country representation.

***BOD Decision: The Strategic Plan will be formally approved by the BOD when final changes are incorporated.***

## 7. Discussion Focusing on Task Forces

The BOD recognized PROCINORTE is the only tri-lateral mechanism that addresses issues pertaining to agriculture technology and science that inform policy makers on issues of tri-lateral interest among Canada, Mexico and the USA. This implies that the TF projects must be of priority for the three member countries.

The major challenges faced by PROCINORTE and several recommended actions for improvement were discussed based on a matrix prepared by the ES (Annex 2). A discussion on how to address these challenges followed.

Also the Board addressed the composition, direction and objectives of each TF. At this point, the BOD discussed and recognized the relevance of the five themes currently addressed by PROCINORTE TFs: Plant Health, Animal Health, Genetic Resources, Tropical and Subtropical Fruits, and Library and Information Services; as being of importance for each country.



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The BOD evaluated the relevance of each TF's theme to the Strategic Plan and the effectiveness of each TF from the point of view of operation and results. Members of the BOD also discussed how to make adjustments to the composition of the TFs to promote more effective technical work. The following questions were posed by the ES to stimulate discussion:

1. Does each of these themes continue to be a priority now and do you envision these themes to be priorities in the future?
2. Are there other themes now or in the future that you envision are of equal or more importance?

Other relevant discussions included the importance of TFs focusing on creating original science, how to address issues of policy formulation for science in support of trade, and what modifications would require the engagement of regulatory authorities of each country, such as in the case of the animal and plant health issues in which policy decisions are informed by science.

The BOD also discussed the themes of the current TFs agreeing that in some cases it might be necessary to form TFs for specific topics or to better target current TFs. For example, the case of a sub-TF or specific target could be formed in the Animal Health TF around the issues of influenza diseases (principally H1N1). The BOD agreed that the participation of the regulatory authorities in these TFs is important when addressing trans-boundary diseases of plants and animals, and therefore recommended that these authorities be included in the TF as appropriate.

Issues of how to more efficiently fund the TFs to avoid their funds being used primarily for travel were addressed. Thus, the BOD instructed the ES to first require the TFs to secure approval of their strategic plans and annual plans before approval can be given to fund allocation. The BOD requested that annual plans be result-oriented and demonstrate how the three countries benefit of the efforts. The BOD decided not to approve projects of bilateral interest only.

Finally, the BOD also agreed that Board members should stimulate the TFs by participating in their activities whenever it was feasible.

***BOD Decision: The BOD agreed to make the appropriate changes in the composition of the TF to appoint Country Representatives who can bring national issues to the discussion.***

## 8. Signing of Agreement between SICTA and INIFAP

By request of SICTA and INIFAP, the BOD allocated time for signing a cooperation agreement between the Central American Agricultural Technology



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Integration System (SICTA) and INIFAP that will promote cooperation between Mexico and the Central American countries on issues of agricultural technology. The addition of INIFAP to SICTA was seen as an important opportunity for PROCINORTE to promote collaboration with the Central American countries. Topics of interest include *a priori* tropical fruits and plant health.

## 9. Proposed PROCINORTE Business Plan

A modified version of the Business Plan proposal was presented by the Executive Secretary. This version includes a slight modification of its structure highlighting its improvements and benefits, a strategy for increasing PROCINORTE visibility, and a projection for funding for the period 2012-15.

***BOD Decision: The BOD agreed to study the proposed Business Plan and provide feedback by YE2010.***

## 10. Presentation of Two Projects by Task Forces

A project proposal submitted by the Tropical and Sub-Tropical Fruits TF was presented to the BOD for potential funding during 2010. The BOD requested that the TF reformulate the proposal to demonstrate the benefits for all three countries. A bilateral proposal submitted by the Genetic Resources TF was not approved.

## 11. Formulation of PROCINORTE Annual Work Plan 2011

The BOD formulated the PROCINORTE Annual Work Plan 2011 using a matrix prepared by the Secretary (Annex 3). This plan was approved.

## 12. Various Issues Related to PROCINORTE Upkeep

The Board members expressed their satisfaction with IICA's leadership in strengthening PROCINORTE, and congratulated the ES for her work in providing support to the TF and the BOD.

