

Professional Staff
Association Meeting

Include a one hour session for members of the
PSA.

*"This was a good opportunity for
outposted staff to be alerted about health
insurance and retirement."*

Research Support &
Service Fair and Expo
Agronatura

Organise a fair at the next Annual Meeting for each project to have a presence, as well as support services and Agronatura.

"People seemed to get the information that they needed and in some cases got more work done than expected. For one individual, the fair gave him the opportunity to solve a computer problem at the IS booth, finalized a contract with HR people, solve a financial problem at finance stand and obtained relevant info at the library."

"Visiting scientists who came to help translations said they learned a lot."

Include a booth for
Management so that staff can
meet with them one-on-one.

Provide guidelines for booths to be sure they are "client-oriented".

"No one asked me the question: 'What do you need?'"

Stimulate participation at the fair by not having all-day parallel meetings.

"The Appreciative Inquiry workshop was held at the same time as the fair. Since the workshop require full-time participation throughout the day, there was no time for people to visit the fair."

Include ways to track fair participants
(National or International, HQ or
Regional).

"Fair organizers will meet next week to provide a sense of what worked, what didn't work, who participated and their perspective on the overall effectiveness of the session."

Question Time
with the DCG

All Senior Management should be included in a question time session. This would include the Directors of Finance, Research, Administration and Agronatura

"It was a positive thing that the DG exposed himself to all staff."

Provide simultaneous translation, as necessary.

Find ways to improve the Nariño (and other) meeting rooms. This could include removing tables and serious interior decorating.

"I would like to take a sledgehammer to those windows. And what about those rugs?"

Peer Assist

Session

Recognise staff for their willingness to be a
Peer Assissee.

*"It was pretty brave of people to raise
personal problems."*

Advertise and market the session to increase participation.

"That was true knowledge sharing."

"We had 35 regional staff participating but only 15 headquarter staff showed up."

Consider omitting plenary sessions for reporting back. Are they really necessary?

"It is difficult for many people to summarize and report back in a short period of time. Do we really need to have a plenary session for reporting back when the topics are so specific?"

Keep the groups small (5 or 6 people per group) to help draw out participants who don't always participate.

"Strong facilitation skills and small groups can help bring everyone's voice into the discussions."

Be sure people understand that the suggestions or solutions help the Peer Assissee solve his/her problem. They should not be directed to someone else ie. management.

"Some of the recommendations were often measures that the individual can't implement alone but at least they are now in the public domain. Three months down the line people can now as Douglas Pachico "How's it going on your issue related to the exclusion of key staff in proposal development?""

What's New

in the

Regions

Give projects the opportunity to share what they are doing and to identify ways to collaborate. Powerpoint presentations are one way, but a "Project Fair" might also be effective.

"We need some concrete information on research in a more standard format."

Provide opportunities for staff to improve their presentation skills so that they can deliver their messages effectively.

Improve the meeting room, or choose one that has more light and fresh air.

Annual
Meetings

Look at alternative scheduling for annual meetings. Meeting could take place every second year or have only half of the staff participate each year.

Alternate the venue of the meeting between the Regions and Headquarters.

Learning to Innovate
Session using the
Appreciative Inquiry
Methodology

Help clarify the vision of the other
Development Challenges using the
Appreciative Inquiry Methodology.

*"Consider using AI approach to move forward
on the other development challenges."*

Ensuring a
common starting
point

Involve more outposted staff in the pre-meeting consultations to gauge their level of understanding on the theme.

"The group wasn't prepared to go to operationalisation."

Provide clarity on the theme prior to the session. This could be done in a plenary through presentations.

"We should have done a better job of determining whether people understood the topic well enough to discuss it."

Ensure consistency in the messages being delivered.

"Two of the three development challenges were presented differently the morning of the presentation. This may have affected the way people participated."

Exploring alternative
themes for next year's
meeting

Use the Open Space methodology to discuss research topics of interest to staff or how projects fit within the Development Challenges.

"People wanted to talk about their work."

"People seemed to support a fresh approach."

Improving the
process

Use an iterative process that allows staff to get to know each other over and develop action plans over the week. This could include morning activities focusing on connecting people and afternoons in plenary listening to presentations.

"Staff need more opportunities to connect and to get to know each other; more time is needed before coming together to develop plans; more of an iterative process is needed."

Allow more time to develop action plans.

"Time for action planning was too short."

Introduce a session where staff can ask themselves what they will do differently as a result of the session.

"It would have been good for people to discuss how their project could contribute to the Development Challenges."

Allow for more time to develop action plans.

Provide staff with opportunities to build facilitation skills.

Introduce a session where staff can ask themselves what will they be doing differently as a result of the session.

Increasing
Participation of
National Staff

Directive for attendance of National Staff
needs to come from Senior Management.
Identify ways to increase national staff
participation during the week.

*"Overall, we had great attendance but after
many attempts to include national staff there
was only a slight improvement over last year in
their participation."*

Make National staff participation an agenda item for the meeting.

Improving Logistics

Start sessions after 830am, preferably at 900am.

Use outdoor space when possible but ensure that the speaker system works well.

"People seemed to like the fresh air."

Schedule a "warm-up" session on the afternoon of Day 1 to deal with the effects of jet lag.

Find alternative ways to communicate changes in session start times. One idea is to announce at the beginning of the week that we may need to change session times and will notify staff of the changes on a "newsboard".

Explore the possibility of using other venues that can bring all staff together in a circle.

Encourage staff who travel to arrive earlier,
to deal with the effects of jetlag.