

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture



10 KEYS TO THE MODERNIZATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

The case of IICA

Characteristics of a Modern Institution





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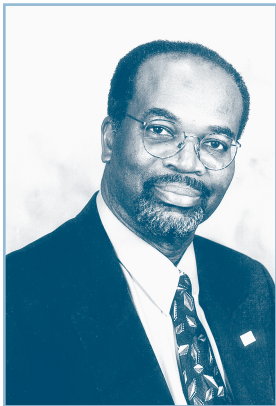
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Foreword



Chelston W.D. Brathwaite

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) is the specialized agency of the Inter-American System for agriculture and the promotion of rural well-being. Founded in 1942, it has offices in 34 Member States, a Permanent Office for Europe located in Madrid, Spain, and its Headquarters in San Jose, Costa Rica.

IICA's mission is to support the Member States in their pursuit of progress and prosperity in the hemisphere through the modernization of the rural sector, the promotion of food security, and the development of an agricultural sector that is competitive, technologically prepared, environmentally managed and socially equitable for the peoples of the Americas.

This document presents a brief and consolidated description of the management model which emerged during the process of leading change and institutional reform at IICA between 2002 and 2005, a process that will be consolidated in coming years. The results-based management style adopted by IICA's Administration to approach its Member States, and its decision to develop a proactive agenda of mutual interests reflects, in many ways, the new vision required to face the challenges of agriculture and rural life in the 21st Century.

The driving force behind this new IICA model is a commitment to lead and manage a process for the creation and sharing of knowledge about agriculture and rural life in the Americas.



In this respect, IICA is focused on becoming a more modern and business-oriented organization that is driven by the needs of the Member States, and where technical excellence, full participation, financial prudence, transparency and accountability, and working together with strategic partners, are emphasized.

The management model implemented during this Administration reflects the vision first presented in 2002 to the Institute's Member States in the document "Repositioning IICA to Meet the Challenges of the 21st Century."

The key strategic objective of this Administration has been to support Member States in their efforts to unleash the talent, energy, and enterprise of the people of the Americas so that the agricultural and rural sectors can compete internationally. This Administration is committed to create a culture of excellence within the Institute that results in the provision of information, knowledge, leadership and technical support to contribute to improving the lives of people and to ensuring the prosperity of the nations of the hemisphere.

We believe that the application of this model has increased the quality of the technical cooperation services offered to our Member States, and has improved the relationship between our Institute and our stakeholders and strategic partners throughout the Americas.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Chelston W.D. Brathwaite".

Chelston W.D. Brathwaite



10 Keys to the
10 Keys to the Modernization
of an International Organization
Modernization



Introduction

When we assumed responsibility of the Institute in 2002, our major goal was to contribute to a process of institutional reform so that we could convert IICA into a modern organization at the service of the Member States.

The reform process was led by a deep conviction that the current challenges faced by IICA in the twenty-first century demanded that we review and modernize the traditional model of technical cooperation, in order to provide more effective and efficient services on behalf of the countries and regions of the hemisphere.

We are also convinced that our job in this Administration is not only to manage the Institute but also to look into the future and see IICA not only for what it is today but also to see the Institute for what it can become tomorrow.

The reform process was based on the need for the Institute to maintain its place of technical excellence and technical leadership in the agricultural community of the Americas.

The Administration took the view that organizations such as IICA must assume a higher responsibility of service to stakeholders and social responsibility to society.

As a result, this Administration implemented what were considered the ten characteristics that a modern institution must have for success in the 21st Century.



1. A strategic vision and a sound implementation strategy
2. A management structure that effectively responds to the mandates and priorities of the Institute
3. Defined mechanisms for performance management and evaluation
4. A clear-cut definition of its clientele, its strategic partners and its competitors
5. Clearly defined human resources management policies
6. Comprehensive financial management policies and processes
7. Strategies for the promotion of a corporate image
8. Ethical principles and values
9. Social responsibility
10. The capacity to think and to anticipate the future

The following describes how each of these ten aspects has been implemented to modernize the Institute on behalf of our Member States.



1

*A strategic vision and
a sound implementation strategy*



The Heads of State and Government of the Americas recognized that agriculture and rural life have a key role to play in reducing poverty and fostering integral development in the countries.

The point of departure required, therefore, was the conception of a *clear strategic vision*, to transform IICA into a development agency designed to contribute to sustainable agricultural development, food security and prosperity in the rural communities of the Americas.

Taking into account this strategic role of agriculture, and current trends in the world economy, the Institute has been assigned an important responsibility in the institutional architecture taking shape in the Americas to support the Summit of the Americas process and to contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, especially that of reducing poverty and hunger by 50% by 2015.

