

PROCINORTE
Minutes of the XVIII Meeting of the Board of Directors
October 24 - 25, 2016
Mexico City, Mexico
INIFAP Headquarters

Background and Objectives

The 18th Annual Meeting of the PROCINORTE's Board of Directors (BoD) was held on October 24-25, 2016 in Mexico City, Mexico, at the facilities of the "Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Forestales, Agrícolas y Pecuarias" (INIFAP). This satisfied the obligation for a Board Meeting for the year 2016.

The main objectives of the meeting were:

- i.** Review the activities and accomplishments of the Task Forces for the current year.
- ii.** Review and decide on PROCINORTE's work plan and budget for 2017.

The Expected results:

- i.** Members of PROCINORTE are familiar with challenges, opportunities and achievements related to PROCINORTE's operations.
- ii.** Individual Task Force work plans and budgets approved.
- iii.** Overall Work plan and budget for 2017 approved.

1. Opening Session

Meeting was called to order at 9:12 a.m. on Monday, October 24th, 2016.

Welcome

The President, Dr. Gilles Saindon welcomed Board Members and thanked Dr. Luis Flores for hosting the meeting at INIFAP Headquarters in Mexico City. He went on to introduce Charles Kounkou, Senior Planning Officer at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada who was attending in place of Brad Fraleigh and extended a special welcome to Dr. Maria Rodriguez who was attending the PROCINORTE BoD meeting for the first time. Other members of the Board introduced themselves and also thanked Dr. Flores for his kind hospitality.

Apologies

Apologies were tabled on behalf of Dr. Miguel Garcia, IICA Representative in the USA and Dr. Salvador Fernandez, Associate Director of Technical Cooperation, IICA HQ, who were unable to attend, as well as for Mrs. Gloria Abraham, IICA Representative in Mexico, who would be late.



2. Approval of Agenda

The agenda tabled ([Click here](#)) was amended to reflect the presence of Dr. Priscila Henriquez, Technical Coordinator of FORAGRO, then **approved by Board members**.

3. Presentation on INIFAP

Dr. Flores Lui, provided members with an overview of the mandate, programmes and work of INIFAP as well as the achievements from research projects developed by the Institute. ([Click here](#))

He spoke of activities being undertaken through the 8 research centres and 38 research stations. INIFAP employs some 890 scientists, of which 64% are engaged in crop research, 25% in Livestock and 11% in Forestry research activities. Of note was the fact that Mexico is free of Swine Fever, the vaccine for which was developed by INIFAP.

In response to questions posed, Dr. Flores indicated that project funding came from both government and private companies. He noted that the results of the innovations developed by INIFAP were given to the farmers, particularly small farmers. He also spoke of renewed efforts to do more with farmers through extension workers. Discussion ensued on INIFAP's efforts to facilitate researchers conducting higher degrees (Masters and Ph.D), and the possibility of PROCINORTE and/or IICA complementing this programme.

4. Minutes of XVII Meeting

The President commended the Secretariat on the timely preparation and circulation of the Minutes and invited the Executive Secretary to present same ([Click here](#)). **The Minutes were accepted by the Board on a motion by Dr. Steven Kappes, and seconded by Dr. Luis Flores.**

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes & Action Plan

A summary of Matters Arising ([Click here](#)) as well as the Action Plan ([Click here](#)) from the XVII meeting were presented by the Executive Secretary. Both were accepted by the Members of the Board after a discussion regarding the rapid development of communication technologies.

6. Report on GFAR and FORAGRO

Dr. Maria Rodriguez, Secretary of FORAGRO, reminded the Board that the summary provided was in response to the outstanding commitment for IICA to present a concept note regarding the role of FORAGRO and the PROCIs. She noted that FORAGRO over the years had diversified its actions beyond being a regional forum, and that it had no budget except for what was provided by IICA and *ad hoc* amounts provided by host countries and FONTRAGRO for hosting meetings. She further explained that since FORAGRO was in transition, and as there was no representation at the GCARD3 Meeting, the presentation to the Board ([Click here](#)) aimed at providing a better understanding of the role and expectations of FORAGRO as well as the link with the PROCIs and its relationship with GFAR. She indicated that the presentation by Priscila would provide further insights as to the steps taken in the process of restructuring FORAGRO.

Members learned that FORAGRO and The Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) were established around the same time – with GFAR being more focused on agricultural research for international development. GFAR has organized 3 Conferences to date – known as GCARD (Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development), aimed at meeting specified goals. The GCARD3 which was recently held in South Africa had as its theme: “No One Left Behind: Agri-food Innovation and Research for a Sustainable World”. It was also shared that FORAGRO has had a reducing level of involvement in the GCARD, resulting in no participation in the GCARD3. Dr. Rodriguez stated that GFAR wished to re-engage FORAGRO in an effort to ensure that the Americas is adequately reflected.

