

2023 Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas – Twenty-second Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA)

**Report of the Representative of the IABA to the
Governing Council and Board of Directors of CATIE
for the period 2022- 2023**

IICA/JIA/DI-04 (23) - original: English

Available only in English

San Jose, Costa Rica
3-5 October 2023

CATIE Report - IABA

Background. One representative of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) sits on the CATIE Board of Directors. The designated representative for the past two years was the Minister of Agriculture of Grenada. The Board of Directors meets twice per year to approve CATIE's annual report and plan and to provide strategic direction to the Director General of CATIE with respect to higher education and training, research, and mobilization of resources. The Board also provides oversight on CATIE's commercial activities and partnerships, as well as the results of the cooperative agreements between IICA and CATIE. Below is a summary of the salient results achieved by CATIE over the last two years.

Graduate Education and Training

CATIE is implementing an innovative educational business model and is transitioning towards blended education (in-person and virtual), in a bid to improve the sustainability of the graduate school. CATIE will launch two new master's programs in the next trimester, namely on resilient coffee systems and sustainable livestock systems. It has also modernized its program to offer a curriculum of core courses on issues of global importance, for example on socio-ecological systems and on food system transformation. In addition, it is implementing a plan for mobilization of scholarships. With respect to training, CATIE is offering courses and diplomas in different disciplines, as a strategy to strengthen extension services, including courses on climate change, climate financing, agribusiness, sustainable livestock production, coffee and cacao systems, regenerative agriculture, forests and biodiversity, blue carbon, watershed management and water harvesting, among others. In 2022, CATIE trained more than 10,000 individuals working in different institutions in Latin America and Caribbean. It also strengthened its cooperation with US and Canadian universities.

Research

- CATIE signed an agreement with World Coffee Research (WCR) to establish a global hub to conduct research on the genetic improvement of coffee varieties that are resilient to climate change, productive and of a high cup quality. Over the last few years, the Center has released several hybrid varieties that are more tolerant to coffee rust. Similarly, it produced improved clones of cacao that are more productive in multi-strata agroforestry systems. CATIE set up a regional research program in Mesoamerica on coffee and cacao, with funding from the Korea-Latin America Food & Agriculture Cooperation Initiative (KoLFACI).
- A new regenerative agriculture program was launched, integrating agrobiodiversity, for the purpose of increasing food production diversity, food security and nutrition. In

cooperation with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), CATIE launched a regional research program to support research on resilient food systems in the Trifinio region of Central America.

- A regional program on transforming livestock systems to achieve more productive and low carbon economies was established. CATIE generated results with respect to silvopastoral-based livestock systems, increasing productivity by more than 40% and reducing the carbon footprint by more than 50%, compared to traditional livestock systems. In cooperation with the Mitigation Action Facility (MAF) and the Honduran Ministries of Agriculture and of the Environment, a project is being implemented on low carbon livestock systems, and in partnership with Germany's International Climate Initiative (IKI- Klima) and the Germany Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), projects have been implemented on nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs) for livestock systems in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Panama and Dominican Republic. CATIE is also working to develop NAMAs for banana and coffee.
- The water harvesting program, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), generated results on how water harvesting contributes to climate resilience and the increased productivity and diversity of family farming and rural economies, working with 3,000 small farmers in Nicaragua. Currently this project is being scaled up in Central America.
- In collaboration with the USDA, a situational analysis was conducted on the impact of climate change on agriculture and its relationship to migration in the Northern Triangle of Central America. In addition, CATIE secured funding from Natural Resources Canada to carry out studies on model forests and to evaluate management factors to reduce forest fires in South America.
- Research by the Environmental Economics and Sustainable Agribusiness Unit studied the impact of consumer behavior on sustainable consumption and de-risking climate finance. In collaboration with the Costa Rica Development Bank, CATIE set up 60 green business incubators and provided training on successful entrepreneurship.

