



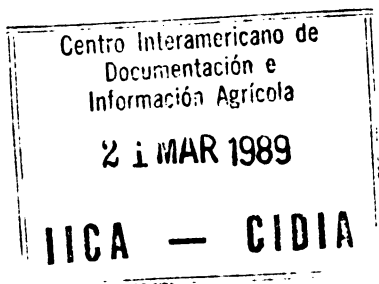
FRAMEWORK FOR CORECA ACTION

November 1986

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Regional Council for Agricultural Cooperation in Central
America, Mexico, Panama and the Dominican Republic





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CORECA

FRAMEWORK FOR CORECA ACTION

San Jose, Costa Rica
November 1986
Secretariat of Coordination

Regional Council for Agricultural Cooperation in Central
America, Mexico, Panama and the Dominican Republic

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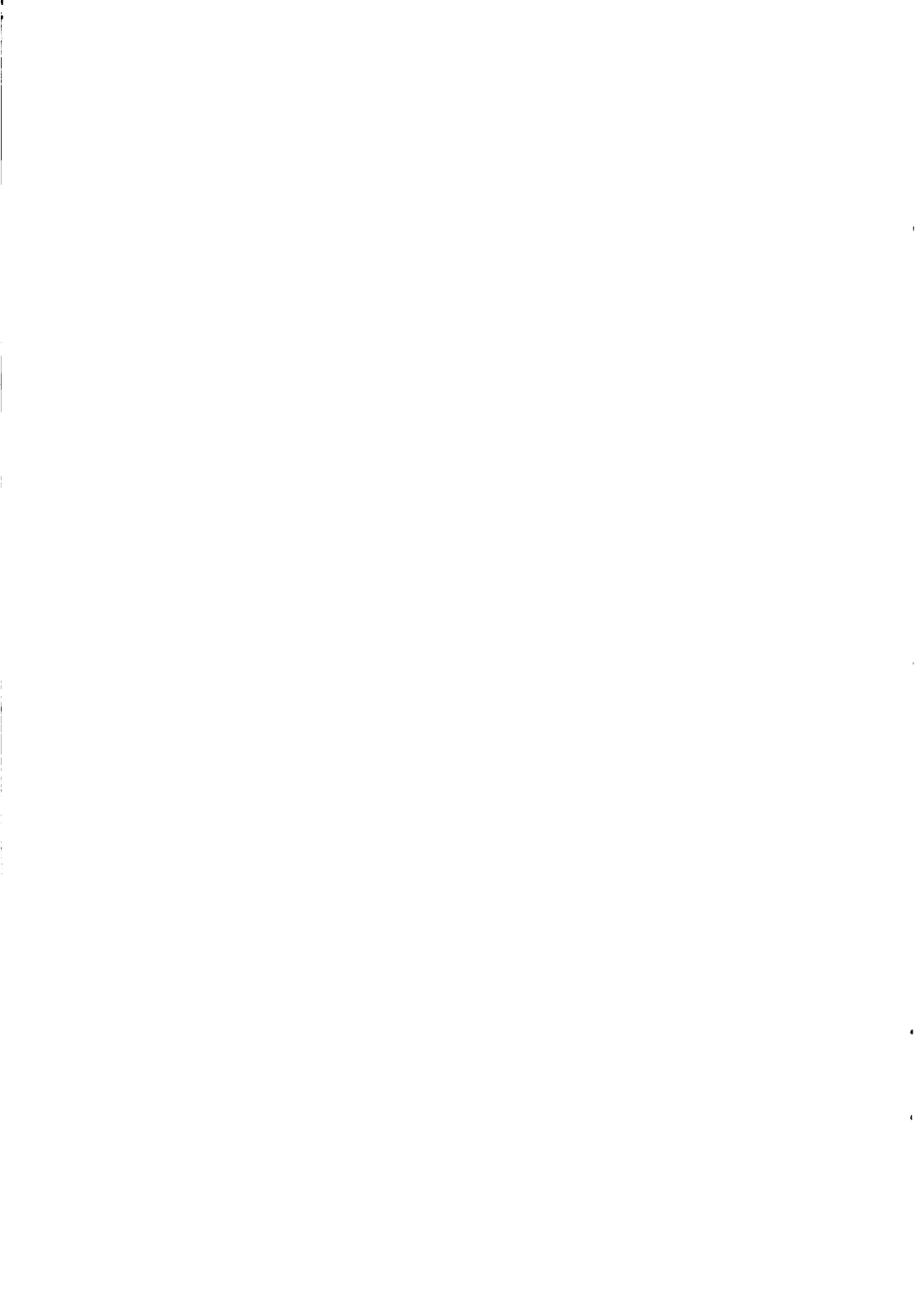
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PRESENTATION

