

2006-2007 Hemispheric Ministerial Process

Improving the Effectiveness of Strategies and Policies:

An instrument for analysts, public decision-makers and stakeholder leaders in the field of agriculture and rural life

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Document prepared by:

Lizardo de las Casas
Javier Gatica
Fabio Jiménez

Secretariat of the Ministerial Process and Ministerial Meetings
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Starting Point for Improving Effectiveness

The effectiveness¹ of strategies, policies and actions aimed at promoting agricultural development and improving the well-being of rural communities has become a subject of growing concern. This concern is felt by many different “stakeholders” (key actors), who believe their interests are affected by the strategies and policies being implemented, and express their dissatisfaction in a variety of ways – some of which have undesirable implications for governance in their countries.

¹ The document “*La crisis, el papel del Estado y la planificación en la conducción del desarrollo agrícola y rural: un nuevo enfoque y guía para la acción bajo condiciones de conflicto y poder compartido*” (Crisis, the Role of the State and Planning in the Guidance of Agricultural and Rural Development: A New Approach and Guide to Action in Conflict and Power-Sharing Situations – 1986) mentions the concept of **effectiveness**, as employed by Katz and Kuhn in 1966 to refer to both the efficiency and the efficacy of organizations. The document also explains the importance of this idea in conflict and power-sharing situations, which arise when multiple actors and interests must be taken into account in order to guide a process of sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu. As mentioned in that document, the concept of “effectiveness” had been applied to agricultural and rural policies long before 1986, as a means of integrating technical-economic efficiency and socio-political efficacy. This can only be accomplished as result of negotiation and agreement among the socio-political forces that represent conflicting economic interests and play a decisive role in the attainment of the desired objectives.

The above can be partly explained by the belief that strategies and policies definition belong to the realm of public authorities and their supporting technical teams because strategies and policies are regarded as instruments that basically include certain technical considerations. Besides, those definitions are based on a limited concept of “agricultural sector”, both in terms of coverage and the visualization of the actors involved. The institutional response generated as a result sidelines important issues that are inherent to the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural communities.

In addition, the global challenges created by the demands of the Millennium Development Goals and their targets for 2015 have also made it clear that agricultural development requires decisions which transcend production and trade in order to make room for the social, environmental and institutional factors needed to address poverty, hunger and the decline of quality of life and the environment. Failure to include such issues, which go beyond production and trade, will have a significant impact on equity, sustainability and governance.²

² The document entitled “*Consulta Nacional sobre Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio*” (National Consultation on the Millennium Development Goals - Final Report (2006) notes that “Worldwide, globalization and democratization processes have multiplied the number of actors that have the power to influence decision making. This widespread power has eroded the effectiveness of traditional

The Dual Role of Agriculture and the Role of the Key Stakeholders of the Agriculture-Rural Complex

In that context, the Heads of State and Government gathered at the Third Summit of the Americas (Quebec 2001) have adopted historic definitions that position agriculture on the inter-American development agenda. These definitions essentially acknowledge the importance of agriculture for the comprehensive development of their countries, in light of the "...role it plays in the creation of prosperity as a strategic sector in our socio-economic system...", and the fact that it is a "...way of life for millions of rural families of the Hemisphere...".

This strategically crucial act of political recognition also touched upon two complementary, significant issues. The first was the leaders' call for "...joint action by all the actors of the agricultural sector..." that are involved, in one way or another, in the development of agriculture and rural life. The second involves identifying those who will participate in such joint action; the Heads of State instructed their Ministers of Agriculture to promote "...dialogue involving government ministers,

forms of governance. This is why public policies that stem from this way of making decisions are usually perceived as being arbitrary and/or ineffective and therefore tend to create opposition and lead to obstructive action on the part of the affected actors. This frequently translates into paralysis and unstable public policies. Finally, it limits the effectiveness of democracy and results in economic stagnation."