The OAS, at its Thirtieth General Assembly (Windsor, Canada, June 2000), gave the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) a new dimension and recognized it as the primary ministerial forum for analyzing and building consensus on policies and strategic priorities for the improvement of agriculture and rural life in the hemisphere.

At the Third Summit of the Americas (Quebec, Canada, April 2001), IICA's role was expanded beyond the provision of technical cooperation services, to include fostering dialogue and consensus building on critical aspects of agricultural development, the environment and the rural milieu, within the framework of integration and the search for hemispheric prosperity. The Institute also became one of six institutions to follow up on the mandates of the Summit of the Americas Process.



It was therefore agreed that in the 2002-2006 Medium-Term Plan, we should consolidate IICA's role as a major player in the promotion of the sustainable development of agriculture, food security and the prosperity of rural communities in the Americas.

The specific thematic initiatives to implement the plan were classified in the following strategic areas:

- Agribusiness Development
- Trade Policies and Negotiations
- Technology and Innovation
- Agricultural Health and Food Safety
- Sustainable Rural Development
- Information and Communication
- Education and Training

Based on the modern use of strategic planning tools as a process of institutional repositioning, the Institute undertook the preparation of technical cooperation agendas at the national, regional and hemispheric levels.

The National Technical Cooperation Agendas

In response to the new mandates received by the Institute, and considering the challenges that lay ahead for agriculture and rural life in the 21st Century, this Administration adopted a new model for the provision of technical cooperation.

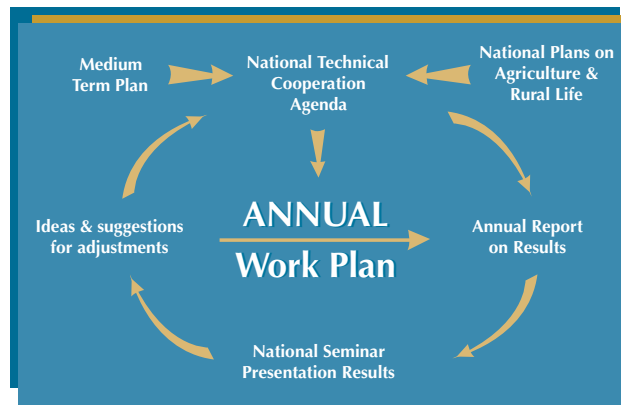
Through Offices in its Member States, IICA fostered an ongoing dialogue with national authorities and other key stakeholders in the agricultural sector (private and public organiza-



tions, the private sector, civil society, NGOs, academia, etc.) in order to harmonize IICA's actions in the countries with national priorities and development plans, taking into account the Institute's strategic areas of action and strengths.

The process included the following steps:

a. Participation, accountability and partnerships at the country level



The first component of the new model is a process of consultation, dialogue and consensus building with national authorities, the private sector, academia and civil society, to draw up **National Technical Cooperation Agendas** and to spur a principle-centered process of institutional transformation. This process aims to meet the Member States' need for technical cooperation that responds to their demands and priorities. The products of this endeavour are the National Technical Cooperation Agendas, through which the Institute implements its technical cooperation at the country level.



Preparation of these agendas represents a new approach to technical cooperation, one that emphasizes participation, partnership, cooperation and demand-driven efforts.

The National Agendas recognize the unique nature of each of the Institute’s Member States, and the approach used in preparing them is holistic and inter-thematic. They afford an opportunity for the principal actors in agriculture and rural development to contribute significantly to developing IICA’s technical cooperation programme, thus ensuring that it meets their needs. It is therefore “their” programme, implemented by IICA with mutually agreed upon human and financial resources.

b. The consultation process

The process of preparing an overall strategy for IICA’s actions at the country level is based on an extensive process of consultation and consensus building with key stakeholders in agriculture and rural life in the Americas. Its guiding principles are:

- The strategy must be based on the interests of the countries and be designed to impact each one as soon as possible.
- It must take into consideration the Institute’s mandates, new vision, mission and priorities, matching them with the countries’ priorities.
- Preparation of the agendas is an ongoing process based on consultations with and the participation of partners. It does not impose a result or create a commitment. The strategy must reflect what IICA believes can effectively be done in each country and region.



- The strategy must define areas in which there is an effective match between the interests of the parties and the human resources available for implementing the necessary actions. A realistic assessment of resource constraints is of key importance.

c. Development and approval of the National Agendas

IICA's Representatives lead the process to prepare the agendas, taking into account the information generated in the consultation and following the established guidelines.

Once agreement on cooperation actions has been reached with national authorities, each Office prepares a draft National Agenda that includes a timetable of activities for the year, as well as an assessment of opportunities for securing additional financial resources to support cooperation actions.

