

2008 Accountability Report
Office of the United States of America
Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

Background

Pursuant to the direction of the Director General Chelston Brathwaite, the Office has prepared a written report of its efforts and results during 2008. This report, '*IICA's USA Contribution to the Development of Agriculture and Rural Communities in the Americas*,' has been distributed to officials of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the United States Department of State (DOS). Additionally, copies of this report as well as their country's national annual report were shared with each Ambassador to the Organization of American States. This report forms part of the efforts that promotes accountability and the pursuit of being the partner of choice for agricultural and rural development in the Americas.

During the 2nd quarter, our team worked diligently to facilitate the transition of the outgoing Assistant Deputy Director General, Director of Strategic Partnerships and IICA Representative in the United States, Christopher Hansen, who assumed the position of Deputy Director General for the Institute. This resulted in some adjustment in priorities. These were identified to be:

1. Strengthen Regional and Hemispheric Mechanism for Technical Cooperation
 - 1.1. Assist PROCINORTE in the design, preparation and implementation of 5 year strategic plan to promote the introduction of technology and innovation in agriculture.
 - 1.2. Provide technical assistance and support to FONTAGRO.
2. Increase the Visibility and Credibility of IICA through the Washington Office
 - 2.1. Promote the transfer of technical information to IICA and its Member Countries from the U.S. Government, universities, research institutions, international organizations and the private sector.
3. Strengthen relationships with entities such as, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Department of State, Organization of American States (OAS) and selected members of the donor community.
 - 3.1. Continue to Develop and Strengthen Relationships with Potential and Existing Strategic Partners to Meet the Goals of the IICA Medium Term Plan.
 - 3.2. Develop a framework and process to create an operative Directorate of Strategic Partnerships that is supported at the Institutional level.

We are generally pleased with the accomplishments achieved through the combined efforts of the office employees. This office experienced a change in leadership early in the 2nd quarter that resulted in some adjustment in priorities. Much has been required of the staff in a period of change and much has been accomplished.

2008 Accountability Process

Key Strategic Partners

Key strategic partners include the Organization of American States (OAS), World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Food Information Council (IFIC) and others. Given the importance of each of these organizations, and others, we have focused our efforts to secure specific results in keeping with the priorities of the office. Specifically with the OAS, the Office worked in conjunction with the General Secretariat of the OAS - Summit of the Americas, to secure passage of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain for the Fifth Summit of the Americas.

Also, with the OAS and other principal stakeholders, efforts were made to establish visibility of the new Assistant Deputy Director General, U.S. Representative and Director of the Strategic Partnerships. Furthermore, the Office initiated and facilitated a visit by senior officials from both the Government of Haiti and IICA to the OAS, the Government of Canada, the Bahamas, and strategic partners including the IDB and The World Bank to discuss the state of agriculture and recommendations for improvement of the agriculture sector in Haiti. Other activities of interest include:

- Facilitation of the Director General's presentation of the 2008 Annual Report to the members of the Permanent Council
- Organization of the Institute's 'IICA Day'
- Facilitation of a successful IICA/OAS, sponsored launch of a distance education course in Agro-tourism. Four virtual classrooms were created.
- Collaboration with IFIC at the OAS to engage the Washington public and private sectors on the importance of partnerships in Food Safety and Risk Communication.

With the World Bank, IICA succeeded in the development of a joint collaboration role with senior World Bank officials from the Agriculture and Rural Development unit for Latin America and the Caribbean to move forward on agriculture insurance initiatives for the Latin America and Caribbean region.

IICA facilitated the signing of an Agreement between the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Caribbean Council of Higher Education in Agriculture (CACHE). The US\$400,000 grant from the IDB's Regional Public Goods Program aims to enhance the capacity of the Caribbean labor force to improve competitiveness of the agriculture sector. As a result, Barbados, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago have joined forces to collectively develop a regional strategic plan that will

include a tool box with public policy guidelines, an information sharing system and a set of pilot training events.

Additionally, the Office led the development of a very promising partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP). Meetings with WFP senior officials in Rome and Panama City resulted in the signing of a MOU in early 2009 that identifies IICA as the technical advisor on agriculture in the Western Hemisphere. The first major project under this MOU is the execution of the Purchase for Progress (P4P) program in four Central American countries that is funded by the Howard Buffet Foundation. P4P will give farmers the knowhow and the tools to be more competitive players in the agricultural marketplace. It will also put more cash directly into their pockets in return for their crops. A project profile with the WFP in Bolivia is also under preparation.

Furthermore, the Office coordinated a technical presentation on Agro-tourism and Animal Health and Food Safety at PAHO and increased awareness of animal health and food safety concerns in the Americas by initiating, and aiding in the successful completion of the fifteenth 'Inter-American Meeting at the Ministerial Level on Health and Agriculture' (RIMSA) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

With FAO, we facilitated linkages between U.S. institutional, financial, professional and technical resources, the donor community, the public and private sectors, and the USDA to bring awareness to the growing concern of food security and the effects of climate change to agriculture in the region, and identified specific steps to take to increase further collaboration.

