



2020 Annual Report of IICA

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Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), 2021



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Message from the Director General

The year 2020 will be remembered as a time when the world stopped and was forced to rearrange its priorities, even as we recognized the vulnerability of the human condition.

Amidst the global health crisis, collaborative work and a commitment to finding innovative solutions became the order of the day. From the scientists and doctors who developed vaccines against SARS-CoV-2 to small- and medium-scale food producers – all groups were forced to reinvent themselves, shouldering a heavier workload and a greater sense of urgency.

In the international context, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) was one of the first to recognize and highlight the resilience of the agriculture and agroindustrial sectors of the Americas in the face of the crisis. Even during the most difficult times of the pandemic they circumvented speculation in the market and attempts to block trade—measures that were devoid of any solid scientific foundation—thus enabling the world to continue feeding itself and our hemisphere to solidify its key role as the guardian of the food and nutritional security of our planet.

IICA has this resilience embedded in its DNA. Its origins date back to the war period of 1942, when the vision of our founders led to the establishment of a specialized organization to promote agricultural and rural development in the Americas.

In times of crisis, relying on virtual communication, the Institute has been a close ally that listens, proposes and acts to promote dialogue among the authorities of the 34 Member States, the private sector, civil society, academia and other international cooperation agencies, with a view to defining joint and innovative work approaches for the development of the agrifood systems of the region.

In times of emergency, IICA's capacity to respond to the demands of member countries has been evident, not only through the hundreds of experience-sharing events and formulation of work agreements, but also through its continued delivery of a robust technical agenda, with more than 270 initiatives in areas such as digital agriculture, soils, gender, bioeconomy, trade, agricultural health, climate change, rural development and research, among others.

Despite the difficulties in mobilizing internal and external resources, the various projects of the organization were carried out effectively, executing a sum of close to USD 130 million. We were responsible for safeguarding the health of all staff, while maximizing the use of institutional resources, by concentrating actions into a single fund, reducing the regular budget by close to USD 7 million and searching for sources of funding. Our commitment to technical cooperation of excellence and institutional efficiency has been our guiding principle.

In a year in which the demands on all of us were much greater, we strived to continue to be an innovative, relevant, productive and sustainable organization.

Today, technical cooperation has also changed and therefore, throughout the year the Institute worked to review, adjust and implement innovative ideas to devise a new business model that would strengthen us, making our work more relevant and current in the face of the increasingly demanding agendas of our Member States.

We have kept our governing bodies informed about these ideas and they have expressed their unwavering support for us to continue modernizing IICA, its services and its financial architecture.

In 2021 we join in the hope that the intensive international vaccination programs will lead us to a “new normal”, which we trust will be a “better normal”. It is precisely now that the role of the Institute has become more relevant as an innovation platform that will facilitate knowledge management to develop increasingly robust cooperation initiatives.

We remain positive about the years to come, as we witness how crops and life itself are renewed when the land is treated with care.

IICA continues to strengthen its linkages with its partners, even as it moves ahead.

Manuel Otero
Director General

Executive Summary

The origins of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) date back to an era in which the world was facing one of its greatest crises and agriculture was playing a pivotal role in ensuring the well-being of millions of people. In 2020—a year of crisis due to a pandemic resulting from the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) disease—the capacity of food systems to contribute to weathering crises and the importance of the sector as an engine for agricultural development and rural well-being was once again brought to light. This, of course, has been the guiding principle that has shaped the mission of IICA over the last 79 years.

The Institute focused its technical cooperation of excellence on strengthening institutional capacities¹, managing knowledge and providing innovative solutions to tackle new challenges, under the motto, “*IICA listens, proposes and acts*”.

In this year, in particular, urgent actions on the institutional agenda were aimed at addressing the needs of the agriculture sector amidst the pandemic. To this end, the Institute organized more than 30 subregional meetings, fostered inter-ministerial dialogue, collaborated in the preparation of response plans and sanitary protocols, provided inputs and supported information dissemination campaigns about the impact of COVID-19 on agriculture.