Mobilization of Resources

CATIE has been working on improving its business and financial model, designing a diversified fundraising and resource mobilization strategy, in keeping with new trends for funding international research and development. Funding for projects represents over 75% of the total income budget of the organization. Financially, this is one of the most relevant activities of the institution, with over 50 projects under implementation in more than 15 countries of the region. With a total mobilized budget of USD 28.4 million, CATIE is focusing increasingly on co-creating project proposals with its donors.

As part of this diversified strategy, CATIE is also strengthening private sector collaboration. International brands such as Mars, Lindt, Starbucks, Southwest Airlines and Yara are some of the companies closely collaborating with CATIE to increase the scope of its research and outreach activities.

Finally, CATIE has two foundations that carry out its philanthropic fundraising activities. Both foundations—The Tropics Foundation, based in Atlanta, Georgia, and Fundatropicos, based in Costa Rica—have been upgraded and renewed and are in the active process of generating income for the institution.

Funding from Commercial Activities

As part of its business model, CATIE is driving the dissemination of knowledge developed through its research program and utilizing it to expand commercial activities that are generating an income for the organization.

For example, the coffee and cacao genetic improvement program has developed improved hybrids and clones that are disease tolerant and climate adapted, thereby allowing smallholder producers to increase their productivity and yield. Currently, medium- and large-scale producers also have a keen interest in purchasing these hybrids and clones and are willing to pay for their value. Therefore, CATIE has developed a commercial propagation strategy to sell these materials and benefit larger producers, utilizing the earnings to reinvest in new research initiatives.

CATIE has demonstrated leadership in developing successful business initiatives in the area of cacao, livestock, reforestation and restoration projects, as well as with its Study Abroad programs. All these activities are generating a significant income for the institution.

IICA-CATIE Cooperation:

There has been significant progress in IICA-CATIE cooperation in the areas of proposal development and implementation, organization of events and meetings, and in the creation of an investment fund for the sustainability of the institutions. Below is a summary of the most noteworthy results:

- The **BioPaSOS** project. CATIE and IICA (Mexico) implemented the BioPaSOS project (funded by IKI-Germany), training 1,250 livestock farmers and more than 45 extension officers to implement silvopastoral systems to enhance the sustainability of livestock systems in Mexico. It is important to note that this project had an impact on three state policies to implement sustainable practices and transformed 35,000 hectares of silvopastoral systems.
- The **AGROINNOVA (IICA-CATIE- EU)** project. CATIE is collaborating with IICA to implement this program on multi-strata agroforestry systems, with a view to increasing

the climate resilience of farming systems and rural communities, while improving food security and nutrition. CATIE assisted in setting up regional plots to validate improved multi-strata agroforestry systems and to train extension workers in Central America.

- CATIE collaborated with the IICA Office in Guyana to conduct a feasibility study of the country's dairy sector and a technical evaluation of the coffee and cacao sectors. The plan is to distribute improved coffee varieties developed by CATIE and to train local technicians on improved coffee and cacao agroforestry systems.
- The Center collaborated with the IICA Office in El Salvador to conduct a diagnosis of the Tissue Culture Laboratory of the Salvadoran Coffee Institute, with the objective of increasing the production of improved coffee varieties.
- CATIE partnered with the IICA offices in Peru and Ecuador to develop a proposal on the "Condor Kutuku Corridor Landscape in the Amazon of Peru and Ecuador", which was submitted to the British Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA-UK) for funding.
- **Forest of the Americas.** IICA and CATIE are working on establishing forests with the key forest species of the Americas on the campuses of both institutions, for training purposes and to build awareness among stakeholders on the importance of forest species and ecosystem functions.
- **IICA-CATIE Investment Fund-** The Directors General of CATIE and IICA agreed to use part of the funding that IICA provides to CATIE to establish an investment fund to strengthen the financial sustainability of both institutions. Over the last three years, this fund was used to finance three important projects that are generating results: 1) improving infrastructure for the genetic propagation of plants of new coffee varieties; 2) investing in the climate-smart dairy model at CATIE's commercial farm; and 3) greening CATIE's energy system to reduce its energy bill and carbon footprint.