

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

Successful national experiences

for the improvement of
agriculture and rural life

Catalogue



Directorate of Regional Operations and Integration
Division of Horizontal Technical Cooperation

IICA



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Editorial Coordination: Guillermo Toro

Stylistic correction: Olga Patricia Arce

Layout: Karla Cruz

Cover design: Karla Cruz

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Introduction

The Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries have implemented numerous initiatives that promote management models and instruments for the improvement of agriculture and rural life, which are worth documenting and disseminating so they can be shared as public goods.

To organize, facilitate and add value to the efforts of the countries and their national institutions and technical personnel, the Division of Horizontal Technical Cooperation (DHTC) of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) began compiling information about successful, innovative experiences in the agricultural and rural sectors that could be replicated in other parts of the hemisphere.

The DHTC involved IICA's 34 Offices in the Member States in the exercise through the Institute's Directors of Regional Operations and Integration and the Representative in each country. These senior officials helped coordinate the contribution of national institutions and IICA's own specialists.

A number of countries provided information on best practices (or successful experiences, as they are also known). In this document, a single format is used to summarize the

initiatives and give a brief explanation of the process undertaken and the tools used, as well as details of contacts and links the reader can use to learn more and share data. The ultimate objective of this effort was to support knowledge management in the countries by promoting and sharing the results.

National institutions rate the experiences as successful based on the impact of their results. The initiatives are broken down by region (Andean, Caribbean, Central, Northern and Southern) and by country. IICA made a technical contribution to some of them. The first section of the document explains conceptual aspects of the successful experiences and the criteria used to identify them.

IICA produced this document to make available to interested individuals and institutions a set of successful national initiatives that set out to improve agriculture and rural life. These experiences have helped meet the countries' needs by providing innovative forms of cooperation and generating lessons learned that could be replicated elsewhere under similar conditions. The information contained in this document provides an overview of the contribution made by these experiences. It is the authors' hope that it will be used to achieve the objectives mentioned. ■

Successful experiences: in the

- Conceptual framework
- Process of identifying successful experiences

Successful experiences: conceptual framework

Certain countries in the hemisphere are recognized as the leaders of a pilot project, program or plan because they have implemented innovations in agricultural processes that are regarded as successful experiences. The results have been validated, so they can be replicated in other scenarios, as an effective way of meeting cooperation needs and solving similar problems in other countries or regions.

This is new technical and human capital that has been created in the countries to provide cooperation as part of the international policies established by the Member States, to promote greater international solidarity.

Definition of successful experience

A successful experience is a coherent group of actions that have achieved significant results. It has been shown to be successful in a given context and is expected to be successful or achieve comparable results in similar settings. It offers innovative ways of meeting cooperation needs and supplements the capabilities and efforts of the different countries.

Once the success of such initiatives has been validated and the conditions created for sharing them, they can be shared with other countries through *cooperation hubs*. Cooperation of this kind is designed to achieve win-win outcomes for different countries. Each participating country identifies its successful experiences and constructs a network to promote the expertise, solve problems with proven solutions and thus supplement capabilities and efforts.

What classifies as a successful experience?

The key to a successful experience is its potential *usefulness* and impact. It contributed to the implementation of a policy or to the execution of concrete plans, projects, processes or activities, generating lessons learned that could be applied to similar situations.

Unsuccessful actions can also produce valuable lessons.

To be considered successful, an experience in the agricultural and rural sector must also meet a number of key criteria (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Criteria for determining a “successful” experience.

Source: Created by the authors.

Each of the criteria mentioned in Figure 1 is described below:

■ Innovation or creativity

The positive characteristics of the experience that could make it of interest to others. The action must change the usual way of doing something (a practice) by modifying, fleshing out, reinventing or improving what already existed.

However, it does not have to be entirely new, since strategies are often used in a given context but are not widely known or applied in other circumstances.

■ **Effectiveness / impact**

Se deben evidenciar los beneficios derivados de la práctica y, si es posible, documentar de alguna manera el impacto producido a través de una evaluación formal o por otros medios, con el fin de determinar si el impacto es demostrable a partir de la comparación entre las condiciones existentes al comienzo de la iniciativa y luego de su implementación.

■ **Replicability**

The successful experience could be applied in different contexts or situations. It does not need to be copied or “cloned” to be of use to others. Transfer is undoubtedly one of the main objectives of the good practice. Hence, the importance of documenting and clearly defining the methodological elements (phases, procedures, etc.) that could be replicated.

■ **Sustainability**

An experience is considered successful if it is sustainable, i.e., if the benefits continue to be effective over the medium and long terms. For example, the project or activity carries on after the initial funding has concluded or leads to the creation of new attitudes, working methods, productive capabilities, etc., that are the consequence of a given practice.

This criterion also refers to greater commitment and citizen participation, an increase in proactive capabilities in the communities and influence over public policies.

■ **Relevance**

A successful experience should contribute to the practice, directly or indirectly, and promote a major, necessary change on behalf of the beneficiaries of the program, activity, project, etc. In other words, a given initiative called for the exact process that took place and the strategy used and results obtained were relevant.

■ **Ethics and responsibility**

The practice developed is the result of consensus and is consistent with the needs, interests and wishes of the parties involved, social and professional codes of conduct and the agreements and rules governing IICA's work.

■ **Suited to the present context**

A good practice takes account of the sociocultural context in which it is employed and the circumstances at the particular moment when it is implemented. An initiative that was successful in the past may not be successful at another point in time; a practice that is good today may not suit the circumstances that exist in the future.

■ **Legitimacy**

Key public and private actors and other direct and indirect beneficiaries of the territory where the practice is employed all agree that it is successful.

■ **Efficiency and execution**

Another point that must be considered is whether the human, financial and material resources available made it possible to achieve maximum impact. The efficiency and execution of those resources may vary depending on the level and nature of the practice.

On the other hand, good practices do not have to be perfect in every sense. Indeed, the information about constraints or circumstances that limit the applicability or impact of a practice may be even more useful than a description of a totally “successful” experience. ■

Process of identifying successful experiences

As already mentioned, a good practice or successful experience is an action that introduces a new way of doing things, is a departure from past habits and references and stands out because good results were achieved in a given context through a coherent set of actions. Such experiences are expected to produce similar results in similar contexts.

In determining a management model of a successful experience, the authors focused on activities related in some way to the work of the Institute. They considered the activities of policy makers and of personnel working on the ground, as well as practices of other organizations, of governments, etc.

The process of identifying the management models of experiences to be included in the Institute's database consisted of the following steps:

1. A form was designed for identifying good practices in each country/region (Annex 1). This was sent out to the countries to request information for the database on successful experiences.
2. Some countries had queries that had to be processed and additional data was obtained. The information was then prepared for systematization and use.
3. The information provided was analyzed by Institute personnel specializing in good practices and successful experiences, in particular those of the Directorate of Horizontal Technical Cooperation (DHTC). These staff members provided follow-up to obtain more information about the practices and advance the process.
4. Once the form had been completed and sent to the DHTC staff responsible, the respective analysis was carried out.
5. This document is designed to be a dynamic, non-static tool. Therefore, it will be reviewed regularly to ensure that the information is still pertinent, accurate and current. Any modifications, and new successful experiences identified, will be posted on the DHTC's Web page.

Purpose and usefulness of recording successful experiences

- To strengthen the good agricultural and rural practices developed by countries, placing them at the service of other countries and encouraging the exchange of successful experiences among the countries of the hemisphere
- To report or showcase the initiatives implemented by countries, as well as the lessons learned and the constraints to success
- To contribute to the development of an institutional knowledge base
- To provide a guide to how to do a good job and improve actions or traditional practices in order to make them effective, strategic and efficient

The key users of the good practices or successful experiences include:

- Public and private sectors of the countries (including government agencies, business and trade union organizations, NGOs and other regional, national and local organizations, as well as the target population)
- The Institute's thematic areas
- Other organizations active in the Institute's area of specialization
- Research groups

Mode of presentation of the successful experiences identified:

The experiences are grouped by region (Andean, Caribbean, Central, Northern and Southern). Each section begins with a summary of the successful experiences in the form of a table. Each experience linked to a strategic area of IICA, in accordance with the subject matter, sector and impact achieved.