In accordance with its 2018-2022 Medium-term Plan, IICA continued to implement its bioeconomy, territorial development, international trade, climate change, agricultural health, gender and youth, and innovation and technology actions with no disruption. It executed 272 initiatives, 223 of which were externally funded, representing a value of close to USD 130 million, with the support of more than 200 partners.

The main results of the **technical cooperation** actions—both those that were scheduled and those that were implemented to address short-term emergencies—were as follows:

- Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) leadership was strengthened to capitalize on the potential of the **bioeconomy**, with approximately 3,500 public sector authorities and technical officers increasing their capacities in this field. Moreover, LAC was equipped with tools to build bioeconomy-based businesses using products such as coffee, cocoa, potato, tomato, vegetables, sheep and honey.
- Various discussion forums among national authorities ensured a continued trade flow and food supply, which had come under threat during the pandemic. The Institute continuously monitored data about **agrifood trade**, international prices

¹ More than 60,000 persons benefitted from the Institute’s virtual campus, which offers 75 courses on topics related to IICA’s cooperation issues.

and agricultural policies introduced to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, even as it coordinated virtual business roundtables.

- Scores of projects and cooperation activities sought to improve the situation in **family farming** and the food supply, particularly in areas such as cooperativism, associativity, technological innovation and market access. In this vein, IICA introduced a digital agriculture advisory program, in collaboration with Michael Kremer, 2019 recipient of the Nobel Prize for Economics, using mobile phone text messaging to benefit millions of farmers in the Americas.
- In partnership with Ohio State University, the Institute launched the Living Soils of the Americas initiative to promote soil restoration in the hemisphere. At the regional level, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Andean Region will benefit from proposals submitted to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to strengthen capacities aimed at creating an **innovative, resilient, productive** and low-emission **agriculture sector**.
- IICA supported its member countries through a wide range of initiatives in **phytosanitary and zoosanitary protection**, including the implementation of maximum residue limits, pest and disease control (for snails, flies, locusts, caterpillars, brucellosis, sigatoka and *Fusarium*), antimicrobial resistance programs and international sanitary regulations, among others.
- At least a dozen forums, commemorative events and applied research studies were carried out to recognize the historic value of **women and young people in the development** of rural territories and to capitalize on opportunities offered by **digital agriculture 4.0**. Furthermore, the **Interpretive Center for Tomorrow's Agriculture (CIMAG)**, which operates out of the Institute's Headquarters in Costa Rica, provides a space in which agriculture and state of the art knowledge come together.

The Institute acted decisively to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, prioritizing the protection of the cooperation dynamic, the health of its staff and the cash flow, streamlining its annual budget by close to USD 7 million. It also enhanced the institutional modernization process, devising a roadmap to implement a new **business model that will result in an Institute with an increased capacity for anticipation and one that is more pertinent, productive, relevant and financially sound**.

The close relationship that the Institute maintained with its member countries in 2020, despite the social distancing measures applied in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, was reflected in a broader international collaboration agenda with academic institutions, international research centers, multilateral banking agencies, private sector entities, producer organizations and cooperation agencies in countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Korea and Spain, in addition to the European Union. In collaboration with all of these strategic partners, IICA has established a vast community of open doors.

About IICA

The mission of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) is to “stimulate, promote and support the efforts of its Member States to achieve agricultural development and rural well-being through technical cooperation of excellence” .

Its actions are guided by the following vision:

“Be a modern and efficient institution supported by a platform of human resources and processes that are capable of mobilizing the knowledge available in the region and around the world, with the aim of achieving competitive, inclusive and sustainable agriculture that takes advantage of opportunities to contribute to economic growth and development as well as to foster greater rural well-being and sustainable management of the region’s natural capital” .

The abovementioned mission and vision are now more relevant than ever and guide the Institute’s daily work to support the efforts of thousands of farmers who have prevented a food crisis during the pandemic caused by the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) disease.

The objectives set out in our Medium-term Plan (MTP) for the 2018-2022 period are as follows:

1. Increase the contribution of the agriculture sector to economic growth and sustainable development;
2. Foster the well-being of all the inhabitants of rural territories;
3. Improve international and regional trade in countries in the region; and,
4. Increase the resilience of rural territories and agrifood systems to extreme events.

