



Supporting Science-Based Agricultural Biotechnology Policy Coordination, Education, and Capacity Building

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1. Background-Rationale

In general, the majority of countries from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) still require technical support for the implementation of science-based agricultural biotechnology, supporting and promoting biotech role in addressing food security and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Such technical support can be offered through activities that support:

- i) promoting science-based regulatory systems to countries in the region that would increase domestic acceptance, adoption, use and facilitate international trade of products of agricultural biotechnology;
- ii) engaging with key decision makers and influencers of the technology to enhance understanding of the potential economic, sustainability, and societal contributions of agriculture biotechnology;
- iii) developing alliances to foster collaboration and common messaging at international fora; and
- iv) evaluating areas of challenges and opportunities in the process of developing appropriate activities.

Some of the general activities that will be covered for the current program include:

- a) Convey scientific findings of U.S. and international bodies related to agricultural biotechnologies, and experiences in policy and regulation to support innovation and safety.
- b) Support preparation for international meetings, including the Conference of Parties-Meeting of the Parties (COP-MOP) to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the Global Low-Level Presence Initiative (GLI) and the Like-Minded Group (LMG), which will educate stakeholders on technical issues to allow them participate in international fora dealing with agricultural biotechnologies.
- c) Strengthen the regulatory capacities of key Western Hemisphere countries, especially those who are regional leaders, to conduct risk assessments, undertake appropriate risk management practices, and draft science-based policies and legislation for current and emerging technologies. Leverage global collaborations as appropriate.
- d) Improve risk communication among government officials and other stakeholders to communicate more effectively with their constituency on new technology issues, such as new plant breeding technologies, and nurture public confidence in new technologies and regulatory systems.



In order to respond to the technical needs of LAC countries and with the financial support of USDA/FAS-, IICA carried out capacity building activities, exercises for efficient communication of biotechnology, and collaborated in the preparation of our member countries for participating in the last seven COP/MOP meetings.

In addition to the COP/MOP activities and the financial support to selected delegations, IICA is considering quite relevant to carry out some technical discussions (either on-line or on-site) in biotechnology and biosafety (B&B) regarding key topics, such as gene editing, risk assessment, low level presence (LLP), etc.

IICA's strategy for biotechnology and biosafety development for the last quarter 2022 and early quarter 2023 will include four activities:

- a. Supporting participation of countries officials to COP/MOP-10 (in short, COP/MOP-10). Sponsor some countries delegates in order to participate in COP/MOP-10 (to be carried out four quarter 2022).
- b. Global Low Level Presence Initiative meeting (in short, GLI). Participation on LLP meeting (organized by GLI Secretariat, date to be confirmed).
- c. Like Minded Group meeting (in short: LMG).
- d. Technical support to LAC countries in biosafety of modern- and precision-biotechnology (in short: LAC support)

2. General Objectives

- To increase access to, and markets for, U.S agricultural biotech, genetically engineered, and genome-edited crops.
- Provide Latin American countries with the opportunity to improve their understanding of specific issues to be discussed at COP/MOP-10 and support participation of delegations of selected countries in this event.
- Promote science-based decisions in key issues on biotechnology and biosafety by carrying out a seminar on genome editing and supporting participation in the discussions on low level presence (LLP) situations.

3. General Methodology

In general, the proposed activities will include either in-person or hybrid meetings, in which technical presentations from expert speakers will be offered. Places, topics and names of speakers will be defined in close association with USDA-FAS.



As participants, officials (around 40, representing at least 15 countries) from the National Commissions of Biosafety (NCB) or National Biosafety Authorities (NBA) from Central America, North America, Southern cone, Andean Region, and the Caribbean will be invited.

Official invitations for both speakers and participants will be submitted by IICA.

Official language will be Spanish although English translation will be available.

