

FAO and IICA

Working together for
agriculture and rural life



2006 - 2007 Report



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Introduction

This Report describes the main actions undertaken jointly by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) during the period 2006-2007. These efforts form part of a long history of cooperation that dates back many years and are derived from successive Technical Cooperation agreements signed between both organizations.

This document summarizes the main results achieved by both organizations working together on different strategic issues, and was prepared under an agreement signed by FAO and IICA on April 27, 2006. The agreement was aimed at strengthening the technical cooperation provided by both organizations to their Member States in order to strengthen efforts towards food security and improve agriculture and rural life.

The joint work of *monitoring agriculture* (1) is an unequivocal gesture in support of the process to implement the Millennium Development Goals and follow-up on the International Food Summits, the Summit of the Americas and the Ministerial Agreements on Agriculture and Rural Life. In the sphere of food security, some of the most important actions included the Central American

Planning Workshop of the Latin America and Caribbean Without Hunger Initiative, the joint review of El Salvador's National Food Security Plan and the activities carried out in the context of the National Alliance against Hunger in Honduras.

On the issue of *regional integration* (2), IICA and FAO collaborated actively in the implementation of the Jagdeo Initiative in the Caribbean Region aimed at increasing the participation of the region's agriculture in domestic and international markets, and in the formulation of the Central American Agricultural Policy (PACA).

In the area of *agricultural health and food safety* (3), both organizations supported the Committee of the Codex Alimentarius for Latin America in its analysis of draft regulations and in the dissemination of information related to health inspections, prevention and eradication of diseases, biosafety issues and best agricultural practices, among other topics. Another important effort was the work carried out in the area of *animal health* (4), specifically in capacity-building projects for the prevention of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (Asian H5N1) in the Southern region.

In *research and genetic resources* (5 and 6), IICA and FAO supported the global dialogue in the implementation of the Program “Application of an innovative outreach system for linking farmers to markets” and in the process of coordinating the work of the national institutions responsible for these issues.

In the *training of agribusiness leaders* (7), emphasis was placed on developing training tools and materials, disseminating experiences and lessons learned and organizing training courses in rural areas. With regard to *Developing differentiated products based on local resources* (8), small and medium-scale agricultural enterprises have received support in developing strategies and through the exchange of experiences and efforts to promote a productive and commercial differentiation based on origin, as well as the evaluation of their production projects.

As to the issue of *environmental sustainability* (9), both organizations focused their attention on the process to formulate the Central American Regional Agro-environmental Strategy (RAS)

and on negotiations with other international organizations to obtain the necessary funding for this initiative. Support was also provided for activities aimed at promoting the *use of agricultural insurance* (10) and strengthening community preparedness to address natural disasters and mitigating the damage caused to agriculture.

FAO and IICA also contributed to *building rural networks* (11) in the context of the project “Andean Rural Development Forum” and supported initiatives aimed at enhancing the region’s rural development capabilities.

In order to *strengthen rural education* (12), full advantage was taken of activities such as global dialogues and national forums organized for the purpose of preparing farmers to effectively meet the challenges of modernizing agriculture and improving the quality of agricultural education and training.

Following the interagency cooperation guidelines established to strengthen the technical cooperation provided by FAO and IICA to their

Member States, major progress was achieved on the issue of *agricultural information* (13), specifically in relation to the use of information technologies and knowledge management, and through the promotion of e-Agriculture Project, the IMARK training materials, and information management courses. The objective was to improve the organization of documentary and statistical information on agriculture.

Finally, in the area of *understanding the links between biofuels and food security* (14), one of the most important emerging issues for the regional agricultural sector, FAO and IICA provided support for the “Second Latin American and Caribbean Biofuels Seminar”, organized by OLADE in El Salvador.

The progress of the technical cooperation projects under implementation and the systematic updating of countries’ needs, based on the priority issues, have facilitated the design of a methodology for managing cooperation. The idea is to analyze and evaluate new technical cooperation projects in order to satisfy the demand generated in the different countries.

The positive results achieved by the end of 2007 reflect these efforts and encourage both institutions to continue to make an even greater contribution to agricultural development, food security and the relief of rural poverty – all this, in the context of their commitment to work together, optimizing the use of their resources and enhancing their complementarities.



José Graziano da Silva
Regional Representative of FAO
for Latin America and the Caribbean



Chelston W.D. Brathwaite
Director General of IICA

About FAO

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is currently the largest autonomous international organization of the United Nations System, with 191 Member States, one Member Organization (the European Community) and one Associate Member (the Faroe Islands). In addition to its headquarters in Rome (Italy), FAO has a large decentralized network of regional offices, subregional offices and liaison offices, as well as representations in 78 countries. The FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean is headquartered in Santiago de Chile and has three sub-regions: South America, with headquarters in Chile; Mesoamerica with an office in Panama and the Caribbean, with headquarters in Barbados.