Pursuant to the MTP, our cooperation services are grouped under five action programs: a) Bioeconomy and Production Development; b) Territorial Development and Family Farming; c) International Trade and Regional Integration; d) Climate Change, Natural Resources and Management of Production Risks; and e) Agricultural Health and Food Safety and Quality. Two cross-cutting themes have also been established to complement the cooperation provided to member countries, namely: a) Gender and Youth and b) Innovation and Technology.

IICA addresses the needs of its member countries through the delivery of timely, relevant technical cooperation services and the provision of innovative solutions aimed at fostering agricultural and rural development in the Americas. To this end, the Institute promotes the sharing of knowledge, skills and experiences; technical and institutional capacity building; advisory services for the implementation of strategic

processes and public policymaking; coordination of the work of multi-institutional entities and the hosting of their technical secretariat; the development, facilitation and implementation of tools and methodologies; and the management of projects linked to the agriculture sector, among other cooperation actions.

IICA's technical cooperation network is made up of offices located in the capital city of each of the 34 Member States, plus an office for Europe, located in Spain. The Institute's team of technical staff, comprised of nearly 300 professionals specializing in the social, economic and productive sciences, is spearheaded by Dr. Manuel Otero, a citizen of Argentina, working from Headquarters in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Amidst the health crisis that the world is currently facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, IICA, true to the spirit that led to its creation in 1942, has been undertaking proactive efforts to guarantee the safety of all its staff members and the regular operation of the Institute, with the aim of excelling in the fulfillment of its mission as well as supporting, more closely than ever, the efforts of its member countries to develop their agriculture and rural sectors.

Despite the difficulties faced in 2020, IICA intensified its institutional transformation and modernization efforts, with a view to enhancing its capacity for anticipation, as well as its pertinence, productivity, relevance and sustainability. These efforts, which have been endorsed by the Member States, have resulted in the renewal of the Institute's business model as well as a roadmap, which will enable IICA to continue offering technical cooperation services of excellence to countries in the Americas, so that they may achieve Agriculture 4.0 and strengthen food systems.

Main results in 2020

IICA provided its member countries with technical cooperation of excellence based on a clear medium-term vision, which was further strengthened through the conceptualization of a new business model that will enable the Institute to increase its relevance and pertinence, as well as its capacity for anticipation and innovation.

The technical cooperation agenda consisted of 272 initiatives, including projects, operations and actions for the benefit of the Institute's 34 Member States. Forty-nine of these initiatives were implemented with institutional resources, while 223 received financial support from more than 200 partners, including governments, academic institutions, international organizations and donors. In 2020, the allocation of external resources totaled USD 171.5 million.

Given the need to respond in the short term to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Institute adjusted its technical programming based on new scenarios in and pressing needs of its Member States, responding rapidly and efficiently based on the financial resources available. Together with various public and private partners, the Institute collaborated in the following activities: a) development of response or reactivation plans (Bolivia, Dominica, Honduras, Mexico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, United States); b) design of protocols for the implementation of sanitary guidelines (for example, for coffee plantations in Costa Rica, markets in Paraguay and packing plants in Saint Lucia); c) provision of support for information dissemination campaigns (for instance, "*El campo se cuida*" in Chile and the production of information materials in Creole in Haiti); d) the distribution of inputs or supplies to maintain production² and self-consumption³; and e) the establishment of demonstration fields and the conducting of research⁴, among other experience-sharing efforts.

One of the most important joint initiatives was IICA's partnership with the government of Honduras, which made it possible to develop the Solidarity Production Bonus Program⁵, the Coffee Farming Bonus Program⁶ and the Safe Harvest Program, which benefited a large number of small-scale producers in that country. For instance, the latter program made it possible to distribute 1 million hygiene kits to coffee harvesters.

Through knowledge management that increasingly relies on virtual tools, the Institute's technical actions focused on strengthening countries' institutional capacities by promoting innovation, technology and digital agriculture, which were key elements in

² Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, The Bahamas, Guatemala, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago.

³ Grenada.

⁴ Barbados and Peru.