Once consistency of the draft National Agenda with IICA's Medium- Term Plan (MTP) is assured and programming and budgetary considerations are reviewed, the National Agendas are approved and communicated to national authorities, representatives of the private sector, universities, NGOs, and other stakeholders.

d. Review and periodic updating of the National Agendas

IICA's strategic planning process is dynamic and ongoing, and the National Agendas are evaluated annually to assess the progress made, the results achieved, as well as to identify problems, document lessons learned, and identify and propose changes in needs and priorities. It aims to ensure the relevance of the National Agendas to changing circumstances in agriculture and the rural milieu. This assessment is conducted with the presentation of an



annual report to all the stakeholders, clients and strategic partners that participated in formulating the National Agenda.

With this new inclusive approach to technical cooperation, the Institute succeeded in achieving the following results:

- **An Improved Relationship with our Member States**

The development of the National Agendas, the preparation of national annual reports, the presentation of these national reports in an annual seminar and the incorporation of ideas and suggestions from the seminar into our work plans for the next year, have greatly improved our relationship with the Member States. This approach leads to partnership, accountability and transparency and builds confidence and trust.

There is a renewed awareness that IICA can make a significant contribution to agriculture and rural life in our hemisphere.

- **Increased Technical Cooperation Actions**

We have successfully changed the actions in several of our Offices in the countries from being primarily Offices for the administration of financial resources, to providers of technical cooperation services. Almost all the new agreements we have signed incorporate technical cooperation elements.

- **Increased Technical Cooperation in Canada and the United States**

We have increased technical cooperation activities in Canada and the United States, countries that were once only providers of financial resources to the Institute, and we have promoted greater regional integration between the NAFTA countries by



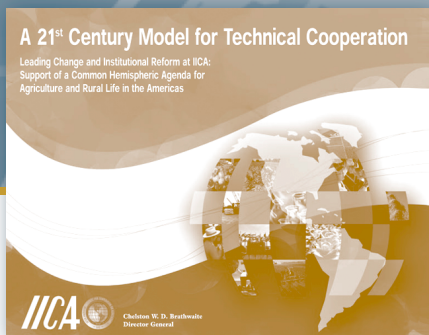
strengthening regional mechanisms such as PROCINORTE and the Tri-national Council.

■ **Increased Private-Sector Participation**

We have improved our relationship with the private sector at the national and regional levels, and the establishment of the 36th Office of the Institute, in Miami, which is focused on agribusiness development in the hemisphere, will enhance this relationship in the future.

■ **Increased Horizontal Technical Cooperation**

Thanks to the building of a hemispheric team of National Specialists, Regional Specialists, Representatives in the IICA Offices in our Members States, Directors of Operations and Directors of Thematic Areas, there is increased horizontal technical cooperation between and among countries and between and among regions.



2

A management structure that effectively responds to the mandates and priorities of the Institute



IICA implemented a new institutional structure based on an integrated and results-oriented management framework aimed at responding more efficiently to the demands of our Member States (see chart). In this regard, we reduced the number of high-level management positions, creating a flatter and more efficient institutional structure.

With the objective of increasing the Institute's efficiency, while reducing costs, IICA modified the operation of the Regional Centres. The positions of Regional Directors were changed to Directors of Operations, which allowed a greater dynamic at the regional level. These positions were moved to IICA Headquarters so as to permit more effective coordination between the management and thematic areas of the Institute, the countries and the regional integration mechanisms.

We created a new unit for budget preparation and control, with clearly defined policies and processes related to budget preparation, resource management and the financial mechanisms required for prudent and accountable resource allocation. In addition, the Institute's internal audit function was strengthened with the appointment of a new internal auditor and a deputy auditor.

Through the establishment of a Directorate for Performance Management and Evaluation, IICA ensured that its actions would be implemented in a cost-effective manner, based on a definition of individual work plans and on periodic evaluations allowing professionals to adjust their performance to lessons learned and recommendations for the short and medium term.

