

INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2010 - 2020



Summary

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

STRATEGIC PLAN 2010-2020

Summary

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This publication is also available in electronic (PDF) format on the Institute's Web site: <http://www.iica.int>.

Editorial coordination: Héctor Iturbe, Patricia León

Translator: Peter Leaver

Layout: Carlos Umaña

Cover design: Carlos Umaña

Printed: IICA Print Shop

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
2010 – 2020 strategic plan: summary / IICA – San Jose, C.R. :
IICA, 2011.
00 p.; 00 cm.

ISBN13: 978-92-9248-338-8
Also published in Spanish

1. International cooperation 2. International organizations
3. Technical assistance I. IICA II. Title

AGRIS
E14

DEWEY
338.181

San Jose, Costa Rica
2011

Foreword

I am convinced of the enormous potential of agriculture to contribute to the development of the countries of the hemisphere and to the well-being of their inhabitants. Likewise, I firmly believe in the willingness of the member countries of IICA to work together to find solutions to common problems and tackle the challenges the sector will face in the 21st century.

At its most recent meeting, held in October 2009 in Jamaica, the IABA approved a Strategic Framework for the actions undertaken by IICA. It also instructed the new Director General to present a draft Strategic Plan for 2010-2020 on the basis of that Framework.

In the Strategic Framework approved by the IABA, the Ministers of Agriculture state clearly how they see the future of the Institute: “The IICA of the next decade must provide more support to its Member States and adapt its structure and operations to achieve that objective. This will require having general guidelines on how the Institute must meet hemispheric and country-level demands, and on possible approaches and potential areas for cooperation.”

In order to help the agricultural sector achieve its objectives, IICA must enhance its technical capacity and achieve the objectives by the Ministers: “strengthening institutional, professional and leadership capabilities; economic analyses and analyses of policies and their impacts on agriculture; knowledge management; use of information and communication technologies to make agriculture more competitive; preparation and implementation of projects; horizontal cooperation; as well as partnerships and coordination with other organizations and mechanisms.”

My administration, in compliance with this mandate from the IABA, prepared a draft Strategic Plan for 2010-2020 that was analyzed and discussed at length with the Member States to obtain their comments and suggestions, in order to ensure that it would reflect accurately not only their priorities, but also their shared vision and hope regarding the outlook for agriculture within the hemisphere and the role that IICA should play in that vision. The Plan, as approved by the Executive Committee at its Thirtieth Regular Meeting, is contained in the present publication.

I wish to thank IICA and the external specialists who contributed to the development of the Plan, the government officials of the member countries who, with their timely and valuable comments, helped to fine tune the document, and the members of our Executive Committee, who approved it. I sincerely hope that this Plan, presented here in summarized form, will serve as a compass for IICA's actions and as a point of reference for the countries of the Americas as they pursue the goal of agricultural development and rural well-being.



Victor M. Villalobos
Director General



Introduction

Our response to the Heads of State and Government and Ministers of Agriculture

In 2008 and 2009, the global economy operated in a context characterized by crisis and highly dynamic changes and a decline in private and public investment in the agricultural sector. These developments had a significant impact on the agricultural sectors of IICA's Member States: levels of poverty and hunger rose, markets became volatile and food security problems intensified.

Mindful of the importance of this situation, the Heads of State and Government of the countries of the hemisphere gathered at the Summit of the Americas held in Port of Spain in 2009, declared that *“providing our people with adequate and timely access to safe and nutritious food is among the most immediate challenges confronting our Hemisphere and the world.”* The leaders also:

- Recognized the negative impact of food crises on the peoples of the hemisphere and pledged **to take urgent and coordinated action**, working in partnership with international organizations such as IICA.
- Called on the ministers of agriculture to undertake activities aimed at addressing the issues affecting **access to and the availability of food**.
- Asked the ministers to support the **promotion of investment** in agriculture, as well as the **strengthening of institutional capacity** in the Member States.

The Inter-American Board of Agriculture asked the Director General to prepare a **strategic plan** for 2010-2020

- Argued that “a **multidimensional and multisectoral approach** to agriculture and rural life is a key factor for sustainable development and food security.”