⁵ A total of 66,000 vouchers for corn, beans, sorghum and fertilizer were distributed with support from the Directorate of Science and Technology (DICTA), the National Agrifood Health and Safety Service (SENASA) and other agencies of the Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock (SAG).

⁶ Fertilizers were distributed to 91,462 producers from 222 municipalities.

most of the cooperation activities. Among the immediate response actions provided to the Member States were:

- the expansion of virtual course offerings to a total of 75 courses on different topics related to the five institutional programs;
- the development of agricultural extension applications for the Caribbean, for potential use in other regions; and
- the organization and provision of support for a large number of forums, consultation processes, ministerial meetings and other events and actions that enabled IICA to engage in dialogue with its partners, including: a) the publication of 50 editions of the IICA blog “Cultivating Tomorrow’s Agriculture Today”, which featured more than 20 articles; b) the survey “Family farming and agrifood supply during the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean”; c) virtual business roundtables to identify solutions to the effects of COVID-19; d) the Integration Platform for the Integration of Female Family Farming Entrepreneurs of the Expanded MERCOSUR Region; e) the development of health protocols for managing the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the poultry, coffee and cocoa sectors; and f) forums with rural women and youth.

The Institute successfully engaged in broad dialogue with the ministers and secretaries of agriculture of the hemisphere regarding the impact of COVID-19 on agriculture and rural areas. IICA and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) organized two hemispheric meetings of ministers. Additionally, five expanded meetings of ministers of the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC) were held.

The Institute’s regional and intraregional coordination mechanisms facilitated the provision of technical cooperation in the countries and regions, as well as the establishment of linkages with institutional partners, sectors and public and private organizations, such as government agencies, the European Union (EU), the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE), Bayer, Microsoft, Syngenta, the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA), CAC, FAO, the Central American Dairy Federation (FECALAC), the Pan-American Dairy Federation (FEPALE), the Central American Federation of Agricultural and Agroindustrial Chambers (FECAGRO), the Regional Cooperative Program for the Technological Development and Modernization of Coffee Production (PROMECAFE), the Market Information Organization of the Americas (MIOA), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), universities, research centers and trade union organizations of agricultural chains, among others (see Annex 3 for a list of new partnerships established in 2020).

Together with CAC, and with the participation of the Secretariat of the Central American Agricultural Council (SECAC) and FAO, a plan for addressing the COVID-19 pandemic was prepared; a plan for overcoming the impact of hurricanes Eta and Iota was developed; and, in coordination with a technical team from USDA-FAS, efforts were

undertaken to address the impact of maximum residue limits on the region and on exports. The Institute systematized tools for the application of good practices in the agriculture sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. Noteworthy examples included CAC's roadmap and the prioritization of issues to immediately address the pandemic in the agrifood sector of the SICA region, which was carried out together with SECAC and FAO. IICA also assisted the Coffee Institute (ICAFFE) of Costa Rica in developing technical guidelines and protocols to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

IICA fostered and organized opportunities for dialogue and forums with relevant agricultural stakeholders, including the following: a) the hemispheric forum "Innovation opportunities for Mesoamerican and Caribbean coffee production"; b) the hemispheric forum "Public/private dialogue of the dairy sector in Latin America", which included a conference on sectoral policies and development actions in response to the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic ; c) the II International Agribusiness Forum entitled "Sustainable and competitive production for new coffee and cocoa markets in Nicaragua"; and d) the forum organized with FECAGRO on the effects of COVID-19 on the agrifood chains of SICA member countries.

Pursuant to the guidelines of the 2018-2022 MTP, technical cooperation was provided to the countries through the five hemispheric action programs⁷ and the two cross-cutting issues. The main results achieved in each of these programs and areas are described below:

Bioeconomy and production development

Amidst the health crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, IICA reaffirmed the importance of fostering frameworks and strategies in the field of bioeconomy, which enabled the Institute to strengthen its leadership in this topic and solidify the international standing of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) as a leading player in harnessing the potential of the bioeconomy. This was demonstrated through the Institute's participation as a partner in the 2020 Global Bioeconomy Summit and as a co-organizer of the International Conference on Applied Bioeconomy Research (ICABR) hosted by Argentina, which were the main technical and policy-related bioeconomy events held in 2020.