Board members agreed on the need for FORAGRO to focus on redefining its role in the hemisphere prior to considering its role within GFAR. Board members also discussed the value of FORAGRO in GFAR in light of other similar platforms as well as the role of the PROCIs, at which stage Dr. Henriquez assumed the floor to update on the transition process being undertaken by FORAGRO.

7. Contributions to FORAGRO Executive Meeting

Dr. Priscila Henriquez, Technical Coordinator of FORAGRO, briefed members on the proposed changes for FORAGRO ([Click here](#)), highlighting that a major challenge was in having inclusive representation of a heterogeneous region. She reminded that a consultant as well as a small team comprising the Executive Secretaries of PROCINORTE and PROCISUR, AAFC and CARDI was tasked with preparing a plan for restructuring FORAGRO for improved effectiveness. She shared aspects of the plan which was recently translated to English and circulated to the PROCINORTE Board ([Click here](#)).

Members of the Board deliberated on the options for the Mission and Vision and proposed the following wording:

MISSION: *Serve as a forum to actively discuss needs and opportunities of research, technology and innovation systems, and to strengthen partnerships for advancing agriculture in the Americas.*

VISION: *To be recognized as the main forum for discussing, sharing, and generating options to address challenges and opportunities that are important for the development of science, technology, and innovation systems in the Americas.*

Mr. Charles Kounkou opined that the proposal of “New FORAGRO” had to be clearly defined with objectives aligned to the mission and vision. He further suggested that since FORAGRO had been launched at the request of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA), IABA should hold FORAGRO accountable. Additionally, he stated that ultimately, the IABA has the capacity to make decisions based on FORAGRO’s recommendations, influence the S&T agenda and feed the work of the PROCIs. . Mr. Ryan Moore spoke to the varying levels of capacities in the hemisphere, a view shared by Maria Rodriguez who stressed that in some countries, even the capacity to define and articulate the needs of their sector was lacking.

Dr. Steven Kappes pointed out that FORAGRO should be an important forum for sharing experiences which offered solutions for agriculture.

The proposed changes for FORAGRO included a budget increase along with funding mechanism options. Regardless of the scenario, Charles Kounkou opined that it was desirable to not increase financial pressure on IICA.

Other points of discussion were around the challenge in having a more focused but all-inclusive forum. It was generally felt that it may not be feasible to have all society's sectors represented in FORAGRO. Ryan observed that since the Research & Development group should already have broad stakeholder representation, this should simplify the inclusivity issue.

The President advised that Dr. Luis Fernando Flores would be representing PROCINORTE at the upcoming Executive Committee Meeting of FORAGRO, when the plan for restructuring will be reviewed for decision making. Members agreed to continue the discussion virtually on November 4, in order to have a PROCINORTE position for deliberations at the FORAGRO Executive Committee meeting on November 16-17, 2016. The President also indicated that it was important that PROCINORTE not lose its momentum.

Decisions

- 1. The Secretariat is to organize a virtual meeting of the BoD and advise accordingly.***
- 2. A one-page summary (of the restructuring plan) is to be prepared for the meeting for assisting the discussion.***
- 3. A revised English version of the Plan for Restructuring FORAGRO is to be prepared by Priscila and circulated to the BoD.***

8. Reports from Task Forces 2016 and Proposed actions for 2017

Plant Health

Dr. Della Johnston, Director, Research, Development & Technology, AAFC, and also Leader of the Task Force presented a report ([Click here](#)) on behalf of members of the task force, noting that their main activity had not yet taken place. She shared the agenda for the upcoming Workshop on “Pests & Diseases of Solanaceans in North America: Trilateral approaches for their management” noting highlights of the planned presentations. The work plan and budget for 2017 was premised mainly on a workshop to be held at the USDA-ARS facility in Beltsville ([Click here](#)).

Animal Health

Dr. Armando Mateos Poumian, Technical Specialist in Animal Health at IICA Mexico, presented the report ([Click here](#)) in person on behalf of the Taskforce, however its leader Dr. Cyril Gay, National Program Leader - Animal Production and Protection, USDA, was able to join by telephone during the presentation. The activities of the Task Force included participating in an international symposium on Alternatives to Antibiotics as well as a workshop on: “Vector-Borne Animal Diseases” recently held in Mexico. While the report of the latter was not yet completed, it was deemed to be a successful workshop, where the task force also discussed future activities regarding animal diseases of trilateral interest. The Task Force also reported that joint research activities had begun in 2 projects which were

identified in 2015 and are being funded by the USDA-ARS. The AHTF work plan for 2017 ([Click here](#)) indicated that the major activity with PROCINORTE budget implications would be a workshop focusing on selected animal diseases proposed during the Mexico workshop. The two joint research projects would continue, with prospects of initiating an additional one being explored.

