

**THE IICA IN THE WTO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE WORK  
PLAN IX:  
JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2019**

SUBMISSION BY THE IICA

The following submission, dated 15 February 2019, is being circulated at the request of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

## 1 BACKGROUND

1.1. In March 2010, the Committee on Agriculture of the World Trade Organization (WTO) granted the IICA *ad hoc* observer status in its regular meetings. Since June 2012, the IICA has been operating a WTO Reference Centre, which provides technical advisory services in connection with various areas of agricultural trade to individuals from government, business and academic circles that are interested in improving their technical capacity in these areas.

1.2. A number of joint technical cooperation activities have been conducted within the framework of the existing alliance between the IICA and the WTO on agricultural subjects of particular interest to the two institutions and their member countries. In 2018, two virtual technical forums were held with the support of the Secretariat and the Chair of the Committee.

1.3. In this context, the IICA submitted eight joint work plans between 2010 and 2018 (documents G/AG/GEN/92, G/AG/GEN/95, G/AG/GEN/105, G/AG/GEN/115, G/AG/GEN/125, G/AG/GEN/132, G/AG/GEN/139 and G/AG/GEN/145).

1.4. In order to ensure the continuity of the IICA's commitment, a ninth joint work plan has been drafted and will be presented to WTO Members at the next regular meeting of the Committee on Agriculture.

## 2 ACTIVITIES TO BE DEVELOPED IN RELATION TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

2.1. The following activities are under consideration:

- a. *Participation in and attendance at meetings of the Committee on Agriculture:* The IICA, as an observer organization, undertakes to participate in the regular meetings of this Committee held at the WTO and in those involving matters within the Institute's competence. Following these meetings, the IICA will prepare technical bulletins to inform government agriculture officials and IICA officials, and the business and academic sectors of IICA member States, about the most salient issues addressed at each meeting.
- b. *Preparation of a paper on the IICA's contribution to the Marrakesh Decision and Food Security:* The IICA undertakes to inform WTO Members about the contributions made by the Institute during the year in the area of food security. It published submissions on this subject in 2010 (G/AG/GEN/93), 2011 (G/AG/GEN/97), 2012 (G/AG/GEN/104), 2013 (G/AG/GEN/111), 2014 (G/AG/GEN/125), 2015 (G/AG/GEN/128), 2016 (G/AG/GEN/136), 2017 (G/AG/GEN/142) and 2018 (G/AG/GEN/148).

- c. *Support for technical cooperation activities related to agricultural trade:* The IICA will support technical cooperation activities at the hemispheric and subregional levels geared towards ministries of agriculture and entities including the Southern Agricultural Council (CAS), the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC), the Pacific Alliance and other ministerial bodies. This support is designed to enhance the impact of the IICA and its partnership with the WTO in the development of such activities.

In September 2018, the WTO Secretariat provided support to a technical forum entitled "Challenges and opportunities for Caribbean and Central American countries in the WTO Committee on Agriculture", which had approximately 30 participants (Geneva-based delegates of Central American and Caribbean countries and IICA staff). The forum was organized by the IICA, which, in its capacity as an *ad hoc* observer organization, has observed the participation of the delegations of the countries of the Americas and noted Member and Secretariat concerns regarding agricultural notifications; the IICA has also taken note of the Secretariat's reports on notifications. In 2019, the IICA will direct its efforts towards technical cooperation so as to follow up on the results of this forum.

In November 2018, the IICA also provided support for the session on agriculture and sanitary and phytosanitary measures of the Trade Policy Course for countries of the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA) in Montevideo.

- d. *Monitoring areas of common interest:* The IICA will monitor the progress of the agricultural trade negotiations at the WTO and will prepare technically to respond to the requests of its member States in the area of agricultural trade policy and to develop possible training programmes in areas of common interest with other technical partners. The Institute will, in turn, make its technical staff available to the WTO should it require support in respect of requests for technical advice and training (in particular in Latin America and the Caribbean) relating to the [agricultural matters that form part of the Institute's work](#).
- e. *Compliance by countries with agricultural notification requirements:* In document G/AG/GEN/86/Rev.33 of November 2018, the Committee identified countries that have fallen behind in submitting agricultural notifications.<sup>1</sup> In this light, the IICA will continue to support the WTO's initiatives to conduct activities including regional workshops and other training events that are geared towards Latin American and Caribbean countries to help them improve, and ensure they are up to date with, their transparency commitments. Similarly, it will support and channel national and regional initiatives that require WTO technical cooperation.
- f. *Preparation of technical documents:* Given the IICA's extensive and proven experience in this area, it will assist the WTO Secretariat with such activities at the Committee's request.

### 3 THE AGRICULTURAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS WITHIN THE INSTITUTE

3.1. The IICA's activities in the WTO will be conducted within the framework of the IICA's Technical Cooperation Directorate, which will be responsible for implementing this work plan. The implementation of the plan will promote knowledge management and support the processes of trade promotion and internationalization of firms, regional integration, and trade policy coordination through technical cooperation services and the mobilization of relevant resources for inter-American agriculture, in accordance with the IICA's **2018-2021 Medium-term Plan**.

3.2. The IICA has an experienced network of experts in agriculture and international trade based at its central headquarters, its offices located in 34 member countries on the American continent and its [Permanent Office for Europe](#), in Spain.

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<sup>1</sup> Notifications are submitted in accordance with the requirements and formats adopted in 1995 by WTO Members (G/AG/2).

3.3. For further information, please contact:

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