Authorities and technical specialists from public agricultural institutions, private companies, academic institutions, research centers and civil society in LAC have gained access to technical information that will foster a better understanding of the potential of the bioeconomy to increase the competitiveness, sustainability and inclusivity of agriculture in the region, as well as the development of projects and strategies to take advantage of the bioeconomy. The sharing of information made it possible to prepare

⁷ With support from the management teams of the technical programs, 118 products were implemented and a technical and financial execution rate of more than 91% was achieved, which made it possible to respond to the needs of the 34 member countries and the five regions in the Americas.

technical documents, identify success stories, develop knowledge management platforms, conduct analyses based on bioeconomic indicators, and create materials for various media, among other things. Two of the technical documents published in Spanish were “[Bioeconomy: A development strategy for Argentina in the 21st century](#)” and “[Policies and business for the bioeconomy in LAC: An ongoing process](#)”.

In the same vein, stakeholders of various agricultural chains in LAC, including coffee, cocoa, potato, tomato, vegetables, sheep and honey gained access to quality information on opportunities for harnessing the bioeconomy, as well as tools that will enable them to strengthen their capacity to build competitive, sustainable and inclusive bioeconomy-based businesses. IICA developed several technical studies for each of the abovementioned chains, as well as a virtual platform that provides access to [technologies for the bioeconomy](#) and [tools to support bioenterprises](#).

Thanks to in-person and virtual courses, workshops, field trips and seminars organized by the Institute, more than 3,500 authorities and technical specialists from public agricultural organizations, private companies, academic institutions, research centers and other entities strengthened their capacities with respect to the bioeconomy in general, biotechnology, bioenergy, biofuels, bioenterprises and other related fields.

As part of Manabí’s Pine Nut for Galapagos project, which has been underway in Ecuador for several years and is funded with resources from the Decentralized Autonomous Government of Manabí, a new pine nut harvest allowed for producing 5,000 gallons of biofuel, which were delivered to the island of Floreana to generate clean electricity.

In Jamaica, IICA launched the gamified course “[Bio-economy World](#)”, which introduces “players/learners” to the bioeconomy and demonstrates its benefits and potential with respect to the use of renewable resources.

Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras and Uruguay achieved progress in the design of strategies and policies aimed at fostering the application of the bioeconomy in agriculture and rural development, through policy positioning, the development of roadmaps and the preparation of proposals for policy guidelines. The Institute also cooperated with Argentina, Guatemala and Honduras in building and implementing regulatory frameworks for biotechnology, biosafety, bioenergy and biofuels, which will foster and guarantee the viability of new bioeconomy-based businesses in the region.

Biotechnology and biosafety

IICA's biotechnology and biosafety agenda included the organization of training, communication and institutional assistance activities related to regulatory issues, which led to a better understanding of the technologies and regulations governing their use.

The Institute continued to provide Guatemala and Honduras with technical support in biotechnology and biosafety under the Customs Union Agreement between those two countries and El Salvador. Furthermore, as part its actions under the Cartagena Protocol for Biosafety, IICA participated in the 15th Conference of the Parties Serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP-MOP 5), which, although originally scheduled to take place in China in October 2020, was postponed until 2021.

Additionally, the Institute collaborated with the Global LLP Initiative (GLI) and the Secretariat of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The Institute also supported communication and technical discussion activities led by the Institute on Science for Global Policy (ISGP) and the EFE agency (Spain). Together with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA) and the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), a Virtual Workshop on Animal Biotechnology was held. The global event brought together representatives from over 55 countries and provided an opportunity to present technological and regulatory advancements aimed at fostering the development of animal biotechnology.

To further its leadership in the field of genome editing, a technology that gained relevance after being awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2020, IICA, together with the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), delivered a "Practical course on genome editing". A total of 20 officials from institutions in the agriculture, environmental and academic sectors of Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras and Peru participated in person.

The Institute also supported various virtual events on this topic, such as the following:

- a. A course on Plant Breeding, organized together with the Mexican Association of Seed Producers (AMSAC);
- b. A seminar on Genome Editing, organized together with Acosemillas (Colombia); and
- c. Training sessions led by the Technological Institute of Costa Rica and the University of Costa Rica.