NORGEN

Dr. Axel Diederichsen, Curator, Research Scientist, Plant Gene Resources of Canada, AAFC, Task Force leader presented his report from Saskatoon ([Click here](#)). He acknowledged the members of the task force who participated in the activities during the year. The Workshop on Indigenous Plant Genetic Resources undertaken in collaboration with AAFC and Laval University was considered a success by the Task Force Leader, who indicated that attempts would be made to continue joint activities in this area. Dr. Diederichsen elaborated on other undertakings of the group, with the most recent being accommodating training of 3 Mexican Scientists in Animal Genetic Resources Information Network (GRIN) at the National Laboratory for Genetic Resources Preservation in Fort Collins, CO (USDA - ARS). The 2016 budget was well executed (100% spent). The workplan for 2017 ([Click here](#)) reflected continuation of activities from 2016, however with an increased budgetary request.

Tree Fruits

Dr. Peter Toivenen, Research Scientist, Food Safety and Quality, AAFC Leader of the Task Force provided his presentation from British Columbia in Canada ([Click here](#)). Acknowledging the support of the members of the Task Force, Dr. Toivonen spoke of the major activity which involved sharing information on the use of a spectrometer to determine maturity of avocados, as well as procuring a suitable instrument to be used by producers in the field. He shared the challenges faced during the year, however advised of industry's continued enthusiasm and anticipation for the technology. The final activity for the year had not yet been undertaken. This would involve providing training in AAFC's Summerland facilities, for a Mexican Task Force member on the calibration and use of a spectrometer (similar to the one to be purchased). The Work plan and budget for 2017 were presented ([Click here](#)), noting the in-kind contribution from member countries as well as the avocado industry.

9. Summary Report

The Executive Secretary, Audia Barnett recapitulated information provided by the Task Forces and included activities of the Secretariat in a Summary Report on the 2016 workplan ([Click here](#)). She provided an overview of support provided to the President of PROCINORTE and its task forces. Dr. Barnett explained that as a result of implementing the communications plan ([Click here](#)), PROCINORTE had begun to attract interest of external stakeholders. Press releases and articles on the institutional (IICA) website, participating in strategic meetings, as well as distribution of promotional brochures were some of the attributing factors. Board Members were also pleased to hear of the anticipated full implementation of the 2016 budget, attesting to prudent financial management by task forces and the Secretariat.

The challenges faced by the Secretariat were related to the acquisition of a suitable spectrometer by the Tree Fruits task force, and the impractical scheduling of task force

activities – the latter resulting in intense activities in a 3 – 4 month period. Kudos were given to Ms. Cristina Jimenez, Administrative Assistant in the IICA Canada Delegation for her efficiency.

Regarding the difficulties experienced when acquiring and transporting the spectrometer, Mr. Ryan Moore suggested making use of the diplomatic pouch. It was agreed that this would be explored when procuring the new spectrometer.

At the conclusion of the report, members of the Board issued commendations on the work of the Task Forces and the Secretariat.

End of the First Day

SECOND DAY OF THE MEETING

10. 2017 Work plan and budget

Dr. Audia Barnett presented the 2017 Work Plan for the Task Forces and the Secretariat ([Click here](#)).

Acknowledging the importance of strengthening PROCINORTE's communication channels, members of the Board offered several suggestions for more cost-effective options to the quote provided by the Secretariat on a new and more robust website platform for PROCINORTE ([Click here](#)). The recommendation by Ryan Moore regarding the use of an intern to review and improve the website, was met with general approval by the board. Dr. Kappes opined that PROCINORTE may be able to partner with other PROCIs to have a website. Dr. Flores indicated that he was willing to have INIFAP's website carry pertinent information on PROCINORTE, as well as establish a link to PROCINORTE's website.

Decisions:

- 4. The Secretariat will explore the option of engaging an intern for the website.*
- 5. The Secretariat to check other PROCIs regarding appetite for a joint website.*
- 6. Member organizations represented on the Board will explore maintaining a link between their institutional websites and PROCINORTE's website*

On the presentation of the work plans and budget proposals for the Task Forces, several recommendations were made by the Board. It was agreed that approval of the respective budgets was contingent on the responses to the recommendations.

