



Executive Committee

*Thirty-second Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee
8 -10 October 2012*

*IICA/CE/Doc.593(12)
Original: Spanish
8-10 October 2012*

Progress made in strengthening IICA-CGIAR Relations Report to the Thirty-second Regular Meeting of the IICA Executive Committee

**San Jose, Costa Rica
October 2012**

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August 2012

In August 2011, at the initiative of the Director General of IICA, the first meeting took place of the directors of the international centers of the CGIAR and of the Institute. The consensus arrived at was that a partnership between IICA and the CGIAR centers held out great potential, and the priorities for collaboration were discussed. It was agreed that the Director General of IICA would inform the countries and stakeholders that a meeting had been held to establish a partnership, and would raise the matter with the Sixteenth Regular Meeting of the IABA, scheduled to be held in Costa Rica in October.

CIAT was invited to take part in the Sixteenth Meeting of the IABA (October 2011) as the representative of the CGIAR, and to explain its position and that of the CGIAR group. It was also decided that articulation of the work agenda of IICA and the CGIAR centers would be based on the implementation of the Consortium Research Program (CRP) spearheaded by each center. CIAT manages the CRP on climate change; CIP spearheads the CRP on roots and tubers; CIMMYT is responsible for the CRP on maize; and IFPRI is in charge of the CRP on policy, institutions, and markets.

The IABA adopted Resolution No. 476 (October 2011), in which it endorsed the efforts of IICA's Director General to consolidate strategic partnerships with national and international organizations and institutions, with a view to boosting IICA's capabilities and strengthening and expanding technical cooperation programs and projects.

Implementation of the various CRPs is at different stages; as a result, IICA has so far been able to develop broader agendas with CIAT (climate change) and CIMMYT (maize).

1) CIMMYT and IICA

IICA took part in the launch of the programs in January 2012. The IICA-CIMMYT agenda focuses on maize and addresses a number of topics:

- a) Articulation and strategic perspective of the different activities related to maize that SICTA, CIMMYT, and IICA are currently carrying out in Central America, in such a way as to project them as part of the CRP;
- b) Joint work on issues of common interest in Central America - for example, efforts to combat tar spot of maize and biofortification;
- c) Development of a joint project for the formulation of a regional maize germplasm bank, in partnership with SICTA and REMERFI. This project would be integrated with the Seeds of Discovery initiative, in order to give it more value added;
- d) It is felt that the CRP on beans could also be a key partner in the joint work of the CAC-SICTA-CIMMYT-IICA, given the importance of beans in Central America and the program's relationship with maize and small-scale production systems; and,

- e) Actions in other countries, for example, Bolivia.

Based on that agenda, IICA proposed that it work closely with the maize CRP in Central America. In August, a meeting of CIMMYT, SICTA, and IICA was held in Guatemala to reach agreement on the specific ways of articulating the different maize initiatives, and familiarize them with the implementation of the maize CRP in this region.

2) CIAT and IICA

The agenda of the two organizations has focused on the following topics:

- a) Seeds;
- b) Biotechnology and biosafety (mainly in connection with the LAC Biosafety Project);
- c) Implementation of the capacity development platform for knowledge management for innovation, jointly with EMBRAPA and FAO; and,
- d) CIAT support for the implementation of the projects that IICA/SICTA are implementing in Central America.

The IICA specialists involved have been in frequent communication with their CIAT counterparts in order to establish contacts with the rice, forage crop, and cassava improvement programs; coordinate the participation of CLAYUCA in a cassava processing course; seek recent information on cassava frogskin disease, and resources for diagnosing and controlling the disease; and request forage seeds. The response and readiness to collaborate of CIAT's specialists have been highly satisfactory, and the two organizations are committed to increasing their interaction.

CIAT is interested in extending its operations into the Caribbean, but until now has had no point of liaison; hence, it is interested in IICA performing that function from Trinidad and Tobago.

3) IFPRI and IICA

- a) IICA developed and implemented a Ning platform via which the five participating institutions are able to share information. The platform is more than simply a repository of information; it is designed to encourage constant interaction among its members. The platform is structured in "boxes" to facilitate sustainability, and the time required to keep it updated is minimal;
- b) IFPRI's participation in the regional outlook for LAC agriculture that is being organized with FAO and ECLAC;
- c) IFPRI plans to draw on the experience of the African Growth and Development Policy Modeling Consortium (<http://www.agrodep.org>) to draft a large-scale

capacity development project for LAC. The project will include other institutions already working on the same issue (IDB, IFAD, World Bank, etc.) The objective would be to build capacities, to enable the countries to generate the information themselves;

- d) IFPRI expressed great interest in IICA participating as a technical expert in its projects in LAC. IFPRI has several projects aimed at the development of agricultural production chains in a large number of LAC countries, and is always in need of specialists in specific areas, such as technology for organic agriculture, camelids, dairy farming in arid areas, etc. IFPRI proposes that IICA thematic experts be incorporated into its projects when their expertise is needed, with IICA being remunerated for their services;
- e) IICA and IFPRI, along with the IDB, the World Bank, Bioversity, IFAD, OECD, UNCTAD, and other institutions, collaborated closely in the preparation of the interagency document presented to the G-20 meeting in Mexico (June 2012), entitled “Sustainable Agricultural Productivity Growth and Bridging the Gap for Small Family Farms”; and,
- f) In the first half of 2012, the Latin American countries were included in the monitoring and updating of agricultural science and technology indicators (ASTI), which is an initiative of IFPRI.

4) CIP-IICA

Potential areas of joint work were explored. IICA informed CIP of its keen interest in promoting the use of improved germplasm in the root and tuber species that the Caribbean needs; in improving agricultural and pest and disease management practices in order to raise yields and reduce losses; and in introducing better post-harvest methods to add value.

In his reply, contact person Andre Devaux said CIP was open to considering activities related to the aforementioned topics, but a joint agenda has yet to be finalized.

In August 2012, a meeting of the directors general of CIP and IICA took place, during which the CIP Director General pledged support from the center to transfer genetic material to the Caribbean, and the Director General of IICA made a commitment to strengthen and energize the RedLatin Papa.

Finally, with regard to the progress of the CGIAR-IICA partnership as a whole, the second meeting of the centers and IICA was held at CIAT headquarters from July 9-10. Information about the status of the decisions reached at the first meeting (August 2011) was presented and discussed, as was the current situation of the CRPs in LAC. The participants then considered ways of improving the partnership (IICA–international centers–private sector). One topic discussed in great detail by the directors of IICA and of the centers involved in the meeting at CIAT was the Sixth Meeting of FORAGRO (August 2012) and its connection with the Second GCARD Conference (October 29-November 1, 2012), to establish the parties’ substantive contributions to the two meetings. Other matters addressed

included follow-up to the process of updating the ASTI indicators, and the implications for the international centers and IICA of the agreements of the recent G-20 and Rio+20 meetings.

Next steps:

- Hold a meeting in Cartagena, Colombia, to discuss in greater depth and reach agreement on specific joint activities and projects.
- IICA is to prepare a communication for the ministries of agriculture of the Americas on the CRPs and their importance for LAC.
- Discuss the idea of mapping the current CRPs in LAC, with the leadership of IFPRI and support from IICA. This proposal will be discussed by Dr. Shenggen Fan and Dr. Victor Villalobos.
- The Director of CIAT agreed to organize a meeting of the CGIAR group and IICA during GCARD II, to discuss expectations and priorities for the LAC region.