



## ***EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE***

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### **Report to the Thirty-second Meeting of the Executive Committee of IICA on the IICA-FAO Strategy and Joint Action Program August 2012**

**San Jose, Costa Rica**

**October 2012**



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IICA-FAO Strategy and Joint Action Program  
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In compliance with Resolution No. 531 of the Executive Committee and No. 477 of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture, IICA and FAO have been working to develop a Strategy and an IICA-FAO Joint Action Program, which will be submitted to the consideration of the Thirty-second Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee.

The Director General of IICA appointed a team to coordinate this process with FAO. Subsequently, this team contacted representatives of FAO for the purpose of drafting and signing a new agreement between both Organizations, emphasizing the importance of implementing a joint action program.

As a first step, both organizations reached agreement on a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**, which was signed on March 29, 2012 by the Director General of FAO, Dr. Graziano Da Silva, and the Director General of IICA, Dr. Victor Villalobos. This MOU establishes the framework for cooperative relations between IICA and FAO, and is effective until March 2016.

It is important to mention that this is the first time that a Director General of FAO has signed a document of this nature with a Director General of IICA.

The **general objective** of the Memorandum is to strengthen technical cooperation between FAO and IICA, through joint actions that will allow for more efficient use of existing resources and capabilities in pursuit of their common goals, thereby benefiting the agrifood sectors of the countries of the Americas. The parties agreed to concentrate their joint efforts in the Caribbean region and implement an agreed work plan, focusing on issues that are crucial to that region and to the countries within it.

In order to define the target areas for the projects and work toward their approval, financing and execution, the parties have held several meetings, both in person and online, with the participation of the IICA coordination group, FAO representatives in the Caribbean and the FAO Office in Chile. In addition to these meetings, both organizations participated in two virtual (online) workshops and in a workshop held at the IICA Office in Barbados, on June 14-15, which included the FAO team in the Caribbean, IICA's Director of Technical Cooperation and the Institute's technical team in that region. During the workshop, agreement was reached on the guidelines for a first draft of the joint Action Program in the region, which has now been completed. The completion of this document was delayed by other regional demands requiring the attention of both organizations and by the appointment of FAO's new Assistant Director for LAC. To date, IICA has submitted all the information that it had agreed to provide and has consulted the FAO technicians on a draft proposal for discussion.

The work teams have decided to focus on three topics that are critical for the Caribbean region as a whole: **Improving the competitiveness and sustainability of agribusiness** (Agribusiness and Commercialization Program); **Improving access to and the adoption of technologies and genetic resources** of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) (Innovation for Productivity and Competitiveness Program); and **Strengthening CARICOM's**

**regional capacity in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures - SPS (Agricultural Health and Food Safety Program).**

In order to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of agribusiness, the teams propose to implement a project with the same name, with the aim of creating a favorable environment leading to the successful incorporation of farmers and agricultural-rural entrepreneurs into dynamic markets.

In order to improve access to and the use of the CGIAR's genetic resources, IICA-FAO have developed proposals for projects whose common objective is to improve food security and increase the production and productivity of roots, tubers, fruits, rice and others crops in the Caribbean, through the improvement of the genetic material available in the region. This effort also includes the promotion of appropriate technologies and innovations, the introduction and adaptation of new genetic materials and the adoption of new livestock production systems for goats and sheep.

In fact, IICA and the CIP have recently agreed on a mechanism for transferring seed materials for vegetative propagation, which is to be implemented in the near future. There is also agreement on efforts to tackle the problem of Black Sigatoka disease, in response to requests received by both institutions from the countries, beginning with a workshop and a consultancy which will present its report in Barbados in the near future.

In order to strengthen CARICOM's regional capacity in the area of SPS, two main lines of action are envisaged: supporting the Caribbean countries in the implementation of their commitments under the "Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA): Regional Coordination Mechanism in SPS"; and the fisheries subcomponent of the SPS component.

## **Main Conclusions**

The Director General of IICA and the Director General of FAO are in constant communication and have met on three occasions to follow up on the agreements, reflecting their intentions and commitment.

The activities carried out to date show no evidence of a duplication of efforts; on the contrary, there has been significant progress in joint and complementary work. However, this does not mean that collaborative efforts cannot be improved and made more efficient, and to this end it will be necessary to systematize efforts and consolidate the proposals that are being negotiated.

IICA is fully aware of the need to complement the efforts of both Institutions throughout the Hemisphere, and considers that the agreed topics for joint cooperation are a priority for the Caribbean countries – without lessening the effort to do the same in other regions and even at the level of countries, as has already been mentioned.

In some cases, both partners even contemplate the possibility of sharing facilities and premises in the countries. However, IICA has been emphatic that in order to do so, it is first necessary to establish a joint work program that justifies this type of administrative arrangement, and that the

savings obtained by both institutions should translate into a better technical cooperation for our member countries.

The Institute has given priority to the three topics that are critical for the Caribbean region, and in doing so wishes to emphasize its total and ongoing commitment to promoting and articulating joint cooperation efforts. For this reason, it sought to have the Memorandum of Understanding signed at the highest level, and acknowledges the willingness of Dr. Graziano da Silva to honor the commitment made at the previous Meeting of Ministers in San Jose.