Plant Health

- Continue efforts to forge links with North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO); Host Task Force Meeting close to the Annual Meeting of NAPPO to facilitate participation (both ways).
- Based on discussions at workshop, etc. identify suite of activities for 2017 as opposed to one large event. The budget advanced was not justified.
- Continue efforts to participate in related international or regional technical events (Participation in the 2016 Entomology Symposium was commended).
- Consider how to incorporate climate change considerations in TF activities.
- Budget approval pending more comprehensive agenda.

NORGEN

- Downstream deliverables needed. i.e. Outcomes need to be clearly articulated for each activity. e.g. For the Animal GRIN Training. Also need the rationale for the follow-up training in Animal GRIN.
- Communicate within IICA to determine interest of other LAC country in Animal GRIN training.
- What is the value of participating in the Davis workshop? Consider participating every other year

- Reconsider the National Plant Germplasm System Operating Committee Meeting gene-bank – and redistribute budget or attaining tangible outcome(s). Depending on budget approved – may need to remove Activity regarding #2 completely.
- Consider how to incorporate climate change considerations in TF activities.
- Budget approval pending response to comments.

Tree Fruits

- Strategy for handing over to industry technology for measuring avocado maturity - should be developed for implementation
- Consider study on application of the technology to low land avocado vs. Hass avocado. Internship to be explored for aiding transfer of knowledge.
- Build on lessons learned with avocado industry in addressing new fruits.
- Consider how to incorporate climate change considerations in TF activities.
- Budget provisionally approved.

Animal Health

- Since a Gap Analysis has been conducted, the TF now needs to focus on specific animal diseases.
- Make efforts to illustrate outcomes of activities. e.g. result of work done in the 3 countries on knowledge sharing on or intervention regarding specific disease(s).
- Consider how to incorporate climate change considerations in TF activities.
- Budget approval pending information on planned focus on specific animal diseases.

Decisions:

- 7. The Secretariat will communicate the recommendations of the Board to the Task Force leaders for responses.***
- 8. Pending approval of the revised work plans and/or budgets, these will be submitted to IICA for due consideration.***

11. Monitoring & Evaluation Proposal

Ms. Trudy Werry, Technical and Performance Coordinator in the IICA Canada Delegation presented the strategy being implemented for developing an appropriate Monitoring and Evaluation plan ([Click here](#)) based on the document previously sent to the board members ([Click here](#)). Mr. Charles Kounkou indicated that Canada will have comments on the Monitoring and Evaluation proposal and will submit to IICA Canada Delegation after the PROCINORTE Meeting. Charles Kounkou also observed that the survey should prove useful for determining whether the work of Task Forces is relevant. Dr. Audia Barnett agreed, pointing out that the proposed survey would identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Task Forces and present opportunities for addressing the weaknesses.

On the issue of appropriate indicators, Dr. Priscila Henriquez related that indicators utilized by FONTAGRO for its projects may prove useful. Charles Kounkou asked about the practice of Monitoring and Evaluation in other PROCIs, to which Dr. Priscilla Henriquez responded that other PROCIs Monitoring and Evaluation system was project-based and therefore was not suitable for PROCINORTE.

Decisions:

- 9. The report of the M & E survey is to be shared with the BoD by the end of November 2016.**
- 10. Dr. Priscila Henriquez will share FONTAGRO's indicators**
- 11. The full M & E plan was approved for implementation.**

12. Additional Business and Closing

12.1. Proposal of new Task Force

Dr. Rodriguez referred to the briefing note tabled by the Secretariat. In presenting the rationale for consideration of a Task Force on Climate Change [\(Click here\)](#), she acknowledged public commitments made by the 3 member countries regarding plans to address concerns relating to Climate Change. She further reminded Board Members of the fact that PROCINORTE had in fact considered this new Task Force in 2012, when the focus then was on invasive species and Forestry. While there was no evidence that the Board followed up on its deliberations in 2013, Dr. Rodriguez proposed several subthemes which could justifiably be considered by a new Task Force. She also indicated that the option of including sub-activities on Climate Change in Task Force activities where appropriate could be considered as an interim measure.

Board Members concurred that there was quite a number of activities being undertaken by various organizations and felt that PROCINORTE must be able to identify the value it envisaged adding. It was also pointed out that PROCINORTE's 2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan included 4 (named) task forces. Steven Kappes spoke of the Climate Hubs being supported by USDA-ARS and suggested that a possible activity by PROCINORTE could be to ensure that relevant data reaches producers in the 3 countries.