4. General Budget

Item	IICA's contribution (in kind)	USDA/FAS contribution			
		COP/MO P-10	GLI	LMG	LAC support
1. Personnel					
Pedro Rocha, <i>Ph.D.</i> (Technical executor, 60 days*350 USD)	21,000	0	0	0	0
Subtotal Personnel	21,000	0	0	0	0
2. Travel and accommodation costs					
Airplane tickets, travel insurances, accommodation, transportation, per diem	0	80,518	15,681	11,136	41,954
Subtotal Travel	0	80,518	15,681	11,136	41,954
3. Logistics					
Supplies (for office materials for conferences and lab work supplies)	0	100	100	100	300
Contractual: Translation, software applications, rental room and services	0	1,200	2,400	2,400	3200
Administrative and Financial costs	4,425	0	0	0	0
Subtotal Logistics	4,425	1,300	2,500	2,500	3,500
Sub-Total per event	25,425	81,818	18,181	13,636	45,454
Cooperator Indirect costs (10%)	0	8,182	1,819	1,364	4,546
Total per event	25,425	90,000	20,000	15,000	50,000
Total per contribution	25,425	175,000			

Notes: -Estimated budget (based on June-2022 values)

- Costs per event and items could be modified. However, limit of 175,000 USD will not be overpassed.

- In biotech, **IICA must work with money advances**. Therefore, money for these activities will be required in advance for last quarter 2022.

5. Detailed proposals

Because this proposal includes four activities, each one is described in detailed as follows.

5.1. Supporting participation of countries officials to COP/MOP-10 (COP/MOP-10)

5.1.1. Background

COP/MOP-10, originally planned for Kunming, China in October 2020 has been postponed several times and it seems likely that the in-person meeting will be held during the last quarter 2022. As it has been carried out for previous COP/MOP meetings, with USDA-FAS support, IICA will sponsor participation of some delegates from LAC countries to the COP/MOP-10 in order to guarantee the presence of key LAC technical representatives in the discussions.

5.1.2. Objectives

- Provide financial support to delegates from selected countries in order to assist and participate in the COP/MOP-10 to be carried out in Kunming, China (four quarter 2022).

5.1.3. Expected results

- Representatives of key countries actively participating (in form of joint statements, interventions, support, decisions, etc.) in COP/MOP-10.

5.1.4. Methodology

- Based on the information acquired from the pre-COP/MOP meeting, and knowing names of countries delegates, trip of officials from key countries will be supported to participate in the COP/MOP-10 meeting. List of countries will be defined in conjunction with USDA/FAS.
- IICA will provide airplane tickets (in economy class, and preferable in U.S. flag air carriers or U.S. code sharing), travel insurances, and *per diem* for assistance to the event.
- As a way of control, selected delegates will provide copy of their corresponding registration sheet.

5.1.5. Chronogram for COP/MOP-10 participation in 2022

Description	Responsible	Oct	Nov	Dec
1. Administrative issues	IICA, USDA	X		
2. Money transfer	USDA	X		
3. Sending invitations	IICA	X		
4. Organizational logistics (buying tickets, sending per diem, etc.)	IICA	X		
5. COP/MOP-10	COP/MOP Secretariat Selected delegates	X		
6. Receiving reports form participants	Selected delegates		X	
7. Preparing and sending activity report	IICA			X

5.1.6. Budget for COP/MOP-9 participation

Item	IICA's contribution (in kind)	USDA contribution (in USD)
1. Personnel		
Pedro Rocha, <i>Ph.D.</i> (Technical executor, 10 days*350 USD)	3,500	0
Subtotal Personnel	3,500	0
2. Travel and accommodation costs		
Airplane tickets, travel insurances, taxis, per diem, covid tests	0	80,518
Subtotal Travel	0	80,518
3. Logistics		
Supplies (for office materials for conferences and lab work supplies)	0	100
Contractual: Translation, software applications	0	1,200
<u>Financial and administrative costs</u>	1,650	0
Subtotal Logistics	1,650	1,300
Subtotal		81,818
<u>Net Institutional Rate IICA (10%)</u>	0	8,182
Total	5,150	90,000

5.2. Global Low Level Presence Initiative meeting (in short, GLI)

5.2.1. Background

The Global Low Level Presence Initiative (GLI) is a group of 15 countries that are committed to working together on the issue of Low Level Presence (LLP). Since 2012, the GLI has had five face-to-face meetings, with the latest held on June 14-15, 2017 in Rome, Italy. Following each meeting, GLI members endorse a revised international work plan on LLP highlighting areas of focus for the coming year. Because of COVID situation, meeting for 2020 postponed and meetings for 2021 and 2022 were virtual.