The ministers of agriculture have echoed this conviction and made decisions regarding joint action in the future. The present document was prepared at the request of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA), which, at its Fifteenth Regular Meeting (October 2009), tasked the Director General of IICA with preparing a strategic plan for 2010-2020.

Guidelines of the Strategic Framework

The recommendations made IABA were examined during the preparation of the Strategic Plan:

- The principal objective of IICA is to support the Member States in their efforts aimed at strengthening their agricultural sectors and the natural resource base on which they depend, making agriculture more competitive, productive and sustainable, and ensuring that rural development is inclusive and in harmony with the environment.
- The Institute will concentrate on the generation and provision of public goods within the hemisphere.
- IICA must become a hemispheric leader, be innovative, serve as a catalyst and facilitator in strategic areas, remain current and be prepared to face the challenges emerging from the dynamic context of the international economy and the globalized society.

Source: Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA), Jamaica, 2009.



2 The context

A complex setting that offers opportunities

The countries of the hemisphere, working individually and together, must endeavour to make agriculture more competitive, sustainable, and capable of **overcoming obstacles** and **taking advantage of the opportunities** that have emerged in the global market for agricultural products. The sector must also help to improve the **well-being of the rural population**, be committed to the conservation of natural resources and contribute to the promotion of efforts to **achieve food security**.

Various trends determine the context in which the agricultural sector must develop:

1. A more interactive and volatile global scenario and expanding markets

- Facilitated by communication and technology, a process of **increasing interaction** now is under way and will become more and more intense.
- International markets in general, and agricultural markets in particular, will be characterized by **instability**.
- The **demand for agricultural products** is on the rise, as a result of the growth of the world population and/or the increased use of such products for non-food purposes (agroenergy, industrial oils, medicines, textiles, etc.).

In the immediate future, international **markets** in general, and agricultural markets in particular, **will be characterized by instability**.

2. Rural poverty has increased and is impeding development

- In 2008, almost 200 million people were living in poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean. Although governments continue to make efforts to reduce it, **inequality is on the to increase.**
- Agriculture must help to **generate new jobs and higher incomes**, both in the sector itself and in those to which it is linked.

3. Climatic vulnerability and agriculture are intrinsically linked

- **Agriculture** contributes in various ways to worsening climate change but can also be very useful in mitigating its effects.
- The countries urgently need **the technology, economic means** and public policies required to address these problems, and to help counteract their effects.

4. Food security poses great challenges and offers many opportunities

- It is estimated that by 2050 it will be necessary to **produce twice as much food** as is produced today, for a world population that is expected to reach nine billion.
- The Americas as **a region is a net exporter of food** and has the potential for increasing its agricultural yields and establishing major programs for the modernization of production.

The countries urgently need the technology and economic means required **to tackle climatic change.**

To help solve problems in the areas of food production and access to food, it is necessary to increase productivity, promote the quality and safety of food, generate more income for the countries and people by ensuring the smooth operation of markets, and apply sound public policies.

5. Structural constraints to the performance of agriculture

- **Expansion of the agricultural frontier** and the subsequent destruction of forest cover. Areas of cropland have been lost as a result of desertification, salinization and poor drainage.
- **Greater demand for water** for alternative agricultural uses, mostly human consumption and industrial applications, as well as the deterioration of aquifers and the decline in water quality.
- Significant increase in the number of smallholdings, which are in the hands of **producers with limited technical and financial capacity**.
- Increase in the cultivation of crops for the production of energy and for other non-food industrial uses.

6. Structural conditions in rural territories

- **Subsistence agriculture** is predominant, associated with a weak, sluggish economic structure, in which poverty and the growing degradation of natural resources continue to be key factors.
- Agriculture **contributes significantly to rural economies** by creating direct employment, agroindustries and demand for inputs and services.

In most countries in the hemisphere, **agriculture is the most important economic activity** in the rural milieu.

- **Rural poverty** is one of the structural conditions with the greatest implications for agriculture.
- The policies and instruments implemented to promote **the development of rural women** have been insufficient.