The data on each experience in the respective region is then systematized in the following subsections:

- Descriptive title
- Origin of the initiative
- Implementation of the initiative
- Successful results
- Participating entities
- Sources



Successful
experiences
in the

Andean Region

Successful experiences in the Andean Region and strategic areas

IICA strategic area	Successful experience	Country
Promoting trade and agribusiness competitiveness	Application and certification of good agricultural practices for exportable products	Colombia
Strengthening rural communities with a territorial approach	Model for the modernization of rural education	Colombia
Promoting the introduction of technology and innovation for the modernization of agriculture and rural development	Design and operation of a competitive fund to promote and transfer agricultural technology	Colombia
Strengthening rural communities with a territorial approach	Management model for rural microenterprises	Colombia
Strengthening rural communities with a territorial approach	Model for intervention in pilot territories	Ecuador
Promoting trade and agribusiness competitiveness	Rural pact for change: a model for the promotion of human capital to combat poverty	Ecuador
Promoting agricultural health and food safety	Development of the National Notification System program	Ecuador
Strengthening rural communities with a territorial approach	Implementation of rural development strategies with a territorial approach	Venezuela
Strengthening rural communities with a territorial approach	New development model: Research and legislative agenda for the design of public policies	Venezuela
Promoting trade and agribusiness Competitiveness	Rural Tourism Program, State of Portuguesa	Venezuela
Promoting trade and agribusiness competitiveness	Development of a model for participation in the international standard-setting system	Venezuela

Colombia



1. Application and certification of good agricultural practices for exportable products

Origin of the initiative

As part of its *Apuesta Exportadora* strategy, Colombia implemented the “Supplier development program: implementation and certification of good agricultural practices on farms in cold areas of the Department of Cundinamarca that produce exportable products,” to support exporters of promising fruits. The program aimed to help producers adopt good agricultural practices (GAPs) to meet the EurepGap® quality and safety standards required by international markets.

Implementation of the initiative

- Farm models were identified to assess the conditions and level of compliance with international safety and quality standards for the implementation of good agricultural practices (GAPs) and EurepGap® certification.
- The project included sensitization activities designed to train the beneficiaries (producers and businesses).
- The program trained entrepreneurs, producers and teams in each organization in subjects related to GAPs and their implementation on each farm.
- The coordinators of the project made field visits to evaluate the performance of producers and verify the adoption of GAPs on each farm.
- Pre-audits were carried out to verify compliance with GAPs.

- The certification process was completed. It included the identification and selection of certification options and the scheduling of inspections and GAP verification visits (audits) for certification purposes.
- Various action plans were drawn up during the execution of the project in order to implement business, commercial, and logistical management frameworks.

Successful results

- The resources of public and private institutions were concentrated on a single project, which made it possible to reach agreement on interagency commitments to enhance producers' business management skills.
- By means of assistance and training, the project strengthened partnerships of producers, associations and international traders, the development of tools for improving business management and market access.
- An applied GAP support methodology was developed and validated, from registration through to certification, based on EurepGap® standards.

Participating entities

- Secretariat of Agriculture, Provincial Government of Cundinamarca
- ASOHOFRUCOL – National Fruit and Vegetable Fund
- Bogotá Chamber of Commerce
- ANALDEX
- IICA Office in Colombia

Sources of information

- IICA (www.iica.int/Colombia)
- CCB (www.ccb.org.co)

2. Model for the modernization of rural education

Origin of the initiative

As part of the 2004-2007 Development Plan for Huila Province, Colombia implemented a program entitled “A new educational model to strengthen 20 agricultural high schools in Huila Province.” Collaborative efforts were undertaken to modernize academic and technical services and rural technical assistance through rural agricultural schools. The main objective was to prevent student attrition at the elementary and middle-school levels, and rural-urban migration by young people seeking better opportunities outside the region’s agricultural sector.

Implementation of the initiative

- The conditions were created to enable each educational institution to operate as a business that supplies services for territorial rural development.
- Through partnerships with public institutions and private-sector organizations, teachers received upgrading and updating training in areas of expertise related to the specialized areas of production chosen by their schools.
- A strategic pilot project was implemented in each high school to help them achieve their educational mission and strengthen the project’s educational and productive sustainability.
- A network of agricultural schools was consolidated, paving the way for innovative contributions to rural education in the region designed to improve its academic content and make it sustainable.

Successful results

- Links were established between the public and private sectors for the process of modernizing rural educational services, involving various organizations interested in improving rural education.
- A new model was consolidated for rural education in Huila Province by implementing and validating the educational approach of productive pedagogical projects (PPP). Curricula and study programs were modified for students interested in studying agricultural subjects.
- A formal network of the region's agricultural high schools was designed and implemented, and linked to universities in the region that provide schools with technical assistance and participate in activities aimed at transferring technologies to their communities.

Participating entities

- Government of Huila Province
- IICA Office in Colombia

Sources of information

- IICA Office in Colombia (www.ica.int/Colombia)
- Government of Huila Province (www.gobernacionhuila.gov.co)

3. Design and operation of a competitive fund to promote and transfer agricultural technology

Origin of the initiative

Assisted by IICA, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Colombia helped develop, implement and operate a competitive fund designed to co-finance initiatives that promote innovation, technological development and technology transfer in the agricultural field. The support comprised conceptual assistance, from a public policy perspective, and support with administrative, financial and contractual procedures, and technical follow-up and evaluation. The core purpose of this competitive fund is to supply tools for innovation through the development of new technologies for the nation's agricultural sector that will make it possible to solve problems in the production chain by means of competitive processes.

Implementation of the initiative

- Efforts were made to identify public resources and a science and technology agenda was drawn up to pinpoint the needs of production chains and the thematic focuses of the projects to be co-financed.
- Before the initiative was launched, an induction process was organized for possible participants (public and private research centers and universities) and the terms of reference were published.
- Eligible projects are selected by a panel of expert assessors for each chain.
- Projects considered eligible in terms of budget and methodology receive financing.
- During the execution phase, technical and financial progress reports are delivered every six months. A final report detailing the important results and outcomes achieved is also produced.

- At the end of each project, the administrators of the fund verify transfer activities, the publication of materials or articles and campaigns and training activities.

Successful results

- Calls for proposals were issued, resulting in an increase in the coverage of the agricultural production chains.
- A competitive fund was designed and implemented by the Government and producers' organizations, which make contributions via para-fiscal funds.
- Agricultural production chains benefited from the financing provided by the competitive fund.
- The model has been self-sustaining for four years and has led to increased investment in science and technology.

Participating entities

- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
- IICA

Sources of information

- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (www.minagricultura.gov.co)

4. Management model for rural microenterprises

Origin of the initiative

The Program to Support the Development of Rural Microenterprises (PADEMÉR) helped raise income and create employment in rural areas through the development of rural microenterprises (RMEs), while also encouraging gender equity and environmental conservation. The program's core objective was to spur the growth of rural microenterprises (in commercial, productive, business and economic terms) and foster the development of rural microcredit and the development, rating and promotion of the service suppliers market. The initiative also arose out of a desire to generate a policy for the development of rural microenterprises as a rural poverty alleviation strategy.

Implementation of the initiative

The operating strategy of PADEMÉR was based on five key actions:

- Geographical areas were prioritized based on beneficiary eligibility criteria, the rurality of the areas, security conditions, and socioeconomic and technical conditions that would encourage the development of RMEs.
- Technological and financial services were delivered in an integrated, coordinated way.
- Gradual, differentiated ways of delivering technological and financial services were adopted, keyed to the prior development of the RMEs.
- The program promoted the strengthening of financial operators and the suppliers of technological services, especially in private and/or private-public entities.
- Evaluations were carried out during the process, to draw lessons and make recommendations aimed at fine-tuning execution and documenting the experience.

Successful results

- The program supported rural microenterprises by means of technological and financial services and training, and a strategy to stimulate the market of decentralized technical assistance services with an eye to improving RMEs further.
- Rural microenterprises were promoted commercially in most parts of the country.
- A rural microcredit model was developed and implemented for rural microenterprises, to position it in the regions.
- 199 projects were co-financed that afforded 308 rural microenterprise associations access to technological services (exceeding the original goal).
- A service was created to provide technical assistance and stimulate the services market, through competitive bidding processes designed to attract resources.

Participating entities

- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- IICA Office in Colombia

Sources of information

- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR) (www.minagricultura.gov.co)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- IICA Office in Colombia

Ecuador



1. Model for intervention in pilot territories

Origin of the initiative

The program entitled “Plan for intervention in the territory of Los Ríos” arose originally out of the Central Government’s desire to identify several sectors that needed to be decentralized. Los Ríos province is the first administrative and political district to take on agricultural functions, the aim being to provide better services to farmers. The program was then developed to strengthen the capabilities of the Los Ríos Provincial Council and to encourage development with a territorial approach as part of the agricultural responsibilities transferred from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fisheries (MAGAP): agricultural health, producers’ organizations, sectoral information, international cooperation, training, and technology transfer, food security, and sectoral planning.

Implementation of the initiative

- The Los Ríos Provincial Council assumed agricultural responsibilities, transferred from MAGAP under the Decentralization Act. To that end, an Agreement for the Decentralization of Agricultural Responsibilities was signed.
- The Provincial Government developed a “Strategic Provincial Agricultural Plan” as its primary tool for the development of agriculture in the province.
- A methodological proposal for the mapping of key provincial actors and territorial research was prepared, with a view to defining the leading territorial actors that would help achieve the objectives of the Strategic Provincial Agricultural Plan.
- The Provincial Council weighted the processes to prioritize them. The actors were characterized according to management areas, territorial areas, reliability of their profile, decision-making level, level of presence and permanence.

- To determine policies, those set forth in the Strategic Plan were correlated in a matrix with the proposals put forward by the different actors. This made it possible to reflect the effects of the proposed strategic objective.
- The program supported a strengthening process that is enabling local governments to effectively assume, sustain and manage a number of agricultural responsibilities.