The BOD manifested the interest of PROCINORTE to coordinate activities with other PROCIS whenever possible. Therefore, it instructed the ES to promote an exchange by video-conference between the Presidents and Executive Secretaries of the PROCIS to discuss potential issues of collaboration.

Dr. Pedro Brajcich was re-elected as President of PROCINORTE for another term (through 2011). The next board meeting will be held in the United States



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tentatively planned for Sept/Oct through Board member Dr. Caird Rexroad of the USDA.

### 13. Presentation of IICA Programs

Mrs. Viviana Palmieri presented the Program on Innovation for Productivity and Competitiveness; Dr. Ricardo Molins presented the Agricultural Health and Food Safety Program, and Dr. Ramon Lastra presented the Biotechnology and Biosafety activities of IICA. These presentations were intended to promote potential collaboration between IICA and PROCINORTE en areas of common interest.

The list of participants is Annexed (Annex 4).



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## ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1. AGENDA MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF PROCINORTE

#### AGENDA DE LA REUNION DE LA JUNTA DIRECTIVA DE PROCINORTE

SEDE DE IICA, SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA, MONDAY 27 AND TUESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER/ LUNES 27 Y MARTES 28 DE SEPTIEMBR

<b><u>Sunday/Monday September 26-27/ Domingo/Lunes 26-27 Septiembre</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrival of participants: Members of the BOD, IICA staff</li> </ul> <p>Hotel Radisson Calle Central y Tercera Av. 15, P.O. Box 538-2120, Calle Blancos, San José, Costa Rica, Telephone: (506) 2 257-3257 Fax: (506) 2 257-8221, <a href="mailto:info@radisson.co.cr">info@radisson.co.cr</a></p>	
<b><u>Monday, September 27 / Lunes 27 de Septiembre</u></b>	
14:00 – 14:20	<b>Welcoming remarks / Palabras de bienvenida</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Karen Lezny, Asst. Director General IICA</li> </ul>
14:20 – 14:30	<b>Opening session/ Apertura de la reunión</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Pedro Bracjich, President of PROCINORTE</li> </ul>
14:30 – 14:35	<b>Approval of draft agenda / Aprobación de la agenda propuesta</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Pedro Bracjich</li> </ul>
14:35 – 14:45	<b>Approval of Minutes XI Meeting of PROCINORTE BOD and follow up/ Aprobación Memoria XI Reunion PROCINORTE y seguimiento a acuerdos</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Pedro Bracjich</li> <li>• Dra. Priscila Henríquez, Executive Secretary of PROCINORTE / Secretaria Ejecutiva de PROCINORTE</li> </ul>
14:45 – 15:15	<b>Report PROCINORTE activities 2010/ Informe de actividades de PROCINORTE 2010</b> Dra. Priscila Henríquez
15:15 – 15:45	<b>Coffee break / Café</b>
15:45 – 17:15	<b>Strategic Plan: agreements and outstanding issues/ Plan estratégico y asuntos pendientes</b> Members of the Board
<b>18:00</b> Official dinner offered by Dr. Villalobos, IICA's Director General, Comedor	