Developing a new technological paradigm

Four challenges for agriculture in the hemisphere:

- 1.** To be **competitive** by means of greater productivity.
- 2.** To contribute to the **development of rural territories** through the linkages of primary sector activities and agroindustries to providers of inputs and services.
- 3.** To contribute to **the conservation of natural resources**, to the improvement of environmental conditions and to **prevention in order to mitigate the impact** of climatic conditions.
- 4.** To make a major contribution to the attainment of **food security** by increasing the production of safer, more nutritional foods, by solving the problems that affect the **availability** of and **access** to food, and by generating **higher incomes** for the rural population.

It is essential to formulate strategies designed to solve the particular problems of the production and marketing systems of **thousands of poor small farmers.**

Opportunities for agriculture within the hemisphere

- One of the most urgent challenges is to increase crop productivity through technological innovation, but in a **sustainable** and **inclusive** manner.
- Appropriate use must be made of technological innovation based on **biotechnology**, such as the new genetically-improved varieties, organic fertilizers and biological control methods.
- It is important **to increase the productivity of crops that are indigenous** native to specific agro-ecological regions that are of great importance at the local level.
- **Progress has been slower** in the livestock sector. The extensive livestock ranching practiced in some countries is efficient but does not take into account the conservation of natural resources.
- There is an urgent need to improve the competitiveness of **agroindustries**, given the increasingly important role they play in the development of value chains.
- **Innovative management practices** are needed that will lead to new ways of operating successful agribusinesses.
- It is essential that thousands of poor small farmers be incorporated into innovation processes, in which they can draw on **their own knowledge and culture** and take advantage of the genetic biodiversity of their native products.

Overcoming the problems of international cooperation

Four problems that have characterized international cooperation and limited its contribution to the efforts of the countries must be overcome.

1. The proliferation of initiatives related to agriculture, with little coordination among them.
2. Limited collaboration between international institutions.
3. The channeling of cooperation towards the solving of lower priority problems rather than structural problems.
4. The dispersal of efforts and the failure to fully account for costs or to evaluate products, results and impacts.

Agriculture must seek to **generate new jobs and higher incomes**, both in the sector itself and in those to which it is linked.

An aerial photograph of a vast field of green cabbages, arranged in neat, parallel rows. Two people are visible in the lower-left quadrant, crouching and tending to the plants. The person in the foreground is wearing a dark jacket and blue jeans, while the person behind them is wearing a bright red long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans. The field extends to the horizon, creating a strong sense of scale and order. The text '3 Policies, institutions and required capabilities' is overlaid in white serif font on the upper left portion of the image.

3 Policies, institutions and required capabilities

Policies and institutional capabilities must be renewed

In order for agriculture to be more competitive and sustainable, and for it to benefit a larger number of people, policies and institutional capabilities need to be renewed.

Public policies for agriculture and for rural development

The body of policies aimed at making agriculture competitive and sustainable is **not solely the responsibility of the ministries of agriculture.**

- Agreements are required to facilitate **work with producers** and other civil society stakeholders and their organizations to formulate and implement public policies.
- **Macro-economic policies can affect the performance of agriculture** and the attainment of competitiveness, which is why they must be given due consideration and valued by political decision-makers involved in the agricultural sector.
- For agriculture to be competitive, policies are also required related to technology, finance, trade, the environment, health, regulation of soil use, water and legal protection, all of which will help to create **a favorable climate for private investment and development.**
- Policies aimed at rural well-being and the environment are increasingly cross-cutting in nature. If they are to be viable and effective, flexible institutional mechanisms and inter-agency coordination bodies are required.

It is **the effort of the governments,** supported by IICA and other international agencies, that will make it possible to achieve the objectives set for the development of agriculture.

In most countries, the **legislation governing agriculture is very old** and few nations have reviewed and updated it.

Agricultural institutions

The institutional framework for agriculture and rural development must be modernized with respect to **legislation**, the renewal of **policy instruments** and the strengthening of the **capabilities** of the responsible entities.

To modernize institutions in the agricultural sector, it is necessary to review and update their functions, train their personnel better and equip them with innovative policy instruments, with enhanced information systems, follow-up and evaluation systems, and more resources.