As a means to facilitate institutional strategic planning, and to promote dialogue and hemispheric horizontal cooperation between countries, the annual hemispheric forum called

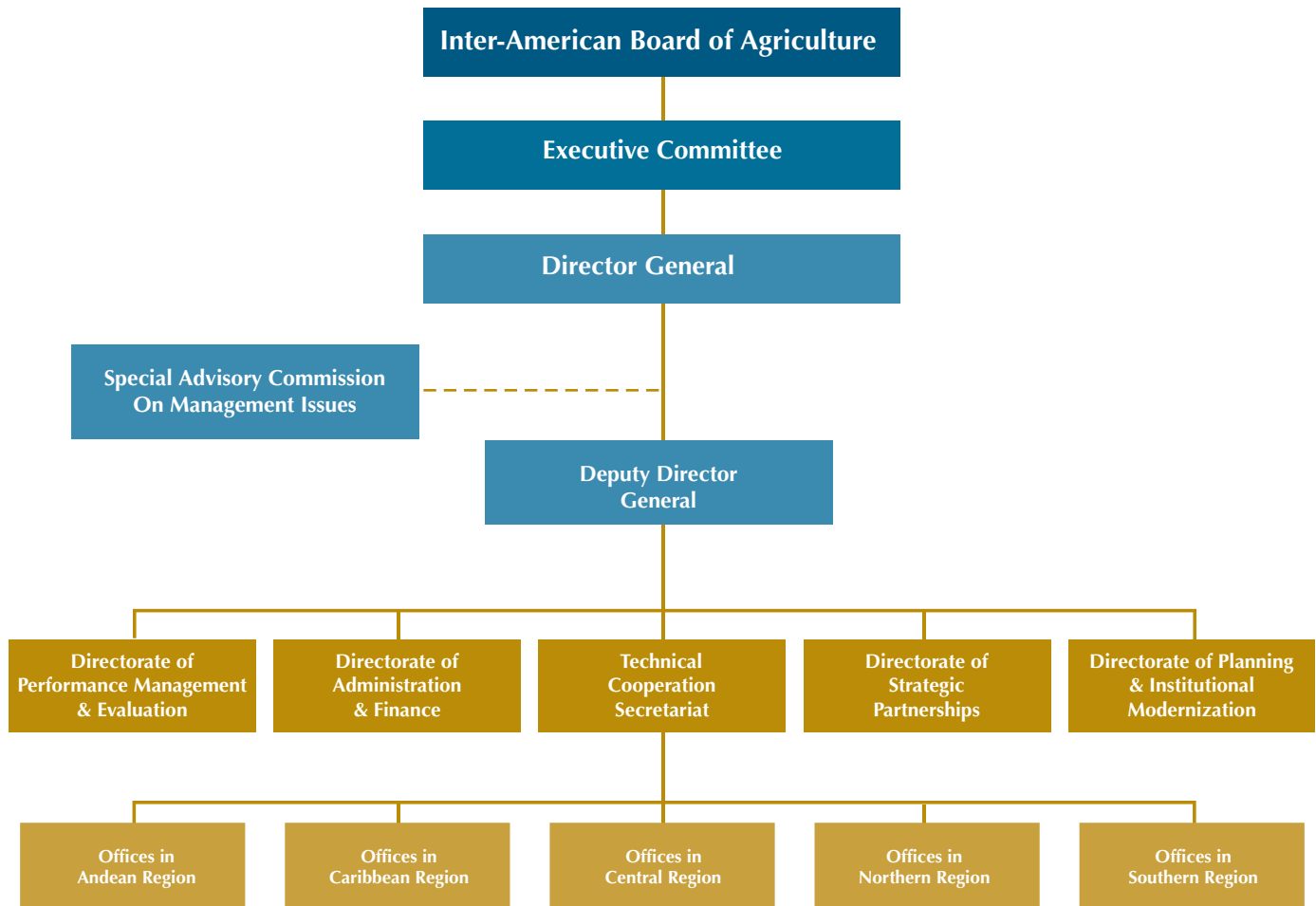


“Representatives’ Week” was established, bringing together all the IICA Directors, Representatives and Regional Directors.

The Directorate for Follow-Up of the Summit of the Americas process was created to provide appropriate follow-up to the mandates issued at the Quebec Summit and the OAS General Assembly.

A new program on trade, agribusiness and food safety was established based in Miami, U.S.A. in order to facilitate market access, information sharing and technical assistance to comply with international trade regulations.

New Structure of IICA





3

Defined mechanisms for performance management and evaluation



As indicated above, the Institute established the Directorate for Performance Management and Evaluation to provide monitoring, supervision, evaluation and follow-up of all Institute actions carried out in compliance with the technical cooperation agendas.

One of the most important internal factors that support this new model for technical cooperation is the Institute's monitoring, supervision, evaluation and follow-up system, which links planning, programming, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and follow-up activities within the Institute. It involves the IICA Offices in the countries and relevant Directorates and Units at Headquarters, which are expected to work in an integrated and holistic fashion.

The system is designed to be supportive and facilitative, and embodies an essential part of the Institute's responsibility to provide leadership, management, coordination, control and accountability in the use of its resources. It is also designed to foster relationships that contribute to improving individual skills and performance, and to bringing people and resources together, based on clear objectives and priorities defined in IICA's work plans, and in the National, Regional and Hemispheric Agendas.

