

Constitution
of the
FAO-ICARDA International Technical Cooperation Network on Cactus (CactusNet)

1. Name

- a. FAO-ICARDA International Technical Cooperation Network on Cactus, or CactusNet in short.

2. Status of the Organization

- a. CactusNet is a voluntary network of individuals and organizations supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA).
- b. FAO and ICARDA support the CactusNet through an appointment of a focal point in each institution.
- c. FAO hosts the online discussion forum through the D-groups platform (<https://dgroups.org/fao/cactusnet>), and ICARDA manages the website (www.cactusnetwork.org). If this arrangement needs to be changed, both organizations will agree on the changes and inform the network.
- d. The technical congress of the CactusNet is held under the auspices of the International Society of Horticultural Sciences (ISHS) on average every three years.

3. Aims and objectives

The aim of CactusNet is to promote production and use of cactus to improve livelihoods and contribute to the reduction of poverty and food insecurity.

The main objectives of CactusNet are:

- a. To collect and disseminate information on production and planting, trade and markets, crop research, post-harvest and processing including cochineal;
- b. To cooperate in the collection, conservation, exchange, evaluation and utilization of germplasm following national and international standards and monitor progress and usefulness of such exchanges;
- c. To promote the ecological, social, economic and health benefits of cactus;
- d. To develop new food, carminic acid and agro-industrial uses;
- e. To exchange expertise and organize training courses, workshop and meetings of experts in order to improve technical capability in the individual institutions;
- f. To encourage new generation of researchers, extensionists, farmers and industry to engage on cactus research, production and use.

4. Structure

The structure of CactusNet will consist of the following:

- a. The General Assembly
 - i. The General Assembly shall be constituted by all members of CactusNet.

- ii. New members to CactusNet are accepted through the CactusNet Dgroups platform (<https://dgroups.org/fao/cactusnet>)
- iii. The General Assembly meeting shall be held once every three years in conjunction with the technical congress mentioned in 2.d.
- iv. Other meetings (physical or virtual) of the General Assembly may be convened by the Secretariat or the International Steering Committee or by request from at least one third of the members.
- v. Any member may withdraw from CactusNet with a written notice to the Secretariat.

b. The International Steering Committee (ISC)

- i. The International Steering Committee will be constituted of the members of the Secretariat, regional and thematic coordinators listed below:

Regional Coordinators:

- North America
- South America
- Mediterranean/Middle East
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Asia Pacific

Thematic Coordinators:

- Genetic resources and conservation
 - Pitayas, pitahayas and other cacti
 - Forage, bioenergy, rangeland and environmental protection
 - Fruit production
 - Nopalitos/beles production
 - Post-harvest and agro-industries
 - Medicinal and cosmetic uses
 - Biotic interactions
 - Youth (≤ 35 years old)
- ii. Each coordinator will be elected from among the CactusNet members by the General Assembly and will serve a term of three years. No member shall be re-elected for more than two terms consecutively.
 - iii. The ISC will meet at least once a year (virtually or physically) to report on activities under regional and thematic areas or any related topic to CactusNet.
 - iv. ISC meetings will be held in English as a common language.
 - v. The election process and the terms of reference of the coordinators are specified in Annex I of this document.

c. The Secretariat

- i. The Secretariat consists of the following
 - General Coordinator

- ICARDA focal point
 - FAO focal point
 - ISHS Workgroup Cactus Pear and Cochineal
 - FAO or ICARDA focal point will also serve as the Deputy Coordinator, and the other will serve as Secretary.
 - In case the General Coordinator steps down the Deputy Coordinator will continue term until upcoming election (congress)
- ii. The General Coordinator will be elected by the ISC and will serve a term of three years for a maximum of two terms.
 - iii. The election process and the terms of reference of the General Coordinator are specified in Annex II of this document.
 - iv. The terms of reference for Deputy Coordinator and Secretary are specified in Annex III of this document.

d. Advisory group

- i. The Advisory group consists of former General Coordinators of the CactusNet, and other cactus experts that is to be invited by a unanimous decision by the International Steering Committee. There is no set number of this group.
- ii. The term is lifetime or until the member wishes to step down.
- iii. The Advisory group may be called upon by the ISC and/or Secretariat for advice on any matters related to CactusNet.

