



**Special Advisory Commission  
on Management Issues (SACMI)**

**Report on the 2010 Meeting**

**San Jose, Costa Rica  
July 20, 2010**



## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The 2010 Regular Meeting of the Special Advisory Committee for Management Issues (SACMI) was called to order at 8:18 on July 20, 2010, in the United States Room at the Headquarters of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

### **Words of welcome and approval of the schedule of the meeting**

The Director General welcomed the members of the SACMI and thanked them for their attendance at the meeting. Upon confirmation of a quorum, the 2010 Regular Meeting of the Special Advisory Committee for Management Issues (SACMI) was officially declared open.

He then explained the purposes of the SACMI in general and of this meeting in particular. He stated his interest in ensuring that the SACMI, as per Resolution IICA/CE/Res.507 (XXIX-O/09) of the Executive Committee, operate effectively as an standing advisory committee to the General Directorate, and his willingness to ensure that its meetings be open, participatory and dynamic.

He also explained the delay in making the proposed 2010-2014 Medium Term Plan and 2010-2020 Strategic Plan available to the Delegates, acknowledging that the members of the SACMI would need addition time to review both documents. To this end, he suggested that a videoconference be held in order to gather feedback beyond that provided in this meeting.

He then shared the provisional schedule of the meeting with the members of the SACMI. At the request of the Delegates of the SACMI, an explanation of the IICA organizational chart, showing recent changes in the structure of the Institute, was included in the schedule. Without further modification, the proposed schedule of the meeting was approved as presented.

## **II. THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING**

### **1. 2010-2020 Strategic Plan and 2010-2014 Medium-Term Plan**

#### **1.1. 2010-2020 Strategic Plan**

The Director General presented the key ideas of the 2010-2020 Strategic Plan, referring first to the elements of the context that was expected to affect agriculture and the rural milieu over the next ten years. This context would be characterized by a more volatile global scenario; expansion and segmentation of markets; population growth, creating demand for more food; higher indexes of total poverty; climate change, with differentiated effects in different regions, and climatic variability in the short term; and the need to increase production without increasing the area under cultivation, while reducing the impacts on the environment and in rural territories.

With this context in mind, he then referred to the needs that existed in the areas of agricultural policies, institutions, agribusiness and individual capabilities and access to information and knowledge. He indicated that the modernization of IICA must be aimed at ensuring that the Institute provide effective and timely services to the member countries in a limited number of topics, in which the Institute must have prospective and analytical capabilities. He also mentioned that the Institute must be recognized for its innovate results and technical expertise, proposing that the Institute's 206 technical personnel be organized into thematic networks through which IICA can contribute to meeting the challenges the agricultural and rural system faces.

## **1.2 2010-2014 Medium Term Plan (MTP)**

The Director of Technical Cooperation presented the proposed 2010-2014 Medium Term Plan, calling particular attention to fact that the greatest challenge was to make agriculture, competitive, sustainable and inclusive, which would require the adoption of a new technological paradigm. He summed up the current situation in the Institute, stressing its strengths and budgetary and technical limitations. Based on this summary, he stated that in the immediate future IICA, with innovation, creativity and commitment, would will be able to help the member countries to make their agricultural sectors more competitive, carrying out actions that respected the principles of the sovereignty and autonomy of peoples.

He went on to describe the proposed strategic proposal, based on four Core Areas for Cooperation: (i) Competitiveness, production and agricultural markets; (ii) Agriculture, territories and rural well-being; (iii) Agriculture, natural resources and climate change; and (iv) Agriculture and food safety. He added that IICA would focus its capabilities and resources on attaining nine strategic objectives, which he explained, and would provide 5 types of technical cooperation: design and evaluation of public policies and strategies; strengthening of institutional frameworks, development of capabilities and knowledge management, and support for the countries on specific issues and investment projects.

As for the proposed operating strategy, he explained that four technical cooperation programs - Innovation for productivity and competitiveness; Agricultural health and food safety; Agribusiness and marketing; and Agriculture, territories and rural well-being – would be established. The first three would address topics related to the competitiveness of agriculture, covered by Core Area 1, while the fourth would cover the topics of Core Area 2.

He added that the topics of Core Areas 3 and 4 would be addressed by two Areas for Cross-coordination: Agriculture, natural resources and climate change and Agriculture and food safety. The principal objective of both was to ensure that the cross-cutting

topics were effectively incorporated into the actions of the programs. Added to these technical units were the Center for Strategic Analysis for Agriculture and the institutional thematic networks for technical cooperation, which would boost IICA's technical capabilities.