The support system has the following main responsibilities:

1. To provide management at the IICA Offices in the countries with relevant orientation and inputs for achieving results and improving performance.
2. To provide inputs in a timely manner for the General Directorate's decision-making process, so as to improve the Institute's performance and accountability.



3. To conduct regular reviews, analyses and evaluations of the actions executed by the Offices in the countries and by the Units at Headquarters.
4. To support the improvement of the administrative support system in the Offices in the countries and Units at Headquarters, so as to facilitate achievement of the Institute's goals and objectives.
5. To support efforts to promote an institutional culture based on performance management and the achievement of results.

These functions provide essential support for the implementation of IICA's new technical cooperation model, and aim to provide leadership, management, coordination and control of the affairs of the Institute as a results-based organization.



4

*A clear-cut definition of its clientele,
its strategic partners and its competitors*



The Institute maintained a permanent dialogue with its strategic partners in order to identify complementary work plans and areas of action, so as to contribute more effectively to agricultural and rural development in the Member States.

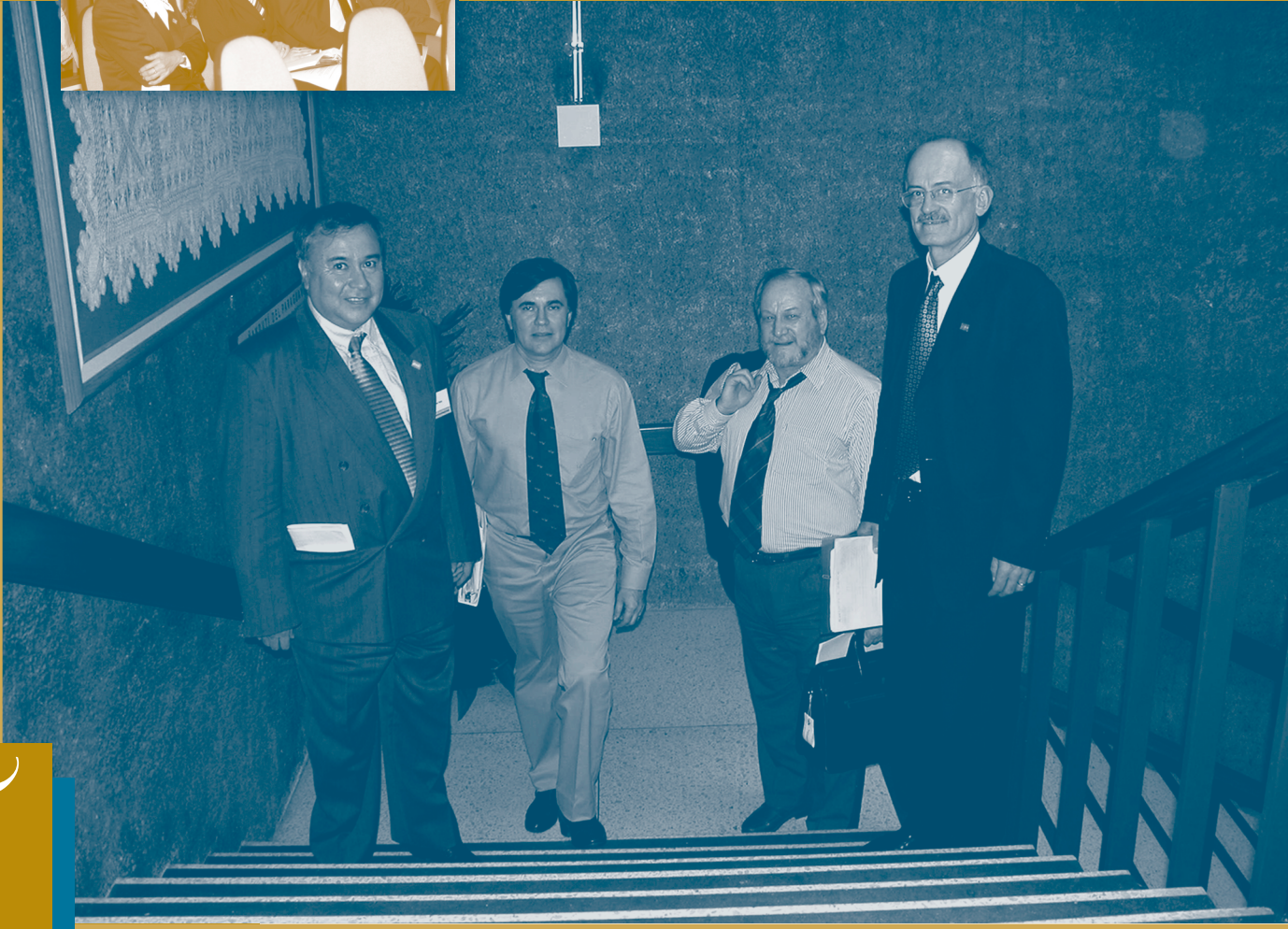
As part of this effort, we have strengthened our strategic partnerships with the World Bank through the Global Development Learning Network, with the Inter-American Development Bank through FONTAGRO, with the Pan American Health Organization through joint actions on Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), and with FAO through joint actions at the national and regional levels.