...

parliamentarians and civil society, in particular organizations linked to rural areas as well as the scientific and academic communities...".³

The need for a new, inclusive institutional framework for agriculture and rural life was recognized and reiterated by the Ministers of Agriculture in their 2001, 2003 and 2005 Hemispheric Ministerial Agreements. This framework is to be based on *joint action* of stakeholders of the agriculture-rural complex, supplemented by joint inter-institutional, multi-sectoral and inter-agency efforts.⁴

Thinking and Acting "Outside of the Box"

In order to understand the dual role of agriculture and its relationship to rural life as well as the role of the key stakeholders of the agriculture-rural complex, and act accordingly, the thinking of agricultural actors⁵ must go

³ See page 76 of "AGRO 2003-2015 Plan for Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas: Bavaro 2001 – Panama 2003 – Guayaquil 2005" for the quote referring to Section 10 of the Plan of Action of the Third Summit of the Americas, held in Quebec City, Canada, in 2001.

⁴ See pages 79, 80 and 82 of "AGRO 2003-2015 Plan...", cited in note 2, for paragraphs 1, 6, 8 and 20 of the Bavaro Ministerial Declaration (Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement AMH1-2001); see pages 59, 62, 63, 65 and 66 for paragraphs 4, 7, 12, 17, 30, 35, and 40; see page 66 and 67 for paragraph 2 of the section on Implementation and Follow-up of the Panama Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement (AMH2-2003); see pages 38, 39 and 40 for paragraphs 9, 11 and 14 of the Guayaquil Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement (AMH4-2005).

⁵ For example, at the public sectoral level, in a Ministry; at the private sectoral level, in an agribusiness association; or at the international

beyond their restrictive immediate responsibility, so that, “working together” with other actors, they can recognize each others’ strengths and reinforce synergies that promote the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu.

Other, more recent demands focus on accountability, as well as the need to measure the progress and impact of national development actions undertaken to address issues identified at the regional level (for example, by the Jagdeo initiative in the Caribbean), the hemispheric level (the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan and Summit of the Americas mandates) and the global level (Millennium Development Objectives and Goals, the World Food Summit, the Rio and Johannesburg summits).

In order to address these needs, and thereby improve the effectiveness of strategies, policies and actions for the development of agriculture and rural life, the actors involved must, through a continuous individual and collective learning process, participate in the development of a new institutional framework for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu. This task spotlights the need to think and act together “*outside of the box*”.

level, in organizations that support development – IICA, FAO, PAHO, ECLAC and IDB, among others.

Understanding Complex Phenomena Involving Multiple Stakeholders and Interests

The challenge of promoting “...joint action by all the actors of the agricultural sector to work towards the improvement of agriculture and rural life...”, as the Heads of State and Government of the Americas instructed their Ministers of Agriculture to do at the Third Summit of the Americas – a mandate which was ratified at the two summits that followed⁶ – poses an additional conceptual challenge: that of fostering a common understanding of the issues facing those who must reach agreements and commitments for joint action.

Hence, a starting point for improving the effectiveness of strategies and policies is to develop a shared conceptual framework, in order to help “stakeholders” understand that agriculture and rural life are complex phenomena involving multiple actors and interests, which must be taken into account in order to secure agreement or consensus and commitments on the part of the groups directly involved, and thereby advance the strategies and policies needed to promote the sustainable development of agriculture and rural life.

⁶ See page 52 of “AGRO 2003-2015 Plan...” for paragraph 43 of the Declaration of Nuevo Leon of the Special Summit of the Americas, held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2004; see page 3 for paragraph 35 of the Plan of Action of the Fourth Summit of the Americas, held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in 2005.

A conceptual framework is a mental model ⁷ – a set of images, assumptions and experiences in our minds that tell us how the world is and how it works. It shapes our decisions and actions; it is a filter we place in our minds in order to see, understand and act upon a given situation.

Mental models are deeply ingrained in us, inasmuch as they are based upon our experiences and beliefs. The only reason to change them would be a sense of motivation arising from a vision that inspires us to create a new world, a different reality. A conceptual framework is developed taking into account the key elements of a desired vision, and is itself an aid that helps analyze, clarify and enrich the vision that originated it.

