



## Implementation strategy

The IBBP includes some strategies for implementing these lines of action and providing follow-up to them.

- **Hemispheric Task Force:** Composed of 15 western-hemisphere countries and a representative of the Biotechnology Group of the Southern Agricultural Council (CAS). Its function is to advise the Program.
- **North American Biotechnology Initiative (NABI):** The Program attends its meetings in an observer capacity in order to serve as liaison with the regions in regard to its lines of action.
- **CAS Biotechnology Group:** the Program maintains permanent links with this group.
- **Regional Multisectoral Groups on Biotechnology and Biosafety in Central America, the Caribbean and the Andean Region:** these were set up following the workshops that the Program organized to assess the needs in regard to agrobiotechnology and biosafety.



## The case of Paraguay

In 2006, the Minister of Agriculture of Paraguay asked IICA for direct assistance in drafting a National Biotechnology Policy.

Through the Inter-American Biotechnology and Biosafety Program, the Institute implemented the following actions:

- ▶ A needs assessment in the country
- ▶ The creation of the National Multisectoral Group on Biotechnology and Biosafety
- ▶ The design of the syllabus for a Diploma Course in Biotechnology and Biosafety, for the National University of Asuncion
- ▶ The drafting of guidelines for the design of the National Biotechnology Policy



## Cross-thematic approach and coordination at the hemispheric, regional and national levels

Under IICA's technical cooperation model, implementing the IBBP necessarily calls for a cross-thematic strategy, since agrobiotechnology and biosafety encompass fields as diverse as science and technology, trade, policies and regulatory frameworks, agricultural health and food safety, agribusiness and training.

With regard to its hemispheric design, the IBBP is closely linked to the regional and national strategies adopted after needs assessments were carried out.



## Strategic partnerships

The IBBP is constantly seeking to establish strategic partnerships with technical and financial cooperation agencies, and continues to consolidate those that already exist with the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO), the United Nations Industrial Organization (UNIDO) and other centers of excellence specializing in biotechnology and biosafety, both within and outside the Americas.

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# Inter-American Biotechnology and Biosafety Program

## TACKLING THE CHALLENGES OF MODERN AGRICULTURE



INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE



## Making agriculture more competitive while preserving the environment

The countries of the Americas are faced with the common challenge of achieving the sustainable and competitive development of agriculture and agribusiness in a way that is compatible with the conservation and sound management of natural resources and the reduction of hunger and urban and rural poverty.

Tackling this challenge also entails producing more nutritious, safer and higher-quality food, while at the same time ensuring the conservation and management of biodiversity (ecosystems, species and genetic resources). The goal, then, is to raise agricultural productivity without destroying the region's genetic resources or increasing the pressure on the agricultural frontier, at a time when the amount of arable land available per capita is beginning to decline.

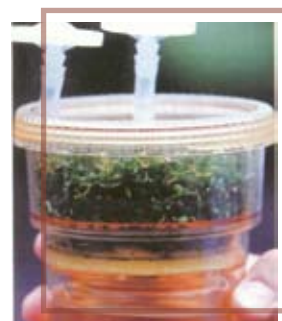
The global scientific community is now agreed that, using conventional technology alone, it will not be possible to increase or diversify the quantity and quality of food production sufficiently to feed a population that will nearly double over the next 50 years. It is also worth bearing in mind that nearly two thirds of the current population lives in poverty. The situation is even more complex given the urgent need to conserve the hemisphere's rich biodiversity: six of the 17 countries considered the most mega-diverse in the world are to be found in the tropical regions of the Americas (Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela).

Mindful that agrobiotechnology and biosafety offer a viable way of meeting these modern challenges, that there are significant differences among the various regions of the Americas and that national capabilities in these fields need to be strengthened, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) is implementing the Inter-American Biotechnology and Biosafety Program (IBBP).



## Recognizing biotechnology's potential

The Inter-American Biotechnology and Biosafety Program encourages the countries to develop and adopt agrobiotechnology, along with a regulatory framework for biosafety that includes risk identification and assessment, in order to prevent the loss of genetic diversity and harm being done to public health and the environment.



There are four main reasons why the Hemisphere should adopt biotechnology as a tool for making agriculture and agribusiness more competitive as part of national development strategies:

- 1) State-of-the-art technology is available, although the situation varies from region to region;
- 2) The mega-biodiversity that exists in the Americas is of global importance;
- 3) The region makes an important contribution to world food production; and,
- 4) The quality of life and wellbeing of the region's inhabitants must be improved.

Realizing biotechnology's potential, and in accordance with the Institute's mission, the member countries mandated IICA to develop and implement the IBBP, assisted by a Hemispheric Task Force. The Institute's mandate is set forth in resolutions adopted by its governing bodies, the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) and the Executive Committee (in resolutions 386 and 445, respectively).

In its 2006-2010 Medium Term Plan (MTP), IICA made biotechnology and biosafety an Area of Concentration, as part of the efforts to promote the introduction of new technologies.

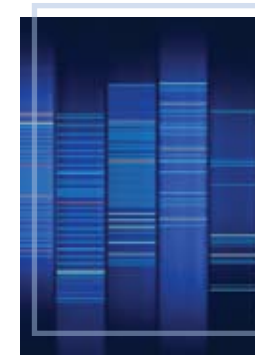


## Purpose

The main purpose of the IBBP is to facilitate mechanisms for the development, management and safe use of agrobiotechnology to promote competitive and sustainable agriculture in the Americas.

## Objectives

- To support the gathering, analysis and dissemination of science-based information to enable national officials to design policies and take decisions based on scientific and technical evidence, and provide the public with objective information about agrobiotechnology
- To support needs assessment at the national and regional levels, to determine the development and appropriate use of agrobiotechnology
- To support the development, implementation and communication of transparent, science-based policies and regulatory frameworks and, where appropriate, facilitate regional harmonization



## Principal lines of action

The IBBP is focusing on the following lines of action, as called for in the 2006-2010 MTP:

- To promote transparent communications on the risks and benefits of agrobiotechnology, and encourage the pertinent authorities to make the issue of public perception an important component of national agrobiotechnology policies and programs
- To support the development of scientific and technological capabilities in the field of agrobiotechnology, considering solutions to national and local problems
- To promote studies, discussions and analyses of the implications of national and international standards, regulations, agreements and negotiations on matters related to agrobiotechnology and biosafety, with special emphasis on their impact on trade. As well as strategic meetings where the countries can share their experiences with international agreements.
- To support the development of a system of objective and scientific information on biotechnology and biosafety, to facilitate the design of policies and decision-making at the national level;
- To assist member countries in identifying needs at the national and regional levels for the development and appropriate use of agrobiotechnology, the development and implementation of policies and regulatory frameworks, and the development of technical-scientific capabilities within the framework of the regional strategies;
- To promote transparent communication regarding the risks and benefits of agrobiotechnology; and to suggest that the pertinent authorities make the topic of public perception an important component of national agrobiotechnology programs and policies;
- To encourage studies, discussions and analyses of the implications of national and international standards, regulations, negotiations and agreements for matters related to agrobiotechnology and biosafety, with special emphasis on their impact on trade.