Successful results

- A methodology was developed and incorporated into a territorial management program that includes the phases of research, product analysis and cohesion.
- Guidelines were provided for the identification of needs that will then be organized as part of the cooperation.
- An “Agricultural Policy for Los Ríos Province” was developed, along with the technical instruments required to implement it. The policy will be used as a five-year work plan.
- A project was developed on the use of jatropha to produce biofuels.
- Los Ríos Province is better equipped to spur development with a territorial approach, as part of the responsibilities transferred to it from the MAGAP, based on the Agricultural Development Plan.

Participating entities

- National Council for the Modernization of the State (CONAM)
- MAGAP
- IICA Office in Ecuador

Sources of information

- CODERI
- IICA Office in Ecuador (www.iica-ecuador.org)

2. Rural pact for change: a model for the promotion of human capital to combat poverty

Origin of the initiative

The National Council for the Modernization of the State (CONAM), acting through its State Structure Decentralization Unit, implemented a program to support decentralization entitled “Rural pact for change: a model for the promotion of human capital to combat poverty.” The program was designed to address key issues and support decentralization. Its objective was to contribute to the sustainable development of Los Ríos Province. It focused on reducing rural poverty by promoting human and social capital for the development of institutional and local capabilities, technological innovation in production chains, and the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

Implementation of the initiative

- A database was created on key actors, which helped to define the territorial management program.
- A Provincial Agricultural Corporation was designed to promote the territorial development program and the implementation of the provincial strategic plan for agriculture.
- Policies and instruments were developed for territorial initiatives.
- Programs and projects were instituted for sensitive agricultural products, in accordance with the responsibilities assumed by the Provincial Government.
- Specific projects designed to strengthen local capabilities were identified, developed and implemented.

Participating entities

- Provincial Agricultural Corporation
- IICA Office in Ecuador

Successful results

- The program organized the first participatory administrative body in the Province of Los Ríos. The Los Ríos Development Corporation (CODERIOS) is an executing agency in charge of promoting rural development.
- Various local stakeholders - public and private actors, academic institutions and associations - were included in the process to democratize decision making in the territory.
- Technical cooperation was provided to strengthen the team of technical staff of the Prefecture, making it possible to put in place the province's agricultural policies for a five-year period.
- The “Rural Pact” investment program was created for the sustainable development of the province, aimed at reducing poverty by promoting human capital for the development of institutional and local capabilities, through technological innovation and the sustainable use of natural resources.

Sources of information

- CODERIOS
- IICA Office in Ecuador (www.iica-ecuador.org)

3. Development of the National Notification System

Origin of the initiative

The project was seen as an alternative for the Ecuadoran Environmental Health Corporation (SESA), which delivers notifications to associations, producers and exporters. It managed to enhance the effectiveness and organization of the notification process, establish the requirements countries must follow when notifying Ecuador, and disseminate rules that allow producers to choose a safe alternative, thereby improving the quality and controls of agricultural products.

Implementation of the initiative

- Conditions were established for countries to deliver notifications to Ecuador and, based on the analysis, new sanitary rules were introduced to improve the quality and control of agricultural products.
- To reorganize the processing of notifications entering the country, the actors were involved so they could gradually familiarize themselves with the new system and the project could continue over the long term.
- The administrative distribution of internal notifications was improved.

Successful results

- Hitherto, notifications reaching the country were delivered by hand. Under the project, the system was computerized.
- There is greater control over notifications and the processing of queries was improved.
- Notifications received from abroad are now processed efficiently.
- Decentralization of the notification process at the national level; responsibility for the system is no longer concentrated in one individual. All institutions have adopted the system, thus paving the way for individual efforts in future projects, in other countries.

Participating entities

- IICA Office in Ecuador
- Corporation for the Promotion of Exports and Investment (CORPEI)
- Ministry for Industry and Competitiveness of Ecuador (MICIP)
- SESA

Sources of information

- www.sesa.gov.ec
- www.mic.gov.ec
- www.iica-ecuador.org

Venezuela



1. Implementation of rural development strategies with a territorial approach

Origin of the initiative

This effort, implemented by the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and the Universidad Centro Occidental Lisandro Alvarado (UCLA), arose out of a desire to equip professionals to plan and execute rural development initiatives, with the work being concentrated in the Tequendama Region. The experience led to the development of new academic projects and course materials for undergraduate and postgraduate studies. The Universidad Centro Occidental Lisandro Alvarado of Lara, in Venezuela, also supported a project focusing on small-scale farmers and fishermen in semi-arid regions of the states of Lara and Falcon, as well as the local rural development plan for small farmers' organizations.

Implementation of the initiative

- The Universidad Nacional de Colombia developed and validated methodologies and tools for interdisciplinary, research-action work and the coordination of joint university-business-territory initiatives.
- The experience gained in the Tequendama Region was used to develop national policy proposals in the fields of regional development and agricultural/rural development. Local capabilities were created for implementing collective development processes.
- The Universidad Centro Occidental Lisandro Alvarado de Lara applied the logical framework of the new rural development approaches to the strategic planning process.
- The action strategies included five development programs with the following strategic objectives: a) to increase the income of families that belong to producers' organizations by improving the quality and coverage of public services; b) to increase the coverage and quality of the agricultural credit system, as well as technical assistance to improve health care services; and, c) to improve the local coverage of the education and training system.

Successful results

- Implementation of a program to increase the income of families that belong to producers' organizations by increasing the coverage of public services.
- Development of tools to improve the quality of the agricultural credit system and technical assistance.
- Links created with the university and other training entities to solve the problems identified, specifically in social development and poverty alleviation programs.
- The agroecological information on the area was updated and the coverage of the communications media was increased.

Participating entities

- Universidad Centro Occidental Lisandro Alvarado (UCLA) in Lara, Venezuela
- Universidad Nacional de Colombia

Sources of information

- Universidad Nacional de Colombia
- UCLA in Lara, Venezuela

2. New development model: research and legislative development agenda for the design of public policies

Origin of the initiative

This initiative, implemented thanks to the relationship established with the General Directorate for Research and Legislative Development (DGIDL) of the National Assembly, has become an important benchmark for technical cooperation with legislative bodies in the Andean Region. The initiative has provided an excellent opportunity to reposition issues related to agricultural and rural development, which is considered a high priority, as it is one of the key elements in the design of a new development model for Venezuela.

Implementation of the initiative

- A technical cooperation agreement was established with the National Assembly in February 2006. The focal point of the agreement is the General Directorate for Research and Legislative Development (DGIDL). The Directorate coordinates activities and provides advisory support to legislative committees in the form of reports, specialized technical assistance and support, and open-access publications for the National Assembly.
- Though the process is ongoing, it has already become a benchmark for the provision of technical cooperation to legislative bodies, which is essential for orienting, establishing and/or modifying the public policies that shape the life of a country.
- The DGIDL is responsible for a program that forms part of the Research Agenda entitled “Developing the Theoretical Basis of Socialism in the 21st Century.” The program comprises 14 lines of research.

Successful results

- A mechanism was created that allows debate, thereby helping to improve the design, development and evaluation of policies and laws within the National Assembly.
- A system was created to provide information and specialized technical support for analysis, evaluations and decision making within the National Assembly in priority areas of research for the repositioning of the issues related to agricultural and rural development, as one of the key elements of the new development model for the country.

Participating entities

- National Assembly of Venezuela

Sources of information

- National Assembly of Venezuela (www.asambleanacional.gov.ve/ns2/index.asp)

3. Rural tourism program, State of Portuguesa

Origin of the initiative

The Rural Tourism Program in the State of Portuguesa arose out of the need to add value to traditional agricultural territories, improve the quality of life of their inhabitants, and generate additional income for producers. As part of the Portuguesa State Development Plan, the program is achieving this by incorporating natural, cultural and productive resources into the tourism activities available in the state. The program aims to integrate rural tourism into state policies as a strategy for the development of Portuguesa, in particular in areas where the dairy and coffee industries are concentrated.

Implementation of the initiative

- The Rural Tourism Program is making a major contribution to the development and integration of agricultural and non-agricultural activities, which offer an alternative source of income in rural areas.
- The small-scale tourism activities on offer in the rural milieu take into account the sustainability of the environment and form part of a single image, identity and cultural landscape. This is helping to diversify the country's tourism industry; create employment and increase income in rural areas; highlight the true value of the cultural and environmental diversity of different regions within the territory; consolidate quality tourism products; and generate increasingly decentralized tourism activities.
- Various types of activity were implemented, including agrotourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism, extreme sports and ethnotourism.

Successful results

- Service industries generated value added in rural areas, incorporated into the annual operating plans for tourism and rural development of the Government of the State of Portuguesa.
- The program encouraged the participation of the communities of two key contributors to development: the coffee and dairy industries.
- A number of training activities were implemented related to the management of GPS, customer service, territorial

assessments and bird watching, which will impact the competitiveness of the services and products associated with rural tourism.

- The program identified 298 natural and cultural resources of the communities that can be used for the development of rural tourism.
- Distinctive images were developed for the coffee and dairy industries, in the highlands and lowlands of Portuguesa, respectively, thereby creating a “territorial brand” that will differentiate these tourism products.