Since its creation, FAO has worked to alleviate poverty and hunger by promoting agricultural development, improved nutrition and the pursuit of food security – ensuring that all people have regular access to a sufficient supply of food to lead an active and healthy life. The

Organization provides direct technical assistance for development; collects, analyzes and disseminates information; shares its expertise on policy and planning with governments; and serves as an international forum for countries to discuss issues related to agriculture and food.

FAO is active in efforts to promote the sustainable use of land and water, plant and livestock production, forestry, fisheries, economic and social policy, investment, nutrition, food standards, and commodities and trade. It also plays a major role in dealing with emergency situations that affect food and agriculture, such as droughts, hunger and pests.

As a long-term strategy for the conservation and management of natural resources, FAO encourages the sustainable development of agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries, with the aim of satisfying the needs of both current and future generations through programs that do not degrade the environment and that are technically appropriate, economically viable and socially acceptable.

About IICA

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) is a specialized organization of the Inter-American System, and its objectives are to encourage, promote and support the efforts of its Member States in order to achieve agricultural development and the wellbeing of rural populations.

With more than six decades of history, the Institute is responding to the new mandates issued by the Heads of State and Government of the Americas, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Ministers of Agriculture of the hemisphere, to reposition itself so that it can meet the new challenges facing agriculture and respond to requests for support from its member countries.

As it pursues its vision and carries out its mission, IICA has competitive advantages it can draw on to perform its new role. It has accumulated a wealth of knowledge regarding agriculture, rural territories, the diversity of peoples and cultures and the agro-ecological diversity of the Americas, all of which are important for crafting creative solutions to a wide range of problems and challenges.

Its presence in all of its Member State gives the Institute the flexibility it needs to move resources

between countries and regions, in order to promote and adapt cooperation initiatives aimed at addressing national and regional priorities, facilitating the flow of information and improving the dissemination of best practices.

The Institute has its headquarters in Costa Rica and Offices in 34 countries of the Americas. It also has an Office in Miami, which is responsible for the Inter-American Program for the Promotion of Agricultural Trade, Agribusiness and Food Safety, and an Office for Europe, located in Madrid, Spain. The Directorate for Strategic Partnerships works out of the IICA Office in Washington D.C.

IICA's Medium Term Plan 2006-2010 helps our Member States to develop a new institutional framework for agriculture and rural life and to approach a series of strategic technical priorities for promoting:

- Trade and competitiveness of agribusinesses
- The development of rural communities based on a territorial approach.
- Agricultural health and food safety.
- The sustainable management of natural resources and the environment.
- The introduction of technology and innovation for the modernization of agriculture.





Principal joint results

Building inter-institutional agendas...

FAO and IICA are committed to a modality of technical cooperation based on interagency coordination and mechanisms for synergic action that guarantee a better use of the resources and competencies placed at the disposal of their Member States. The objective is to ensure complementary and coordinated actions in the different areas of cooperation.

In this regard, both institutions have signed various cooperation instruments in the areas of agricultural health, food safety, and information management, among others, which have served to strengthen the strategic partnership between both organizations.

In the Southern Region (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay) the Southern Agricultural Council (CAS), comprising the Ministers of Agriculture of those countries, is constituted as a platform for requesting and receiving international cooperation.

Actions at country-level:

- In **Argentina, El Salvador, Haiti and St. Lucia** both organizations formalized strategic alliances to promote food security, the improvement of agriculture and rural prosperity, facilitating closer and more systematic cooperation links between FAO and IICA, and strengthening the technical cooperation services delivered to countries.
- In **Costa Rica**, IICA, FAO and RUTA established the Commission for Interagency Coordination with the aim of harmonizing international cooperation efforts, in line with the National Development Plan and the priorities of the agricultural sector. The Commission, led by the Ministry of Agriculture, has defined competitiveness, agricultural health, food safety and rural development as the priority areas for international cooperation.

- In **Guatemala** the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food was presented with a Work Plan prepared jointly by IICA-FAO, aimed at complementing and enhancing the organizations' respective capacities and resources to benefit agriculture and improve rural life.
- In **Panama** both organizations supported the formation of groups and interagency commissions to provide a coordinated response to the country's technical cooperation needs. FAO and IICA are currently working with OIRSA and AECID on a Strategic Plan for Coffee that aims to reactivate the country's coffee sector.



Chelston W.D. Brathwaite and José Graziano da Silva.



A hemisphere without hunger...