We have improved our relationship with CATIE as we seek to ensure greater complementarity in our actions in the areas of education, technology and innovation and rural development. We continue to pursue the ultimate goal of CATIE and IICA working together in the implementation of our respective institutional mandates.

Thanks to IICA's strategic partnership with the USDA, we have facilitated increased participation of the Member States in the meetings of the World Trade Organization in Geneva to promote greater awareness of the global trading system, and we have launched a new instrument for modernizing agricultural health and food safety systems in the hemisphere.

We returned the Institute Office in Washington D. C. to the OAS building as part of a strategy to build a renewed and closer relationship with the OAS.

Those are some examples to demonstrate that the magnitude of the problems and challenges facing agriculture and rural development considerably exceed the capabilities of any single organization, and that if we wish to make significant and effective contributions to the agricultural and rural sector of the Americas, we must expand and intensify collaboration with our sister institutions of the Inter-American System, our partners and international allies, and the private sector.



5

*Clearly defined human resources
management policies*



As an institution that promotes the development, transformation and transmission of knowledge, the Institute developed a three-year plan for the improvement of our human resources, including:

- a) Reviewing the Institute's classification and compensation system and its recruitment practices.
- b) Developing a language training program to strengthen staff's language capabilities, and an orientation program for new employees.
- c) Introducing a new performance evaluation system linked to performance incentives and bonuses.
- d) We have reduced international management positions at Headquarters from 36 to 20 and reduced Headquarters costs by 10%.
- e) There has been an increase in the number of national professional personnel promoted to international professional positions, many of those being key management positions within the Institute.
- f) We have reduced the average age of the professional staff of the Institute by retiring all staff above sixty-five years of age. This has allowed IICA to renew its roster of professionals, and to recruit a new generation of talented, dynamic and well-prepared specialists to ensure that IICA can continue to keep updated and in tune with the demands and challenges facing development organizations.



- g) Thanks to the new model of technical cooperation implemented by this Administration, there is a new sense of purpose, commitment and dedication among staff, as mentioned earlier. We have aligned the individual performance evaluation system with the work plans of the units of the Institute to ensure coordination of individual actions and performance with institutional goals.
- h) One of the cornerstones of the new IICA model is the pursuit of excellence at all levels. To this end, the Director General's Awards for Excellence Program was created to contribute to shaping an institutional culture of recognition for creativity, outstanding performance, leadership and teamwork.

For many years the Institute has provided awards to its staff for years of service. It was the view of this Administration that, in addition to awarding years of service, we needed to award superior performance of our staff. We therefore initiated in 2002, the Director General's Awards for Excellence.



6

Comprehensive financial management policies and processes



External Audit

For the first time since 1995, in 2004, the External Auditors approved the financial statements of the Institute without qualification. This reflects, in our view, that the measures which have been taken to promote financial prudence, including the establishment of the Unit for Budget and Control and the strengthening of the Internal Audit, have produced positive results. It is also a reflection of the responsible attitude of our Representatives and Unit Managers, and their cooperation and support is greatly appreciated.

Payment of outstanding quotas

The Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) approved Resolution No. 392 – “Proposal for the Collection of Quota Contributions Owed to the Institute” – to implement a number of actions to collect outstanding quota payments, which has resulted in several countries paying their outstanding quotas. In spite of these payments, we have asked for a continued commitment to financial prudence in the use of our financial resources.



7

*Strategies for the promotion
of an institutional image*



Under the new model, IICA attaches special importance to information, communication and the projection of the institutional image. The promotion of the Institute's new global dimension and image is of fundamental importance in efforts to position the Institute as an international development organization that is recognized and respected as a reliable strategic partner that can make a major contribution to the development of agriculture and rural life in the Americas.

IICA's new information and communications policy facilitates dialogue with the Community of Agriculture and the Member States and keeps them informed of the activities and results of the Institute's work.