5. Organization of technical congress

- a. The Secretariat shall receive expression of interest from institutions who wish to host the next technical congress.
- b. The nominees will then be required to provide the following information within the deadline given by the Secretariat:
 - i. General information
 - Country information including
 - a. Entry visa requirements (How long might it take for different nationalities to obtain a visa?)
 - b. Security status (safety)
 - c. Weather during proposed dates, and status of cactus production in vicinity
 - d. Venue information (including cactus production/industry in vicinity)
 - e. International airport/how to get there
 - f. Accommodation (cost/night)
 - g. Meeting rooms (possibility for simultaneous interpretation)
 - ii. Composition of the organizing & scientific committee
 - iii. Suggested timing and technical program of the congress, including deadlines for abstract and full paper submission
 - iv. Budget (estimate for a conference of a number of participants suggested by the Secretariat) and potential for local sponsorship

v. Options for technical tours

The final decision will be made by the International Steering Committee and informed to the ISHS. The selected host should sign the contract with ISHS within 6 months of the decision.

6. Any changes to the constitution shall be presented to the Steering Committee and elected by the General Assembly for approval by two thirds of the people present in the General Assembly.

Annex I

Election process and the Terms of Reference for the members of the International Steering Committee (ISC)

1. Election process

The General Coordinator shall invite nomination for vacant or end of term Regional and Thematic Coordinator positions no later than 90 days before the General Assembly. Candidates should have been a member of the CactusNet for at least one year, have research or extension experience in the relevant area, have regional experience on cactus for regional coordinators. Their Curriculum Vitae must be submitted along with a reference letter from one of the current ISC members. The nominees will be presented to all members of CactusNet via electronic means at least 30 days before the election, and the votes will be cast electronically. Voting members should have been a CactusNet member at the time of the call for nomination.

Resignation of a coordinator shall be accepted by a written notice to the ISC.

2. Terms of reference

All coordinators should be able to communicate in English with the other ISC members.

a. Regional coordinators shall:

- i. Foster communication among region members;
- ii. Promote and encourage the establishment of joint projects on cactus research and development among countries with common geographical and ecological situations within the region;
- iii. Arrange biannual meetings (virtual or physical) of its members to review activity progress, problems and formulate work plans;
- iv. Coordinate fundraising effort for activities to be implemented in the region;
- v. Report at least once a year to the Secretariat activities undertaken in the region.

b. Thematic coordinators shall:

- i. Foster communication among thematic members;
- ii. Promote and encourage the establishment of joint projects on cactus research and development among countries within thematic areas;
- iii. Arrange biannual meetings (virtual or physical) of its members to review activity progress, problems and formulate work plans;
- iv. Coordinate fundraising effort for activities to be implemented;
- v. Report at least once a year to the Secretariat activities undertaken in the thematic area.

Annex II

Election process and the Terms of Reference for the General Coordinator

1. Election process

The ISC shall invite nominations from CactusNet members for vacant or end of term General Coordinator positions no later than 90 days before the ISC meeting. The candidates must be a member of CactusNet for at least three years and have attended one General Assembly. The nominees will be presented to all members of ISC via electronic means at least 30 days before the ISC meeting, and will be selected by simple majority of electronic votes cast.

Resignation of a General Coordinator shall be accepted by a written notice to the ISC.

2. Terms of reference

The General Coordinator shall:

- a. Serve as the chair of the Secretariat and the ISC;
- b. Ensure communication between the regional and thematic groups;
- c. Arrange an ISC meeting once a year;
- d. Coordinate publication of a newsletter at least every 2 years;
- e. Assist regional and thematic coordinators in developing proposals for projects and fundraising;
- f. Coordinate with the ISHS Working Group on Cactus Pear and Cochineal;
- g. Liaise with the ISHS in the organization of the technical congress.

Annex III

Terms and Reference for the Deputy Coordinator and the Secretary

1. The Deputy Coordinator and Secretary positions shall be held by representatives (focal points) of FAO and ICARDA. They are chosen by their respective organizations. Both focal points will agree on who will hold which position.
2. Terms of reference
 - a. Deputy Coordinator
 - i. Assist the General Coordinator;
 - ii. Report activities and progress to the organization where they belong;
 - iii. Support the network in fundraising and preparing joint proposals.
 - b. Secretary
 - i. Ensure that General Assembly and ISC meeting minutes are recorded and made available to the members;
 - ii. Report activities and progress to the organization where they belong;
 - iii. Support the network in fundraising and preparing joint proposals.