

PROLINNOVA Guidelines 13

Selecting host organisation for a PROLINNOVA Country Platform

In the context of PROLINNOVA, a host organisation is an agency that belongs to the national PROLINNOVA platform (Country Platform, CP) and is willing to provide administrative and financial services to the CP. PROLINNOVA funds and assets are managed by the host organisation, but important decisions of the CP on financial and administration matters need to be made by the CP's National Steering Committee (NSC) members. The host organisation needs to develop a procedure for the decisions made by the NSC to come to the attention of the head of the host organisation, who may have the authority to approve financial and administrative requests.

A representative of the host organisation (a relevant staff member, preferably the head of the host organisation or someone in a leading position in the organisation) should be a member of the NSC. The coordinator of the CP, who could be recruited by the NSC, may or may not be a regular staff member of the host organisation. S/he may also be hired in on a part-time or full-time basis for the task. S/he is an *ex-officio* member of the NSC and plays the role of a secretariat; this involves handling of all PROLINNOVA documents, information and communication materials and external communications, as well as coordination of the network and any projects carried out under its umbrella. The representative of the host organisation in the NSC will supervise the CP coordinator on behalf of the NSC. For ease of communication and better interactions, it is advisable that the CP coordinator (in case s/he is recruited) sits in the office of the host organisation. In this case, the host organisation would be expected to provide office space for the CP coordinator. However, a CP coordinator may also work from his/her own office/organisation, i.e. not necessarily in the office of the host organisation.

Choosing an appropriate host organisation is extremely important, as it has a tremendous impact on the work of the network. The following criteria and principles should help to guide the CP in choosing an appropriate host organisation.

A PROLINNOVA host organisation needs to be:

- An organisation that shares the principles of PROLINNOVA; it is preferable to choose an organisation that is already carrying out PROLINNOVA-like activities on its own;
- An organisation with a flexible and uncomplicated institutional culture with respect to financial and administrative matters. This is a key factor while choosing a host organisation. Experiences have taught PROLINNOVA that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are often more suitable in this respect. However, non-NGO members of the CP could also be proposed as a candidate for host organisation, as long as the NSC

members unanimously agree that the financial and administrative system of the organisation is acceptable;

- An organisation in which at least one – preferably more – of the top management members is very open to new approaches and innovation in agriculture, particularly to the principles and approaches of PROLINNOVA;
- An organisation in which the leaders have a high capacity for networking and advocacy;
- An organisation that has a good level of acceptance and popularity among the potential stakeholders who could join the PROLINNOVA network in the future. If the host organisation has a poor reputation in finance, management, administrative and similar matters, this will have a negative effect on expansion of membership and being able to engage and succeed in policy dialogue;
- An organisation that is promoting approaches and activities that do not contradict with PROLINNOVA's concepts of ecologically oriented and sustainable agriculture, participatory approaches and gender issues;
- An organisation that is operating at the grassroots, particularly in projects relevant to small-scale family farmers, gender equity and environmental concerns;
- An organisation that has a strong fundraising capacity and enjoys a high level of trust among many donors that are supporting agricultural research and development;
- An organisation that has well-functioning Internet and telephone facilities;
- An organisation that is willing to contribute to the budget of the network, at least, in kind.