In concluding, he stated that IICA would continue to do even more to help its member countries to tackle the challenges facing agriculture in the Americas. To do this, however, IICA must expand its leadership and technical capabilities, and focus its efforts on those thematic areas in which it can have the greatest impact in the countries.

The members of the SACMI agreed to acknowledge the great effort made by the Administration to make the Strategic Plan and the Medium-Term Plan, and expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to offer comments on them.

The members of the SACMI, through their comments and recommendations, requested that: (i) the linkage between Strategic Plan and the Medium-Term Plan be emphasized in both documents; (ii) that the linkage between both documents and the Strategic Framework approved by the IABA in Jamaica, the AGRO Matrix and the Agro Plan be clarified; and (iii) that the difference between the plans be reinforced.

They also felt it would be advisable to: (iv) include, to the extent possible, indicators of results and qualitative and quantitative goals; (v) eliminate the reference to the concept of multifunctionality; and (vi) define the follow-up and evaluation mechanisms to be used.

Lastly, considering that the Strategic Plan was a useful tool for conveying information on the Institute, it could later be adjusted to reach a broader audience.

The Director General and IICA specialists provided the following clarification:

- **The Director General** explained that the documents were prepared on the basis of the 2003-2015 AGRO Plan, the assessment of institutional capabilities and several resolutions on the Institute's work. However, he recognized that it was necessary to recover the references that underpin and make the relations more evident. He agreed on the need to review the interrelationship between the two documents and to clarify IICA's role in the four strategic thematic areas. He explained that, for the Institute to be an authority in those four topics, it was necessary to strengthen its capabilities and have the necessary budgetary resources. In the case of the cross-cutting topics such as food security and climate change, it would be necessary to strengthen partnerships with organizations that had specific strengths in them. He agreed with the need to incorporate goals and indicators. Lastly, he noted that the process of approving the Program Budget would conclude at the next Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee, scheduled for October of this year.

- **The Director of Technical Cooperation** explained the relationship between the four Core Areas for Cooperation and the programs and Areas for Cross-coordination, indicating that the work would focus on public goods such as policies, institutions, the capabilities of individuals and knowledge.
- The Director of Management and Regional Integration described the programming process that will be implemented to achieve results, goals and indicators. He added that programming for 2011 would be based on the MTP, and that the regional strategies would be based on the four Technical Programs and the two Areas for Cross-coordination. Then, the IICA Country Strategies would be defined on the basis of a comparison of the demands included in the plans of the countries with IICA's capabilities and strategies. On the basis of that comparison, strategic projects would be developed for each country, rather than isolated specific actions.

### 1.3 Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** That the Director General make adjustments in the proposed the 2010-2020 Strategic Plan and 2010-2014 Medium Term Plan, reflecting the recommendations and concerns of the member of the SACMI, especially:

- To underscore the linkage of both plans with the Agro Plan, the AGRO Matrix and the 2010-2020 Strategic Framework, approved by the IABA in Resolution 444 at its 14<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting.
- To place greater emphasis on clarifying the relationship between the Strategic Plan and the Medium Term Plan, including cross-references.
- To incorporate, to the extent possible, indicators of results in the 2010-2014 Medium Term Plan.
- To include an estimation of financial requirements for the medium term.
- To attach greater importance to the evaluation component.

They also recommended some specific adjustments in terminology and in specific sections of the documents, which were noted by the Secretariat and will be incorporated into the revised version of both documents.

**Recommendation 2:** In order to ensure that the delegates have more time to analyze and offer suggestions regarding and adjustments to the 2010-2020 Strategic Plan and 2010-2014 Medium Term Plan, the following follow-up activities were planned:

- Between July 21 and 27 inclusive, the Delegates may offer comments, using the SACMI's on-line forum.
- On August 6, the adjusted versions of both documents, which would include the comments received and adjustments proposed, would be made available to the delegates on the IICA website.

- (iii) A videoconference would be held on August 13 to receive feedback from the members of the SACMI on the revised versions of both plans.
- (iv) On August 20, the revised versions of the 2010-2020 Strategic Plan and 2010-2014 Medium Term Plan, which would include the results of the videoconference, would be posted on the IICA website as a working document for the 30<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee.

## **2. Financial Situation of the Institute and 2011 Program Budget**

### **2.1 Financial Situation of the Institute and Progress in the Collection of Member State Quotas**

The Secretary of Corporate Services presented information on the Institute's finances, underscoring administrative discipline and the sound management of IICA's finances. In addition, he thanked the member countries for paying their quotas, which were essential to the performance of the Institute. He went on to say that a new model of comprehensive administration was being promoted, in which the corporate services (personnel administration, finances, programming and budget, rules and regulations and general services) were aimed at facilitating and strengthening the technical cooperation IICA provided to the member countries.