The eradication of extreme poverty and hunger is the first of the eight Millennium Development Goals that establish a series of objectives to be achieved by all countries by 2015. Its goal is to reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

In this context, following a Planning Workshop for Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic in relation to the Latin America and Caribbean Without Hunger Initiative, in which an Interagency Work Group (coordinated by FAO) was established, IICA was assigned the task of conducting applied research in agriculture as a contribution to food security and the eradication of hunger.

In **El Salvador**, IICA and FAO carried out a joint review of the country's National Food Security Plan, prepared with technical cooperation from FAO. As a result two municipal-level initiatives are being implemented in Guatajiagua and Nueva Granada, two extremely poor communities. Meanwhile, in **Honduras and Bolivia**, both organizations are working in close coordination with the National Alliance Against Hunger (ANCHA), promoted by FAO in the context of the International Alliance Against Hunger. This

is a voluntary association whose members share a common commitment to work towards the rapid eradication of hunger in the world.



World Food Day

In Grenada, Haiti, Honduras and St. Kitts and Nevis, IICA and FAO supported various activities organized on "World Food Day", aimed at increasing awareness of food security issues.



Monitoring agriculture...

As part of the coordinated actions to support the implementation of the mandates of the World Food and Americas Summits and of the Ministerial Agreements on Agriculture and Rural Life, IICA, ECLAC and FAO have worked together to develop indicators for the follow-up and evaluation system of the Agro 2003-2015 Plan, in compliance with Mandate 43 of the 2005 Mar del Plata Plan of Action.

Similarly, with a view to developing a shared vision of the state of agriculture and rural life, both organizations, along with ECLAC and CATIE, contributed working documents and supplied essential information to prepare the baseline analysis that enabled IICA to publish

the Report *“Agriculture and the New Challenges of Development: The State of and Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas 2007”*. The Report offers a summary on the performance of the agrifood sector, policies for agriculture and rural life, institutional reforms in agriculture and the rural milieu, the agrifood trade, agricultural health and innovation and the latest agricultural technology.



Towards regional integration...

The new global and regional development context, and particularly the development of agriculture, has prompted governments, academia and the private sector to strengthen their organizations and implement more intensive and permanent processes of dialogue within their own regions. Integration has emerged as an alternative for establishing regional policies and agreements to allow governments to take full advantage of their region's potential in terms of its institutional framework, its social capital, its markets and its store of knowledge to obtain social and economic benefits for their countries.

As members of the Secretariat of the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture and the Rural Milieu in the Caribbean, IICA and FAO have received clear instructions from the CARICOM Heads of State to guide the implementation of the *Jagdeo Initiative*, and to plan and conduct fundraising activities for the Caribbean region.

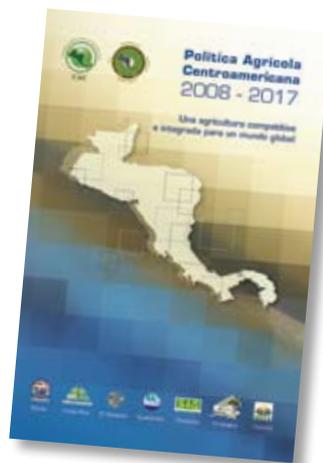
As part of an Interagency Group in the Central Region, IICA and FAO provided technical and financial cooperation in the formulation process of the *Central American Agricultural Policy (PACA)*, led by the



The Jagdeo Initiative

In an effort to increase agribusiness' share of domestic and international markets, President Bharrat Jagdeo of Guyana is spearheading a process aimed at enhancing agriculture. The full title of the initiative is "Strengthening agriculture for sustainable growth and development: Proposal for interventions to alleviate the key binding constraints to the development of the agricultural sector in the CARICOM countries".

Central American Agricultural Council (CAC), establishing work groups, and shared technical secretariats. The Policy was approved by the CAC's Council of Ministers and welcomed by the Heads of State and Government of the Central American Integration System (SICA), as the "key instrument for strengthening regional integration, the competitiveness of the agricultural sector, regional food security, and promoting increased access for small and medium-scale producers to the benefits of regional integration and the complementarity between the public and private sectors" (Resolution 20 of the Declaration of the Thirty-first Summit of Heads of State and Government of the SICA Countries).



Promoting agricultural health and food safety...

The trade in agricultural products in the Americas, with nearly US\$190,000 million in exports and US\$130,000 million in imports, is facilitated thanks to the application of agricultural health and food safety standards and regulations. However, to maintain or increase that commercial exchange it is essential to continue with efforts to strengthen national agricultural services and the legal frameworks governing agricultural issues.

In this context, a regional workshop was organized in the Caribbean region for the purpose of building capacity in food manipulation practices and in the implementation of the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system in small and medium-scale tourism enterprises in Barbados.