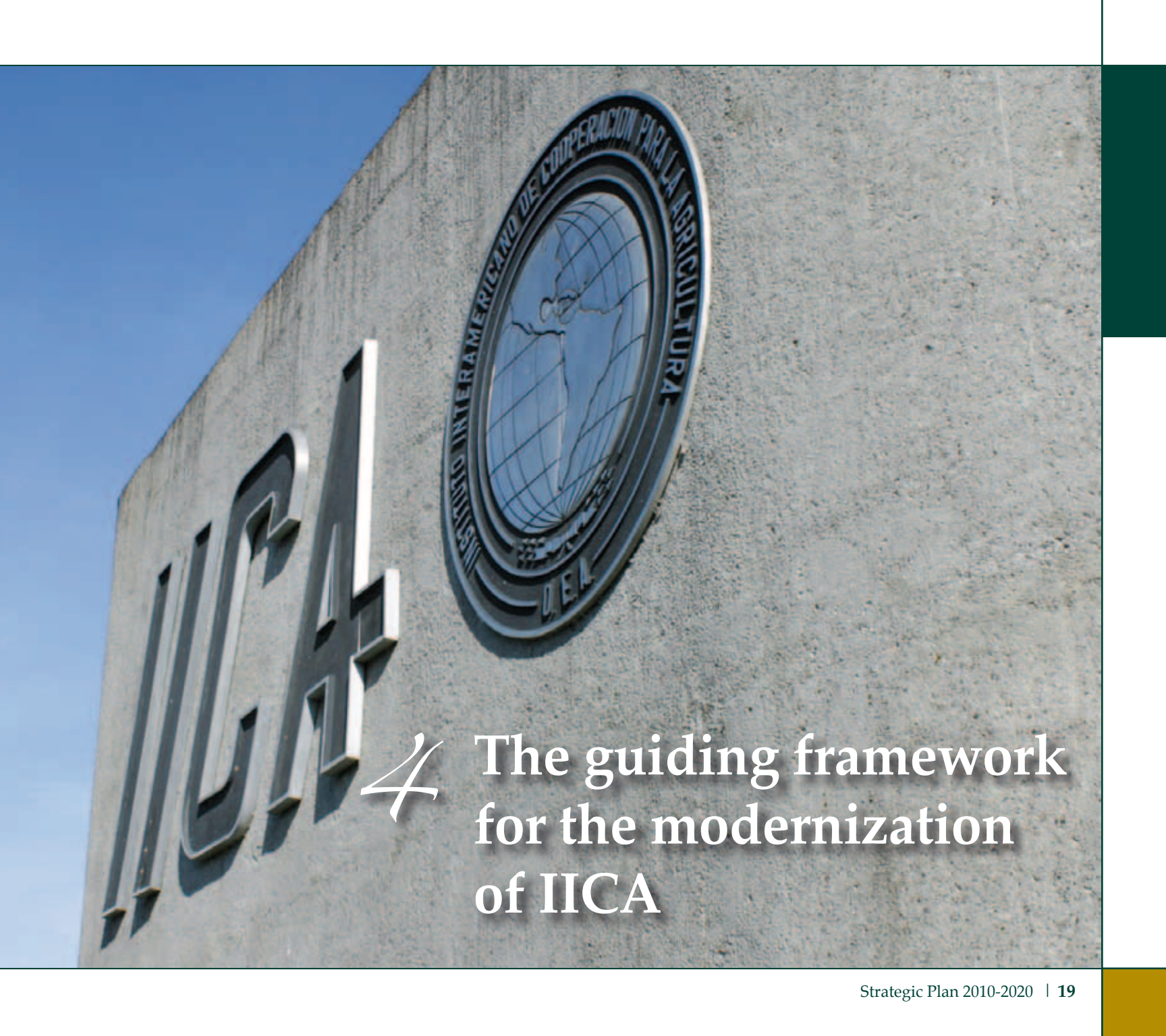
The capabilities of enterprises and individuals

The State has a responsibility to contribute to the development of the capabilities of both enterprises and individuals, with different types of support suited to the needs of each country and public goods that complement the actions of individual producers and groups of producers. **This is possibly the biggest challenge that has to be tackled** to make agriculture sustainable and competitive and contribute to the attainment of the other objectives of development.

Investment for the growth and development of the sector

In recent decades, investment in the agricultural sector has stalled or in some cases even declined, which in large part limits possibilities for its development.

- It is necessary to **increase investment** in areas such as research and innovation, poverty alleviation, food security and environmental protection.
- Achieving sustainable and competitive agriculture calls for effective private and public investments.