At the last GLI, member countries highlighted the need to have a firmer understanding of how countries manage LLP situations. As most of the GLI discussions focused on sharing information related to regulatory and policy approaches to managing LLP, there is a gap in understanding how these policies and approaches are implemented during actual LLP scenarios.

5.2.2. Objectives

- Enable exchange of information on how countries manage LLP situations.
- Identify challenges associated with managing LLP situations.
- Enable countries to identify areas for collaboration when responding to LLP situations.
- Identify needs of regulators to facilitate response to LLP situations.

5.2.3. Expected result

- Identified needs and challenges of GLI member countries in order to support the clear understanding on how policies and approaches are implemented during actual LLP scenarios.

5.2.4. Methodology

- Agenda will be prepared and shared by GLI Secretariat.
- Official language will be Spanish although English translation will be available (if required).

5.2.5. Chronogram

As in previous occasions in which IICA has acted as facilitator in GLI meetings, based on the agenda and instructions given by GLI Secretariat, IICA will present the chronogram.

5.2.6. Budget LLP simulation

Cost overview: Room rental, simultaneous translation (English/Spanish), equipment (microphones, computer, projector, speakers), coffee breaks/ lunch, participant costs (hotel night, per diems), potential travel costs for regulators that are not attending the GLI meeting, costs for contracted organization

Item	IICA's contribution (in kind)	USDA contribution (in USD)
1. Personnel		
Pedro Rocha, <i>Ph.D.</i> (Technical executor, 10 days*350 USD)	3,500	0
Subtotal Personnel	3,500	0
2. Travel and accommodation costs		
Airplane tickets, travel insurances, taxis, per diem, covid tests	0	15,681
Subtotal Travel	0	15,681
3. Logistics		
Supplies (for office materials for conferences and lab work supplies)	0	100
Contractual: Translation, rental room and services	0	2,400
Administrative and Financial costs	600	0
Subtotal Logistics	600	2,500
Subtotal	4,100	18,181
<u>Indirect charges (Net Institutional Rate IICA, 10%)</u>	0	1,819
Total	4,100	20,000

5.3. LMG

5.3.1. Background

For biotechnology and biosafety, Like-Minded Group (LMG) meetings have demonstrated to be important spaces for education, discussion, and purposes presentation. Unfortunately, because of the COVID-19 pandemics, in-person discussions have almost stopped for more than two years. Certainly, virtual sessions have been useful but not enough to deal with strategic and sensitive issues. So, based on the technical and regulatory advances regarding living modified organisms (LMOs), and precision biotechnology (in particular, genome editing [GnEd]) in LAC region, we consider relevant to carry out a LMG meeting.

5.3.2. Objectives

- Support technical and strategic discussion on agricultural biotechnology through a Like-Minded Group meeting.

5.3.3. Expected results

- Identified current relevant issues on agricultural biotechnology for the LAC countries.
- To explore specific actions for the development of science-based agricultural biotechnology in the region.

5.3.4. Methodology

- An in-person meeting will carry out during the last quarter 2022.
- Location will define with USDA-FAS, depending time and country situation.
- Official language will be Spanish although English translation will be available.

Participants

- Officials (around 20) from the National Commissions of Biosafety (NCB) or National Biosafety Authorities (NBA) from Central America, North America, Southern cone, and Andean Region will be invited. However, the list of countries will be defined by USDA-FAS.

Supporting personnel: IICA and translators (4)

5.3.5. Chronogram LMG

Description	Responsible	Oct	Nov	Dec
1. Administrative issues	IICA, USDA	X		
2. USDA-IICA planning	USDA, IICA	X	X	
3. Money transfer	USDA	X	X	
4. Sending invitations	IICA		X	
5. Organizational logistics (negotiating place, buying tickets, sending per diem, etc.)	IICA		X	
6. Event	IICA		X	
7. Preparing activity report	IICA			X