In regards to strengthening the veterinary infrastructure in the Caribbean region, IICA played an important role in obtaining a one year extension of the APHIS-IICA Agreement for the VEP Project, which secures funding of \$200,000. Furthermore, as a result of coordinated efforts made by IICA, the USDA-APHIS approved funding of \$75,000 for the LAC Codex Coordinating Committee.

Key Stakeholders

In addition to the above accomplishments special emphasis was directed toward the USDA and the DOS. These two stakeholders are critical to the success of IICA in the hemisphere. The DOS provides funding as allocated by Congress to international organizations. In addition, it holds potential to progress agricultural development through its own budget. A significant part of this potential is found in USAID. The USDA has historically been active in providing oversight to IICA in a variety of venues such as the SACMI and Executive Committee. In both organizations, there have been significant personnel changes that have partly driven our efforts to increase communication and coordination between IICA and these organizations. As a result, during the year, many informative meetings were organized with U.S. government officials, including USDA and the U.S. Department of State, to inform them on many institutional actions.

The accountability process, most specifically with our key stakeholders, was completed in four phases; 1) developing two specific technical projects that would more fully engage the USDA and the DOS; 2) presentations and meetings surrounding the 2009 USDA Agriculture Outlook Forum to various parties within the USDA to inform them of IICA efforts in selected technical themes; 3) a review of 2008 accomplishments by the US Office and an agreement of 2009 objectives with the USDA and the DOS and: 4) a presentation to a dozen representatives of the Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) who were either unfamiliar with IICA or had no information regarding IICA for several years or more.

Phase I

In mid-year the new representative met with FAS representatives responsible for IICA oversight. During this meeting, IICA proposed two specific projects designed to promote greater collaboration between the two institutions and to address two relevant and pressing issues. The first project addresses the need to promote more institutional communication and cooperation regarding the technical national agendas in each country. The specific proposal was to share the national agendas of each country in this hemisphere in order to promote more understanding, coordination and when appropriate joint efforts. The second proposal was find a way to access relevant technical information (markets and good farming practices) housed in the various USDA data bases for the benefit of small and mid size farmers in the Caribbean and Latin America. Both proposals were approved and next steps were mapped out.

Setting these and other goals, primarily regarding communication, for the year quickly established a standard of accountability.

Phase II

Each February, the USDA holds a two day conference entitled, “Agriculture Outlook Forum”. This event attracts a broad spectrum of public and private sector organizations including foundations and academia. Historically, it provides an excellent opportunity for IICA, including employees from Headquarters, to attend the conference, hold many off-site meetings with attendees and also hold meetings with other organizations. This year we organized and held meetings with Technoserve, IFIC, USAID, and the USDA to discuss a range of relevant topics to the US such as trade, bio safety, and PROCINORTE.

Additionally, during 2008 we provided strategic direction to FONTAGRO through various interventions, such as the development of prospective studies of the agricultural production systems of the Americas, the current agendas on research and innovation in agriculture, the analysis and monitoring of the rapidly evolving institutional architecture in the areas of research, development, innovation and financial support to agricultural innovations. Also, IICA supported FONTAGRO with a specific study on the area of protection of regional public goods and prepared strategic documents for submission to its Board of Directors. Second, IICA participated in a training workshop to improve capacities for the formulation of project proposals and in the regional technical workshop

on FONTAGRO projects. And finally, by sharing the FONTAGRO office space, it actively participated in the daily operational activities of the Fund, from the development of TOR for the annual call for proposals, training and follow up workshops.

Phase III

Early this year, the Office called a meeting with representatives of FAS to review the progress of the past and set 2009 objectives. This event involved almost three hours of discussions. We reviewed such topics as; 1) progress made in the two projects, 2) the effectiveness of IICA communications with FAS, 3) ways to increase interaction among more FAS and USDA officials, financial and technical challenges of IICA and ways to address the challenges, and 4) how relationships between the USDA, IICA and DOS have evolved and ways to improve them for 2009. The consensus reached was a clear agreement that FAS was pleased on all fronts and appreciated the efforts to keep FAS informed and counsel together as appropriate.

Phase IV

The opportunity to orient uninformed representatives of key stakeholders is always welcome. We were pleased that FAS suggested and organized this event involving some 12 individuals. FAS said they were pleased with the energy and vision of the Office and wanted more of their staff to be informed. The discussions and presentations served to increase the understanding and appreciation of what IICA has been engaged in generally over the past year, specific achievements of this office, and plans for 2009. We were advised that the results were very positive.

Conclusion

We are pleased by the progress made thus far as demonstrated in part, in this document. There remains a great deal to accomplish. We will continue our focus on the USDA and DOS as key stakeholders here in the United States while also expanding our efforts with other organizations. We are optimistic that 2009 will bring additional resources to the office through filling two critical vacancies. These employees will permit a more even and expanded distribution of work to accentuate the accomplishment of specific and substantive results.