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Board of Agriculture (IABA)

**Report on the Results of the IICA-CATIE Program of Joint
Action for 2016-2018
(second semester of 2016 and first semester of 2017)**

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REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE IICA-CATIE PROGRAM OF JOINT ACTION FOR 2016-2018 (SECOND SEMESTER OF 2016 AND FIRST SEMESTER OF 2017)

The IICA-CATIE Program of Joint Action was approved pursuant to the terms of the IICA-CATIE Bilateral Agreement and Resolution IICA/JIA/Res 500 (XVIII-O/15) of 22 October 2015. The plan establishes the strategic areas of collaboration between the two institutions, and the operating mechanisms required to coordinate and manage the joint actions called for in the areas of technical cooperation, capacity building and corporate services.

The Program focuses on five areas of collaboration: a) the delivery of assistance to the Member States designed to enable them to adapt to climate change and mitigate its effects; b) the strengthening of processes aimed at innovation in production; c) the development of institutional frameworks and capabilities for the sustainable management of rural areas; d) collaboration to improve the food security of small and medium-scale producers and family farmers; and e) other technical cooperation initiatives under consideration, and the design of projects.

This executive report describes the main progress made under the Program.

TECHNICAL COOPERATION

In the area of technical cooperation, IICA-CATIE joint actions were carried out pursuant to the General Bilateral Cooperation Agreement and within the framework of IICA's 2014-2018 Medium-term Plan and CATIE's 2013-2020 Strategic Plan. They focused on priority issues and the allocation of the human, financial, and logistical resources required, with emphasis on external financing and seed or preinvestment resources provided under technical cooperation instruments. The implementation of projects and actions related to the following subjects got under way:

1. Support for the strengthening and sustainability of the coffee sector
 - Central American Program for Integrated Coffee Rust Management (PROCAGICA Regional): on 16 November 2016, IICA and CATIE signed a sub-delegation contract for implementation of the actions to be carried out by CATIE during the period 2016-2020. IICA will contribute €1,488,497 (one million four hundred eighty-eight thousand four hundred ninety-seven Euros), resources provided by the European Union (EU), for implementation of the various sub-delegated activities. CATIE is using these resources to carry out applied research, field validation, technology transfer and technical assistance activities aimed at enabling small and medium-scale coffee farmers to adapt to variability and climate change in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and the Dominican Republic. This project has assumed greater importance following the appearance of a new race of leaf rust to which the varieties resistant to the races of rust that existed in the region previously are susceptible.

- Strengthening the coffee sector in the Dominican Republic: IICA has signed another agreement with the EU to bolster the coffee sector in specific areas of the Dominican Republic (PROCAGICA-RD), which is related to PROCAGICA-Regional. Efforts are under way to identify the specific actions that CATIE has the technical capacity to implement in the areas concerned. The work will also entail close collaboration with the project “Technological-financial alternatives for the renewal, rehabilitation and development of coffee plantations in the Dominican Republic,” financed by the National Fund for Innovation and Scientific and Technological Development (FONDOCYT) of the Dominican Republic’s Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, and carried out by CATIE and the Dominican Coffee Council (CODOCAFE).
- Feasibility study for the development of coffee growing in Dominica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: as part of an IICA rapid response action (RRA) requested by Dominica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, between December 2016 and February 2017 CATIE conducted an assessment for the design of a plan aimed at strengthening and developing coffee growing in both countries. Based on the assessment’s findings, the ministries of agriculture have submitted a proposal for capacity building and the introduction of superior varieties more suited to the agroecological and market conditions of the two countries. A project is being prepared to respond to these needs.