A shared conceptual framework also facilitates dialogue and coordination between the many interest groups (key actors or “stakeholders”) of agriculture, leading to the

development of consensus and commitments on key issues that affect them, in order to replace the status quo with the desired vision.

The conceptual framework of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan and the AGRO-Matrix, as established in the Panama 2003 Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement and enriched by the Guayaquil 2005 Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement, is one example of a mental model for thought, understanding and action in the field of agriculture and rural life. It was born of a need for a common understanding that would enable 34 Ministerial Delegates and their Ministers of Agriculture to reach consensus on critical issues and strategic actions, in order to develop a frame of reference for the promotion of sustainable development of agriculture and rural life in 34 countries throughout the Americas. The development of the AGRO-Matrix has progressively addressed the need to improve the effectiveness of national and regional strategies and policies on agriculture and rural life, in a way that helps to advance the implementation of the strategic actions established by the AGRO Plan, looking to the 2015 Shared Vision for guidance.

⁷ See “Leadership, Repositioning and New Institutional Frameworks” (2000) for the following quotes from the books *The Gurus Guide* (1999): “Our mental models are deeply ingrained images of how the world works, but they are not passive images... Not only is our mind modelled by our experiences; it also models our experiences...”; “The Art of Systemic Thinking (1997): “Our mental models belong to us, but they change and evolve with our experiences, and we must reshape them when we enter uncharted territory...”; and “The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization” (1990): “Differences between mental models explain why two people can observe the same event and describe it differently; they are paying attention to different details...”

A New Concept of Agriculture: Beyond “the Primary Production Sector” and “Expanded Agriculture”

In decades past, strategies and policies were based on the traditional view of agriculture as a “*primary production sector*”, more recently, different versions of “*expanded agriculture*” were used. These definitions led to an inadequate development of agriculture and the rural milieu vis à vis the aspirations of interest groups (key actors, or “stakeholders”). As the twenty-first century begins, alarming levels of poverty, hunger, social exclusion and environmental degradation continue to exist, particularly in rural areas, to the detriment of stable governance.

In that context, during discussions in 2001-2003, the Ministerial Delegates of Agriculture and Rural Life and their Ministers of Agriculture concluded that a restrictive concept of agriculture should no longer be used as a frame of reference for the development of strategies and policies to promote the sustainable development of agriculture, the improvement of the living conditions of rural people, food safety, protection of the environment and democratic governance.

Thus, it was deemed necessary to develop a **new concept of agriculture**, in order to facilitate consensus and commitment to an inter-American agenda that would serve as a framework for the development of effective

regional and national strategies and policies to build today the agriculture and rural life of 2015.

In order to address these needs, the Ministerial Delegates of Agriculture and Rural Life, supported by the Secretariat of the 2001 Ministerial Process, set out to develop a concept capable of transcending the traditional view of agriculture as a “*primary production sector*” and going even further, beyond the various manifestations which the concept of “*expanded agriculture*” has adopted since the late 1980s. This need to find a comprehensive definition of agriculture that captures the many economic, environmental, socio-cultural and political-institutional interactions it involves was recognized during the lead-up to the First Ministerial Meeting on “Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas”, held within the framework of the Summits process, and was reflected in the 2001 Ministerial Declaration of Bavaro. During the 2002-2003 ministerial process leading to the Second Ministerial Meeting, the Ministerial Delegates shaped this new concept, which served as a conceptual framework for the development of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan.⁸

⁸ See second introductory paragraph of AGRO 2003-2015 Plan, 2003 Panama Ministerial Agreement (RM2/AMH2-2003), on page 58 of “AGRO 2003-2015 Plan ...”, cited in note 3.

