



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Twenty-Second Regular Meeting
2 - 3 October 2002

IICA/CE/Doc.413(02)(XXII-0/02)
19 August 2002
Original: Spanish

"Proposal for Establishing the Status of IICA Associate Expert"

San Jose, Costa Rica

I. Justification

Since 1995, IICA has been working with a frozen budget. One of the most important repercussions of this situation has been the Institute's decision to reduce its cadre of International Professional Personnel, from 132 in 1995 to just 93 in the 2003 budget.

The latter figure represents the minimum number of staff members the Institute must have to operate, without making drastic changes in its organizational structure. Decisions on this matter have been postponed, in large part, because the reduction in the number of international experts has been partially offset by their replacement with highly qualified local personnel. Everything seems to indicate, however, that this will soon no longer be a viable solution.

In addition, today the Institute is faced with a number of new challenges and tasks. In point of fact, the demand for cooperation services in its Member States is on the rise, and is expected to grow even more in the near future as the Member States request support in their efforts to reposition agriculture and combat rural poverty.

Furthermore, IICA has been designated by the Heads of State and Government as a partner institution in all stages of the Summit of the Americas process. This will generate new demands from the Member States for IICA to support their efforts to comply with the mandates stemming from the Summits process. IICA will also be expected to engage in new inter-institutional actions with the IDB, World Bank, FAO, IFAD, ECLAC, and other international organizations associated with this process.

One way to overcome the lack of qualified and experienced personnel is to introduce into the Institute's rules the status of "IICA Associate Expert." This would make it possible to tap the capabilities of experts who are willing to contribute to the Institute's efforts without becoming IICA staff members.

II. PROPOSED CATEGORIES OF ASSOCIATE EXPERTS

Given these considerations, the General Directorate proposes to the Member States sitting on the Executive Committee that they authorize and endorse the establishment of the status of IICA Associate Expert, with a view to boosting the Institute's technical capabilities in the priority areas set out in its 2002-2006 Medium Term Plan. This would include, among other categories of Associate Experts, the following:

A. Institutional Associate Expert:

Specialists who work for institutions or universities in the Member States, permanent observers and third countries, who, upon becoming IICA Associate Experts, would participate in missions to provide technical support for actions under IICA's responsibility in its Member States.

In this case, the institutions or universities would continue to pay the expert's honoraria, and IICA, by agreement with the country receiving the cooperation, would cover transportation costs, per diems and related expenses.

Requirements: Agreements must be signed and in force between IICA and the institutions or universities, in which they second their staff to IICA for short periods of time, to be agreed to on a case-by-case basis, and they agree to continue paying the expert's respective salary and benefits. Also, it is important that the Member States agree to co-finance the costs of such cooperation.

Observations: This type of arrangement would be particularly beneficial in helping the Institute to promote horizontal cooperation programs and actions among the Member States.

B. Independent Associate Expert

Specialists who work on a freelance basis or with enterprises or nongovernmental organizations with which IICA has signed agreements and which are willing to share costs or relinquish part of the specialist's time, at not cost to IICA, to participate in drawing up national or regional investment, technical cooperation or training projects that the Institute will present for funding to governments, lending organizations or foundations.

Requirements: If the project is approved by the agency or government that will finance it, IICA commits itself to hiring, with these external resources, the professionals who participated in preparing it.

Observations: Questions regarding any labor-related responsibilities to be assumed by the Institute must be ironed out. In any case, solutions would be sought on a case-by-case basis, while respecting the labor laws of each country and adhering to a common policy and set of standards.¹

C. Former IICA-staff Associate Expert

The Institute has former staff members, including its Emeritus Personnel,² who, during their careers at IICA, have accumulated considerable experience, which could be of great value in pre-investment, technical cooperation and training activities the Institute carries out in its Member States. Also, their support would be very valuable for managing certain aspects of the IICA offices and for establishing linkages with the community of agriculture and rural life in the countries.

¹ Obligations assumed by IICA, basic guidelines governing association of expert, benefits, etc.

² Former IICA staff members who have been appointed as Emeritus Personnel, because of their contributions and dedicated service to the Institute

Requirements: To be a former member of the professional personnel of the Institute, and to have performed their duties with distinction.

Observations: The experiences of enterprises, international agencies and countries in the region that have established mechanisms for working with former employees must be gathered and studied, for designing this mode of association.

III. NEED TO ADJUST IICA'S RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Rules of Procedure of the General Directorate and the Staff Rules currently in effect do not take this type of association into account. These rules, especially the Staff Rules, must be adjusted, and the corresponding amendments proposed. This is essential if IICA is to be able to retain the services of independent experts, staff members of other agencies, enterprises, universities and NGOs, as well as former staff members, and, in particular, the Emeritus Personnel, as IICA Associate Experts.

Should this proposal be viewed positively by the Member States sitting on the Executive Committee, as a means of regaining technical capacity and strengthening the Institute's services, the Director General proposes the following:

The General Directorate will prepare and present a comprehensive proposal on the amendment of the rules of the Institute to allow for selecting, establishing the mode of association, managing, and determining the remuneration and benefits to be granted to associate experts. Also, it will propose guidelines for reaching agreement with the agencies that will second their personnel as associate experts, and with the governments that will receive IICA cooperation the associate experts. This proposal would be submitted to the consideration of the Executive Committee, at its Twenty-third Regular Meeting scheduled to take place in 2003.