4

The guiding framework
for the modernization
of IICA

A strengthened and renewed Institute

IICA must be an institution that meets the cooperation needs of its member countries, enabling them to tap into the opportunities that exist and solve their individual and shared problems that affect the competitiveness and sustainability of agriculture, with emphasis on joint action to achieve common objectives.

IICA's actions and proposals must be implemented at the hemispheric, regional and national levels. In addition, they must help to effectively reduce the existing gaps that limit the development of the Institute's member countries, support primarily the less developed countries, ensure balance in the provision of support to regions and countries, and respect the principles of autonomy and sovereignty of peoples and nations.

For IICA to accomplish all the above, and fulfill the commitments made to the countries, it must have the capacity to:

The Institute's actions must **support primarily the less developed countries**, ensure balance in the provision of support to regions and countries, and respect the principles of autonomy and sovereignty of peoples and nations.

- Focus its activities on a **limited number of topics areas** in which it has competitive and comparative advantages.
- Have **forward-looking** and analytical **capacity**.
- Be recognized for its innovative results, its **strong technical expertise** and great response capacity.
- Meet the challenges involved in developing the agricultural and rural system by generating a continuous supply of specialized services, knowledge, instruments and approaches.

The Institute has an obligation to generate **international public goods** in areas in which it has expertise, such as knowledge, negotiating capabilities, the defense of regional interests, trade agreements, health agreements, strategies for managing global or hemispheric problems (e.g., climate change) and relations with institutions in other regions of the world.

IICA will forge and strengthen partnerships with other international and regional cooperation and assistance organizations, as well as with national institutions that complement its efforts and actions, in order to provide the countries with comprehensive solutions.

The proposed actions will be carried out through **institutional thematic networks** for regional and hemispheric collaboration.

The bases of the Institute's response

IICA must address and comprehend the links between agriculture and the components of the economic, social, technological and environmental systems, within the context of integrated knowledge management that takes into account both the spatial and temporal dimensions of those relationships.

The Institute understands that agriculture must become increasingly sustainable and competitive and contribute to knowledge-based sustainable development, in which social and environmental considerations play a very important role.

IICA will serve as a **technical and scientific intermediary** with networks of institutions that generate, share and transfer knowledge.

The decreasing rates of growth in the yield from the main crops, the limited amount of land available and the loss of natural resources are some of the **factors that are putting pressure on agriculture.**

Strategic objectives

1. Make the agricultural sector more productive and competitive

This objective encompasses all aspects of production, with agriculture viewed as a key component of a complex system of value chains in which production reaches consumers in agricultural markets and is supplied by **competitive agribusinesses, including small-scale agriculture.**

The countries must develop public strategies and encourage the formulation of private strategies to **promote innovation, attract investment, reduce the uncertainty in agriculture and develop new business models.** This will make it necessary to reach agreement on policies that go beyond the traditional functional areas of the ministries of agriculture, in order to incorporate other public and private stakeholders.

IICA will promote innovation to enhance competitiveness, increase production and help improve the operation of agricultural markets in a socially and environmentally-sustainable way. In these efforts, it is necessary to consider the inclusion of small-and medium-scale agricultural producers, as well as the development of the markets for the traditional commodities consumed by the people in the lowest-income brackets.

2. Enhance the contribution of agriculture to territorial development and to rural well-being

This strategic objective recognizes that agricultural activities take place in rural territories, where effort should complement the rational use of natural resources and take into account the people who are the subject and object of development.

This objective also highlights the role that agriculture plays in the economy and society in rural territories, where its importance extends beyond purely production-related considerations to include the **social dimensions of rural well-being**. Family agriculture and the role that women play in agriculture are two elements that require special consideration.

IICA will support national efforts aimed at the development of territories and rural well-being, and help to achieve greater articulation and coordination of the institutions that play a leading role in both areas.

3. Enhance the capacity of agriculture to mitigate the effects of and adapt to climate change and make better use of natural resources

The third strategic objective highlights the **link between agriculture and the natural resource base of ecosystems** located in rural territories. Agricultural activities depend on those resources for production, but they also affect the condition of those resources and their availability for use and enjoyment by current and future generations.