2. Support for the strengthening, sustainability and resilience of the livestock sector

The project, “Scaling Up Biodiversity Conservation through Climate-Smart Agrosilvopastoral Practices in Landscapes Dominated by Cattle-Raising Systems in Three Regions of Mexico” (GANAMEX). This project, funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of Germany’s Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB), will be carried out during the period 2016-2020. Spearheaded by CATIE, the project will also involve IICA, Mexico’s National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO) and Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food (SAGARPA). The basic objectives of GANAMEX are as follows: 1) to facilitate the creation and operation of learning communities focused on the establishment and management of climate-smart agrosilvopastoral systems; and 2) to propose a policy and institutional framework that would facilitate implementation of climate-smart livestock practices. Within the framework of GANAMEX, actions will be implemented in Campeche, Quintana Roo, Yucatán, Chiapas and Jalisco at the local level (municipal governments and organizations of agricultural producers), the state level (governments and private sector organizations), and the national level (government, financial institutions and scientific community).

3. Support for agricultural research and development

IICA and CATIE organized the XVI Annual Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Forum of the Americas on Agricultural Research and Technology Development (FORAGRO), held 16-17 November 2016 at CATIE’s headquarters in Turrialba and partially funded by the Regional Agricultural Technology Fund (FONTAGRO). A proposal for the restructuring of the Forum was presented, studied and modified at the meeting, and a work plan was drafted for implementation of the proposal in 2017. The participants agreed to inform the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) of these developments at its next meeting, since the forum was established under a resolution issued by the IABA.

4. Assistance to combat climate change and mitigate its effects

- Course on Elements of Geographic Information Systems and their Application to Agricultural Systems: the objective of this on-site course was to enhance the technical capabilities of public and private institutions with regard to the main uses, purposes and applications of geographic information systems (GIS), an important decision-making tool for natural resource management in the agricultural sector. The training involved the use of concepts related to soil, water and climate change. Theoretical and practical sessions were held on the use of GIS in agriculture that included conceptual sessions and computer-based exercises. The participants included 18 specialists from 13 public and private institutions in Costa Rica, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), the National Institute for Agricultural Innovation and Technology Transfer (INTA), the National Groundwater, Irrigation and Drainage Service (SENARA), the Executive Secretariat for Agriculture Sector Planning (SEPSA), the National University (UNA), the State Distance University (UNED), the Costa Rican Soil Science Association (ACCS), the Café Forestal Foundation, the National Rice Corporation (CONARROZ), the National Banana Corporation (CORBANA), the Rural Development Institute (INDER) and the League of Sugarcane Growers and Processors (LAICA).
- Six series of virtual forums were coordinated to share information and experiences with respect to the benefits of production systems that promote sustainable soil management, and to raise stakeholder awareness of the importance of the soil for building resilience to climate change in agriculture. People located at more than 1600 sites across the Americas took part in these virtual forums.

5. Improved food security, particularly among small and medium-scale producers and family farmers

IICA, CATIE, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Rural Forum and the Specialized Meeting on Family Farming (REAF) of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) organized "International Family Farming Week," which took place from 1-4 November 2016 and included the following events:

- International seminar on women's role in family farming, with the participation of the First Lady of Costa Rica, Ms. Mercedes Peñas.
- International forum on differentiated public policies for family farming.
- Meetings of the national family farming committees of seven countries.

These events led to the identification of opportunities to establish partnerships and develop initiatives designed to strengthen public policies, institutional frameworks and programs, so they make gender a crosscutting issue in technical cooperation and promote the economic, social and environmental sustainability of family farming.

6. Integration of CATIE-IICA technical cooperation actions at the country level

- The directors general of IICA and CATIE sent letters to their respective Representatives in Belize, Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic to promote technical cooperation and the efficient use of the two institutions' resources at the country level.

- IICA's delegations and CATIE's offices have been instructed to focus their interaction on technical cooperation actions related to the priority subjects identified in the Program of Joint Action and IICA and CATIE strategies in the countries, complementing their technical and corporate capabilities within the framework of the two institutions' missions.
- The plans for collaboration drawn up by the Representatives are underpinned by letters of understanding at the country level.
- In Panama, IICA and CATIE are working together to support the drafting of the National Plan for Climate Change Adaptation for the Agricultural Sector, in close collaboration with that country's Ministry of Agricultural Development (MIDA).