As regards the Institute's finances, he noted that in 2009 a total of US\$27.2 million in quotas was collected, leaving a pending balance of US\$2.3 million. He further stated that must overcome the financial constraints that limited its response capacity, which could be attributed to the declining value of its resources, estimated to be some US\$8 million between 1995 and 2009. In view of this situation and in order to fulfill its obligations, IICA had decided to apply a contingent financial strategy based on special budgets and miscellaneous income, he remarked. He cautioned that the availability of such resources was highly uncertain since most of them were derived from yields on investments.

### **1.2 Proposed detailed allocation of the resources of the 2011 Program Budget**

Next, Secretary of Corporate Services presented the proposed detailed allocation of the 2011 Program Budget,<sup>1</sup> which was focused on ensuring the implementation of the Medium-Term Plan. He reiterated what the Director General had said to the effect that IICA would provide its technical cooperation through four Technical Concentration Programs, which would receive support from two Areas

---

<sup>1</sup> The IABA, at its 15<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting, by Resolution IICA/JIA/Res.453 (XV-O/09), approved the total amount of the Regular Fund budget (quotas and miscellaneous income) for 2011.

for Cross-coordination and the Center for Strategic Analysis for Agriculture, and that there would be initiatives aimed at strengthening technical cooperation in the countries.

He recalled that the Regular Fund budget for 2011 is US\$33.4 million, of which US\$27.3 million was quotas and US\$6.1 million was miscellaneous income. The 2011 budget was approved as an overall figure, but the detailed allocation of the resources was pending. He added that external resources earmarked for specific projects were initially estimated to total US\$154.6 million, of which US\$9.7 million would be INR (Institutional Net Rate) resources.

The members of the SACMI congratulated the Administration on the efficient and transparent manner it was administering its resources, and expressed that hope that the Institute would continue to fulfill its mandates efficiently despite frozen quotas.

Next, the Director General, the Secretary of Corporate Services and the Head of the Programming, Budgeting and Control Division responded to the comments and queries of the Delegates regarding the periodicity of the Program Budget, the relationship between the proposal and the implementation of the 2010-2014 Medium Term Plan and the declining purchasing power of the quota contributions of the Member States.

### **1.3 Recommendations**

The members of the SACMI, after expressing satisfaction with the positive results of the efforts made by the Member States to bring their quota payments current, and for administering their collection, made the following recommendations:

**Recommendation 3:** To back the proposal presented by the General Directorate on the proposed detailed allocation of the resources of the 2011 Program Budget, and recommend that it be submitted for consideration and approval to the Executive Committee at its 30<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting.

**Recommendation 4:** To request that the Director General distribute to the Member States an analysis of the impact on IICA's finance of the freezing of quotas since 1995.

### **3. IABA Resolution 447: "IICA-FAO Joint Action on Behalf of Agriculture in the Americas"**

The Director General introduced the analysis of the IABA Resolution 447, in which the SACMI is asked to propose options for closer IICA-FAO integration, and to present recommendations to the IICA Executive Committee in 2010 on how to proceed on



IICA-FAO integration. He pointed out the relations between IICA and FAO went back a long time, as reflected in a number of resolutions issued by both the Executive Committee and the IABA, which had not been fully implemented for a variety of reasons, which he explained.

He then presented a summary and analysis of the most important aspects of the document “Strengthening Partnership and Coordination between IICA and FAO to the Benefit of Agriculture in the Americas,” referred to in IABA Resolution 447. He then addressed those aspects that must be considered by both the Member States and FAO vis-à-vis an eventual merging of IICA and FAO, adding that FAO, unlike IICA, has no mandate to merge with IICA. Further, he analyzed the complexities of merging IICA and FAO, following the WHO-PAHO model, adding that it was a process in which there would be winners and losers, and that careful thought should be given to the cost of such an undertaking.

The Director General underscored the fact that relations with FAO had been strengthened and moved forward in several areas. Examples included studies conducted jointly with ECLAC on the state of and outlook for agriculture, the standardization of indicators, several events, and the implementation of joint projects on topics of mutual interest. He believed that there was great potential for expanding collaboration, especially in the areas of knowledge management and generation of strategic thinking, as well as in the provision of direct technical cooperation to the countries. He was of the opinion that the two organizations, rather than competing with each other, complemented their respective capabilities, in aid of the countries.