Participating entities

- Secretariat for Economic Development – Government of Portuguesa State, Venezuela

Sources of information

- IICA Office in Venezuela (www.iica.int/Venezuela)

4. Development of a model for participation in the international standard-setting system

Origin of the initiative

A model was developed for disseminating information among the public, private and academic sectors of the participating countries as part of the international standard-setting process of Codex Alimentarius, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). As a result, the agencies that form part of the national agricultural health and food safety systems now has access to tried and tested, fully operational conference systems.

Implementation of the initiative

- The initiative made it possible to disseminate information about these processes among a large number of people at the same time, and to link several countries simultaneously in

real time. The process helped raise awareness of the issues facing the countries, and of successful experiences that can be shared.

- Officials of government AHFS agencies in different countries exchanged contact information.

Successful results

- Tried and tested, fully operational videoconferencing systems were developed for the training activities.
- More dynamic conferences, to encourage as much interaction as possible among the participants.
- Many stakeholders are more involved in the international standard-setting system.

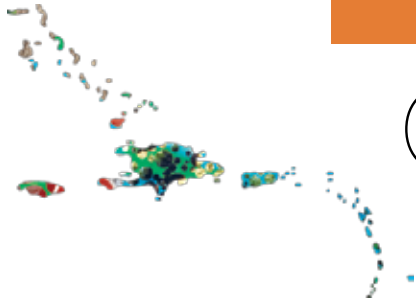
Participating entities

- Agencies that belong to national agricultural health and food safety systems.

Sources of information

- IICA Offices in Venezuela, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia.

Successful
experiences
in the



Caribbean
Region

Successful experiences in the Caribbean Region and strategic areas

IICA strategic area	Successful experience	Country
Promoting trade and agribusiness competitiveness	Development of a model farm with organic plants	Dominican Republic
Promoting trade and agribusiness competitiveness	Implementation of the Pro-Huerta Program for food security	Haiti
Promoting trade and agribusiness competitiveness	Reference center for the development of agrotourism in the Caribbean	Barbados
Promoting the introduction of technology and innovation for the modernization of agriculture and rural development	Sustainable rural development model for the rehabilitation of land used for mining: the initiative for Moengo	Suriname

Dominican Republic



1. Development of a model farm with organic plants

Origin of the initiative

Model organic farms were set up on three sites at the demonstration stations of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (MALMR). The aim of the project was to stimulate interest in organic agriculture (vegetables, other food crops and tree crops) and demonstrate the opportunities available for this activity. MALMR extension staff is on hand to give demonstrations.

Implementation of the initiative

- The project identified a multidisciplinary team of agricultural scientists, extension officers and other people with useful knowledge of the sites selected.
- The project compiled all the pertinent studies related to the history and physical characteristics of the area.
- To implement the project, the team drew up a work plan and prepared the material on ecological agriculture (establishment, operation and benefits of using organic products).
- The extension staff received training in organic farm management.

Successful results

- A commercial ecological demonstration farm was set up.
- The Government will promote the model organic farm to encourage the establishment of commercial farms.

Participating entities

- IICA Offices in Trinidad and Tobago, the Dominican Republic and Barbados

Sources of information

- IICA Offices in Trinidad and Tobago, the Dominican Republic and Barbados

Haiti



1. Implementation of the Pro-Huerta Program for food security

Origin of the initiative

The Pro-Huerta program implemented in Haiti is based on the experience gained in Argentina, over a number of years, in affording the poor access to fresh food. Given Haiti's food security problems, the program has been implemented with great success through various grassroots organizations. To carry out the cooperation activities, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Argentine Embassy in Haiti, assisted by the IICA Office, signed an agreement to identify the areas and the respective users.

Implementation of the initiative

- This national initiative was first implemented in Argentina thirteen years ago. It was established in Haiti with the participation of all the entities that had the required expertise and experience. It is being carried out by the National Agricultural Technology Institute (INTA) of Argentina, with the support of that country's national Ministry for Social Development (MDS). Since 2003, it has been implemented under Law N° 25 724/03, which created the National Food Security Plan (PNSA), entitled "*The most urgent hunger.*"
- The program has been implemented in almost every part of Haiti. The creation of demonstration organic vegetable gardens has had a great impact on the communities. There are plans to extend the program to further parts of the country.
- Some 4000 students have participated in the school garden model and the results have been successful. Canada also provided financing during this stage.

Successful results

- The program implemented and promoted a technical model to permit families to eat fresh foodstuffs.
- Demonstration organic vegetable gardens were created, promoted by means of training courses and technical assistance.
- The good relationship established between the governments of Haiti and Argentina has produced successful results for the entire country, thanks to the financial support of Canada and the fact that international cooperation agencies have also fulfilled their commitments.
- Solidary ties were created among the participants in the Pro-Huerta Program by organizing them at the grassroots level.

Participating entities

- Embassy of Argentina in Haiti

Sources of information

- National Agricultural Technology Institute (INTA)
- National Coordinator of the Project

Barbados



1. Reference center for the development of agrotourism in the Caribbean

Origin of the initiative

The development of production and the effective integration of the links between agriculture and tourism into Caribbean systems could do much to reposition and grow the agricultural base, promote diversity in a context of true competitiveness and ensure the sustainability of tourism and the opportunities it offers the region.

The Center's objective is to facilitate commercial links between the agricultural/agroindustrial sectors and the tourism industry, with emphasis on the integration of rural communities to promote sustainable rural development.

Implementation of the initiative

- The activities carried out include the design of a tourism strategy for the development of agrotourism based on three components: a) strengthening of policies and institutional frameworks; b) consolidation of the chain, which includes markets, services and production; and, c) documentation and sharing of good practices.
- Forms of tourism-related production were designed to supply the products that tourists visiting the Caribbean look for.
- With assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat, a study was carried out on culinary tourism in Barbados.
- Various types of partnerships were promoted between producers and hoteliers to facilitate training in various subjects, such as tourism services, post-harvest management, food processing, customer service and insurance.

Successful results

- A national workshop was held in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Tourism, with a view to implementing the national strategy and executing the plan of action for agrotourism in Barbados.
- Links were forged with key public-sector actors and private-sector agents involved in agriculture and tourism in the Caribbean, such as the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), the Barbados Hotel & Tourism Association, the Culinary Alliance of Barbados, the Barbados Agricultural Society and the Barbados Hotel Association.
- A regional project was implemented to foster stronger links between tourism and agriculture. It helped create economic opportunities in rural communities and promoted the sustainable development of both the tourism and agricultural sectors.
- The seven Caribbean countries took part: Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Dominica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Suriname.

Participating entities

- Public and private sectors of the 14 Caribbean countries.
- Public sector: ministries of agriculture, tourism, education and community development, and the Caribbean Tourism Organization.
- Private sector: Caribbean Hotel Association, Barbados Hotel Association, Barbados Agricultural Society, Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association, Culinary Alliance of Barbados

Sources of information

- IICA Office in Barbados

Suriname



1. Sustainable rural development model for the rehabilitation of land used for mining: the initiative for Moengo

Origin of the initiative

This project was designed to tap the investment opportunities of the mining sector and thereby promote the sustainable development of the people of Moengo County in the District of Marowijne, Suriname, as part of the rehabilitation of a region where agriculture is one of the most important activities.

Implementation of the initiative

- The project was devised by the mining companies to address the main challenges facing residents of the mining areas and the need to increase income and employment, and to improve the quality of life, through the promotion and creation of income-generating activities.
- The mining companies shared the work in Moengo with the community leaders and local governments, to ensure that the owners and workers of the territory took part in the investment efforts.

Successful results

- The inhabitants of Moengo had an opportunity to improve their standard of living and increase their income thanks to the development of agriculture in the territory.
- The project implemented a sustainable production program focusing on aquaculture, small ruminants and manioc, and other investments aimed at the territory's development. The inhabitants of the territory now have more options for increasing their income.

Participating entities

- Suriname:
 - Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (IVV)
 - University of Suriname, School of Technological Sciences
 - Bauxite Institute, ZW Hovenbrugstraot 166
 - Suriname Agricultural Research Institute (CELOS)
 - Zoological collection, Suriname Institute
 - World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Suriname
 - Conservation International, Suriname
 - National Institute for Development and the Milieu
 - Suriname Aluminum Company (SURALCO)
 - Ministry of Regional Development
 - IICA

Sources of information

- SURALCO
- IICA

Successful experiences in the

Central Region



Successful experiences in the Central Region and strategic areas

IICA strategic area	Successful experience	Country
Promoting trade and agribusiness competitiveness	National Fruit Program of El Salvador-FRUTALES	El Salvador
Strengthening rural communities with a territorial approach	Rural development model with a territorial approach in the Municipality of Belen Gualcho	Honduras
Promoting agricultural health and food safety	Model National Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measure (SPS) Agenda to improve the AHFS System, working in tandem with other international organizations	Honduras
Promoting the introduction of technology and innovation for the modernization of agriculture and rural development	Implementation of the Bono Tecnológico Project	Honduras
Promoting trade and agribusiness competitiveness	Model for the management of agricultural insurance for investment	Panama
Promoting the introduction of technology and innovation for the modernization of agriculture and rural development	Creation of new varieties of corn using plant breeding techniques	Panama
Strengthening rural communities with a territorial approach	Territorial rural development model in the Darien region	Panama
Promoting trade and agribusiness competitiveness	Model for restructuring production for small and medium-scale farmers	Panama

El Salvador



1. National Fruit Program of El Salvador-FRUTALES

Origin of the initiative

Following the collapse of coffee prices, El Salvador launched the fruit tree production program as part of its policy of agricultural diversification and modernization. The aim was to tap the potential of fruit growing as one of the options for strengthening economic and social conditions, the environment, nutrition and health. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), with the support of the IICA Office, promoted the National Fruit Program (FRUTALES) around the start of 2000, drawing on the experience of the Fruit-growing and Agroindustry Development Project (PROFRUTA) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) of Guatemala, implemented between 1988 and 2000.

