



2 March 2015

(15-1176)

Page: 1/3

Committee on Agriculture

Original: Spanish

**THE IICA IN THE WTO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE WORK PLAN V:
JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2015**

SUBMISSION BY THE IICA

The following submission, dated 23 February 2015, is being circulated at the request of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

1 BACKGROUND

1.1. In March 2010, the WTO Committee on Agriculture granted the IICA ad hoc observer status in its regular meetings. Since June 2012, the IICA has been operating a WTO Reference Centre which is open to individuals, associations and institutions from government, business and academic circles and the general public that are interested in obtaining information to improve their technical capacity in the areas of agriculture and international trade.

1.2. A number of joint regional and national technical cooperation activities have been conducted in the framework of the existing alliance between the IICA and the WTO on subjects of particular interest to the two institutions and their member countries, including, in 2014, a Regional Workshop on Trade and Environment for Latin American countries and a national seminar in Costa Rica introducing the multilateral trading system. Thanks to the workshops, participants were able to improve their theoretical and practical knowledge of trade policy in relation to the interaction between trade and the environment, and of the provisions of the multilateral trading system. At the same time, participants were able to strengthen their institutional capacity to participate more effectively in the work being done on trade and the environment at the WTO and in other forums.

1.3. Accordingly, the IICA submitted four joint Work Plans between 2010 and 2014 (documents G/AG/GEN/92; G/AG/GEN/95; G/AG/GEN/105 and G/AG/GEN/115).

1.4. In order to ensure the continuity of the IICA's commitment, a fifth Work Plan has been drafted. This plan is to be submitted at the next regular meeting on the Committee on Agriculture to be scheduled, for circulation to WTO Members.

2 ACTIVITIES TO BE DEVELOPED IN RELATION TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

2.1. The following activities are under consideration:

- a. *Participation and attendance at meetings of the Committee on Agriculture: the IICA, as an observer member of this Committee, undertakes to participate in the regular meetings held at the WTO and addressing matters within its competence.*

-
- b. *Preparation of a paper on the IICA's contribution to the Marrakesh Decision and Food Security:* the IICA undertakes to submit, at the regular meeting of the Committee in November, a contribution on what the Institute has done during the year in the food security area. Since 2010, it has published submissions on this subject: in 2010 (G/AG/GEN/93); in 2011 (G/AG/GEN/97); in 2012 (G/AG/GEN/104); in 2013 (G/AG/GEN/111) and in 2014 (G/AG/GEN/121).
 - c. *Support for technical cooperation activities:* the IICA will support the WTO in its technical cooperation activities directed at ministries of agriculture at both the hemispheric level, through the Inter-American Board of Agriculture, and the subregional level through the Southern Agricultural Council, the Central American Agricultural Council, the Caribbean Alliance, and other ministerial bodies. These actions are designed to enhance the involvement of the IICA's WTO Reference Centre in the development of such activities.
 - d. *Monitoring areas of common interest:* the IICA will monitor the progress of the agricultural trade negotiations in the WTO and will prepare technically to provide technical training or advice to the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean for the introduction by member countries of changes to their international trade policy. At the same time, should the WTO Secretariat require extra IICA technical staff to deal with demands of this type, it will be able to rely on the Institute in its geographical sphere (mainly Latin America and the Caribbean) for such activities and for other matters related to the agricultural areas in which the Institute works.
 - e. *Compliance by countries with agricultural notification requirements:* Since the Committee has identified countries that have fallen behind in submitting agricultural notifications in accordance with the requirements and formats adopted in 1995 by WTO Members (G/AG/2), the IICA will continue to support the WTO's initiatives to conduct regional workshops for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to help them improve and update their agricultural policy notifications.
 - f. *Preparation of technical documents:* The Committee on Agriculture often needs to prepare technical documents. Since the IICA has experience in that area, it could provide the WTO Secretariat with support for such activities at the Committee's request.

3 THE AGRICULTURAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS WITHIN THE INSTITUTE

3.1. The IICA's activities in the WTO are conducted in the framework of the Institute's flagship project, Competitiveness and Agricultural Chains, and it is under the corresponding thematic area that the work plan will be implemented. Implementation of the plan forms part of institutional contribution No. 11 of the 2014-2018 Medium-Term Plan, which consists of strengthening Member State's capacity to build relationships and participate in international forums and other mechanisms for the exchange of knowledge and mobilization of relevant resources for inter-American agriculture. Part of this contribution consists of following up on implementation-related issues concerning the Agreement on Agriculture and progress in the agricultural trade negotiations, and building up capacity in administering agreements that emerge from the Doha Round. At the same time, the IICA's actions in the framework of its cooperation with the WTO are linked both to the flagship project Competitiveness and Sustainability of Agricultural Chains as well as to other IICA flagship projects that address problems relating to resilience and comprehensive risk management in agriculture, and productivity and sustainability of family agriculture for food security and the rural economy. They are also related to an externally funded project in place for this year, namely "Strengthening bilateral trade between USA and those countries from Latin American with which the USA has established Free Trade Agreements".

3.2. The IICA is represented in 34 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and has an experienced network of experts in agriculture, international trade and trade negotiations, strategically located both in country offices and at Central Headquarters, through whom the technical cooperation activities set out in the Work Plan will be implemented.

3.3. For further information, please contact:

James French

Responsible for the thematic area "Competitiveness and Sustainability of Agricultural Chains"

Email: james.french@iica.int

Tel: (+506) 2216-0218

Adriana Campos Azofeifa

Trade Policy and Negotiations Specialist and Coordinator of the WTO Regional Reference Centre at the IICA

Email: adriana.campos@iica.int

Tel.: (+506) 2216-0170
