

PROCINORTE Task Force on Genetic Resources (NORGEN)

Annual Report from Task Force and Proposed actions for 2018

The three Task Force representatives are:

(1) Mexico: Dr. Jose Fernando De La Torre Sanchez, Director, Centro Nacional de Recursos Genéticos, Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Forestales, Agrícolas y Pecuarias, Tepatitlán de Morelos, Jalisco;

(2) USA: Dr. Peter Bretting, National Program Leader, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington DC; and

(3) Canada: Dr. Axel Diederichsen (Task Force Leader), Plant Gene Resources of Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Saskatoon; Chair of NORGEN Task Force since June 2015.

For 2017, the Inter-America Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) allocated a budget of \$15,000 in February 2017 for the NORGEN Task Force.

1. What activities has the TF undertaken over the past year?

The following meetings related to the task force were held in 2017

- February 23 (virtual meeting of NORGEN),
- March 17, 2017 Task Force Leaders with PROCINORTE Secretary (virtual meeting),
- May 15 (virtual meeting of NORGEN),
- September 22 (virtual meeting of AAFC Taskforce Leaders and Int. Engagement)
- September 27 (NORGEN in person meeting in Quebec City, Canada, with four young scientists from Mexico as guests and Dr. Amanda Galvez; P. Bretting participated remotely), and
- October 4 (virtual meeting of NORGEN).

Several of the NORGEN meetings included the Legal Chair in Food Diversity and Security of the University of Laval (Dr. Geneviève Parent, Ms. Marie-Ève Buist) and the AAFC Research and Development Centre at Quebec (Dr. Stéphane Gariépy).

In April 2017 the final report from the 2016 workshop “Conservation and Development of Ancestral/Indigenous Plant Genetic Resources: Challenges, Tools and Perspectives; Sharing the Canadian, Mexican and American Experiences” was released and distributed. This workshop was held on May 10-11, 2016, at the University Laval, Quebec.

The workshop contributed to the AAFC A-base project “The Three Sisters” lead by S. Gariépy.

Due to the initiative of Dr. Geneviève Parent, all Task Force members were invited to the “Symposium on Food Security and Nutrition in the Age of Climate Change” from

September 24 to 27, in Québec City. This symposium was co-organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Province of Quebec. The US representative on the Task Force, Peter Bretting, could not attend this symposium. The Mexican and Canadian Task Force members gave each a keynote address to the plenary at this symposium. They highlighted the relevance of genetic diversity for food security and the relevance in regional cooperation among the three countries. In addition to Dr. Jose Fernando De La Torre Sanchez, the participation of Dr. Amanda Galvez, a nutrition scientist from Mexico City, who gave a presentation on the Milpa System. The Mexican participation and the travel of the PROCINORTE Secretary Dr. Audia Barnett was supported by the Task Force.

In October 2016, three employees of the Centro Nacional de Recursos Genéticos in Mexico were supported by the Task Force to attend a three-day training workshop at USDA Plant and Animal Genetic Resources Preservation at Fort Collins, Colorado. Due to this, they were able to implement the Animal-GRIN software at the Mexican genebank and already have made information accessible to the public. Hence, the long ongoing cooperation on Animal-GRIN that includes Brazil, the US and Canada now has impact on other countries as well.

The USDA Plant Germplasm Operating Committee Meeting that was planned to be held in Davis, California, was cancelled and the NORGEN funding planned to be used for attending this meeting will be used for another purpose.

All members of the NORGEN Task Force are part of the Organizing Committee of the 11th SIRGEAC (Simposio Internacional de Recursos Genéticos para las Américas y el Caribe). The symposium will be held in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, October 15-18, 2017 with “Biodiversity mainstreaming facing climate change” as the theme. Peter Bretting and Axel Diederichsen have participated in remote monthly sessions to prepare this symposium since February 2017. They proposed keynote speakers for this symposium, resulting in Drs. Stéphane Gariépy and Yong-Bi Fu from AAFC attending as keynote speakers. Financially, the NORGEN Task Force will support the organization of a side event at this symposium on the *Milpa* system entitled “The Three sisters: Ecologically friendly and sustainable production system that has prevailed up to modern times”. Four producers and four scientists from Mexico will be supported to attend this.

Molecular characterization of bean germplasm at the Centro Nacional de Recursos Genéticos was also supported. The final results are still outstanding.

2. Identify in-kind resources used in implementing the TF work plan

Travel by Canadian governmental employees for attending the above mentioned symposium were paid partly by AAFC using A-base funding, partly covered by the organisers, i.e. FAO and the Province of Quebec. The costs for material associated with the GRIN Global training were covered by the US in 2017. In 2017, the total in kind contributions (estimated) were \$ 41,000:

- AAFC: \$ 2,000 (Travel for A, Diederichsen and S, Gariepy)
- Province of Quebec and FAO: \$ 15,000 (Hosting Symposium)
- INIFAP Centro Nacional de Recursos Genéticos: \$ 17,000 (Hosting SIRGEAC conference and bean characterization); AAFC: \$7,000 AAFC: Travel (Y.-B. Fu and S. Gariepy)

3. Work Plan and Budget for 2018

The work plan and budget for the NORGEN Task Force for 2018 were only discussed among the Task Force on October 4, 2017. The Task Force has the chance to be involved in developing a curriculum for future genebank managers during a workshop USDA/ARS National Laboratory for Genetic Resources Preservation and Colorado State University in Ft. Collins, CO, US, in April 2018. We also plan participating in National Plant Germplasm System, Plant Germplasm Operations Committee Meeting at Washington DC, US, in the second half of 2018. We need to have more discussion in the Task-Force about a possible project on maize germplasm assessment in the context of the Milpa System/The Sisters. So far, we estimate that \$15,000 support would be required.

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