Modern agriculture also plays an important role in protecting and improving environmental conditions, modern practices can restore the health of the environment. Climate change and its unpredictable effects, as well as extreme natural events, determine and affect productive activities, their competitiveness and sustainability, as well as the vulnerability of the population.

The territorial approaches to the development of agriculture and the attainment of rural well-being have paved the way for the generation of policies whose most important features are **decentralization, participation** and the **articulation** of parallel public policies.

Small-scale agriculture requires effective public policies and efficient investment in public goods to improve its contribution to the supply of agricultural products.

IICA will support the efforts of the ministries of agriculture to enhance their capabilities and improve their institutional frameworks in order to address this critical issue. It will also provide expertise and advisory services to enhance the institutional and human capabilities of the member countries, in order to place the issue on their domestic agendas.

4. Enhance the contribution of agriculture to food security

The fourth strategic objective recognizes the dual role that agriculture plays in food security. On the one hand, **it provides an adequate supply** of quality food (availability and utilization); while, on the other hand, **it creates conditions that provide access to food** by the rural population (employment and income).

One of the key aspects of this dual role is the participation of small-scale agriculture, which can make a bigger contribution to the supply of agricultural products than at present, provided its efforts are underpinned by effective public policies and efficient investment in public goods that improve its production and its integration into value chains. If markets provide a fair return, small-scale agriculture can also generate more employment and income.

IICA will support the development of policies, strategies and institutional frameworks aimed at increasing the contribution of small-scale and family agriculture to the countries' food security, both in terms of the supply of food and access to it by small farmers.

Technical cooperation objectives

Based on the strategic objectives defined for cooperation, the Institute will concentrate its work on the following thematic areas:

Technological innovation

*IICA will support the institutional efforts of its Member States to increase and extend innovation in agriculture in order to **improve production, competitiveness and trade** and thereby support food security and the development of the member countries.*

Agricultural health and food safety

*IICA will continue to assist the countries in the field of agricultural health and food safety, particularly with **the development of policy instruments and modern, harmonized regulations**; the modernization of national services; the implementation of hemispheric and regional mechanisms for cooperation and information on the subject; the adoption of international standards in the countries; and the establishment of public-private collaboration mechanisms, as part of the collaboration with the specialized international agencies.*

Agribusiness and trade

IICA will assist the countries in developing the policies, institutional frameworks and capabilities required to create enabling environments for agribusinesses, as well as a new mindset and capabilities by producers, by strengthening their individual and collective capacity to supply markets and compete successfully. The Institute will also help its Member States to develop public policies, strategies and institutions for the promotion and development of more transparent and efficient local markets, as well as to develop mechanisms and instruments that will reduce risks and permit small-scale producers to establish stronger links with markets. Moreover, it will help to develop strategies and strengthen the institutional framework for promoting international agricultural trade as a factor in development; and assist its member countries in developing capabilities that will enable them to better administer the trade agreements they sign while taking greater advantage of them.

Agricultural development requires a set of policy measures for which **other institutions are responsible, institutions with which the ministries of agriculture must interact.**

IICA will help to develop instruments for **assessing the contribution that agriculture** makes in rural territories.

Management in rural territories

IICA will help to develop instruments for assessing the contribution that agriculture makes to rural territories, and to establish the intersectoral relationships among the public policies and instruments that have an impact on territories. The aim of this is to optimize the contribution of agriculture to the development of rural territories, thereby maximizing the social returns generated by agricultural activities. The Institute will also help the governments execute projects in rural territories and encourage the use of good social accountability practices, fair trade and other elements that foster harmony between production and rural communities.

Food security

IICA will support the efforts of its Member States to develop policies, strategies and institutional frameworks that will increase the contribution that agriculture - in particular the small-scale variety - makes to the food security of the countries, in terms of both the national vision and the access of small-scale producers to the income they need to produce or purchase staple foods. The Institute will contribute to the development of policies, strategies and capabilities designed to improve production, productivity, value-added processes and access to input and product markets, to financing and to agricultural insurance.

Natural resources and climate change

IICA will assist the institutions of the countries, especially the ministries of agriculture, with the development of public policies, the design and implementation of sectoral strategies, the use of policy instruments and the provision of timely information. This will reduce the uncertainties that producers face in their agricultural activities and help them to improve their productivity and competitiveness.