These types of training opportunities on technical and regulatory aspects of gene editing enabled the countries to strengthen their research and regulatory systems, which will equip them to take better advantage of the potential of biotechnology.

Territorial development and family farming

IICA prioritized the implementation of technical cooperation actions and activities aimed at promoting family farming, food supply, associative undertakings and market access.

The year 2020 was characterized by uncertainty and new challenges in the agriculture and rural sectors as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. With a view to collecting information on the effects of the pandemic on these sectors, a series of hemispheric and regional surveys on the situation were carried out.

The purpose of the first survey, which took into account all public and private stakeholders involved in family farming throughout the hemisphere, was to understand the initial impacts of the pandemic. A heterogeneous group of approximately 120 persons from 29 countries participated in the survey. The results of the survey were summarized in a [digital publication](#).

The second survey was carried out in the Caribbean region, with a view to understanding the situation with respect to the provision of family farming products to the hotel and tourism sectors.

A third survey was launched, geared towards leaders of the main family farming organizations in the hemisphere, focusing on policy measures and actions needed to address the pandemic. Based on the information yielded by the latter two surveys, a series of regional and hemispheric dialogues will be held in 2021 to reflect on the status of family farming and possible measures for its recovery in the short term.

Another important result achieved in 2020 was the consolidation of strategic partnerships to channel joint actions towards the recovery of the family farming economy, by means of innovative elements that are relevant to the current crisis situation. One noteworthy example was the proposal to renew the Framework Agreement for Collaboration with the MERCOSUR Specialized Meeting on Family Farming (REAF) until 2025, which is expected to be signed shortly, under Argentina's Pro Tempore Presidency of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR).

Ties were strengthened with Cooperatives of the Americas through technical cooperation activities carried out throughout the year, including the organization of joint virtual events and the development of the project "Digitalization of agricultural production and marketing services for family farming cooperatives". Additionally, within the framework of the General Cooperation Agreement with the Confederation of Family Farmer Organizations of the Expanded MERCOSUR Region (COPROFAM), support was provided to the organization through training activities for its members. Lastly, cognizant of the importance of strengthening regional agendas to address the COVID-19 pandemic, IICA identified topics for possible work agendas with the Specialized Meeting of MERCOSUR Cooperatives (RECM), the Southern Agricultural

Council (CAS), CAC and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM); the Institute also developed a proposal for collaborating with REAF within the framework of the EU-MERCOSUR Association Agreement.

IICA led the development of the technical proposal for the Plan to Address Food and Nutritional Security in the Tri-national Border Federation of Río Lempa (MTFRL), which is a joint initiative with SICA and the EU, aimed at assisting 1,500 families affected by the pandemic. The plan is funded through the extraordinary use of resources from the Central American Program for Integrated Coffee Rust Management (PROCAGICA) and the Adapted Agroforestry Systems for the Central American Dry Corridor project (AGROINNOVA).

Together with strategic partners, particularly Cooperatives of the Americas and REAF, IICA held hemispheric and regional events that gave greater visibility to the Institute's activities in support of family farming. Together with Cooperatives of the Americas, two hemispheric events were held to emphasize the importance of cooperative undertakings and new digital technologies for family farming, with a total of 370 participants. IICA and REAF actively collaborated to organize and hold the thirty-second (Asunción, Paraguay) and thirty-third (Montevideo, Uruguay) meetings, which were attended by representatives of countries in the Southern Region and a few from the Andean Region. Furthermore, in coordination with the Latin American Network of Rural Extension Services (RELASER) and with the participation of FAO, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Institute developed an agenda of forums on remote technical assistance using new digital technologies, marketing, the digital divide and rurality, which are scheduled to be held in 2021.

IFAD-IICA partnership to foster innovation in family farming

The Knowledge Management for the Adaptation of Family Farming to Climate Change project (INNOVA-AF)⁸, implemented by IICA with nearly USD 2 million of funding from IFAD, has directly benefited 1,614 family farmers in eight countries, who are actively participating in the development and dissemination of technologies, good practices, methodologies and strategies for adapting their production systems to climate change.