Country-level activities:

- In **Ecuador**, the IICA – FAO partnership and the SALTO –USAID project worked together on the drafting of an Animal and Plant Health Bill, and prepared the National Guides on Good Agricultural and Livestock Practices, the General Regulations of the Animal and Plant Health Laws, and Manuals of Procedures for imported agricultural products.
- In **Grenada**, greater public awareness of biosafety issues was promoted through a television documentary produced by a FAO project and administered by the National Consultative Authority on Biosafety.
- In **Paraguay**, the national food safety institutions applied the “Performance, vision and strategy” (PVS) instrument in a workshop organized by SENACSA and IICA with the cooperation of the World Bank, and the participation of representatives of PAHO, FAO, the National Institute of Food and Nutrition (INAN) and the Technical Secretariat for Planning of the European Union.



CODEX

During 2006, IICA provided continuous support to the Codex Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) in the analysis of draft regulations and the dissemination of information. It also supported a meeting of the Americas Chapter to review phytosanitary standards in the context of the IPPC work agenda. At this event, organized by the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, countries analyzed the proposed regulations for approval at the Meeting of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures. In Antigua and Barbuda, the local IICA Office was invited to participate in the CODEX workshop promoted by the “Antigua and Barbuda Bureau of Standards” and the FAO Sub-Regional Office in the Caribbean. In Dominica, IICA endorsed the proposal of the FAO project to strengthen the National Codex Contact Points (NCCP) to promote food inspection systems.



Prevention of animal diseases...

In the field of animal health, one of the most important joint exercises undertaken in 2007 was the simulation of an outbreak of Avian Influenza in countries such as St. Lucia and Suriname. By simulating the presence of the virus in a poultry farm, the exercise made it possible to assess the countries' levels of preparedness to manage an outbreak of disease caused by the H5N1 virus. The participants included officials of the Ministries of Agriculture and Health, as well as personnel of IICA, FAO, USAID and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

With regard to information concerning risks, materials on the prevention of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza were widely disseminated to the public, including a series of ten radio programs in Spanish and Portuguese entitled "*Prevention is better ... an intelligent decision*" and a video in Spanish and Portuguese entitled "*Bird flu: prevention is possible*". Both materials were produced by IICA, based on the technical guide prepared by FAO, and were validated at the "Training Workshops on Communications for Development and Information for the Prevention of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza", organized by FAO in Ecuador, Guatemala and Uruguay. Recently these materials were translated into English, Portuguese and Creole for the benefit

of small and medium-scale poultry farmers in Latin America and the Caribbean.

It is important to mention the publication of the report on the "First Hemispheric Meeting on International Border Controls in Animal and Plant Health" held in Chile and organized by the



Project: "Strengthening the Southern Agricultural Council for the prevention of Avian Influenza"

Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay received assistance in the design of the above mentioned project approved by the World Bank (WB), through an analysis of complementarities of animal health projects (FAO-IICA-WB-CAS). IICA and FAO have also implemented a coordinated management system for the continuous monitoring and follow-up of agricultural health projects in the Southern region.



country's Agriculture and Livestock Service (SAG). The purpose of the meeting was to formalize an ongoing dialogue and define basic guidelines for a hemispheric policy to harmonize and strengthen border control strategies, in a way compatible with a fluid and safe commercial exchange from the point of view of plant and animal health regulations.

The following results were achieved in this area:

- In **Venezuela**, IICA-FAO and UNDP supported the preparation of a National Plan on Avian Influenza; and the follow-up of the International Experts Commission of the Global Lactoperoxidase Program for the definition of logistical aspects and materials to support the Training Program.
- In **Barbados**, as part of a hemispheric initiative, IICA, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and FAO developed a national preparedness plan for the influenza pandemic.
- In the **Dominican Republic**, FAO/WB/IICA produced a joint technical proposal

to enable this country to secure funding from the World Bank for prevention activities and to strengthen the health protection infrastructure against avian and human influenza.

- In **Trinidad and Tobago**, the Caribbean Joint Meeting on Animal Disease Surveillance and Preparedness, focusing on avian influenza, was organized in conjunction with other international agencies, the CARICOM Secretariat, the Caribbean Poultry Association, the Caribbean Animal Health Network (CaribVet), CIRAD, the Chamber of Agricultural Products, PAHO, and the US Department of Agriculture.
- In **Paraguay**, an Interagency Coordination Group involving FAO-IICA-PAHO-PANAFTOSA was established to cooperate with government institutions and the agricultural production chain on public health and animal health issues. The aforementioned organizations have also prepared a short-term work program with emphasis on a Contingency Plan for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and food safety activities.

Linking global, regional and national research...