However, IICA has the duty and responsibility to point out to its Member States and to this Executive Committee that the process has been complicated by the fact that our counterpart has not shown sufficiently clarity in carrying out concrete actions that would allow for more rapid progress in the relationship, for example, in the decision to form an FAO team to coordinate all the actions with IICA. Our Institute has not found it possible to coordinate with a specific counterpart at FAO, which would include the FAO Headquarters and its Regional Office, but trusts that this situation will be resolved in the short term.

## **Annex: Joint IICA-FAO Activities in the Member States during 2011 and up to August 2012**

At least twelve IICA Offices have maintained or maintain working relations with FAO during this period. As regards the results of these collaborative efforts, it is worth mentioning the following:

Argentina: IICA provided technical support to FAO's new Documentation Center, which has a new database for the bibliographical management of its publications. The Center has access to the SIDALC network and to Argentina's Agricultural Libraries, and has also joined the network of information specialists.

Chile: An intersectoral meeting took place in June 2011 to discuss policies in response to food price increases and volatility. The participants updated their knowledge on the main threats and opportunities, shared experiences in the application of policy measures to mitigate the negative effects and take advantage of opportunities, and evaluated policies to facilitate the improved integration of the agrifood system. In November 2011, experts from the Southern Cone countries gathered for a seminar on "Family agriculture and market access: new evidence." The results of this seminar will be used to develop new public policy tools and FAO-IICA programs to improve market access for family farmers.

Colombia: A seminar entitled "Institutional framework and policy guidelines for sustainable fisheries and agriculture in LAC" took place in 2011. In January 2012 the Aquacrop model was validated; training on this initiative took place in February.

Costa Rica: Coordination meetings were held in January 2011 to define positions on the issues of complementarity and how to respond to requests from the MAG. Activities were organized with the fisheries sector to discuss issues of sustainability and production. In agricultural marketing, IICA and FAO helped to identify speakers for the meetings and supported the organization of these events (April 2011). IICA and FAO also participated in the First International Symposium on Area-based (Territorial) Rural Development (December 2011), organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) and other institutions. The purpose of the Symposium was to provide information and discuss the progress of the Central American Strategy for Rural Area-based Development (ECADERT) and the modernization of the former Institute of Agrarian Development, now renamed the Institute of Rural Development.

Guyana: Phase I of the course "Promoting Alternative Income Generation" was implemented in the Hinterland communities in November 2011. More than 60 young people received basic training in apiculture and construction of apiaries, and were provided with manuals on beekeeping and protective gear donated by FAO.

Mexico: In 2012 two agreements were signed for the evaluation of phytosanitary campaigns against pink mealybug and avocado pests.

Nicaragua: In June 2011, 30 seed producers held a meeting to exchange experiences, with the support of IICA, the Red SICTA project funded by the Swiss Cooperation Agency, the "FAO Seed Project" and Spanish Cooperation. In March 2011 the project to promote the use of

inoculants in bean crops was completed. This initiative was supported by “FAO Seed” and IICA-Red SICTA project of the Swiss Cooperation Agency and benefited at least 3,500 farmers. IICA and FAO also participated in and supported the Food and Nutritional Security Fair held in November 2011, with the aim of drawing public attention to the problems of hunger and food security.

Panama: Between March and September of 2011, efforts were made to coordinate the actions of the Interagency Group (of which IICA and FAO form part) and to define the responsibilities of its members in the process to combat transboundary diseases. In May a work group was established to support the milk chain, and a similar group was set up to support the meat chain in September 2011. A national Platform, which includes MIDA and the academic sector, has been established to monitor the implementation of the ECADERT in Panama.

Peru: In June 2011, IICA and FAO jointly prepared the document “Strategic guidelines for the development of micro, small and medium-scale agroindustry,” which was submitted to the Ministries of Agriculture and of Production.

Trinidad and Tobago: IICA and FAO provided technical assistance to prepare the 2011 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Food Production, Land and Marine Affairs (March of 2011). In May 2011, a workshop took place on the value chain approach. Between May and August 2012, two regional meetings were held with Directors and Plant Health technicians in the Caribbean for the purpose of protecting the region from the threat of exotic plant pests, with the support of USDA/APHIS, the CARICOM Secretariat and other organizations. The meetings addressed issues such as trade, Agricultural Health and Food Safety; technical work to combat priority pests; capacity building; and environmental sustainability.

Uruguay: In August 2011, FAO and IICA conducted a survey on the mandates and organizational capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture, in relation to agribusiness and agroindustry. This survey will serve as a reference to improve the technical support provided by both organizations to member countries. The report prepared by IICA-FAO-ECLAC entitled “Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas -2011”, was presented in October 2011.

Venezuela: In March 2011, a Forum was held to discuss “Situation of food prices: the International Market and its impact on Venezuela,” in the context of the debates on “The Venezuelan Economy: challenges and prospects for 2011”. This event included the presentation of the IICA-FAO-ECLAC report entitled: “Price volatility in agricultural markets 2000-2010. Implications for Latin America and policy options.”