The project has allowed for validating and disseminating more than 20 practices and technologies that can be applied in arid and semi-arid areas: use of domestic water in home gardens, reservoirs for use during droughts, agroforestry systems for coffee growing, fruit and timber tree nurseries for planting near water sources, low-pressure irrigation systems that optimize water use, agroecological practices to reduce the use of synthetic inputs, as well as technologies for capturing, reusing and conserving rainwater, among others.

Efforts are also being undertaken to promote methodologies and strategies to reduce the vulnerability of production systems and territories, such as rural development models for arid areas, financial instruments for the procurement of small irrigation systems, methodologies and good practices to reduce vulnerability on farms, physical and online platforms for marketing the organizations' products, and territorial adaptation plans.

More than 11 public-private partnerships have been established in the eight countries where the project is being implemented. Over 30 partners are supporting the implementation as well as the technological, economic, political and institutional scale-up of project initiatives in the territories. Lastly, a methodological and pedagogical model for transforming technical publications into audiovisual products is facilitating virtual and blended training for producers and technical specialists.

As part of a joint initiative with Cooperatives of the Americas, the Institute developed a project aimed at digitalizing the services of family farming cooperatives, which will be implemented in phases, based on the management of external resources (USD 5 million) and the development of the capacities required to implement it. Other actions launched in 2020 include the following: a) the development of the Women Entrepreneurs Platform project (USD 750,000), which seeks to improve the financial autonomy and market access of female family farmers; b) the management of resources for the Healthy Territories Project, which is geared towards strengthening the participation of family farming in health and food safety policies and strategies (USD 2.2 million); and c) the preparation of the initial profile for the Project to Restructure and Improve Market Access for Family Farming Value Chains, which involves the development of a series of regional studies to identify actions and investments to strengthen family farming.

⁸ In late 2020, IFAD carried out a supervision mission which yielded positive feedback on the implementation of the project, as well as recommendations to facilitate its implementation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

IICA began implementing the project “Seal for family farming on the northern border of Ecuador”, funded by the Italian-Ecuadorian Fund for Sustainable Development (FIEDS). The project, which will benefit 60 family farming organizations in the provinces of Esmeraldas, Sucumbíos and Carchí, will strengthen marketing schemes and brand recognition for family farming products.

Other activities promoted by the Institute focused on contributing to associative undertakings and market access through virtual courses and the use of digital technologies. In partnership with COPROFAM, two virtual courses were delivered: one on associative and cooperative undertakings, and the other on leadership, with the participation of close to 100 representatives of the member organizations. In coordination with REAF, a virtual platform was developed to foster entrepreneurship among rural women in the Southern Region (<http://plamural.iica.int/>). IICA also prepared a virtual course on market access models for small and medium-scale producers, as well as information materials on biosafety for the marketing of food in family farming markets.

International trade and regional integration

One of the priorities in 2020 was to provide opportunities for dialogue that would foster trade and regional integration and guarantee the trade flow of food throughout the Americas.

To this end, IICA and FAO jointly organized meetings between the ministers and secretaries of agriculture, livestock, fisheries, food and rural development of countries in the Americas, who discussed the need for the agriculture sector to continue playing a key role in guaranteeing the food and nutritional security of our populations, which the COVID-19 pandemic has placed at risk. During these meetings, the ministers and secretaries reaffirmed the commitments undertaken within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to facilitate trade and protect people’s health and safety through collective action, and, in turn, to strengthen the implementation of the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).

IICA worked together with the Technical Secretariat of CAS to develop recommendations on ways to address the health emergency triggered by COVID-19 and guarantee food supply. Additionally, IICA and the EU jointly developed a digital application for food supply in Central America, which enables agricultural authorities to share and obtain information, in real-time, regarding surpluses or shortages of various food products in the countries, such as basic grains, fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy products and others, while fostering intraregional trade and boosting food supply and availability.

As the leader of CARICOM's "Business Development" thematic group, IICA supported the post-COVID-19 recovery plan for the Caribbean Region. Approved by ministers of agriculture and heads of government, the plan has served as a guide for the interventions and activities undertaken by countries and cooperation agencies.