Investment in science and technology is a key factor in the hemisphere's economic and social development. The importance of generating knowledge and innovation in the agrifood sector is already evident, as is role played by technology in the competitive insertion of countries or regions in this globalized world.

Working through GFAR (Global Forum on Agricultural Research), FAO and IICA joined forces to prepare a proposal and a Plan of Action for Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to develop a Global Partnership Program (GPP) in the "Application of an innovative outreach system for linking farmers to markets". IICA is also working with FAO and GFAR on a project to promote the use of information and communications technologies for agricultural research and innovation, undertaken in the context of FORAGRO. Both organizations are providing intensive cooperation for these activities, permanently sharing documents and analysis derived from the meetings in which they both participate.

In order to introduce new technologies and innovations into agriculture, IICA, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and FAO



Biotechnology: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay

The FAO Project "Development of technical reference tools for biosafety management in the member countries of the expanded Mercosur", contemplates the active participation of national Biotechnology experts of the GT5 (*Working Group on Public Policies on Biotechnology*) of CAS and IICA.

joined forces to launch the two-stage project financed by the CDB and entitled "Evaluation of Greenhouse Technology for Food Production in the Caribbean", related to greenhouse management in the Caribbean, specifically in Barbados and Dominica.

At the national level, the efforts were oriented to the following actions:

- In **Bolivia**, IICA and FAO are participating in the Support and Follow-up Committee

of the Bolivian Agricultural Technology System (CAS-SIBTA).

- In the **Dominican Republic**, a joint effort is under way to support the agricultural sector through the selection and propagation of seven (7) clones for the

cultivation of yucca varieties appropriate for the national market and for export to the United States. These materials have been propagated and improved to supply women's groups belonging to the National Confederation of Rural Women (CONAMUCA).



Exchanging experiences in genetic resources...

For several years, IICA and FAO have maintained a working partnership in the field of genetic resources and, in this context; IICA has participated in meetings of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources at global level.

For its part, FAO has participated in meetings of the National Commissions on Plant Resources in Costa Rica, El Salvador and Guatemala. These Commissions have received support from IICA, Bioversity (formerly IPGRI), CATIE and the NARIs of the different countries, as well as from universities and research institutes specializing in specific products.

With the backing of CATIE, both organizations have supported efforts to coordinate the

networks on plant genetic resources, and more specifically the actions related to the Mesoamerican Network for Plant Genetic Resources (REMERFI). These efforts seek to improve the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources by strengthening the national systems responsible for these resources and promoting the coordinated implementation of the respective actions at the national and Mesoamerican levels.



National Commission on Plant Genetic Resources - Guatemala

In coordination with FAO, a process is under way to promote the articulation of the national institutions in order to strengthen the efforts of the National Commission on Plant Genetic Resources. As part of this initiative a national meeting was held to discuss the importance of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources with the participation of CATIE, FAO and IICA. The ratification of this Treaty, approved by the National Assembly, facilitated a review of the role played by different institutions in the application of regulations on this matter.



Training leaders for agribusiness...

Both organizations appreciate the importance of partnership as a strategy for improving competitiveness and recognize the various mechanisms that facilitate its application in rural businesses of Latin America and the Caribbean.

For this reason, the Program for the Development of Rural Agroindustry (PRODAR), IICA and FAO's Agricultural Management, Marketing and Finance Service (AGSF), have worked together to develop teaching materials for the training of leaders of rural business organizations. These training resources were used in Ecuador with organizations of potato and quinoa producers and with business organizations of cacao farmers in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, in the context of the "Andean Countries Cocoa Export Support Opportunities" (ACCESO) Program, involving IICA, the World Cocoa Foundation and USAID.

Finally, a distance learning course on "Policies for Agribusiness Management in Rural Business Partnerships" was organized in the context of the FAO-FODEPAL platform, with instructors from IICA-PRODAR. The course served to enhance national capacities for the creation of new businesses.



Competition *"Successful experiences in business partnerships in Latin America"*

PRODAR, the AGSF and FAO's Information Network on Post-harvest Operations– INPhO, promoted and organized a competition on "Lessons Learned from Rural Agroindustry".

Developing differentiated products based on local resources ...

In an effort to support production projects at the local or territorial level, IICA and FAO have identified a series of processes and products associated with the products' area of origin, which enjoy a very high reputation among consumers. It was therefore considered important to promote product differentiation strategies within small and medium-sized agricultural businesses, either by evaluating their products, assessing the quality associated with their geographic area or origin (physical, genetic or human characteristics), or developing marketing and labeling processes.