The conceptual framework of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan (the AGRO-Matrix) provides a new concept of agriculture and rural life, which facilitates a comprehensive understanding of both types of activities. The AGRO-Matrix is an ideal tool for understanding and defining the “real” contribution of agriculture and rural life to the development of countries. Used individually and collectively, it facilitates the development of a common framework for information on agriculture and rural life, as well as for understanding the nature and magnitude of the processes they involve, and allows organization of the collected opinions and expectations of the many stakeholders. It also helps define and rank objectives and strategic actions, the identification of the impact of policies and programs and the understanding of the progress made toward purposes, strategic objectives and the Shared Vision of 2015, as set forth in the AGRO 2002-2015 Plan.

The AGRO-Matrix helps to explain the basic aspects of the complex phenomena of agriculture and rural life, as well as promote national, regional and hemispheric strategies, policies and actions to address specific issues and facilitate coordination between different interest groups (key actors, or “stakeholders”), in order to develop a *new institutional framework* for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu.⁹

⁹ See paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 of the Bavaro Ministerial Declaration, 2001 Bavaro Hemispheric Ministerial Agreement (RM1/AMH1-2001), on page 80 of “AGRO 2003-2015 Plan...”, cited in note 3.

Two essential aspects must be distinguished within the AGRO-Matrix: (i) the two pillars of its structure; and (ii) the three components of the desired situation of agriculture and rural life. The two pillars of its structure are: a *systemic concept* of agriculture and rural life, broken down into three categories or operational areas (rural territories, agricultural value chains and the national and international context) with the three corresponding systems (rural, agri-food and policy); and a *sustainable development approach* consisting of four dimensions or types of actions (production-trade, ecological-environmental, socio-cultural-human and political-institutional) carried out by the stakeholders in each of the three mentioned systems. The three components of the desired situation needed to attain the Shared Vision 2015 are: the twelve purposes, the seven strategic objectives and the overarching objective which guides the strategies, policies and actions adopted.

Conceptual Framework for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture and Rural Life: The AGRO-Matrix

Systemic Concept	Rural Territories	Agricultural Production-Trade Chains	National and International Context	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
Sustainable development approach				
Production – Trade	I. Promoting competitive rural enterprises	II. Integrating chains and strengthening their competitiveness	III. Promoting an environment conducive to competitive agriculture	→ Competitiveness
Ecological – Environmental	IV. Being environmentally responsible in the rural areas	V. From farm to table: promoting integrated environmental management	VI. Participating in building an institutional environmental framework	→ Sustainability
Sociocultural - human	VII. Quality of life in rural communities: creating know-how and opportunity	VIII. Advancing learning and expertise in the chain	IX. Promoting policies to create capabilities and opportunities for the rural communities	→ Equity
Political - institutional	X. Strengthening public and private sector participation and coordinated action between them in the territories	XI. Strengthening dialogue and commitments among actors in the chain	XII. Promoting national policies and regional and hemispheric cooperation for agriculture and rural life	→ Governance
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Rural Prosperity + Food Security + International Positioning			OVERARCHING GOAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL MILIEU

Visualizing the Actors Involved: Three Types of “Stakeholders”

In order to develop effective strategies and policies, the AGRO-Matrix facilitates the identification of three types of “*stakeholders*” whose different desires, expectations and behavior shape the development of agriculture and rural life; hence the need to include them in the formation of the aforementioned strategies and policies.