CAPACITY BUILDING

In the area of capability building, five objectives have been set for the process of supporting the reorganization of CATIE's academic area. The progress achieved with each activity so far are as follows:

1. Optimization of onsite academic activities.

This action involves a review of the master's degree study programs offered by CATIE for the purpose of identifying duplications and making efficient use of academic resources. The consultant submitted his report in March of this year, which includes an assessment of the situation and recommendations for the review and enhancement of onsite academic activities.

2. Distance learning programs.

The purpose of this action is to develop and implement master's degree and continuing education programs. It was decided that an IICA-CATIE joint unit needed to be created to develop distance learning and virtual education programs. This unit will be operationally independent of the current structure of onsite postgraduate courses, as postgraduate courses and any modifications to their study programs must be approved by CATIE's Academic Committee for Master's Degrees (CAM). No significant progress has been made with the conceptual and operational design of this unit. Various points have been agreed upon, such as an implementation plan for the development of the International Master's Degree in Watersheds, which will be formulated in August 2017.

3. Continuing education programs.

The purpose of this action is to contribute to the development of continuing education courses and certificates. The diploma in Sustainable Development Objectives is being promoted for the second semester of 2017. During that semester, IICA will work on the preparation of a massive open online course (MOOC) related to that program that will also make it possible to promote the diploma course for CATIE.

4. Orton Commemorative Library.

The two directors general signed the Letter of Understanding for the Joint Modernization of the Orton Commemorative Library, establishing the respective institutional responsibilities for this new stage. The two organizations, through the units concerned, have coordinated actions related to human talent,

infrastructure, the delivery of services, information and communication technologies (ICTs) and management. In doing so, they have responded to a series of queries related to IICA and CATIE committees and internal units, explaining the scope of the project; formalized the operation of the library, with all professional staff and assistants working according to IICA's rules and regulations; identified consultants for the process of selecting the documentary collection; drawn up the terms of reference and contacted suppliers for the remodeling work required; and identified digital sources of information to increase library users' access to information.

5. Henry Wallace Legacy Scholars (HWLS) Program.

This scholarship program has continued to be implemented according to the contracts signed with CATIE and USDA. The report on the second semester of 2016 (when there were 18 active scholarship holders) was submitted in March 2017, followed by the transfer of the sum of USD 89,500.00 to CATIE in April.

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

During the second half of 2016 and the first half of 2017, the following important corporate actions were carried out and results obtained:

1. Tripartite agreement

- The tripartite agreement signed by IICA, CATIE and the Costa Rican Social Security System (CCSS) is designed to make it possible to supply water to the new hospital that is to be built in Turrialba. Once the work on the agreement had been concluded, IICA coordinated the signing of the document by the heads of all three institutions. The ceremony took place on 10 March 2017 at CATIE in the presence of the President of Costa Rica, Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís.

To ensure proper coordination, IICA convened a meeting with the other two institutions (CCSS and CATIE) on 25 April 2017 for the purpose of putting in place the Follow-up Committee called for in clause two of the agreement. The committee's remit is to oversee the preparation, approval and signing of the technical annex, verifying its content, and to monitor the corresponding activities and responsibilities. Following that meeting, the first legal and technical activities got under way. The CCSS, in coordination with IICA and CATIE, requested the respective approvals needed to prepare the call for tenders for the design of the proposed hospital under a turnkey contract.

Continuing with the process of ensuring the water supply for the new hospital in Turrialba, the CCSS technical team convened a meeting to organize the field visit to the Bajo del Chino spring, located on CATIE's campus, with the companies interested in participating in the tendering process for the construction of the medical center.