This document, prepared by CORECA's Secretary of Coordination, was written to provide a broader and clearer understanding of IICA's purposes and those of the Council, and of the executive activities carried out by the Secretariat, in light of the new Agreement on Technical Cooperation between the countries and IICA.

The nature of this third stage of CORECA, whose general objective is to bring about the final institutionalization of this consulting forum for the Ministers of Agriculture, in order to contribute to the integrational efforts of the region, demands substantial changes in the definition of the new tasks and the work style employed thus far. Forging through this rugged terrain will also demand new alternatives, as the countries, determined to strengthen their ties of friendship and cooperation, unite.

This new stage, if it is to be carried out effectively and overcome the misunderstandings that have delayed the long-awaited results in the region, will require a clear understanding of what is set forth in this document.

We do not expect to generate debate on this topic since the countries of CORECA and IICA have already defined their objectives and terms of cooperation, as explained in the pages that follow.



I. BACKGROUND

The Regional Council on Cooperation in Agriculture (CORECA) was founded in November of 1980 by the Ministers and Secretaries of Agriculture of Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic. Since then, through the signing of an Agreement on Technical Cooperation with the Inter-American Institute of Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), this organization has exercised the functions of the Secretariat of Coordination of IICA.

In December, 1984 at the Fifth Meeting of the Council of Ministers, held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, the admission of Mexico into CORECA was approved.

CORECA provides a formal framework for the meetings of the Ministers of Agriculture and establishes mechanisms of technical analysis for decision-making and follow-up of the resolutions and agreements approved by the Ministers in support of the efforts toward agricultural development and rural well-being. In this sense, CORECA seeks to enhance and energize the regional efforts to increase agriculture, intra- and extra-regional production, trade and exportation, as well as stabilize the process of rural development, particularly in the generation of rural employment and the improvement of the living conditions of farmers, through a process of exchange of experiences and ideas on a political and technical level.

IICA's initial technical and financial assistance for the operation of CORECA was given through the Simón Bolívar Fund. Subsequently, from October 1981 to December 1985, support for operational expenses was provided through a Grant Agreement between the Agency for International Development (AID) and IICA.

Within the development of the Regional Council of Cooperation on Agriculture (CORECA) as an institution, three notable stages have been defined. The first centered on the structuring and organization of CORECA's constitutive bodies and the preparation and implementation of a Medium-Range Operating Plan, which identified the opportunities in the agricultural and rural sector, as well as formulated recommendations for its long- and medium-range development with the direct participation of the countries themselves. The second stage was aimed at the preparation of a Normative Framework, comprised of regulations, standards and procedures for CORECA's operation, the Special Studies Program of Research and Analysis (UIA) and the Program of Reciprocal Technical Cooperation (COTER). This in turn led to the structuring of a Policy Agency and the execution of projects and policy analysis studies in areas specifically defined by the Council of Ministers. This work process in conjunction with the countries led to the establishment of Cooperation Agreements to carry out specific actions with SIECA, CATIE, CEPAL/Mexico, BCIE, MULTIFERT/Panama and CADESCA/CEE.