Publication of the National and Regional Technical Cooperation Agendas, IICA's Annual Reports, IICA Connection (an electronic bulletin), AGROENLACE (a radio program), COMUNIICA online (a technical journal) and the Director General's Infoletter, together with the improvement of the Institute's new website and the consolidation of its information systems, are examples of this policy.



8

Ethical principles and values



We also developed a new code of ethics, which takes into account the standards of the Institute, as set out in the Rules of Procedure of the General Directorate, the Staff Rules and the Financial Rules.

The purpose of this code is to build an ethical system that recognizes the value of the individual and of diversity, and to foster an environment characterized by high moral integrity, so that staff members can realize their full potential.

It also highlights those IICA values which govern staff members' work at the Institute, so that all members observe the highest values of ethical conduct, namely: impartiality, integrity, professionalism, flexibility, discretion, loyalty, financial prudence and responsibility to the Institute.

It sets standards for staff members' conduct within and outside the Institute, relations at work, personal business and moral issues, as well as the use and disclosure of information, conflicts of interest, and political activity.

The code must be interpreted as a clear signal that this Administration will not tolerate corruption, improper conduct or political activity within or outside the Institute.



9

Social responsibility



The Institute cannot dissociate itself from the social problems of unemployment, lack of shelter, education and health care, poverty and social injustice that prevail among the majority of our peoples. Those social problems are reflected in urban and rural crime, trafficking in illicit drugs, personal insecurity, lawlessness, all of which represent a threat to peace and prosperity and the process of democratic governance.

Consequently, in the future, the Institute should embrace greater social responsibility and a development agenda that allows it to play a more dynamic and strategic role in the promotion of prosperity in the rural communities of the Americas.

That role that takes us beyond the traditional support to agricultural production and makes us partners in the development process of increasing the competitiveness of the entire agri-food chain and fostering linkages between the chain and other sectors of the economy, such as tourism, health, nutrition, infrastructure, education and the environment.

IICA's National Agendas must reflect a holistic, integrated approach that responds to the reality of the national agricultural community and national circumstances, and must link macro-policy with territorial reality.



10

The capacity to think and to anticipate the future



The new unit for Strategic Planning and Institutional Modernization has made great advances in themes which relate to the future of agriculture in the Americas.

■ A New Vision for Agriculture

We have promoted the concept that agriculture is more than primary production and we have shown in our studies that, when all the backward and forward linkages are taken into consideration, agriculture's contribution to national development is greater than reported in national statistics.

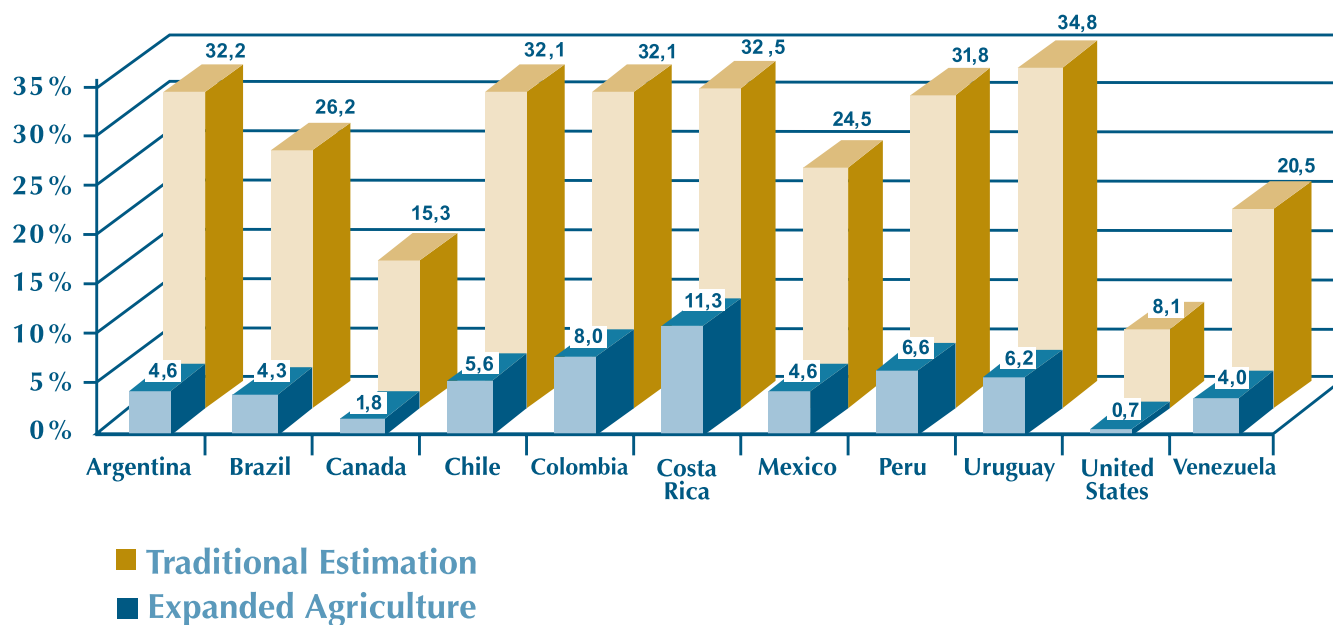
Our research suggests that when all the backward and forward linkages in the commodity chain are considered, agriculture's contribution to national development is three to seven times greater than the percentages reported in national statistics.