Types of cooperation that IICA will provide

Design, analysis and evaluation of public policies and strategies

National governments are directly responsible for addressing the challenges facing agriculture and the rural environment, and tapping the opportunities available, by developing and implementing public policies for the agricultural, rural and environmental sectors.

The countries have a responsibility to take decisions regarding those policies and, therefore, IICA must be prepared to **provide the ministries of agriculture with support in analyzing them**, in increasing the influence of such policies on agriculture, and in finding a way to ensure they are given the attention they deserve.

The Institute will support the processes of devising, analyzing and evaluating public policies, strategies, approaches and intervention instruments, actions that are carried out primarily via the public institutions of the countries.

Strengthening and modernization of public and private institutions

Countries need to overhaul their agricultural institutions in order to provide more efficient and effective services. They need to strengthen their leadership and managerial capabilities so they can incorporate innovative processes and instruments and improve access to relevant, up-to-date information. Public and private sector agricultural institutions need to be overhauled to enable them to generate the knowledge required to make agriculture competitive, sustainable and inclusive, and to provide the services needed to achieve that new type of agriculture.

The Institute's contribution will concentrate on what an international cooperation agency is expected to achieve. Therefore, IICA's work **is intended to complement, not replace**, the activities of national institutions and other international organizations.

Public and private sector agricultural institutions need to be overhauled to

enable them to generate the knowledge required to make agriculture competitive, sustainable and inclusive, and to provide the services required to achieve that new type of agriculture.

The countries also need to strengthen the capacity of their institutional framework at the hemispheric and regional levels. This includes the forums of ministers of agriculture and those dealing with technology, health and other topics, through which the countries coordinate their policies.

In particular, IICA will help to generate and manage investment projects for institutional modernization.

Capacity creation and development

The dynamism and complexity of the global environment in which agriculture operates is spurring the rapid development of new expertise, information, technologies and tools, and calls for investment in the development of capabilities in every relevant and critical field.

IICA will continue to contribute to the **development of expertise, technical capabilities and leadership** in topics pertinent to the strategic objectives and technical cooperation in which the Institute has expertise, in order to promote innovation in the agricultural sector and in rural territories, where such capabilities and knowledge have an impact.

Knowledge management for agriculture and rural well-being

In order to make the sector more competitive and sustainable and contribute to rural well-being, the countries must be at the forefront of knowledge: Producers, specialists, scientists, business leaders, executives and managers of sectoral organizations must have access to the knowledge and information they need for sound decision making.

The Institute will generate, identify and disseminate knowledge, innovation, experiences and best practices, and share them with the countries. Existing mechanisms for knowledge sharing will be overhauled and new ones will be created, as

needed, to ensure that knowledge is available to as many persons as possible involved in different types of agriculture. These mechanisms will make it possible to systematize, manage, exchange, transfer, disseminate and apply knowledge. To this end, partnerships will be created with knowledge-generating institutions at the hemispheric and global levels.

Support for the countries with specific issues and investment projects

Today's agriculture, as well as and the support that the countries are requesting and need, present a wide range of opportunities for implementing agricultural and rural development projects with the governments, funded by the international financial institutions and other sources. Furthermore, the public sectors of some countries need assistance with specific or very important issues that other countries can provide.

IICA will support the countries with the design and management of investment projects aimed at promoting institutional modernization.

The Institute will seek to generate, identify and disseminate knowledge, innovations, experiences and best practices, and **share them with the countries.**

The Institute will facilitate horizontal cooperation to **provide support to countries on issues that are a priority** for them.

Concentration of efforts for the renewal of IICA

Overview of the current situation

IICA is a well-known organization that has a broad hemispheric mandate and almost 70 years of experience in the provision of technical cooperation in the areas of agricultural technological innovation, agricultural health and food safety, agribusiness and agricultural trade, rural development and training in different aspects of agriculture.

More recently, the Institute has included in its work the question of the relationship between agriculture and the environment, natural resources and climate change. Furthermore, in its desire to respond to the new challenges facing agriculture in the countries, it has undertaken activities in the areas of biotechnology and biosafety, agroenergy, agrotourism, organic agriculture, rural agroindustry, agricultural insurance, rural development with a territorial approach, the fight against desertification and the comprehensive management of water resources.