The third stage is marked by the Agreement on Technical Cooperation signed between the Ministers of Agriculture of CORECA and IICA on October 29, 1986. This agreement modifies the previous agreements and establishes an organizational structure for CORECA in conformance with Resolution VI-09 approved at the Sixth Meeting of Council of Ministers of Agriculture and in accord with the recommendations made in connection with evaluations of CORECA by the Group of Six Experts, which was designated by the Inter-American Board of Agriculture to review and evaluate the Medium-Term Plan and IICA's programs.

This new organizational structure will reinforce the Council's role as the consulting forum of the Ministers of Agriculture and subregional integration agents, and will afford the agricultural officials of the countries a greater measure of guidance and support from CORECA.

II. BASIS OF IICA'S COOPERATION WITH CORECA

The signing of the New Agreement on Technical Cooperation between the member states of CORECA and IICA is of transcendental significance in that it underscores the countries' willingness to broaden the avenues of cooperation among them, and it allows IICA to comply with one of the objectives set forth for the 1987-91 MTP, since there now exists a mechanism for establishing definite goals on which IICA may focus its assistance. Hence, the objective "to stimulate, promote and support the efforts of the Member States to advance in the process of regional integration" can now become a reality due to the concurrence of the objectives of the countries that comprise CORECA —members of a subregion— and those of IICA.

This confluence of purposes defines the magnitude of effort IICA has decided to put forth so that the member countries of CORECA can achieve in five years a more effective technical and economical integration, through the development of ties of cooperation in agriculture, especially from the standpoint of technology, hygiene and food security.

Undoubtedly, the need for cooperation among the nations surpasses IICA's capacity to offer technical assistance, as a result of its internal adjustments and the decision to concentrate its efforts on developing technical leadership in the relevant areas of agricultural and rural development defined and approved in the 1987-91 MTP.

Consequently, IICA's decision to support the Secretariat of the Council in the development of mechanisms of horizontal cooperation, with the participation of organizations other than IICA, evidences a real contribution toward attaining one of the results sought with the agreement.

Thus, IICA's decision to continue supporting the Secretariat of Coordination, within an autonomous framework that will permit greater and better articulation with the Council of Ministers, in search of a final institutionalization of this consulting forum of Ministers of Agriculture, fits well into the atmosphere of cooperation IICA desires to foster among its Member States.

In this sense, the fundamental purpose of the Secretariat's work, in the light of the new Agreement, should be to consolidate its organizational structure and the mechanism of reciprocal technical cooperation. Moreover, it should enhance the process of adoption of agricultural policies and programs of common interest, which seeks to institutionalize the Council.

These aims, set forth as medium-range tasks, become the instruments through which subregional integration may be achieved in a sector that is becoming more and more crucial with respect to economic growth, considering the major problems affecting these countries.

The acceptance of CORECA's new Agreement of Technical Cooperation by the countries reflects the spirit that prevailed in defining IICA's lines of action in bolstering the regional and subregional endeavors to bring about agricultural and rural development in the Member States.

III. REGIONAL EMPHASIS OF CORECA

The emergence and permanence of a mechanism of sub-regional interest such as CORECA, in a concrete field such as agriculture, ready to foster reciprocal cooperation in order to bring about technological progress, equalize opportunities and enhance the capacity for negotiation of the countries of the region, points up the importance of arriving at agreements of common interest and the need to confront together the great challenges posed by the problems of agricultural and rural development in particular, and, more generally, those problems that hinder the economic and social development of the nations as a whole.

The decision to share solutions lends a regional character to the tasks that demand compliance with the objectives that CORECA has established, along with the firm commitment of the countries and IICA to support all aspects of reciprocal development, the actions needed to coordinate the cooperation afforded by the various entities of the region so that it will be more effective and coherent, and the refining of the technological and economic mechanisms of integration.

Achieving these goals will require the participation of each and every one of the entities of cooperation operating in the region, within the sphere of their own objectives. To mobilize interests and willingness to this end is the greatest challenge CORECA has. A second characteristic of the regional emphasis of CORECA, then, will be the liberal participation of all the cooperative organizations that work in the interest of the region.

