

Directors meet in Costa Rica for the AIRCA Annual Steering Committee Meeting



In February 2016, directors and representatives of all members attended the 5th Steering Committee Meeting of [AIRCA](#), the Association of International Research and Development Centers for Agriculture. The meeting was hosted by the Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza ([CATIE](#)), one of the founding AIRCA members, at their beautiful compound in Turrialba, Costa Rica.

CATIE is a regional centre dedicated to research and graduate education in agriculture, and the management, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Its members include Belize, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Venezuela, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the State of Acre in Brazil.



Upper row left to right: Sayed Azam Ali (CFF), Trevor Nicholls (CABI), Scott Angle (IFDC), Dyno Keatinge (AVRDC), Jose Joaquin Campos (CATIE), David Molden (ICIMOD), Dennis Rangi (CABI)
Front row: Marita Dieling (AIRCA Secretariat), Segenet Kelemu (icipe), Jan McAlpine (INBAR), Leida Mercado (CATIE), John Beer (CATIE).

The meeting started with a review of the year 2015, where for example AIRCA's participation in the 2015 Global Landscapes Forum, a side event to the COP 21 in Paris, was highlighted. AIRCA participated for the first time as an implementing partner and hosted a discussion forum on the topic "[Restoring Landscapes through Climate Smart Agriculture](#)". AIRCA members **also organized and took part** in a number of other events around the COP 21 and GLF, for example the Launch of the Paris Declaration on Agricultural Diversification, and the Regional Declaration to promote Climate Smart Agriculture in Latin America.

AIRCA representatives also participated in the Economist Food and Nutritional Security Conference, the Global Forum for Agricultural Innovation, the GFAR Constituent Assembly and the APAARI Executive Committee Meeting.

Other positive developments in 2015 included the finalization of the [Lake Victoria Concept Note](#), which attracted positive feedback from several donors and will be pursued further in 2016. In terms of publicity and outreach material, AIRCA produced in 2015 the first two editions of the [AIRCA Newsletter](#) as well as a [brochure](#) on the Sustainable Development Goals and how AIRCA can help achieving a large number of them.

In terms of AIRCA governance, two new AIRCA Deputy Chairs were appointed: Sayed Azam Ali, CEO of Crops for the Future, and David Molden, Director General of ICIMOD, who will form the AIRCA executive committee together with icipe's Director General Segenet Kelemu, who succeeded AVRDC's Dyno Keatinge as AIRCA chair in January 2016.

For the coming year, two new working groups will be established. One of them will take our work on the SDGs further by developing a research capability statement that will link AIRCA's wide range of research portfolios with SDGs and their targets, showing what a considerable number of SDGs AIRCA is able to address. It was also decided to capitalize on the extensive experience and many success stories AIRCA members have in the promotion of healthy landscapes, namely with the development of a concept note on methodologies for measuring the health of landscapes.

Key events for AIRCA in 2016 will include the [CGARD 3 Global Event](#) in Johannesburg and the COP 13 on Biodiversity. Our partnerships with regional association like APAARI and CACAARI among others will be strengthened, as well as support to the Tropical Agriculture Platform ([TAP](#)), a G20 initiative that aims to facilitate capacity development in agricultural innovations in the tropics.

The AIRCA steering committee agreed to fully support the Global Action Plan for Agricultural Diversification ([GAPAD](#)), an initiative led by Crops for the Future and its partners that will help mitigate climate challenges by diversifying agriculture within species, between species and between agricultural ecosystems. Activities for 2016 will include a series of regional symposia in preparation of the launch of the GAPAD at the CBD COP 13 in December 2016.

AIRCA as an association as well as the members will also become members of GODAN ([Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition](#)), a CABI-hosted network that works to support global efforts to make agricultural and nutritionally relevant data available, accessible, and usable for application worldwide.

Our host CATIE organized a presentation of some key aspects of their work, including the Livestock Program and Environmental Management (GAMMA) of the institution and their germplasm collections of coffee and cacao, known for their international importance.

The meeting also included a field trip in which participants visited several sites around the province of Cartago, there they discussed development initiatives and landscape management, systems and subsystems landscapes, conservation, ecosystem services and climate change.

The next AIRCA steering committee meeting in February 2017 will be hosted by Crops for the Future at their campus in Malaysia.

The nine AIRCA founding members are:

clicking on the logo will lead to their websites