He reported that the IICA-FAO agreement had expired in 2006, and that, at the FAO Regional Meeting held in Panama, it was proposed that the cooperation agreement be renewed and expanded and that a new phase of joint cooperation in the areas of food security, rural development and poverty alleviation, agricultural productivity and competitiveness, sustainable development and knowledge management be implemented. He added that the draft of the new agreement had been sent to FAO for consideration.

The delegates acknowledged the difficulties of merging IICA and FAO, not only because of the differences in their administrative systems, but also, and principally, because such a decision would have to be endorsed by the Member States of both organizations and changes would have to be made in the Convention on IICA. They felt that the cons outweighed the pros of such a decision at the present time. They were concerned that IICA might be absorbed by FAO, and agreed that there were possibilities for increasing collaboration between IICA and FAO, examples of which were joint actions and studies.

He noted that, despite the impression that these two organizations competed with each other in terms of types of cooperation and for access to resources, this was not true. There were no projects or activities in which they were competing for resources from the same financial institution. To the contrary, there is ample evidence to the effect that they are organizations that co-existed and were not interested in replacing each other, that complemented each other, and that created a beneficial institutional synergy. He explained that this relationship had yielded important fruits, such as the “Report on the State of and Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Life,” prepared each year by the two institutions in conjunction with ECLAC. He noted that there was a willingness to expand and strengthen this partnership, with a view to complementing activities and the synergy between the two; and concluded that a possible merger would not achieve the results sought by the countries.

Lastly, the Director General noted that actions with FAO could complement IICA’s work in thematic areas in which the Institute needs additional capabilities; for example, in the area of food security and climate change.

### **3.1 Recommendations**

The members of the SACMI, in light of the comments of the Director General and the SACMI itself, made the following recommendations:

**Recommendation 5:** That, given the complexity and difficulties of a possible merger of IICA and FAO, and recognizing that FAO had not been mandated by its Member States to merge with IICA, the SACMI recommends strengthening joint action via agreements between IICA and FAO, with the support of the Member States.

**Recommendation 6:** That the Director General prepare a document on IICA-FAO relations for presentation to consideration of the Executive Committee at its 30<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting, that included:

- The presentation that was presented and discussed at this meeting on IABA Resolution 447 “IICA-FAO Joint Action on Behalf of Agriculture in the Americas.
- Information on the how the two institutions complement each other’s work, and progress in terms of joint action.
- The presentation made by the General Directorate at the Regional FAO meeting held in Panama on joint IICA/FAO efforts, and the proposed agreement on expanding and strengthening joint action.

#### **4. Proposed organizational structure of IICA**

At the request of the SACMI, the Director General referred to the proposed organizational structure, which is a work in progress. He based his explanation on the Institute's new organizational chart. He explained that IICA would have two Directorates: the Directorate of Technical Cooperation (DTC) and the Directorate of Management and Regional Integration (DMRI). The first comprises four programs and two Areas for cross-coordination, and included 66 technical personnel, who would form thematic networks for technical cooperation. He then mentioned that relations between IICA and the academic sector and research institutions would be the responsibility of the Hemispheric Center for Leadership in Agriculture, attached to the DTC. He noted that there would be a Projects Unit charged with preparing project profiles and full projects in support of the countries.

As for the DMRI, the Director General explained its structure, its areas of action in IICA's regions and its areas of competence, which included the management of the IICA Offices in the countries and interaction with regional integration organizations or bodies.

Both Directorates would receive support from the following Secretariats:

- Secretariat of Corporate Services, charged with providing assistance in matters related to administration, finance and human resources, and which would assume responsibility for the Language Services Unit and the Information and Communication Technologies Unit.
- Secretariat of Planning and Evaluation, which included the Inter-American Information and Editorial Production Center.
- Secretariat of External Relations, which was responsible for coordination of Institute meetings, follow-up to the Ministerial Process "Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas in the context of the Summit of the Americas Process, and the IICA Office in Spain.

He explained that the Political Advisor, the Internal Audit Office, the Legal Services Unit, the Office of the Coordinator of the Office of the Director General and the Center for Strategic Analysis for Agriculture would report directly to him. He added that the Secretariats of External Relations and of Planning and Evaluation would report to the Office of the Deputy Director General. Finally, he considered that the proposed organizational structure was balanced and called attention to the fact that it placed emphasis on the technical component of the Institute.

The Director General, the Director of Management and Regional Integration, the Secretary of Corporate Services and the Coordinator of the Area for Cross-coordination Agriculture, Natural Resources and Climate Change answered questions from the

Delegates on matters related to how the new structure of the General Directorate was expected to function.