To stimulate the entities of cooperation to work toward fulfilling the objectives defined for the region by its countries, it will be essential to formulate a strategy with clearly defined phases. In the first place, it will be necessary to reconcile the specific objectives of the cooperative organizations with the strategic objectives of the countries. Secondly, this convergence must be translated into pragmatic and concrete commitments to work through a unified regional mechanism, that, while not detracting from the cooperative organizations' identity, will allow them to complement the assistance offered to the countries in the most effective way possible.

This deduction, based on the interest manifested by the countries, constitutes an unequivocal intrinsic challenge to the countries themselves, as well as to the institutions cooperating technically and financially in the region. Success in this goal will depend on conducting the respective tasks correctly toward this end.

IV. GENERAL OPERATIONAL AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OF CORECA

A. OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

1. The Operational Framework of CORECA encompasses three main areas:

- The consolidation and institutionalization of CORECA: the development of its institutional foundation.
- The enhancement of the capacity to formulate, coordinate and execute policies, programs and projects of common interest to the countries of CORECA.
- The constitution and consolidation of coordinating mechanisms for technical cooperation on behalf of the agricultural and rural development of the countries of CORECA.

a. Consolidation and Institutionalization of CORECA

Actions in this area are based on the recognition of the existence in the region of entities whose activities, aimed at agricultural development, coincide with the objectives and goals of CORECA.

Hence, the actions of CORECA as a whole and those of the Council of Ministers and their Support Bodies shall be directed at obtaining the following results:

1. The consolidation of the organizational structure of the Secretariat as an interface between the technical and financial institutions of cooperation.
2. The formulation of alternatives for institutionalizing CORECA and its respective definition.

3. The adjustment of the work procedures of the Council of Ministers, the Executive Committee, the Technical Committee and Secretariat of Coordination so they will effectively contribute to the objectives and functions of CORECA.

b. Enhancement of the Capacity for Formulating and Executing Policies, Programs and Projects

The purpose of this area is to give technical content to the decisions of the Council of Ministers of CORECA. At the same time, these decisions are aimed at the definition and execution of regional policies, programs and projects that will give rise to intensified efforts toward integration in technological development, food security, the management and conservation of renewable natural resources, the fostering and integration of agroindustry within the process of rural development, specialized agricultural production, intra-regional trade, exportation to third markets in a united and coordinated manner, greater effectiveness of public agricultural institutions, especially those of sectorial planning systems, and technical and professional training in agriculture.

c. Constitution and Consolidation of Mechanisms for Coordinating Technical Cooperation

The purpose of this area is to conduct coordinating mechanisms which will make it possible to channel intra-regional and international technical cooperation toward the priority areas defined by the Council of Ministers of CORECA.

These actions shall be directed toward:

1. The development and consolidation of the Program of Reciprocal Technical Cooperation, for which it will be necessary to obtain complementary external resources.

2. The formulation and approval of mechanisms that will make it possible to coordinate the regional cooperation offered by the technical and financial agencies for agricultural development.