Implementation of the initiative

- With IICA's assistance, the MAG designed this program based on the analysis of markets and criteria related to agroecological, productive, commercial, plant health and profitability issues.
- The program has been carried out continuously for nine years, the aim being to position fruit growing and make it more competitive by delivering specialized technical assistance services throughout the agricultural production and trade chain, and affording the fruit agroindustry access to national and international markets.
- It includes the following components: marketing and commercialization, post-harvest and processing activities, fruit production, training and dissemination, and financial assistance.
- The FRUTALES Program has focused primarily on the generation of information about the analysis of national, Central American and international markets, and the supply of tropical fruits. The Program specializes in tropical fruits such as: limes, cashew, coconut, avocado, sapote, sapodilla, jocotes and other native tropical fruits.
- The users of the program are individuals, organizations, entrepreneurs, processors, merchants, nursery owners and exporters.

Successful results

- The private sector was encouraged to invest US\$35 million, with the participation of over 3000 national producers, processors, merchants and nursery owners, who received technical assistance and training for the establishment, agronomic and post-harvest management and marketing of production.
- The Program created ten producers' organizations and gave them assistance, and promoted the national production of quality genetic material by providing technical assistance and training to 23 registered nurseries, which has generated around 10,000 new permanent jobs each year.
- The Program facilitated contact with national and international fruit companies, which enabled producers to establish commercial links with supermarkets, municipal markets, individual customers and exporters.
- Cooperation agreements were signed with the Agricultural Development Bank and the Mortgage Bank to provide fruit producers, processors, nursery owners and agroindustrialists with financial resources.

Participating entities

- Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock of El Salvador (MAG)
- Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

Sources of information

- National Fruit Program of El Salvador
- IICA Office in El Salvador

Honduras



1. Model for development with a territorial approach in the Municipality of Belen Gualcho, Honduras

Origin of the initiative

Under the project “Sustainable rural development in ecologically fragile areas of the Trifinio Region” (PRODERT), a municipal district was identified with characteristics that set it apart from the others in which PRODERT operates, and where the methodology of the territorial approach to rural development could be applied to manage the rural development process in the district’s various communities.

Implementation of the initiative

- The territory was selected for its environmental, cultural, ethnic, economic and institutional/ political characteristics, which set it apart from the other municipalities in which PRODERT operates.
- The project conducted an assessment of social actors, mapped investments and identified leaders, and then set up a management group for the territory.
- The management group identified the areas in which the territory was in need of support.
- The project explained to producers, among other things, the concept of the “new rurality,” designed to reduce the dichotomy between urban and rural areas.
- The initiative was implemented using the methodology of the territorial approach to rural development, which is an innovative way of managing development in rural communities.

Successful results

- Various actors in the territory participated in the characterization activities, which involved mapping social actors and investments, identifying leaders and setting up the group to manage the territory.
- The tourism sector was identified as a competitiveness group for the territory, based on the assessment of the potential of tourism for the municipal district and the definition of lines of action.
- The management of the Environmental Management Unit of the Municipality of Belen Gualcho was strengthened.
- Information was compiled to make it possible to hold training workshops to guide the intervention of PRODERT and other investment programs in the Municipality of Belen.

Participating entities

- The Municipality of Belen Gualcho, in the Department of Ocotepeque

Sources of information

- Monthly IICA bulletins
- PRODERT-SAG Web page
- IICA Office in Honduras

2. Model National Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measure (SPS) Agenda to improve the AHFS System, working in tandem with other international organizations

Origin of the initiative

Honduras has carried out a series of actions designed to take better advantage of the trade opportunities available, using a management model that will make it possible to improve the AHFS System working in tandem with other international organizations. It was decided that, to accomplish this, it was necessary to develop a model National SPS Agenda.

Implementation of the initiative

- Creating an integrated management model for AHFS called for the development of an agenda to define the roles of the international organizations and thereby improve sanitary and phytosanitary conditions, with international and national markets in mind.
- Different countries shared their experiences during the workshop held to draw up the agenda.
- The project facilitated the sharing of Chile's experience with regard to SPS and shared information about the methodology used to draft national plans aimed at enhancing SPS capabilities (citing the example of Peru).

Successful results

- The project arranged for countries to share their experiences during the implementation of the initiative.
- A National SPS Agenda was drawn up to facilitate the implementation of the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the various free trade agreements negotiated by the country.
- The project fostered partnerships involving the public and private sectors and other organizations for the design of the National SPS Agenda.

Participating entities

- National Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards of Honduras
- IICA Office in Honduras, in its capacity as the Technical Secretariat of the Committee
- Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, through the National Agricultural Health Service (SENASA)
- Ministry of Industry and Trade (SIC)
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Honduran Private Enterprise Council (COHEP)
- National Federation of Agricultural and Livestock Producers of Honduras (FENAGH)
- Academia (universities)
- International Regional Organization for Plant Protection and Animal Health (OIRSA)
- FAO

Sources of information

- National Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards (CNMSF)
- IICA Office in Honduras

3. Implementation of the Bono Tecnológico Productivo Project

Origin of the initiative

The agricultural sector in Honduras was finding it difficult to produce enough food, especially basic grains, so most were being imported and there was no incentive to produce them. Implementation of the Bono Tecnológico Project (a program involving subsidized inputs, such as fertilizers and seeds) began in 2006. The initiative was designed to reactivate and stimulate staple grain production and involve small and medium-scale producers.

Implementation of the initiative

- The project was implemented in 17 of the country's 18 departments, 246 municipal districts and 11,000 communities. Some 275,000 producers benefited from the program, receiving seed, fertilizers and other items.
- The project provided access to improved seed, which enabled producers to renew their planting materials.
- The use of fertilizers was facilitated and promoted. Coupled with the seed, this enabled some farmers to obtain better yields and increase the amount of grains available.
- Needs were identified related to organization, marketing, processing and financing.
- The project highlighted once more the need for a technical assistance system capable of meeting producers' need for technology, information and training.

Successful results

- The success of the project was made possible by the close coordination of the institutional political framework.
- Cooperation partnerships were forged between the public sector and other important actors in the private sector.
- The project strengthened the administrative and technical apparatus to ensure the availability of inputs (seed and fertilizers) and services (technical assistance).
- The project showed there was a need to continue with the technical assistance system, increasing the quality and variety of seeds and fertilizers, to ensure that producers' organizations are strengthened.

Participating entities

- Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (SAG)
- Directorate of Agricultural Science and Technology

Sources

- Proceedings of the first and second meetings of the Forum for rural development in the Trifinio Region

Panamá



1. Model for the management of agricultural insurance for investment

Origin of the initiative

The model for insurance for investment is operated by the Agricultural Insurance Institute (ISA), a Panamanian decentralized agency created in 1975. The State funding that the Institute receives is used to cover its direct personnel costs. This allows it to charge premiums that producers and entrepreneurs can afford.

Implementation of the initiative

- Initially, the Institute studied the plans of countries that had already implemented such a program successfully.
- Technical and actuarial studies were carried out and validated that made it possible to establish technical parameters, the cover to be provided and premiums.
- This model has been in place for 30 years and new insurance plans and successful products have been incorporated during that time. The model now also includes the banking sector and the cooperative movement.
- New items and products have been incorporated into insurance plans, such as performance bonds and guarantees. More than thirty types of policy are currently available, which has made it possible to diversify risk.

Successful results

- The procedures were strengthened to make the model for managing agricultural insurance for investment sustainable, offer new products and increase the number of policyholders by incorporating the banking sector and the cooperative movement.
- More categories of insurance, thus diversifying the risks.
- Opportunities and mechanisms were created to make it possible to share the experience that Panama has acquired in managing agricultural insurance through the investment insurance model with other countries in the region.

Participating entities

- ISA

Sources of information

- ISA: www.isa.gob.pa

2. Creation of new varieties of corn using plant-breeding techniques

Origin of the initiative

In 1975, the Agricultural Research Institute of Panama (IDIAP) was created as a decentralized agency and given the mission of generating technology for small and medium-scale farmers. From the outset, researchers focused on staple crops such as corn, due to the need to improve yields and production to meet the needs of the domestic market.

Implementation of the initiative

- The research focused on producers' farms, to key the work to their conditions and needs.
- An interdisciplinary team helped establish the objectives, strategies and activities.
- IDIAP carried out a series of activities aimed at improving corn, generating improved varieties of yellow and white corn, as well as hybrids for human and animal consumption.