In Argentina, official statistics indicate that agriculture's contribution to GDP is 4.6%, but when we consider all the backward and forward linkages, this figure increases to 32.2%; in Brazil from 4.3. to 26.2, in Canada from 1.8% to 15.3%, in Chile from 5.6% to 32.1%, in Colombia from 8.0% to 32.1%, in Costa Rica from 11.3% to 32.5%, in Mexico from 4.6% to 24.5%, in Peru from 6.6% to 31.8%, in Uruguay from 6.2% to 34.8%, in the United States from 7% to 8.1% and in Venezuela from 4.0% to 20.5%. We are currently extending this study to all countries of the Hemisphere. (see Chart)

In addition, these analyses demonstrate that approximately 74% of primary agricultural production serves as inputs for other sectors of the economy, such as agro-industry and manufacturing.



Real contribution of agriculture





These results are documented in our report “More than Food on the Table: Agriculture’s True Contribution to the Economy”.

■ **A common hemispheric agenda for agriculture and rural life in the Americas**

We have assisted the Ministries of Agriculture in the development of a strategic, futuristic vision for Agriculture and Rural Life in this hemisphere through the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action, which can assist the Americas in achieving the Millennium Development Goals of reducing poverty, promoting environmental sustainability and a global partnership for development.



Final Final Comments

- Our goal is to make IICA the premier institution in agricultural technical cooperation in the Americas and the partner of choice for the Member States.
- We will succeed in these efforts only if our member countries and the General Directorate work as part of a team dedicated and committed to the goals of the Institute.
- The reform process at IICA has been recognized not only in the Institute, but also throughout the Hemisphere and in the Inter-American System. For example, Dr. Cesar Gaviria, former Secretary General of the Organization of American States, in his report to the Presidents and Heads of State at the Special Summit of the Americas in Monterrey, Mexico, in January 2004, said the following:

“The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) is another example of the impact of the Summits on the work of the Inter-American institutions. The IICA restructured its operation to focus on the Summits process; it called on Ministers of Agriculture to develop a coherent overview of needs, to design plans, and to mobilize resources for implement-



ing these plans. The result was a clear consensus on the actions necessary to create opportunities for agricultural producers, to improve food security and compete in international markets.”

- In addition, in Resolution CP/RES.826 (1338/02) of the Permanent Council of the OAS, which was approved on September 25, 2002, the Council endorsed the reform process at IICA and several delegations congratulated the leadership of the Institute on its new path.
- In conclusion, given the mandates we received in Quebec, Bavaro, Panama and Monterrey, we are convinced that the development agenda must:
 - a. Support the countries in the implementation of the 2003-2015 Plan of Action.
 - b. Provide technical cooperation services.
 - c. Monitor the state of and outlook for agriculture and rural life in the hemisphere.
 - d. Promote an inter-agency agenda in support of sustainable rural development.
- We see the monitoring of agriculture and rural life in the hemisphere, and the identification of trends, threats, critical emerging issues and opportunities, as an important future role of this Institute as we seek to create societies of knowledge. Acceptance of this responsibility will allow the Institute to accompany the Member States in the implementation of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action. Consequently, in 2004, the Offices in the Member States began a process to define the state of agriculture and rural life in each Member State in order to identify the critical emerging issues, threats, tendencies and opportunities in the sector.



- This exercise has been consolidated into regional, thematic and hemispheric dimensions in order to define the state of agriculture and rural life in the hemisphere. This, we hope, will result in “Outlook” conferences in the entire hemisphere in the future.
- We believe that, with the implementation of these initiatives, the Institute will indeed be playing a strategic role in the modernization of the rural sector, the promotion of food security and the promotion of prosperity in the rural communities of the Americas.
- IICA’s model for technical cooperation must be seen as a means to open and engage in a permanent dialogue between agencies and like-minded organizations that search for more effective and efficient solutions to the problems that affect the countries of the hemisphere.
- We are fully committed to continuing our strategy of “working together” in order to face the challenges of the 21st Century and contribute to meeting the Millennium Development Goals.