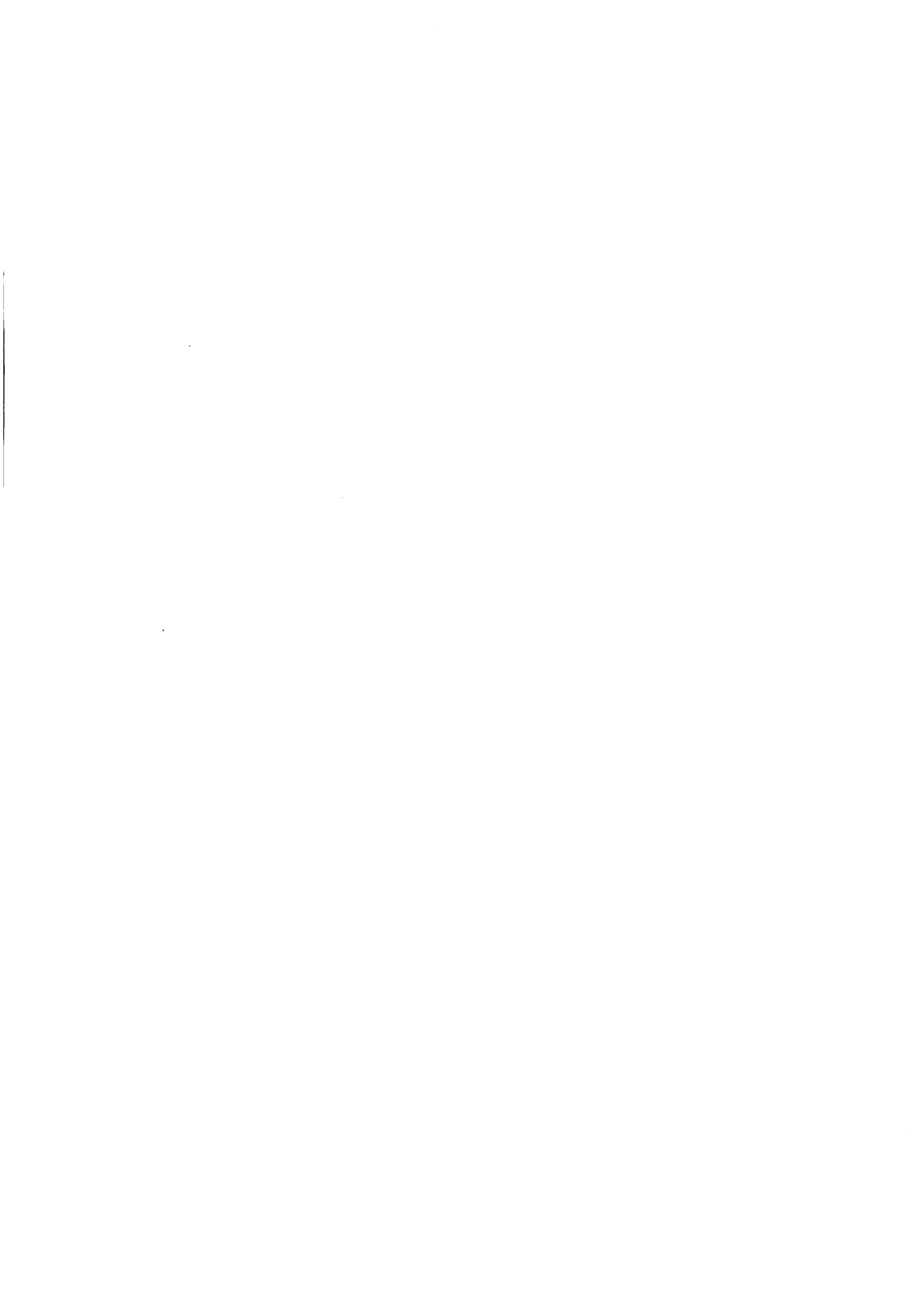
B. GENERAL STRATEGY

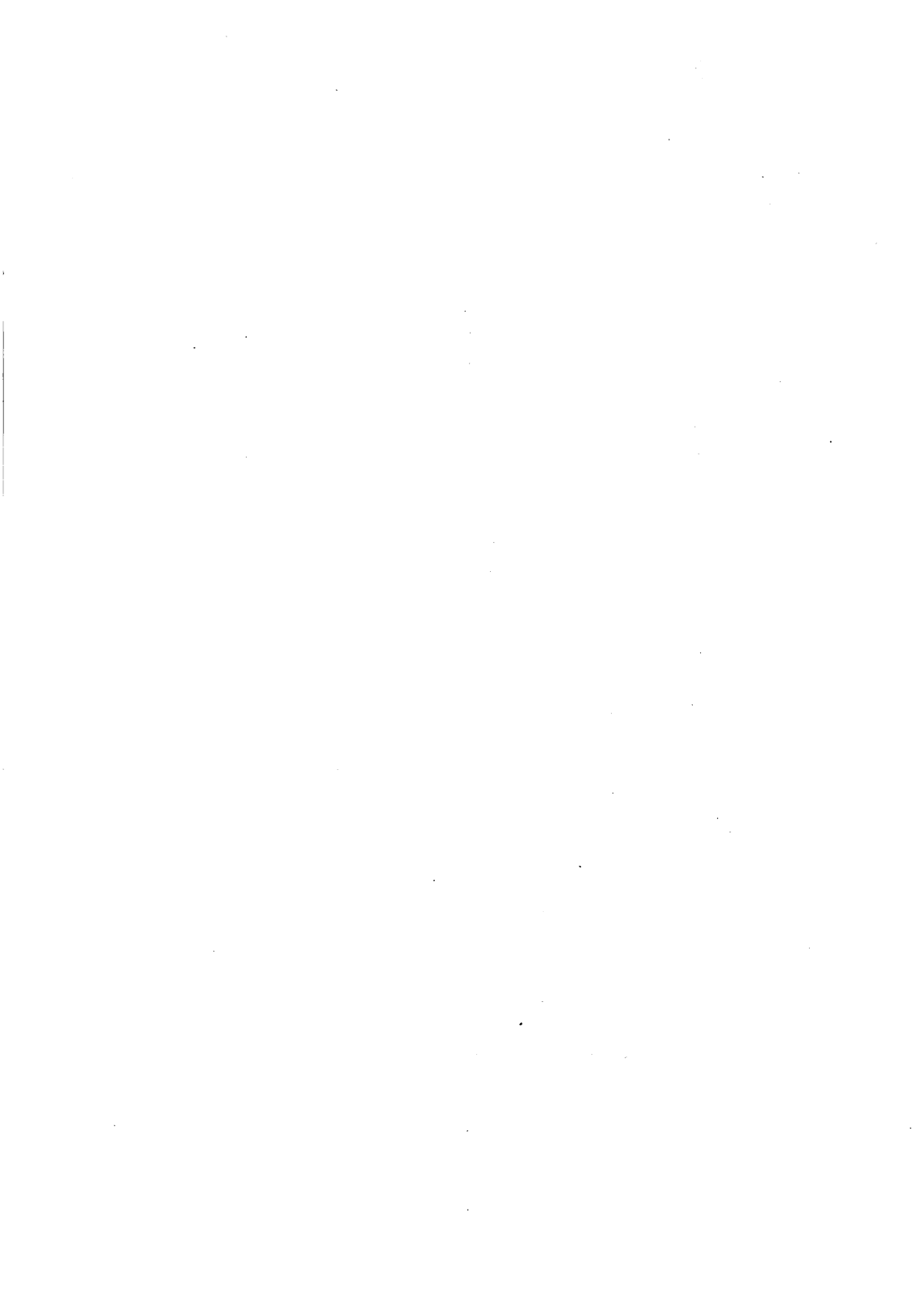
The general strategy of CORECA shall include the mobilization of the national technical resources and the actions of cooperation done on behalf of the region's interests, and shall be based on the following elements:

1. The Regional Council on Agricultural Cooperation (CORECA), comprised of the Ministers and Secretaries of Agriculture and their support bodies, as a permanent regional consulting and coordinating forum in agricultural development, shall depend upon IICA and other agencies of cooperation in order to fulfill its objectives.
2. The active participation of the countries shall be intensified in the formulation, choosing and execution of regional policies, programs and projects so that cooperative forms of work contributing to the integrational process are consolidated.
3. Existing technical resources in the region shall be made available in a coordinated way through the planned and concerted execution of the Program for Reciprocal Technical Cooperation.
4. Ways of coordinating technical and financial resources from international agencies and contributing countries of the region shall be established so those resources will be utilized in a more effective and selective manner, in accordance to the priorities set by the Council of Ministers for programs and projects of agricultural and rural development.


5. **Coordination of technical activities among the countries shall be promoted, encouraging exchanges of mutual benefit.**

6. **The development of forms of cooperation will provide the conditions necessary for progress in the process of technological and economic integration of the subregion. Political integration, as the supreme historical objective of the Central American nations, pertains to the sovereign powers of those nations, and is therefore beyond the scope of CORECA's or IICA's action.**









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