In this context, IICA, through PRODAR, has been jointly accompanying and implementing the FAO strategy throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. This effort has included the preparation of reference documents and



Workshop “Food quality linked to Origin and Traditions: Lessons and Perspectives”

The International Seminar on Food Quality Linked to Origin and Traditions in Latin America was organized jointly with the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRI) of Chile for the purpose of exchanging experiences on this topic, facilitating processes to improve food quality and promoting cooperation among countries.

the organization of discussion and exchange workshops. Future actions are expected to focus on activities to generate and exchange information, and on the creation of a Latin American network of specialists on this topic.

In **Ecuador**, both organizations designed a methodology to evaluate small production projects, subject to the approval and the disbursement of funds from the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES). In addition, they evaluated 250 small production projects supported by the Ministry of Social Welfare.



Promoting environmental sustainability...



Among the resolutions adopted during the intersectoral meeting of Ministers of Agriculture, Environment and Health of Central America (CAC-CCAD-COMISCA), held in Panama, in June 2006, was a request to FAO and other international cooperation organizations to support the Technical Secretariats of the different Councils of Ministers participating in the formulation of the Regional Agro-environmental Strategy (RAS) and in the negotiations to obtain the necessary funding.

IICA, through the CAC's Secretariat and the Directorate of Rural Development, together with FAO, through its National Forestry Programs Support Unit, with financial support from the Netherlands, have participated in this initiative since the preparatory phase, forming part of the Interagency Consultative Committee. Together with the three Technical Secretariats (agriculture, environment and health), they have defined the vision and mission of the RAS, as well as the concept of "agro-environment". The RAS contemplates four strategic areas: sustainable land management; climate change and environmental variability; biodiversity; and eco-business ("green markets").

This initiative is already under way and it is hoped that the organizations involved will also participate in the implementation of the RAS, once it has been approved by the relevant Central American inter-governmental bodies.



Insuring agriculture and mitigating damage...

As noted in the latest report on “Agriculture and the New Challenges of Development- the State of and Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas 2007”, the populations that suffer most from natural disasters are those who live in poverty, and the majority of these groups also live in rural areas. Their vulnerability is further increased by their precarious living conditions, their limited ability to invest in preventive measures, their limited capacity for response and insurance, as well as the fact of living in areas susceptible to flooding, landslides and droughts.

In this area, the joint efforts of IICA and FAO are reflected in:

- In the **Bahamas**, with the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources, working to implement an insurance program against hurricanes that affect agriculture and fisheries. The issue of insurance has been a major concern among farmers, many of whom are still in the process of recovering from two or more consecutive natural disasters.
- In **Jamaica**, a project on “*Caribbean Hurricane Preparedness*” was executed jointly with the Ministry of Agriculture and Land to implement strategies to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters on agriculture.



International Seminar: “Agricultural Insurance and Risk Management: International Trends and Experiences”

More than 100 representatives of public and private-sector organizations from eleven countries participated in the international seminar “Agricultural Insurance and Risk Management: International Trends and Experiences”, organized in Costa Rica by IICA, the CAC and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, and sponsored by the National Insurance Institute (INS), FAO, and RUTA.

1

Building rural networks...

Given the complex nature of development, mechanisms are required to establish relations that transcend borders, – whether national, institutional or individual – and that generate dynamics of economic, social, cultural and environmental benefit. Networks are essential for generating joint work commitments and systems of public or private investment in agriculture and rural life.

In Central America, in coordination with the National University of Costa Rica (UNA), FAO and IICA supported the establishment of the Network for Rural Studies and Alternatives, aimed at building capacity in the area of rural development.

In the Andean Region, in the context of the Project “Andean Rural Development Forum: Towards the Formulation of an Andean Rural Development Strategy”, IICA and FAO are working together using three instruments: a) National Rural Development Networks; b) Reference Territories and the operation of a horizontal cooperation program among the network partners; and c) Observatories of Territories or Observatories of Chains and Territories.

In this area, the following country-level activities were carried out:

- **Ecuador** received support in the design of the projects “Andean Rural Development Forum: Towards a Community-based Rural Development Strategy” and “Food Security for Indigenous Peoples”.



- In **Colombia**, both organizations participated in the Interagency Group on Rural Development, configured as a national network and comprising technical cooperation agencies and multilateral financial institutions interested in contributing to the country's rural development, including: AECID, UNODC, IDB, WB, CAF, IFAD, IOM, UNIDO, UNDP and the European Commission's Delegation to Colombia and Ecuador. Similar efforts are under way to establish a network in Peru, in collaboration with other organizations.

An important initiative in the Southern region, specifically in **Uruguay**, is the Departmental Network Development Offices (RODDE) established by IICA at the end of 2005. Its mission is to develop a forum for exchange, through training, institutional strengthening, horizontal cooperation and the systematization of FAO's experiences in supporting local governments. The joint action will facilitate a preliminary assessment of the status of rural development in each Department, which will accelerate the preparation of profiles of key projects for the transformation of the country's rural areas.