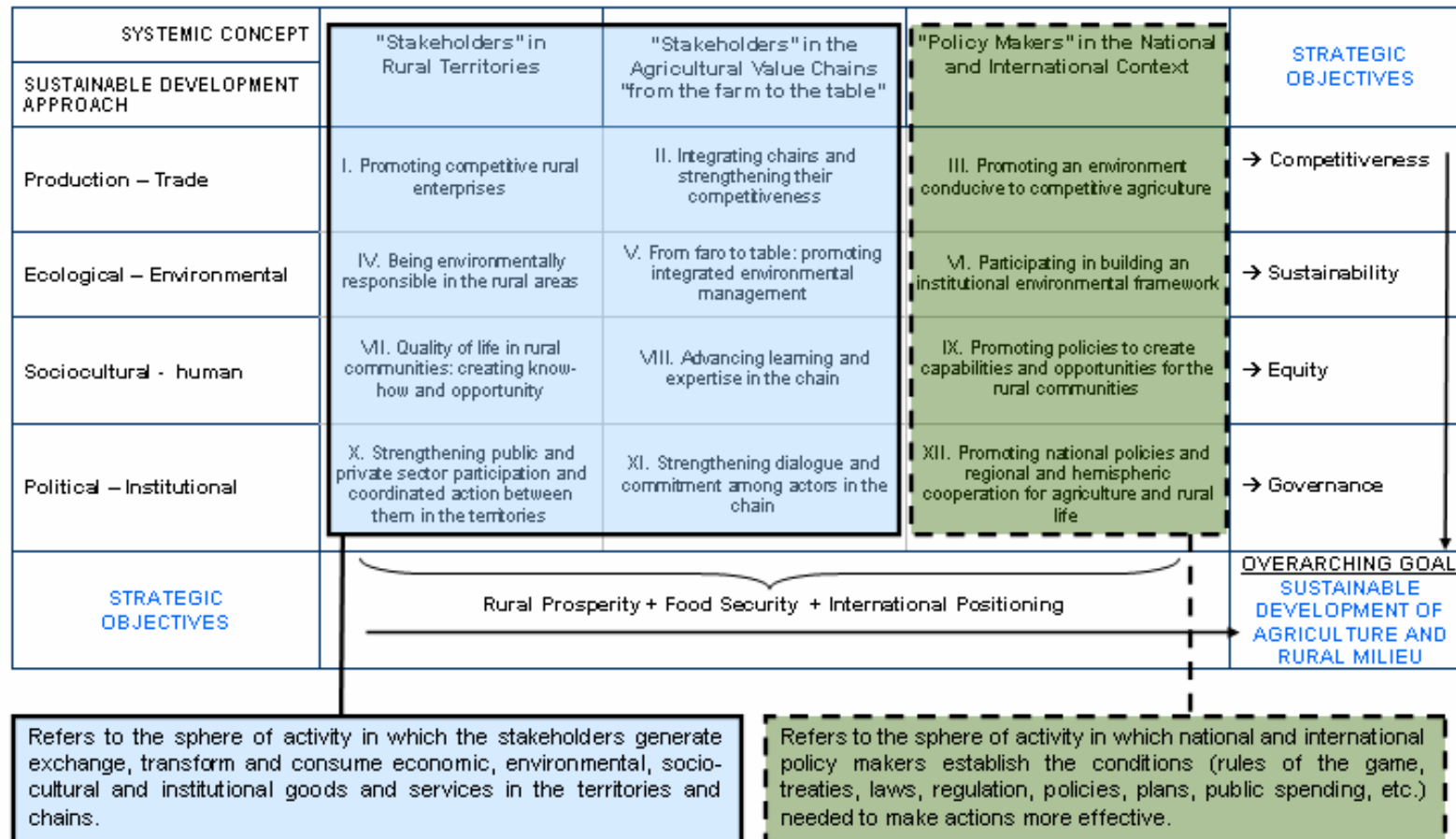
Two types of “*stakeholders*” generate exchange, transform and consume economic, environmental, socio-cultural and institutional goods and services. One is comprised of a variety of social manifestations of the rural population; the other consists of groups that are active in the links that make up agricultural value chains. These key actors have many interests at stake, which make them winners or losers when certain strategies and policies are applied.

The third type of “*stakeholder*” is responsible for creating a favorable environment for the effective implementation of the actions of the two groups mentioned above. This third group is made up of policymakers at the national and international levels, understood broadly as decision-makers – *analysts and authorities in the executive and legislative branches, as well as the judiciary*. In order to ensure the effectiveness of strategies and policies,

however, greater participation of the leaders of other stakeholder groups that are active in each territory and chain is needed. This has become necessary in light of the most recent experiences of certain countries in the Americas, where the instability of strategies and policies must be reduced in order to meet the overarching goal of sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu.