Decisions

- 12. The Executive Secretary to encourage Task Forces to include, where possible, the impact of Climate Change in their respective portfolio areas.**
- 13. An inventory of Climate Change – Agriculture related initiatives being undertaken in the 3 countries to be conducted by the BoD (Ryan, Charles, Francisco).**
- 14. A teleconference is to be scheduled in 2017 for the BoD to review the inventory compiled (which would include the organization leading the initiatives and the scope of same).**

12.2. Next PROCINORTE meeting (Date & Place)

The President advised that the venue of the 2017 BoD meeting will be London, Ontario. The date will be confirmed in due course.

12.3. Closing Remarks

The President thanked Dr. Flores for the excellent hospitality afforded the group, noting the venue, transportation service, culinary fare, were all outstanding. He also commented that

the high caliber of documents prepared for the meeting aided in the smooth execution of proceedings and congratulated the Secretariat in this regard. These sentiments were echoed by other Board Members.

The President then closed the meeting, advising that members were invited to participate in a visit to the CIMMYT (The International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center) where presentations and a short tour would be provided.

Acronyms

- BoD** : Board of Directors
- TF** : Task Force
- ES** : Executive Secretary

Annex 1: List of Participants

List of Participants

1. Dr. Gilles Saindon, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, AAFC, President, PROCINORTE
2. Mr. Charles Kounkou, Senior Planning Officer, AAFC (Representing Dr. Brad Fraleigh)
3. Dr. Steven Kappes, Associate Administrator, National Programs, ARS/USDA
4. Mr. Ryan Moore, International Affairs Specialist, ARS/USDA
5. Dr. Luis Fernando Flores, Director General, INIFAP
6. Dr. Francisco Moreno Sánchez, Director Technical Support Unit, INIFAP
7. Dr. Maria Rodriguez, Deputy Director Technical Cooperation, IICA
8. Dr. Audia Barnett, IICA Representative in Canada, Executive Secretary, PROCINORTE
9. Ms. Gloria Abraham, IICA Representative in Mexico
10. Dr. Priscila Henríquez, Specialist in the Management of Technological Innovation, IICA US, (Technical Coordinator of FORAGRO)

Presenting:

a. In Person – On behalf of Animal Health Task Force

- Dr. Armando Mateos, Animal Health Specialist, IICA Mexico

b. Via Videoconference

On Monday, October 24, 2016:

- Dr. Della Johnston, Leader Plant Health Task Force, AAFC
- Dr. Peter Toivonen, Leader Tree Fruits Task Force, AAFC
- Dr. Axel Diederichsen, Leader NORGEN Task Force, AAFC
- Dr. Cyril Gay, Leader Animal Health Task Force, ARS/USDA (TBC)

On Tuesday, October 25, 2016:

- Ms. Trudy Werry, Technical and Performance Coordinator, IICA Canada

Annex 2: List of Documents Reviewed During the Meeting

i. First day

- Agenda of the BoD Meeting ([Click here](#))
- Minutes of the XVII Meeting ([Click here](#))
- Matters Arising from the XVII Meeting Board of Directors ([Click here](#))
- Action Plan ([Click here](#))
- Proposal for a Plan for the Restructuring of FORAGRO ([Click here](#))
- Work Plan And Budget – Plant Health Task Force ([Click here](#))
- Work Plan And Budget – Animal Health Task Force ([Click here](#))
- Work Plan And Budget – NORGEN Task Force ([Click here](#))
- Work Plan And Budget – Tree Fruit Task Force ([Click here](#))
- 2016 Annual Summary Report From The Secretariat ([Click here](#))
- Communications Plan Report ([Click here](#)),

ii. Second day

- 2017 Annual Workplan & Budget – dated October 17, 2016 ([Click here](#))
- Website Development for PROCINORTE ([Click here](#))
- Monitoring and evaluation plan ([Click here](#))
- Concept Note: a PROCINORTE task force on climate change mitigation and adaptation technologies for agriculture ([Click here](#))

Annex 3: List of Presentations Reviewed During the Meeting

i. First day

- INIFAP: The National Institute for Forestry, Crops and Livestock Research ([Click here](#))
- FORAGRO and GFAR ([Click here](#))
- The new FORAGRO: towards an inclusive model ([Click here](#))
- Plant Health Task Force Report ([Click here](#))
- Animal Health Task Force Report ([Click here](#))
- NORGEN Task Force Report ([Click here](#))
- Tree Fruit Task Force Report ([Click here](#)).

ii. Second day

- Proposal for Evaluation Activities ([Click here](#))

At CYMMIT

- Global WHEAT Program Overview & Global and North American Wheat Improvement Priorities ([Click here](#))
- Heat & Drought Research And Physiological Pre-Breeding In Wheat ([Click here](#))
- MasAgro ([Click here](#))