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Strengthening rural education...

Considering the pressing need to develop the region's human capital and create a highly qualified workforce capable of meeting the enormous challenges of revitalizing and modernizing agriculture, a program of global dialogues was implemented in the context of the IICA-FAO partnership. As part of this effort, IICA, UNESCO and FAO joined forces to convene the Latin American and Caribbean countries and inform them on the status and progress of professional training programs for farmers.

The following Global Dialogues were organized: "Education based on competencies and applications in higher university education to improve the quality of agricultural training" and "Training Professional Farmers: a challenge to enhance human capital in an integrated system".

Country-level activities carried out:

- In **Venezuela**, under the leadership of the Venezuelan Rural Education Foundation (FUNDAVER), and with the participation of universities, agricultural technical schools, the Ministry of Agriculture and Land, and UNESCO, IICA and FAO jointly supported the consolidation of

the National Rural Education Network in Venezuela. In addition, both organizations sponsored and participated in the National Forums on Rural Education, organized to discuss issues related to rural education processes.

- In **Nicaragua**, in partnership with the American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM), FAO and IICA helped to establish vegetable gardens in 70 schools, in an effort involving more than 10,000 people (children, parents and teachers).
- In **Grenada**, agricultural science teachers of the Ministry of Education participated in an exercise that culminated with the joint design of the project "*Schools Food Security Approach: Linking Secondary School Agricultural Science-based Agro-business Curriculum*".



3 Managing agricultural information...

In the context of the IICA-FAO strategic partnership, work continued on efforts to promote the use of information technologies and knowledge management for agriculture.

As part of the Steering Group of the Agricultural Information Management Resource Kit (IMARK) led by FAO, IICA contributed to the promotion, adaptation and use of the e-learning modules on “Managing Electronic Documents”, “Building Digital Libraries” and “Investing in Information for Development”. These training resources have already generated the necessary skills and knowledge to improve information management in agricultural organizations. The results of this effort were visible following the implementation of the Agricultural Leaders Information Program, financed by CTA, and the E-document management courses prepared for IICA staff and for Costa Rica’s Agricultural Information Network.

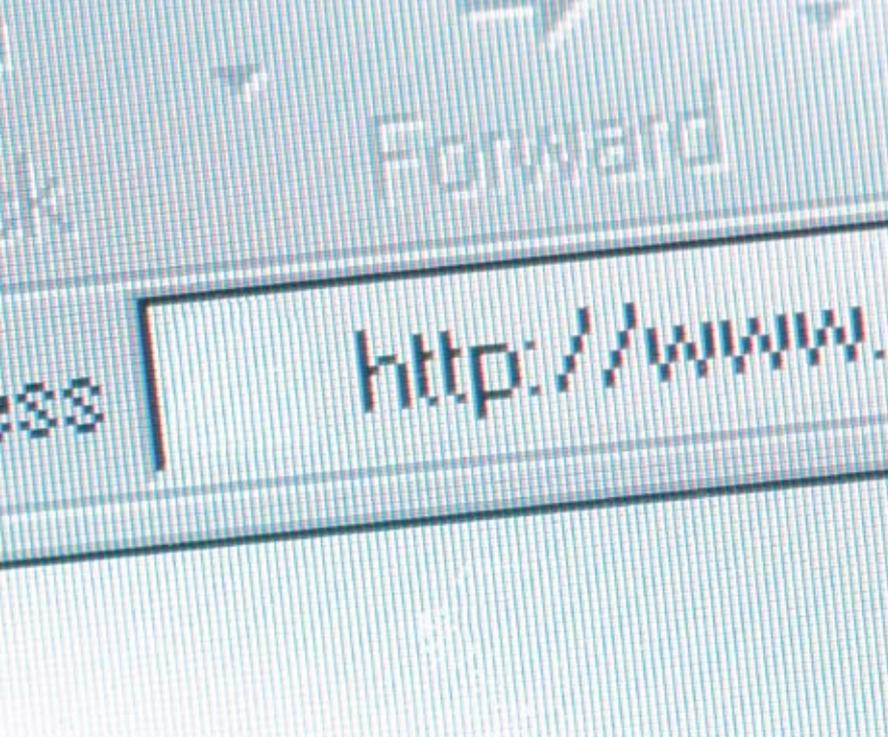
Other training events included: the First Central American Workshop on Forestry Information Policies, organized by FAO; the course on “Investing in Agricultural Information for Development”, using IMARK materials and the FODEPAL project; the International Congress



E-Agriculture

IICA played an active and direct role in the e-Agriculture Project’s International Forum for Latin America and the Caribbean, an initiative that the United Nations Summit on the Information Society placed under the responsibility of FAO. The objective of the Forum was to harmonize and align strategies and policies related to the new model that e-Agriculture wishes to implement. As a result of its participation, IICA has become a member of the e-Agriculture Steering Committee, joining other organizations and joint international efforts such as IMARK led by FAO and the AGRIS Task force.

of Networks and Specialized Information Units in Science and Technology in Colombia; the Workshop “Managing Digital Libraries” in Costa Rica (Orton Library); and the Workshop on “Strengthening the Agricultural Digital Libraries of the NARIs” in Venezuela.