5.3.6. Budget LMG

Item	IICA's contribution (in kind)	USDA contribution (in USD)
1. Personnel		
Pedro Rocha, <i>Ph.D.</i> (Technical executor, 10 days*350 USD)	3,500	0
Subtotal Personnel	3,500	0
2. Travel and accommodation costs		
Airplane tickets, travel insurances, taxis, per diem, covid tests	0	11,136
Subtotal Travel	0	11,136
3. Logistics		
Supplies (office materials and lab work supplies)	0	100
Contractual: Translation, rental room and services	0	2,400
Administrative and Financial costs	525	0
Subtotal Logistics	525	2,500
Subtotal	4,025	13,636
<u>Indirect charges (Net Institutional Rate IICA, 10%)</u>	0	1,364
Total	4,025	15,000

5.4. Technical support to LAC countries in biosafety of modern- and precision-biotechnology (in short: LAC support)

5.4.1. Background

IICA, with the financial support of USDA-FAS, carries out technical activities in biotechnology and biosafety (B&B) in three main areas: institutional support, B&B training and biotech communication. Some relevant results include the review of frameworks and the subsequent generation of biotech regulation in Guatemala, and Honduras; more recently with Panama and in process with El Salvador. In addition, important work genome editing technologies (training and regulation) has been the focus of IICA (Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, Ecuador, Panama) and the results are quite either positive or promising.

In order to continue with these types of activities, the following are some of the activities to carry out in the months coming:

- Panama: Socialization of the biotech regulatory proposal
- Ecuador: Contribution to the approval of the genome editing regulation
- Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador: To continue supporting the harmonization of biotech policies in these three countries.
- Colombia and Costa Rica: To have meetings with novel authorities
- LAC Region: To continue providing technical training in Genome Editing Technologies
To continue supporting COP-MOP intersessional discussions virtually

5.4.2. Objectives

- Strengthen biotech harmonization in Central American countries.
- Enable exchange of information on how countries are approaching to regulate genome editing and new breeding techniques.
- To continue support on environmental risk assessment to selected countries.

5.4.3. Expected results

- Strengthened science-based biotech policies in countries of Central America, and by doing that, novel biotech crops approved and commercialized in the region.
- Established genome editing conceptual basis, applications and regulatory implications and examples as a way to contribute to a clear understanding, proper regulatory analysis and efficient communication of a new breeding techniques branch in selected countries of Latin America.

5.4.4. Methodology

- In-person (or hybrid) workshops and seminars.
- Official language will be Spanish although English translation will be available.
- Locations will be defined depending time and country situation.

Participants

- Officials (40, representing 20 countries) from the National Commissions of Biosafety (NCB) or National Biosafety Authorities (NBA) from Central America, North America, Southern cone, Andean Region, and the Caribbean will be invited. In addition, delegates from selected countries could be invited to participate on-line through Zoom system.

Speakers to be defined

Supporting personnel: IICA and translators (4)

Observers:

- USDA and other US agencies
- Private sector representatives

5.4.5. Chronogram LAC support

Description	Responsible	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
1. Administrative issues	IICA, USDA	X	X				
2. Proposal adjustment	USDA, IICA	X	X				
3. Money transfer	USDA		X	X			
4. Sending invitations	IICA		X	X	X	X	
5. Organizational logistics (negotiating place, buying tickets, sending per diem, etc.)	IICA		X	X	X	X	
6. Events	IICA		X	X	X	X	
7. Preparing activity report	IICA						X

5.4.6. Budget genome LAC support

Item	IICA's contribution (in kind)	USDA contribution (in USD)
1. Personnel		
Pedro Rocha, <i>Ph.D.</i> (Technical executor, 30 days*350 USD)	10,500	0
Subtotal Personnel	10,500	0
2. Travel and accommodation costs		
Airplane tickets, travel insurances, taxis, per diem, covid tests	0	41,954
Subtotal Travel	0	41,954
3. Logistics		
Supplies (office materials and lab work supplies)	0	300
Contractual: Translation, software applications, rental room and services	0	3,200
Administrative and Financial costs	1,650	0
Subtotal Logistics	1,650	3,500
Subtotal	12,150	45,454
Indirect charges (Net Institutional Rate IICA, 10%)	0	4,546
Total	12,150	50,000