The AGRO-Matrix is, first and foremost, a useful tool, in two regards: for analysis of agriculture and rural communities, taking into account the two pillars of its structure (the *systemic concept*, introducing three operational areas or arenas for action and the *sustainable development approach*, introducing four dimensions or types of actions, combining these two pillars of the structure, results the twelve cells of the AGRO-Matrix that help to organize the strategies, policies and actions of the three stakeholder groups as well as the results of their implementation); and for synthesis of the results of that analysis, in terms of comparing the progress made with the implementation of the aforementioned strategies, policies and actions with the twelve purposes, the seven strategic objectives and the overarching goal. These objectives provide an overview of the progress made toward the Shared Vision 2015, which is the guiding principle of the development process.

The AGRO-Matrix: a Tool for Analysis and Synthesis that Recognizes the Three Types of “Stakeholders”

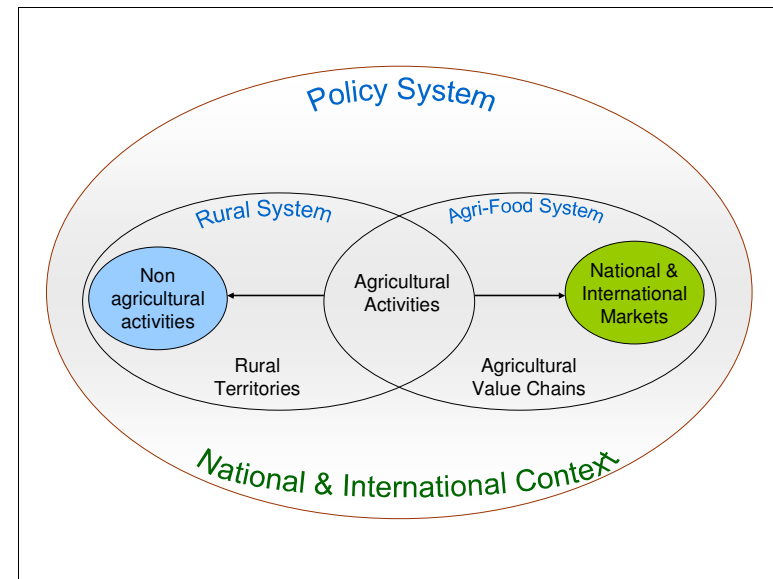


The Systemic Conception of Agriculture and Rural Life: Only One of the Pillars of the AGRO-Matrix

In essence, it is important to keep in mind that the AGRO-Matrix is founded upon two pillars: the three operational areas or arenas for action of the *systemic concept* and the four dimensions or types of actions of the *sustainable development approach*.

It is easier to understand and promote effective strategies and policies if the three arenas for action of the **systemic concept** are viewed in terms of “stakeholders” working within three complementary systems: the rural system, the agri-food system and the policy system. It must be understood, however, that this constitutes only one of the pillars of the AGRO-Matrix.

Effective strategies and policies also require consideration of the other pillar of the AGRO-Matrix. The actions and relationships of the *stakeholders* within the three systems correspond to the four dimensions: the production-trade, ecological-environmental, socio-cultural-human and political-institutional that characterize the **sustainable development approach**. This will be addressed in the following section, which will explain the need to go “beyond production-trade”. The current section deals with only one of the pillars of the AGRO-Matrix – namely, the three systems of agriculture and rural life without making reference to their four types of actions.



The Policy System

The “*stakeholders*” that establish the “playing rules” of a society’s development model comprise the **policy system**. Its key actors are “policymakers” whose decisions, in terms of the four dimensions of the sustainable development approach, shape the behavior of stakeholders in rural territories and chains.

The decisions made by these policymakers assign agriculture and rural life a specific role in the development

model of a society, and shape the evolution of the development process in territories and chains. They build strategies, policies and support programs to bring about the development of agriculture and rural life, based on their interests, beliefs and expectations. The decisions of policymakers strongly influence the expectations and behaviors of stakeholders in rural and agri-food systems, and these stakeholders, in turn, influence policymakers through their actions.