At the same time, IICA-FAO are currently working with other international organizations to develop a specialized consultation system on agricultural statistics, given the enormous volume, complexity and diversity of data available on agriculture (including social and economic data) and to organize this data for the analysis or evaluation of agriculture and rural life. In addition, the 24th session of the Working Group on Agricultural Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean was organized in Aguascalientes, Mexico, in cooperation with Mexico's National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI).

Finally, in **Colombia**, IICA contributed to the economic analysis component of an initiative to gather information, develop and program analytical models for the Strategic Information and Communications Network of the Agricultural Sector (AGRONET) promoted by FAO.



Information and Communications Technologies for Rural Women's Organizations -Bolivia:

In 2000, together with other local institutions, the Gender in Rural Development Network was founded, now renamed the Rural Women's Support Network. Since its foundation the Network has organized numerous training events, technical cooperation activities, fairs, the publication of statistical data, internships etc., to support rural women in Bolivia. The most recent action was related to information technologies.



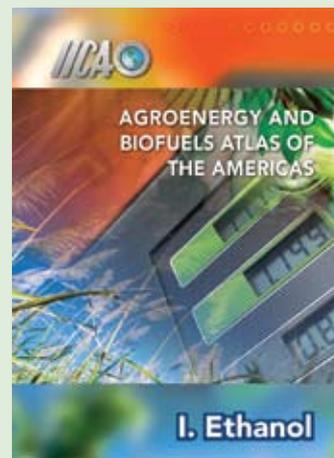
Understanding the links between biofuels and food security...

In 2007, FAO and IICA supported the implementation of the “Second Latin American and Caribbean Biofuels Seminar”, organized by the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE) in El Salvador. The purpose of this event was to discuss the issue of food security vis à vis biofuels; analyze the countries’ agricultural potential; share experiences and discuss the progress of the different national biofuels programs in the region; analyze their regulatory frameworks; and present the latest technological advances in the production of biofuels. FAO and IICA are currently supporting the organization of the Third Latin American Biofuels Seminar, which will take place in the Dominican Republic in May 2008.



Publication Biofuels Atlas

During the Seminar, IICA took the opportunity to present the “*Agroenergy and Biofuels Atlas of the Americas*”, a publication containing comprehensive information on the current status of this issue in the hemisphere.



Acronyms

AECID	Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development	COMISCA	Council of Central American Health Ministers
AGRONET	Strategic Agricultural Information Network	CONAMUCA	National Confederation of Rural Women
AMCHAM	American Chamber of Commerce	CTA	Technical Center for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation
ANCHA	National Alliance Against Hunger	ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
CAC	Central American Agricultural Council	FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
CAF	Andean Development Corporation	FORAGRO	Forum for the Americas on Agricultural Research and Technology Development
CARICOM	Caribbean Community	FUNDAVER	Venezuelan Rural Education Foundation
CAS	Southern Agricultural Council	GFAR	Global Forum for Agricultural Research
CATIE	Tropical Agriculture Research and Higher Education Center	GPP	Global Partnership Program
CCAD	Central American Commission on Environment and Development	HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
CCLAC	Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean	HPAI	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank	IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
CIRAD	French Agricultural Research Center for International Development	IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
CODEX	Codex Alimentarius		

IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture	RAS	Regional Agro-environmental Strategy
IMARK	Information Management Resource Kit	REMERFI	Mesoamerican Network for Plant Genetic Resources
INAN	National Food and Nutrition Institute	RUTA	Regional Unit for Technical Assistance
IOM	International Organization for Migrations	SAG	Agriculture and Livestock Service of Chile
IPGRI	International Institute for Plant Genetic Resources (now called Bioversity)	SENACSA	National Food Quality and Animal Health Service of Paraguay
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention	UNDP	United Nations Development Program
NARIs	National Agricultural Research Institutes	UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization
OAS	Organization of American States	UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
OIRSA	International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health	UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
PANAFTOSA	Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center	USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
PRODAR	Program for the Development of Rural Agroindustry	WB	World Bank
		WFP	World Food Program

FAO

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