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<b>Ejecutivo, IICA HQ</b> Cena oficial ofrecida por Dr. Victor Villalobos, Director General de IICA, Comedor Ejecutivo, Sede de IICA	
20:00. Return to Radisson Hotel/ traslado al Hotel Radisson	
<b>Tuesday September 28 / Viernes 28 de Septiembre</b>	
9:00 – 10:00	<b>Continuation of Strategic Plan: Focus on Task Forces/ Continuación del Plan Estratégico: Enfoque en las Fuerzas de Tarea</b>
10:00 – 10:20	<b>Signing of agreement between SICTA and INIFAP</b> Requested
10:20 – 10:30	<b>Coffee break / Café</b>
10:30– 11:30	<b>Board Close Session/ Sesión de Trabajo Cerrada</b>
11:30 - 12:30	<b>Proposed PROCINORTE Business Plan / Propuesta de Plan de Negocios de PROCINORTE</b>
12: 30 – 14:00	<b>Lunch</b>
14:00- 14:15	<b>Presentation of two projects proposed by Task Forces and fund allocation/ Presentación de dos propuestas de proyecto de las Fuerzas de Tarea y distribución de fondos</b> Priscila Henríquez
14:15 – 15:30	<b>PROCINORTE 2011 Work Plan / Plan de Trabajo 2011</b>
15:30 – 16:00	<b>Coffee break / Café</b>
16:00 – 17:00	<b>Presentation of IICA Programs/ Presentación de Programas de IICA</b>
17:15 – 17:30	<b>Election of President of PROCINORTE BoD/ Elección de Nuevo Presidente de PROCINORTE</b>
17:30 – 17:45	<b>Additional Business / Asuntos Adicionales</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next PROCINORTE meeting (Date &amp; Place) / Próxima Reunión del PROCINORTE (Fecha y Lugar)</li> </ul>
17:45	<b>Closing</b>





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**ANNEX 2. Major Challenges for PROCINORTE**

Stated Challenge	Recommended Actions	Observations
Promote coordination and strategic partnerships among a broader set of national stakeholders	Implement Strategic Plan and Business plan	Will require additional time and resources to complete The role of the focal points in each country will be crucial
Overcome financial limitations	Execution of a Business Plan Evaluate relevance and pertinence of current themes for collaboration on research, capacity building and outreach and make appropriate changes if necessary	Eventually needs allocation of funding from research authorities in Canada, Mexico and the US The results must be quantitative and compelling Will need to revise country priorities to establish which ones are of trilateral interest and determine new ones if necessary
Promote more effective technical work	Evaluate/revise Task Force's themes Evaluate current Task Force performance Evaluate/revise composition of the Task Force members Eliminate "pet projects"	Will require analysis including future trends by each country Will need to establish a process to identify and select new Task Force members with revised ToR if necessary
Address issues of policy formulation for science in support of tri-lateral trade	Appoint decision makers to TF's as appropriate	Will need to construct a careful blend of decision makers and scientists depending on the objectives of the TF Might encounter resistance from current Task Force members
Inconsistent use of funding by the TF's; avoid becoming a mechanism primarily to fund travel	Evaluate resource allocation mechanism Task Forces should plan based on expected results to achieve its objectives Funding follows approval of the Task Forces' annual work plans	Might encounter resistance from current Task Force members Might require training to Task Force members on result-oriented planning
Make PROCINORTE better known at the three country level and beyond	Design and launch an effective results dissemination strategy (ICT's, appropriate fora) beyond web site	IICA maintains and updates the PROCINORTE web page but it is difficult to obtain contributions from PROCINORTE members Requires further discussion as an agenda item at the next Board Meeting



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**ANNEX 3. PROCINORTE ACTION PLAN 2010**

**OBJECTIVE 1**

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

<b>ACTIONS/ACCIONES</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
1.1 Implement PROCINORTE activities as indicated in the Strategic Plan	The Executive Secretary & BOD	December 2011
1.2 Take advantage of opportunities at relevant meetings to present PROCINORTE purpose, progress and accomplishments	ES & BOD	December 2011
1.3 Complete Business Plan in view of its adoption	The Executive Secretary & BOD	Feb. 2011

**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.

<b>ACTIONS/ACCIONES</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
2.1 Present the accomplishments of PROCINORTE at meetings of agricultural research and technology fora (i.e. FORAGRO and GFAR)	President & ES	December 2011
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 PROCINORTE via teleconference with PROCINORTE or other means. Request Executive Secretariats of other PROCINORTES 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



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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 2011
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 2011
3.2. b. Teleconference with Task Forces' Chairs to: Each TF to develop its strategic plan aligned with the PROCINORTE strategic plan using a standard template	Task Forces	December 2011
3.4. Support Action Plans proposed by Task Forces within the allocated budgets	ES	December 1, 2011

**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 2011
3.3. Dissolve Plant Health Task Force and establish a new TF PH to focus on high priority issues	BOD	March 2011



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**Annex 4. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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<b>IICA Staff attending and presenting</b>		
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