The Agri-food System

The “*stakeholders*” who participate in the entire chain that moves agricultural products “from the farm to the table” make up the **agri-food system**. This system connects different steps of the flow of agricultural products through the agricultural value chains as a result of the actions of stakeholders and the prevailing interests in each of the links connecting farming and farm production, irrespective of place (rural or suburban), with post-harvest value added activities to final consumption. The term “agri-food system” includes both food and non-food products.

The adoption of the “farm to table” concept helps to identify and carry out efforts to ensure that opportunities for farm products are exploited through the benefits of inclusion in the chain, thereby preventing the traditional conceptual disconnect between farm production and the value-added received by agricultural products outside the farm. This value-added has traditionally been understood to entail increased processing. Under the new approach, however, value-added is not automatically synonymous

with processing; the addition of value to primary production now includes intellectual capital, innovation and market intelligence, among other factors.

The Rural System

The “*stakeholders*” in rural territories interacting in different types of agricultural and non-agricultural production processes to improve their economic, environmental, socio-cultural and institutional situations make up the **rural system**. In this case, the stakeholders are various social manifestations of the rural population.

Agricultural activities are activities in which “*stakeholders*” have natural resources at their disposal for production in agriculture, forestry and fishery. Their products may either become part of an agricultural value chain or be used for their own consumption, with the farm as their main physical capital. Other economic activities that employ farm resources – for agro-tourism, for example – are also classified as agricultural. In both cases, agricultural activities are understood to include actions involving the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment on the farm, as well as the quality of life of agricultural workers.

Non-agricultural activities are production activities carried out in rural areas that do not involve agriculture – for example, craftwork, rural cuisine, tourism, education, health care and financial services. This category also includes state-sponsored health care, education, social security and infrastructure, among other items.

Understanding the Multiple Interacting Factors of Agriculture: Beyond “Production-Trade”

The “real” contribution of agriculture to the development of countries comes into full focus when the results of all the actions and relationships of the three “*interest groups*”, in the three systems in which they operate (rural, agri-food and policy), are considered. Consequently, if strategies and policies are to be effective, they must go “beyond production-trade” and overcome the limitations imposed by the concept “agricultural sector” in order to take into account the four dimensions (or types of actions) of the **sustainable development approach**. This broad understanding, which facilitates consideration of the two pillars of the AGRO-Matrix, is also necessary to develop the new institutional framework agriculture and rural life requires.

This has been a subject of hemispheric dialogue since the first meeting of Ministerial Delegates on Agriculture and Rural Life (GRICA 2001), where the various interacting factors of agriculture were identified in terms of the four dimensions of the sustainable development approach and linked to the need for a new institutional framework. The Ministers of Agriculture expressed this need at the First Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas (Bavaro 2001), in paragraph 7 of the Ministerial Declaration of Bavaro:

“7. To renew the national and international institutional frameworks in such a way that they contribute to the sustainable development

of agriculture and the rural milieu, based on the objectives of greater competitiveness, equity, sustainable management of natural resources and democratic governance.”

In this regard, it should be noted that the “real” contribution of agriculture to the development of countries must be framed in terms of the impact of the actions of “stakeholders” in the three systems mentioned above vis à vis the purposes and strategic objectives included in the four dimensions of the sustainable development approach – the production/trade, ecological/environmental, socio-cultural/human and political/institutional dimensions.

- 1. Production-trade** – refers to the technical-economic processes whereby agricultural and non-agricultural goods and services are produced, transformed and exchanged. Desires, expectations and behavior will shape the actions of the stakeholders in the three systems which will determine the pace and quality of progress toward the three purposes corresponding to this dimension: *Promoting competitive rural enterprises* (AGRO-Matrix Cell I); *Integrating chains and strengthening their competitiveness* (AGRO-Matrix Cell II); *Promoting an environment conducive to competitive agriculture* (AGRO-Matrix Cell III). In turn, the degree of progress achieved related to the three purposes and the combination of the three results would be instrumental for increasing and

sustaining progress toward the strategic objective of *competitiveness*.