Successful results

- New varieties of corn cultivars developed by IDIAP compete in the marketplace with imported ones.
- The new varieties and hybrids were adapted to Panama's different edaphoclimatic conditions and to the requirements of the market, both for human and animal consumption.
- Studies carried out on the adoption of these varieties and hybrids confirmed that they had a significant economic impact.

Participating entities

- IDIAP

Sources of information

- IDIAP, www.idiap.gob.pa

3. Territorial rural development model in the Darien region

Origin of the initiative

The Government of Panama asked the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to design and finance the Sustainable Rural Development of the Darien Project (PRODARIEN), for execution in the Darien Region, which borders with Colombia. For political purposes, this region is divided into one province and two indigenous *comarcas*. As it is one of the poorest regions of Panama, the project was designed to improve the population's standard of living by developing and strengthening local capabilities (human and social capital), promoting development needs (cultural, social and business undertakings), and recognizing and placing emphasis on the cultural heritage of the territory's population.

Implementation of the initiative

- By adopting the methodology of the territorial approach and involving different cultural groups, the project promoted grassroots and regional organizations with a view to fostering processes, based on a shared vision of the region's development, after negotiating and building consensus with the different groups
- Business, cultural and social undertakings were implemented and continue to be promoted.

Successful results

- A multicultural network of over 55 grassroots organizations was generated that is implementing a sustainable local tourism program.
- The cultural network of Afro-descendant communities remains active and is promoting new cultural initiatives.
- Producers' organizations are selling their products in national markets.
- Mechanisms were created to enable the region's grassroots organizations to develop regional and national partnerships, through interaction with local governments, donors and public institutions.
- External evaluations and systematizations of the experience were produced and published.

Participating entities

- Ministry of Agricultural Development (MIDA)
- IFAD

Sources of information

- MIDA
- IFAD
- PRODARIEN Project, www.mida.gob.pa/PRODARIEN
- Web pages of IFAD's regional programs, www.preval.org www.fidamerica.org

4. Model for modernizing production for small and medium-scale farmers

Origin of the initiative

For decades, Panama applied measures to protect small- and medium-scale producers who supplied the domestic market. That situation changed when Panama joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) around the middle of the last decade.

Implementation of the initiative

- As part of the negotiations for quotas for “sensitive” products, the Government of Panama implemented modernization programs with subsidies and loans for producers of corn, tomatoes, dairy products and five other items.
- The measures focused on the identification of the geographic areas and the target population.
- Efficient mechanisms (financial institutions) were developed to deliver the incentives and loans.

- Laws and decrees were enacted, in addition to the rules and regulations issued by the government agencies responsible.
- The modernization efforts focused on technological improvements (as in the case of hog production) and factors related to production (in the case of corn, for example).
- With respect to the modernization of production, the Government encouraged farmers to switch from products like corn and tomatoes to the production of cucurbits and pineapple for the international market.

Successful results

- The acreage of traditional products fell and the acreage planted with cucurbits, such as watermelon and melon, and pineapple, increased.
- Over the last five years, jobs have been created, the value of the exports of these products has risen and the agricultural gross domestic product (GDP) has increased.

Participating entities

- MIDA

Sources of information

- MIDA, Trade Policy Directorate, www.mida.gob.pa

Successful
experiences
in the



Northern
Region

Successful experiences in the Northern Region and strategic areas

IICA strategic area	Successful experience	Country
Promoting trade and agribusiness competitiveness	Centro de información de producción, comercialización y mercadeo en leguminosas	Canada

Canada



1. Center for information on the production, commercialization and marketing of pulses

Origin of the initiative

Under the terms of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), in 2008 Mexico opened its bean market to imports. Pulse Canada (the Canadian association of pulse producers and merchants) sought to increase exports to the Mexican market, as the country's annual per capita consumption of beans had fallen from 26 kg to 13 kg. The aim was to engage with Mexican producers with a view to finding points of synergy and support that would make it possible to reverse the country's consumption trend, and increase consumption in Canada as a way of benefiting both countries.

Implementation of the initiative

- In 2004, Canada organized the first Canada-Mexico Bean Congress, to engage in dialogue and exchange information.
- In 2005, the second congress included a visit by Canadian producers to production areas in Mexico, with the reverse taking place in 2006.
- In 2006, the governments invited these actors to form part of the FTA bilateral group.
- The Third Bean Congress took place in February 2007, with senior officials from both countries taking part. Furthermore, a meeting of researchers was held to identify issues of interest to both countries. The participants visited the wholesale market and the bilateral group for the Canada-Mexico FTA held an official meeting.

Successful results

- This experience shows how trade can serve as a bridge for developing strategies for production, research, commercialization and marketing that benefit both the producers and consumers of the two countries concerned.
- Beans were included on the agenda of the bilateral negotiations under the aegis of the FTA.
- A source of information about beans and other pulses was created.
- Binational bean producers' associations set up.

Participating entities

- Pulse Canada (association of pulse producers and traders), which includes beans, chickpeas and lentils
- Mexico's bean production system (the entire bean production and marketing chain)
- FTA bilateral group
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)
- Mexico's Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food (SAGARPA)

Sources of information

- <http://www.pulsecanada.com>
- Mexico's Bean Production System http://w4.siap.sagarpa.gob.mx/sispro/SP_AG/frijol/index_mcentro/index_situacion.html

Successful
experiences
in the

Southern
Region



Successful experiences in the Southern Region and strategic areas

IICA strategic area	Successful experience	Country
Promoting trade and agribusiness competitiveness	The Pro-Huerta program for fresh food self-sufficiency	Argentina
Promoting trade and agribusiness competitiveness	Development of an organic production model - "Las Brisas"	Argentina
Promoting the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment	Creation by the company Ventura S.A. of a system for sustainable organic agricultural production in semiarid regions	Argentina
Promoting the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment	Conservation crop production system using green manures	Argentina
Promoting trade and agribusiness competitiveness	Implementation of the organic or ecological agriculture model in Argentina	Argentina
Promoting trade and agribusiness competitiveness	Project for the manufacture of first cold-pressed oils and seed processing	Argentina
Repositioning agriculture and rural life and modernizing the institutional framework	Model for building consensus on the design of a State policy for agriculture	Chile
Promoting agricultural health and food safety	Model used to manage the implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary measures	Paraguay
Promoting agricultural health and food safety	Agricultural risk management and insurance model	Uruguay
Promoting agricultural health and food safety	Implementation of the cattle traceability model	Uruguay

Argentina



1. Development of an organic production model - “Las Brisas”

Origin of the initiative

This production model was implemented in the city of Santa Fe, in the province of Santa Fe, Argentina, to develop the alternative production of foods with high value added in a niche market with a high growth rate - the organic fruit and vegetable market. This project arose out of the need to promote sustainable development in the region, generate work for family groups and enhance the quality of life of consumers and producers.

Implementation of the initiative

- The project promoted sustainable development in the region based on a business concept that also considers the long term, rather than only current profitability. The producers do not create pollution, damage the environment or exhaust the available natural resources.
- As the social object of the undertaking, the personnel received training that helped raise productivity.
- Thanks to the knowledge generated about the business by strengthening a culture of work in organic production, operating expenses were cut and continuous investment has led to economies of scale
- Partnerships were created with producers, suppliers and traders.
- Income generation mainly targeted foreign exchange, which strengthened exports of the products involved.

Successful results

- Production has increased, since there is a permanent demand for organic products. It is estimated that prices of organic strawberries have risen 50% since 2004.
- Higher productivity thanks to the investment in training, as labor is the key element as far as the cost of the end product is concerned.
- The conditions have been created for improving the quality of life of producers and consumers, as the products marketed are environmentally friendly and promote sustainable development.

Participating entities

- Argentina, city of Santa Fe, province of Santa Fe

Sources of information

- Establecimiento Orgánico Las Brisas, www.lasbrisas.com.ar

2. Creation, by the company Ventura S.A., of a system for sustainable organic agricultural production in semiarid regions

Origin of the initiative

Ventura S.A. was created to develop an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable system that would dispense with the use of any product or any action that was harmful to the environment. A very important collateral aspect of this system is the inexpensiveness of the technology applied, which lowers production costs and the investment involved in implementing it. For 12 years, the standards of the organic system have been applied to everything produced, with the corresponding certifications.

Implementation of the initiative

- The planning initially focused on four main aspects: the market, the implementation of activities with experience, diversification and soil conservation.
- Commercial ties were forged with other companies, to position the products.
- The work of the institutions related to the agroecology was coordinated to make the system more effective and ensure the integrity of the organic system.
- Various steps are taken to conserve the soil and its environment, mainly by using a rotation system based on different species and farming practices that are as non-aggressive as possible.
- The conventional cultivation of cereals and oilseeds and the management of stock raising and beekeeping were transformed, switching to systems that are completely organic.