#### **4.1 Recommendations**

The members of the SACMI expressed their satisfaction with the new structure of the General Directorate, still being fine tuned, and with the management style being implemented by the Director General, which emphasized the technical work of the Institute, its *raison d'être*. They offered the following recommendations:

**Recommendation 7:** That the Director General inform the minister of agriculture of the new structure of the General Directorate, calling attention to the implications of same as regards the decentralized model, the emphasis on technical work, the Areas for Cross-coordination, which involve topics beyond the areas of responsibility of the ministries of agriculture, and the need to strengthen IICA's capabilities, especially at the level of the Offices vis-à-vis the implementation of the 2010-2020 Strategic Plan and 2010-2014 Medium Term Plan.

**Recommendation 8:** That the Director General formulate and implement a communication strategy for disseminating the new structure of the General Directorate as part of efforts to reposition the Institute.

#### **5. Reconsideration of the compensation package of the Director General**

The Director General informed the SACMI that the previous Administration, in compliance with a recommendation made by the SACMI at its 2009 meeting, had requested a review of the compensation package of the Director General, and that same be presented at the 2010 meeting of the SACMI.

He did not believe it was advisable for the SACMI to review his salary and other benefits without first having reviewed the salaries of all Institute personnel. For this reason, he asked that said item be removed from the agenda and not brought to the attention of the Executive Committee at its 30<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting, adding that he had made the same request to the Audit Review Committee (ARC), which was in agreement.

**Recommendation 9:** The Director General's proposal was accepted by the SACMI and therefore, the Director General should act accordingly.

#### **6. Report on the situation in the IICA Office in Colombia**

The Director General explained that IICA administered projects funded by its Member States that were in line with the Institute's thematic priorities, in which the overriding interest was to serve the member countries and provide support to the agricultural sector and the rural milieu, with no intention of making a profit. He added

that the administration of one of those projects in Colombia had become complicated, provided certain details on the matter and asked the Legal Advisor to elaborate.

The Legal Advisor, based on the document “Issues related to externally funded projects: the case of Colombia, “and as a complement to the presentation made by the Director General, made a thorough presentation on the events in Colombia, emphasizing the probity of IICA’s actions in this case. He next explained in detail the actions already taken and those under way and the consequences of the situation, and offered his opinions regarding the concerns and comments of the Delegates.

The Political Advisor of the Director General, adding to the presentation by the Legal Advisor, noted: (i) that any eventual financial sanction imposed on IICA would have an impact on all 34 Member States because their resources are for technical cooperation; (ii) the political factors involved in this situation; and (iii) the importance of ensuring that the Governing Bodies adopt a policy on what type of the Institute can administer when they are funded with public funds of the governments of the Member States, especially when they entail some “political risk.”

## **6.1 Recommendations**

**Recommendation 9:** The SACMI, considering the document entitled “Issues Related to Externally Funded Projects: The Case of Colombia,” and the comments offered on same, decided:

- To support the Director General’s efforts to have the Resolution of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR) of Colombia, which fines IICA for US\$7 million, withdrawn or rendered unenforceable, through measures that do not imply a waiver of the Institute’s immunities;
- To recognize that the most adequate means for resolving conflicts between a member state and the Institute, as a public international organization with privileges and immunities under its basic agreements with its member states, is through negotiations between them, and if that is not successful, through international conciliation, mediation or independent international arbitration;
- To suggest that the Director General include this matter on the agenda of the next meeting of the Executive Committee, so that it may consider a Resolution that requests that Colombia:
  - (i) Withdraw or otherwise render unenforceable the Resolution that fined IICA for US\$7 million; and
  - (ii) Seek independent mechanisms in accordance with the concept of due process and customary international practice, such as international conciliation, mediation, and/or arbitration, to resolve any difference it may have with the Institute.

- To request that the Director General present at the next meeting of the Executive Committee a report on the political and financial consequences of the MADR Resolution for the Institute and that he keep the Member States informed of significant developments on this matter.

**7. Regarding the procedure for approving the minutes of the 2010 SACMI meeting.**

The Director General proposed to the SACMI that the preliminary version of the minutes of this meeting be posted on the SACMI on-line system on July 23.

He also proposed that the members of the SACMI have until August 6 to submit recommendations on and adjustments to the minutes, to be used in preparing the final version before August 20. The final version, according to the rules currently in force, must be posted on the on-line system along with the working document of the 30<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee. Both proposals were accepted.

**8. Close of the meeting**

At 18:35 on July 20, 2010, the Director General thanked the members of the SACMI for their valuable recommendations and contributions and adjourned the meeting.