2. Letters of Understanding

- Based on the model letter of understanding agreed upon, the two directors general signed one related to the Orton Commemorative Library. The aim is to modernize the library's information services, transforming the resource, in the short run, into a "specialized information center" that adds value to CATIE's education, training, cooperation and research activities, optimizing its resources and making intensive use of ICTs.

- A draft letter of understanding was also concluded for the IICA Delegation in Bolivia, in order to lay the groundwork for joint collaboration on corporate matters, with a view to establishing and strengthening the IICA-CATIE plan of action for technical cooperation and capacity building in that country.

3. Bilateral agreement

- In accordance with the IICA-CATIE Bilateral Cooperation Agreement, the Institute supported a general review of CATIE's National Staff Rules, based on IICA's regulations. The respective contributions were forwarded to CATIE for presentation to the next regular meeting of the Board of Directors (53rd) for approval.
- By means of Resolution No. 7-17, adopted at the 41st Regular Meeting of CATIE's Nominations Committee, held in April 2017, the Board of Directors validated the amendments and updates issued by IICA to the Rules for the Election of the Director General of CATIE, and agreed to forward them to the Governing Council for approval. The new version is designed to serve as a more appropriate, useful instrument for the process of nominating and selecting the Director General.

4. Financial management

- IICA has continued to make financial contributions to CATIE, as established in Law 8028, transferring USD 6.8 million between 2010 and the first quarter of 2017, reaffirming the Institute's commitment to the Center's work.
- IICA has continued to finance the Orton Commemorative Library, contributing USD 185,000 in 2017, in particular to promote its process of modernization. Each institution will then contribute USD 75,000 in each of the next five years. In addition to strengthening the library's process of modernization, the aim is to bolster it financially, so that it becomes more efficient and self-sustainable and can update its collections and infrastructure on a permanent basis.

5. Going forward

- A letter of understanding is being prepared for IICA-CATIE joint activities in Mexico, in order to continue to institutionalize and improve the relationship between the two institutions in the areas of technical cooperation, capacity building and corporate services. Work will then focus on the cooperation arrangements in Haiti, Colombia, Dominican Republic and Belize, since CATIE is in the process of designating its Representatives in those countries.
- CATIE's Representative is reviewing the letter of understanding for the Office in El Salvador.
- In the coming months, as part of CATIE's review of its rules and regulations, work will get under way on the joint analysis of the Financial Rules, with a view to updating them. IICA's Rules will be used as a reference, while respecting CATIE's distinctive characteristics.

6. Resolution No. 500 (IABA 2015), Law 8028

One aspect of special importance for both institutions is the first operative paragraph of the mandate issued by the IABA in its Resolution No. 500, which establishes that the Board will support the automatic extension of the Contract, from 2020 onward, according to the terms of clause thirty-three of said contract.

The proposed 20-year extension must ensure that CATIE embarks on that new stage with solid underpinnings for its academic, research and corporate management activities. The Center must be equipped to respond to the social, economic, and environmental challenges faced by the tropical regions of Latin America and the Caribbean with regard to agriculture and the sustainable use of natural resources, so that it becomes the national, regional and hemispheric benchmark institution in its areas of competitive strength.

The extension of Law 8028 is a unique opportunity to provide CATIE with a modern legal framework and a strategic vision for the future that strengthens its academic, research, operational and financial position and enables it to offer its member countries proposals of excellence.

With this in mind, it would be advisable for the two institutions to set up an *ad hoc* working group that includes internal and external specialists with expertise in legal aspects, the operation of the Legislative Assembly, the governing bodies of the two institutions and their interinstitutional relations, and task it with drawing up a strategic proposal for updating and improving the regulatory framework.

At the same time, it will be very important to establish the best option for proposing, first to the Executive Committee, a general model for the structural transformation of CATIE as a cutting-edge scientific and educational institution that produces important and more valuable results for the countries. Secondly, thought could be given to the most appropriate way to achieve all this through the modernization of the contract, supported by specialists in legal matters and the workings of the Congress, in order to ensure a successful outcome.