Successful results

- The volume/quality of production is greater/better or similar to the average achieved in the area using traditional/conventional methods and less than that of farms that use large quantities of chemical inputs. The rate of return is comparable to, or higher than, other types of operation.
- Crop activities were diversified by varying what is produced - wheat and oats in winter and sunflower and millet in summer - and using the system's favorable conditions for the activity.
- The company's unsustainable indebtedness was overcome and it now operates normally, without liabilities.

Participating entities

- Argentine Movement for Organic Production (MAPO)
- Argentine Chamber of Certified Organic Products (CAPOC)
- National Agricultural Technology Institute (INTA)
- Cambio Rural Pampa Orgánica Group

Sources of information

- Institutions responsible
 - La Ventura S.A., laventura@darreguira.com.ar
 - Grupo Pampa Orgánica, www.grupopampaorganica.com.ar
 - Mapo, www.mapo.org.ar

3. Conservation crop production system using green manures

Origin of the initiative

In 1991, a group of farmers supported by technicians from the Directorate of Agrarian Extension began setting up this system. The initial objective was to improve crop yields, which had fallen due to the degradation of the soil and the poverty of the farmers and their families. Following countless adjustments, research, the construction of implements, tests of different rotations and combinations of crops using green manures, the stakeholders developed concrete proposals for rehabilitating highly degraded soils and for conservation crop production.

Implementation of the initiative

- The initiative began with the process of adapting implements, using green manures and rotating crops, and direct planting by hand and using animal power.
- Soil fertility was reestablished (physical, chemical and biological improvement of the soils), with organic matter proving the key to the efforts to raise productivity and reduce the amount of physical effort that farmers are required to make.

Successful results

- The cost of controlling weeds in the degraded soils was reduced.
- Productivity rose, thanks to a bigger financial return on farmers' investment in day laborers. Producers who adopted the system have achieved a better standard of living, documented by published socioeconomic studies.

Participating entities

- Paraguay's National Program for Soil Management, Conservation and Recovery
- Office of the Deputy Secretary of State for Agriculture
- Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock

Sources of information

- Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
- Office of the Deputy Secretary of State for Agriculture
- National Program for Soil Management, Conservation and Recovery
- Publications

4. Implementation of the organic or ecological agriculture model in Argentina

Origin of the initiative

The model used for the initiative “Natural resource conservation combined with the production of grains and meat based on the principles of organic production” arose out of concern for the environment, the conservation of native flora and fauna and the need for the land to create prosperity, using it to produce food and at the same time provide a source of employment. Organic and ecological agriculture is an alternative that strikes more of a balance between conservation and production. It is also consistent with the concept of social responsibility, the idea that enterprises should adopt economically, socially and environmentally viable models. In this case, “*Las Dos Hermanas*” cattle ranch undertook to produce crops and livestock without using agrochemicals.

Implementation of the initiative

- The ranch managed to consolidate an organic production system that produces wholesome and nourishing food.
- Adopting the model made it possible to increase soil fertility.

- The ranch promotes biodiversity, especially protection of the native flora and fauna of the pampas ecosystem.
- The ranch promotes the quality of life and work of its employees.
- Crops and livestock are produced without using agrochemicals.
- More than 200 primary and secondary students have attended talks under the Environmental Education Program.

Successful results

- The model has proved sustainable despite Argentina's economic crises and increasing pressure to opt for the process of agriculturalization (use of a single-crop system to grow soybean) that is becoming widespread in the region, resulting in the disappearance of livestock activities and the consequent displacement and reduction of the labor force in rural areas.
- A 25-30% increase in stock on the ranch, demonstrating the positive results achieved.
- Information disseminated about organic or ecological agriculture, the environment and natural resources through the Environmental Education Program.

Participating entities

- Fundación Rachel y Pamela Schiele
- Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto
- Fundación Silvestre Argentina

Sources of information

Institution responsible for the successful initiative

- Fundación Rachel y Pamela Schiele, www.lasdoshermanas.com.ar

5. Project for the manufacture of first cold-pressed oils and seed processing

Origin of the initiative

In 1995, drawing on 25 years' of experience in organic and biochemical agriculture, Harald Tomys set up a small, non-industrial enterprise to produce whole-wheat flours and cold-pressed oils. He subsequently decided to promote the company as a producer of wholesome, organic, non-processed foodstuffs, focusing primarily on the quality of its products.

Implementation of the initiative

- Consumers were enthusiastic about the company's flour and oil.
- The enterprise promoted the Campo Claro brand, producing hulled millet, peeled and rolled oats and dried noodles made from 100% whole wheat flour.
- Production increased as demand grew steadily.

Successful results

- The brand name has been consolidated in both the organic and whole food and therapeutic food markets, due to the characteristics of the non-industrial products and constant improvements in their preparation and presentation.
- A market with new needs was created, in which the company developed new processes to meet consumer demand.
- Consumers developed an awareness of the social benefits of organic products through the production of wholesome plant-based foods.

Participating entities

- Molino Campo Claro, Argentina

Sources of information

- Angela Tomys, Campoclarotomys@hotmail.com Phone: 02323-495080

6. The Pro-Huerta program for fresh food self-sufficiency

Origin of the initiative

The Pro-Huerta Program was developed in 1990 by Argentina's National Agricultural Technology Institute of the Secretariat for Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food and the Ministry of Social Development, as a targeted social strategy designed to offset the effects of the structural adjustments. The key objective is to afford vulnerable families access to healthy foods by enabling them to produce their own fresh foodstuffs (vegetables, fruits, poultry), thereby increasing the range of foods available. The program is related to the food security strategy, whose key components are progressive training, solidary participation and systematic support for actions on the ground.

Implementation of the initiative

- The program created models for organic kitchen gardens and farms that are implemented by families, schools, communities and institutions.
- Training is provided to volunteer promoters from the communities themselves and other institutions (educators, health workers, municipal staff, religious groups, NGOs, etc.).
- The program promotes the basic contributions (biological inputs, technical assistance, training) so that families and groups or grassroots entities can produce their own fresh food in kitchen gardens and on farms.

- The program encourages families to organize so their daily diet includes fruits, vegetables and other produce grown on their farms. They also receive training in methods of preserving and processing food in the home, and in mechanisms for participating in fairs, barter networks and microenterprises.
- The program promotes the consumption of foods that will improve the nutritional levels of the population.

Successful results

- Support provided to over 550,000 (family, school, community and institutional) kitchen gardens.
- Families have increased their capacity to be self-sufficient in vegetables by up to 70%.
- 7200 kitchen gardens were created in schools.
- 9300 kitchen gardens were constructed by community groups.
- Each year, the diet of over 500,000 families has improved.
- The program now covers 90% of the country's municipal districts.
- The Pro-Huerta Program enjoys an excellent reputation thanks to the appropriate technologies developed and the credibility of the service it provides.

Participating entities

- INTA, Argentina
- Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food of Argentina
- Ministry of Social Development of Argentina

Sources of information

- Pro-Huerta Argentina <http://www.inta.gov.ar/extension/prohuerta/>

Chile



1. Model for building consensus on the design of a State policy for agriculture

Origin of the initiative

Chile's State policy for agriculture (2000-2010) is a road map designed to meet the needs of all the stakeholders involved in agriculture (both public and private). It encompasses small farmers' associations, companies, academics, lawmakers and others involved in the forum on agriculture.

Implementation of the initiative

- It was the President who called for an effort to reach consensus on a State policy. The final version was endorsed by all the representatives of the entities taking part.
- Chile's State policy for agriculture (2000-2010) was prepared during a series of sessions of the forum on agriculture, a body that discussed an agenda that had been drawn up previously. All the participants discussed the issues involved and submitted proposals.
- No special funds were needed, since the private sector participants paid their own expenses.
- This policy is also targeted at small-scale agriculture.

Successful results

- Following in-depth discussion of each issue, a document was approved that became the State policy for Chilean agriculture for the period 2000-2010.
- Many elements of the State policy were subsequently underpinned by laws and regulations enacted by the Legislative Branch.

- The sector has performed well and the participants in the Ministry of Agriculture's forum on agriculture have acknowledged that fact.
- The State policy for agriculture has been endorsed in all the country's agricultural areas, most of which are to be found in the south of Chile, where producers find themselves increasingly under pressure to improve their competitiveness.

Entidades involucradas

- Office for Studies and Agrarian Policies (ODEPA)
- Ministry of Agriculture

Sources of information

- Office for Studies and Agrarian Policies (ODEPA), a unit of the Ministry of Agriculture

Paraguay



1. Model used to manage the implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS)

Origin of the initiative

Between 2002 and 2007, a hemispheric program was implemented entitled the “Initiative for the Countries of the Americas in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.” The objective was to promote the development of capabilities in individual countries, to ensure effective implementation of the SPS agreements of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Starting with the 28th meeting of the WTO/SPS Committee, national delegates and leaders of institutions involved with SPS began attending meetings on a regular basis. Meetings were also held to create a national committee in each country. This process led to the creation of discussion forums and mechanisms to help strengthen the countries’ capacity to defend their interests in international activities.

Implementation of the initiative

- An informal working group was set up to allow the institutions involved in the issue to engage in dialogue and exchange information. This strengthened national representation in the meetings of the WTO/SPS Committee.
- Coordinated, complementary work was carried out at the national level by the institutions involved, leading to the creation of a National Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, whose main function is to implement the decisions taken and recommendations made under the WTO’s SPS agreements.
- Paraguay’s National SPS Committee managed to establish a national agenda and a position on animal and plant health issues in relation to the WTO agreement on the application of SPS and bilateral trade agreements.

