

IICA
INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION
ANNUAL REPORT 2023

The International Trade and Regional Integration Program provided support to the member countries of the Institute to enable them to improve their standing in international agrifood markets, with a view to strengthening global and regional food security, while contributing to the sustainable development of the region. The cooperation offered by the Program benefitted more than [5,878 individuals and 1,375 companies](#).

The Program focused its efforts on two areas - trade policy and market access, on the one hand, and trade promotion, on the other. In line with these two spheres of action and six specific areas of work, it succeeded in:

A. CONSOLIDATING THE HEMISPHERIC PARTNERSHIP IN TRADE-RELATED ISSUES

In collaboration with the IDB, ECLAC, FAO and IFPRI, a regional workshop was offered on [“Strengthening the Region’s Agrifood Trade to Boost its Contribution to Sustainable Development and Food Security”](#). The event led to the identification of collective actions to be pursued by the partners, under the leadership of IICA, pursuant to Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) Resolution No. 545, [“Strengthening the](#)



[Hemispheric Partnership for Food Security and Sustainable Development”](#). Collective actions under the Partnership include: the consolidation of a network of agricultural negotiators to promote the development of regional positions within the World Trade Organization (WTO) in support of open, transparent and predictable international trade; the preparation of a coordinated response to the introduction of regulations that have the potential to restrict the agrifood trade of the countries of the region; and increased intraregional trade through more effective use of existing trade agreements and coordination with mechanisms and other institutions that promote regional integration.

B. FACILITATING EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN MULTILATERAL FORUMS



IICA’s position as an observer institution of the WTO Committee on Agriculture enabled it to keep abreast of and disseminate the results of discussions regarding the implementation of measures that hamper or foster the agricultural trade of the countries of the Americas and their partners at the global level. In collaboration with IFPRI, the Institute launched the [“Latin American Network of Agrifood Trade Negotiators”](#), comprised

of 23 participants from 17 countries. As a result of the WTO work plan, El Salvador is now up to date

on its notifications and a Best Practices Manual has been developed to enable countries to improve their participation in the WTO Committee on Agriculture. Moreover, the Program highlighted the contribution of the region to food security and sustainable development in two technical events organized as part of the WTO Public Forum – one on [biodigital innovation](#) and the other on [sustainable agricultural practices](#). Additionally, IICA and the WTO signed a [memorandum of understanding](#) at COP28 to enhance the implementation of actions that promote a fairer and more market-driven agricultural trade system, in addition to other objectives defined in the WTO Agreement on Agriculture and its Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement.

C. DISSEMINATING TRADE INFORMATION, INDICATORS AND POLICIES

The WTO-IICA Reference Center prepared and disseminated 49 information capsules on agrifood trade in the Americas and published 77 articles that attracted more than 34,000 views. Moreover, 11 technical queries were addressed, and two videoconferences held on database management and new trade issues for the Santo Tomas University in Colombia. The Center also contributed to the Public Policy Observatory for Agrifood Systems (OPSAa), providing data for the trade indicator modules ([Agrifood Atlas](#) and [Socioeconomic Indicators](#)) and information on policy frameworks, initiatives and resources.



D. STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL TRADE



In collaboration with IICA's Agricultural Health, Safety and Agrifood Quality Program and the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), two technical workshops were organized on regulatory convergence – one focusing on [equivalence](#) and the other on [conformity assessment procedures](#). The courses attracted 289 participants, including authorities, technical officers and specialists from 13 countries, who exchanged information on the latest developments in the field and identified possible joint actions to promote policies and practices that would facilitate agrifood trade. On the other hand, the Institute worked with the Central American Dairy Federation (FECALAC) and the Central American Agricultural Council (SECAC) to strengthen trade in dairy products and collaborated with the Latin American Poultry Association (ALA) to disseminate information on trade regulations governing poultry products, while identifying potential areas for joint work with both institutions. In partnership with the Southern Agricultural Council (CAS), the Institute offered technical support to conduct a face-to-face meeting at COP28 between the Ministers of CAS and the WTO. Stemming from this meeting, a technical team was established with the WTO, with a view to strengthening the negotiating positions of the Latin American and Caribbean region, in preparation for the upcoming WTO Ministerial Conference in February 2024. Additionally, in coordination with the FAO and the IDB, a Network of Agrifood Trade Experts ([RECA](#)) was established, enlisting 25 experts from 11 countries, aiming to strengthen the technical quality

and relevance of research on agrifood trade in the Americas and build capacities to provide technical advice and policy recommendations to governments and the private sector.

E. BUILDING TECHNICAL CAPACITIES

The Program contributed to capacity building in the area of agricultural trade policy and export expertise, which included the organization of four courses and 25 lectures and conferences that registered 4,110 participants. At the level of training, in conjunction with partners such as the FAO, SIECA and SECAC, courses were offered on “International Trade and Agriculture” and “Agricultural Trade Policy”. In terms of capacity development in relation to exportation, a joint course was organized with ALADI, entitled “Training for the Internationalization of Agricultural SMEs”, in addition to another course on “Preparing to Export Agrifood Products”, which was held in tandem with the Forum for International Trade Training (FITT) in Canada.



F. LINKING PRODUCERS WITH THE MARKET

The [seventh](#) and [eighth](#) editions of the [Virtual Business Roundtable of Agrifood Chains of LAC](#) were held jointly with the FAO, SIECA and SECAC, with a view to supporting agrifood sector companies and organizations to consolidate and diversify their presence in regional markets. In total, 1,173 companies participated, generating close to USD 50 million of expected business. On the other hand, in coordination with the FAO, the third edition of the Caribbean Virtual Business Roundtable was held, with a view to promoting intraregional trade of agrifood products. A total of 202 companies participated in the event and generated USD 1.3 million of expected business.



G. STRENGTHENING MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN THE AMERICAS

Furthermore, the program coordinated the work of the Technical Secretariat of the Market Information Organization of the Americas (MIOA). During the year, the market information systems of five countries were strengthened. There were also four capacity building exercises and 19 information exchange initiatives, involving 788 participants from the five regions of the hemisphere. These initiatives attracted close to 21,148 views on [social media](#).