The Institute has a number of strengths:

- Its highest governing body is the IABA, the inter-American forum of ministers responsible for the agricultural sector.
- It has a wealth of knowledge and experience related to agriculture and rural development.
- It possesses valuable human capital, considerable assets and physical infrastructure as well as essential financial resources.
- It has developed networks and systems for managing knowledge and information that give it a great capacity to respond to the needs of the countries.
- It maintains strong ties and partnerships with strategic international and regional organizations whose areas of competence complement its own.

All these factors, as well as the close relationship that IICA maintains with the ministries of agriculture and other clients within the hemisphere, contribute to the countries' positive perception of the Institute.

However, IICA has limitations that make it necessary to strengthen the following areas:

Renewal of capacities

The Institute will implement a **plan for the continuous improvement of its technical and administrative-managerial capabilities.**

Management through program-based networks

IICA recognizes that the knowledge society operates via formal and informal networks and views this as a challenge for international cooperation. Networking will be used as the **primary means to address the increasing complexity** of global problems.

Strengthening of management

The Institute needs to modernize its management instruments based on modern management platforms, the professionalization of the administrative areas and the use of management information systems.

Strategic partnerships

The problems related to institutional policies and capabilities in agriculture cannot be resolved by the governments based on the support received from a single international organization.

IICA is a well-known organization that has a broad hemispheric mandate and almost 70 years of experience in the provision of technical cooperation. However, it requires **strategic re-engineering** to meet the new challenges facing agriculture.

IICA will therefore place special emphasis on cooperation with other international cooperation agencies. Such cooperation must lead to joint initiatives at the hemispheric, regional and national levels. Special care will be taken to build effective partnerships, especially for the mobilization and effective use of cooperation resources.

Financial resources for cooperation

- IICA must become the technical partner of choice for international and regional financial institutions.
- The Institute must be more effective in accessing the cooperation and international aid resources pledged by the developed countries.
- IICA must take advantage of the opportunity to establish strategic partnerships with countries and cooperation agencies, with a view to creating funds to finance processes, programs or projects to be implemented in the countries.
- The Institute must extrapolate its experience of national project management at the international level, with the donor governments as its clients. IICA will act as the intermediary between the donors and the governments that receive assistance.

To deliver services of the highest quality and have comprehensive knowledge of the areas in which it provides technical cooperation, **IICA's personnel must be properly trained and motivated.**



The Strategic Plan in action

Flexibility will play a key role

One of the aspects underscored in this Strategic Plan is the **uncertainty** of the scenario in which agriculture in the hemisphere will be operating in the years ahead. Therefore, the Institute must be **flexible and seize new opportunities as they arise**, assisting the countries in specific fields in which it specializes. The Institute's response will be based on three main aspects:

- 1° **Concentration** of technical cooperation in the areas in which IICA possesses or will develop capabilities.
- 2° **Focusing** of actions on specific fields.
- 3° Administrative **efficiency** and the broadening **and diversification of funding sources**.

This proposal, the starting point of which was the guidelines provided in the Strategic Framework approved at the Fifteenth Regular Meeting of the IABA, held in October 2009, was drafted via a process of consultations involving the Institute's own specialists and external experts with extensive knowledge of agriculture in the Americas. It also includes the recommendations made by the members of the Special Advisory Committee on Management Issues (SACMI). The proposal is still in the process of development and is therefore subject to further revision.

IICA places great importance on the planning process, but is fully aware that a better future for the sector will be achieved one step at a time, with a clear vision of the objectives and goals to be met. This document provides the frame of reference for the medium-term plans guidelines for the Institute's activities.

Modernizing IICA is no easy task, especially since the Institute is an organization that is required to address the extremely diverse needs of the countries and provide a complex set of hemispheric and regional public goods, which it must assess if it is to be useful to each country and to the hemisphere as a whole. **Accordingly, this Strategic Plan will be converted into actions as the Institute's governing bodies endorse the process of change advocated in it.**

IICA attaches special importance to the planning process, but is fully aware that a better future for the sector will be achieved **one step at a time, with a clear vision** of the objectives and goals to be met.

Printed at IICA Print Shop
IICA Headquarters, San Jose, Costa Rica
Press Run: 500 copies



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