2. **Ecological-environmental** – refers to the natural foundation – living and non-living – of production processes which, when combined with human activity, determine its sustainability. This dimension involves the way in which natural resources are employed in the production process, and whether that process contributes to their conservation and respects their vital functions. The actions of the stakeholders in the three systems will determine the type of progress toward the three purposes corresponding to this dimension: *Being environmentally responsible in the rural area* (AGRO-Matrix Cell IV); *From farm to table: promoting integrated environmental management* (AGRO-Matrix Cell V); *Participating in building an institutional environmental framework* (AGRO-Matrix Cell VI).). In turn, the way in which the three results are combined would be instrumental for the progress toward the strategic objective of *sustainable management of natural resources and the environment*.
3. **Socio-cultural-human** – refers to the background, customs, capacities, rights, needs and expectations of persons and stakeholders. These factors influence the level of equity in a society, and involve the distribution of economic benefits arising from production, transformation and

exchange processes. Actions of the stakeholders in the three systems will determine the progress toward the three purposes corresponding to this dimension: *Quality of life in rural communities: creating know-how and opportunity* (AGRO-Matrix Cell VI); *Advancing learning and expertise in the chain* (AGRO-Matrix Cell VIII); *Promoting policies to create capabilities and opportunities for the rural communities* (AGRO-Matrix Cell IX).). In turn, the type of combination of the results would determine the progress toward the strategic objective of *equity*.

4. **Political-institutional** – refers to institutions (the system of norms that establishes the “playing rules”) and organizations, and the relationships between them in local, national and international networks, which influence democratic governance. The actions of the stakeholders in the three systems will determine the progress toward the three purposes corresponding to this dimension: *Strengthening public and private sector participation and coordinated action between them in the territories* (AGRO-Matrix Cell X); *Strengthening dialogue and commitments among actors in the chain* (AGRO-Matrix Cell XI); *Promoting national policies and regional and hemispheric cooperation for agriculture and rural life* (AGRO-Matrix Cell XII).). In turn, the type of combination of the results would define the progress toward the strategic objective of *democratic governance*.

Finally, as explained in the two preceding sections, a purely systemic concept of agriculture fails to address current needs with regard to the effectiveness of strategies and policies. Consequently, if analysts, public decision-makers and the leaders of other “stakeholders” are to benefit from the AGRO-Matrix, and thereby improve the effectiveness of strategies and policies on agriculture and rural life, the AGRO-Matrix must be used in its entirety, including the two pillars of its structure, as defined by the systemic conception (three arenas for action) and the sustainable development approach (four dimensions or types of actions) as well as the three components of the desired situation, ranked according to purpose, strategic objective and the overarching objective of sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu.

Some Suggested Uses of the AGRO-Matrix

Faced with a need to improve the effectiveness of strategies and policies on agriculture and rural life in a specific area (a country or region), the AGRO-Matrix can help to accomplish the following:

1. Identify interest groups (key actors, or “stakeholders”).
2. Identify strategic actions in progress, carried out through programs and projects (determine which areas have or have not been addressed).
3. Identify “my role” as a stakeholder in the Matrix; identify other “stakeholders” with whom joint actions must be taken (“working together”).
4. Become acquainted with the status of agriculture and rural life.
5. Identify areas of agriculture that require spending or investment.
6. Identify the contribution of international cooperation agencies and national entities to the sustainable development of agriculture and rural life.
7. Identify key issues and challenges as inputs for the adoption of strategic actions.
8. Become acquainted with the existing institutional framework for the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu.
9. Determine where strategies, policies and programs on agriculture and rural life are having an impact.
10. Identify areas where inter-institutional and multisectoral efforts can be coordinated.
11. Lay the groundwork and identify actors for the development of a National policy on agriculture and rural life.
12. Lay the groundwork for an information system capable of monitoring and assessing the progress of national and regional strategies, as well as the hemispheric agenda, toward the purposes, strategic objectives and Shared Vision of 2015 of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan.

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