Successful results

- A decree was issued institutionalizing the National Technical Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS), comprising a technical secretariat, a permanent secretariat and internal regulations.
- A training program was designed for the members of the Committee and specialists from institutions, involving two seminars (one national and one international) on the SPS of the WTO.
- The model implemented has successfully helped coordinate the efforts of the public and private sectors to implement the STDF 19-WTO Project “Model arrangements for institutions and companies involved in sanitary and phytosanitary standards at the national level.”

Participating entities

- Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
- Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare
- National Food and Nutrition Institute
- National Technology and Standardization Institute
- Codex Alimentarius

Sources of information

- IICA Office in Paraguay, www.iica.org.py

Uruguay



1. Agricultural risk management and insurance model

Origin of the initiative

In Uruguay, the agricultural sector is very important to the economy as a whole. It is estimated that 75% of Uruguay's foreign exchange earnings are derived from agricultural exports. It is for that reason that agricultural insurance has existed in the country since 1912, with the state-run Banco de Seguros having a monopoly until 1993. Four insurance companies now compete in the agricultural insurance market, including the state-owned enterprise. In 1996, insurance policies were exempted from sales tax and in 2000 the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP) decided to make the development of an agricultural insurance system public policy. The aim was to stabilize the income of agricultural enterprises and rationalize the use of public resources to deal with adverse climatic events that affect agricultural production.

Implementation of the initiative

- The government collaborated with farmers to them to better manage the risks to which people involved in agricultural activities are exposed.
- The program has helped improve the use of public resources by coordinating information and financial support services, thus making it easier to obtain cover.
- Companies specializing in agricultural insurance began participating in the market, together with the State and farmers, in order to create an environment for the development of an agricultural insurance market based on a technically appropriate and commercially viable supply.
- The program promoted the participation of producers' organizations, developing climate risk cover to integrate them into the development of the agricultural insurance system.

Successful results

- An analysis was conducted of the most frequent risks in Uruguayan agriculture, including an assessment of the agricultural insurance market and a proposal for short- and medium-term actions.
- A technical cooperation project was formulated and executed that included training activities related to risk management and insurance, and the preparation of risk maps for Uruguayan agriculture.
- An interagency working group was set up to design and develop an information system tailored to the agricultural insurance market.
- Information about the importance of agricultural insurance was disseminated among members of civil society by means of the publications “Seminar-workshop on agricultural insurance in Uruguay” and “Risk maps for Uruguay.”

Participating entities

- Entity responsible
 - MGAP
- Technical Cooperation
 - Spain’s state-owned Entidad Estatal de Seguros Agrarios (ENESA and AGROSEGURO)
- Financial cooperation
 - IDB and Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECID)
- Co-participating entities
 - Insurance and Reinsurance Authority of the Central Bank of Uruguay
 - Insurance companies
 - Producers’ organizations and institutions linked to the agricultural sector (INIA, School of Agronomy, National Meteorology Directorate)

Sources of information

- Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries
<http://www.mgap.gub.uy/opypa/segurosagropecuarios>
- AGROSEGURO

2. Implementation of the beef traceability model in Uruguay

Origin of the initiative

The initiative stemmed from the European Union (EU) requirement that, beginning in 2005, suppliers of beef had to have systems that guaranteed that the meat of individual animals could be traced from their place of birth to the door of the refrigerator.

Implementation of the initiative

- In 2004, implementation of a pilot plan got under way to permit individual traceability in a planned way.
- Subsequently, Uruguay and the EU agreed that, under the Hilton quota, as of 1 April 2010 the EU would only accept meat from Uruguay from animals identified individually at their place of birth and until they were weaned, and whose movements were recorded individually.
- Under Law N° 17997 and Decree N° 266/2008, on 1 September 2006 it became mandatory in Uruguay to identify and register calves born anywhere in the country.
- The Animal Identification and Registration System (SIRA) is notified of all movements or changes of property of animals identified and registered, by means of a form that is used to update information about individual animals.
- Technical activities were held to explain the procedures to be followed and the operation of the system. A (free) 0800 number was made available to clarify doubts and field queries, and sections were created on the websites of the different state agencies involved.
- By 2008, the MGAP had distributed 6,000,000 ear tags and entered data about 478,218 heads of cattle into the system: 4,646,770 as traced (89%) and 135,948 as observed (3%), with the other 8% yet to be traced.

Successful results

- A cattle traceability system was created in Uruguay, which has led to better food safety and human safety, and meat exports have increased.
- A visual and electronic document was developed for use nationwide, to enable producers and the MGAP to exchange information and send out cattle ear tags.
- Individual traceability was incorporated into Uruguay's national legislation, to improve meat quality in the country.

Participating entities

- MGAP
- SIRA
- General Directorate of Livestock Services (DGSSGG)
- Directorate for Stock Control (DICOSE)
- National Meat Institute (INAC)

Sources of information

- SIRA, <http://www.mgap.gub.uy/DDSG/SIRA/SIRA.html>
- DGSSGG, <http://www.mgap.gub/DGSG/>
- DICOSE <http://www.mgap.gub.uy/DGSG/DICOSE/dicose.html>
- National Livestock Information System http://www.snig.gub.uy/porta_l/hgxpp001.aspx?2,1,4,0,S,0
- INAC, <http://www.inac.gub.uy/> http://www.inac.gub.uy/innovanet/macros/Home_2_4P.jsp?contentid=2562&version=1&channelid=1

Conclusion

The national initiatives presented in this document are considered successful because they have the potential to be applied elsewhere. They are noteworthy for their innovation, effectiveness and sustainability; they have been validated; and, if replicated, they could have a real impact on the agricultural sector and its beneficiaries. They are intended to encourage the countries to participate in horizontal cooperation networks, since they offer solutions to some of the problems of other States. They can also strengthen solidarity among States, increase mutual knowledge and permit harmonious economic integration. Finally, they are benchmarks for innovation, because they are tried and proven processes that could be adapted to other situations in other countries.

This mechanism has been conceived as an innovative form of international cooperation that promotes effective (*win-win*) partnerships between countries and holds out the promise of better results.

Technical cooperation between countries is a great opportunity to support national institutions by generating and transferring public goods. This can be done by means of missions to impart technical knowledge, consultancies and specialized technical advisory services, participation in technical events and the sharing of information about priority issues. This new form of horizontal cooperation, with the support of a cooperation agency like IICA, can complement knowledge management efforts with the countries' institutions. IICA studies the technological advances made by national institutions, sees what new lessons have been learned and then identifies and disseminates solutions to the problems of agriculture and rural life.

By strengthening its ties with the countries' cooperation agencies, IICA has raised the profile of its technical cooperation among the national officials responsible for multilateral relations and international cooperation. This has resulted in stronger ties with the ministries of foreign relations and embassies and promoted actions between the countries that

receive and contribute cooperation. The link with international cooperation organizations working in the agricultural sector and with national cooperation agencies has contributed to the establishment of alliances and strategic partnerships aimed at securing financing for horizontal cooperation.

This mechanism implemented by IICA to manage knowledge generated by the national entities is full of potential. It marks a cultural change for the Institute itself, which is called upon to work with national partners to deliver international cooperation to other Member States. The role of IICA's Offices in the countries is key in facilitating actions of this kind. Technical cooperation between countries holds out great promise for IICA's work in the future. The Institute plans to collaborate with national institutions on issues of strategic importance for the improvement of agriculture and rural life, and at the same time mobilize knowledge among countries, promote a fruitful relationship with the entities in charge of international technical cooperation, and raise the profile of IICA's cooperation. ■

Form No. 1

Identification of successful experiences in the country/region

Please provide the information requested under each heading. Limit all replies to a maximum of two or three pages.

1. Descriptive title

2. Country/entities that implemented the initiative

3. Brief description of the experience: background, purpose and objectives, type (1-2 paragraphs) What problem did this initiative solve?

4. Achievements and coverage: what made the experience “successful” and what was its impact? How was its success determined? (for example, formal or informal evaluations or analyses)? What more is expected from this experience? (1-3 paragraphs)

- 5. **Conditions required:** Explain the circumstances in which this experience was carried out and detail any precautions / constraints / warnings (factors that could affect its applicability in other contexts or situations. Are there other factors that could support or reinforce the use and impact of the experience?

Describe the context in which the initiative was implemented and other factors that are critical for its replication (1-2 paragraphs)

- 6. **Methodology used.** Describe the methodology used, with emphasis on ideas or tips that could be useful for other people who wish to carry out similar actions (transfer methodology) (1-3 paragraphs)

- 7. **Type of horizontal cooperation.** Indicate the types of horizontal cooperation needed to effectively transfer this successful experience.

8. Sources of information on the successful experience:

- Institution responsible for the successful experience (Web page)

- Technical personnel familiar with the successful experience (Web page)

9. References:

- Name of person who provided or edited the information (email address and phone number)

- Dates: presented, revised

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