IICA spearheaded the provision of technical information, conducted analyses of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on trade flows, and fostered transparency with respect to the trade-related measures applied by its member countries in response to the pandemic. Through the publication of more than 50 editions of the "Food Security Monitor for the Americas" and the blog "Cultivating Tomorrow's Agriculture Today", IICA shared news as well as monitored and analyzed data on trade in agrifood products, exchange rates and international prices. The publications also provided a means of sharing the views, perspectives and thoughts of the Institute's technical experts and renowned international experts on the agricultural policies implemented by member countries during COVID-19 and the pandemic's impact on trade.

IICA participated as an observer in the WTO's Committee on Agriculture, which enabled the Institute to take part in discussions related to the implementation of measures that hinder or facilitate agricultural trade in countries of the Americas and their partners around the world. IICA also disseminated information on the trade measures and instruments that countries have adopted to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic. One such example was the preparation of a special report for CAS on the measures implemented by countries of the Southern Region to cope with the pandemic.

To assist producers, producer organizations and SMEs in the agrifood sector in capitalizing on the trade opportunities afforded by export markets to accelerate economic recovery, IICA carried out processes and events aimed at building export capacities, which had more than 2,000 participants. Particularly noteworthy were a series of webinars held with the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) to assist companies in LAC to capitalize on the opportunities generated by international trade.

Together with strategic partners such as SIECA, FAO and ALADI, two virtual business roundtables were held with the participation of 948 companies from 23 countries. The roundtables generated USD 15.6 million of expected business. The Institute also promoted a program to support the export of organic products from Ecuador to Europe, which enabled Ecuadorian producers to establish linkages with importers and distributors in Germany and Spain.

Climate change, natural resources and management of production risks

By mobilizing funding, training, South-South cooperation and knowledge management, IICA provided technical cooperation to build capacities and strengthen national and

local institutions involved in the management of natural resources and climate change, thereby contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Together with nine CARICOM countries, the Institute developed a regional proposal in the amount of USD 1.2 million that seeks to lay the groundwork for climate-smart agriculture in the Caribbean, which was approved by the Green Climate Fund (GCF). This will result in a significant amount of capacity building efforts, studies and preliminary work aimed at channeling financial resources towards the development of a more climate-resilient, productive and low-emission agriculture sector.

The Ministry of the Environment and Water of Ecuador and the national authorities of seven other countries in the region received support from IICA in the conceptualization, financial management and approval by the Green Climate Fund of the multi-country Readiness Support Proposal. This instrument will contribute to generating technical input for green recovery in the post-COVID-19 period, through specialized studies on technological, financial and institutional innovations in the agriculture sector and their alignment with countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

The Institute developed a statistical tool to measure resilience to hurricanes in the absence of panel data. A pilot version was implemented in a farming community in Dominica, where the Institute cooperated in building the capacities of local technical specialists to apply the tool.

In Honduras, IICA supported the development of a national plan to address the emergency caused by hurricanes Eta and Iota and contribute to reactivating agricultural production.

In support of the Caribbean Region, the Institute implemented an organic waste management program that consisted of 20 in-person and virtual training events with 400 participants. A total of 79 partner organizations were involved in the program, which resulted in 30 small-scale pilot projects that were implemented in six countries. Furthermore, in The Bahamas, more than 90 people received training in waste management following the passage of Hurricane Dorian, and, as a follow-up, four small-scale projects were established.

IICA disseminated information and knowledge on climate change and natural resource management through a dozen publications, videos and blogs, as well as 20 presentations delivered at various events held throughout the Americas on topics such as ecosystem-based adaptation, water resource policies, sustainable livestock farming, integrated management of climate risks, composting, soil management, the situation with respect to COVID-19, measuring resilience and nationally determined contributions. Additionally, four Master's students were provided with tutoring and development opportunities.

Together with Ohio State University's Carbon Management and Sequestration Center, and under the leadership of World Food Prize winner, Rattan Lal, the Living Soils in the Americas initiative was launched.

The Institute carried out three virtual capacity-building sessions to participate more actively and in an informed manner in the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which saw the participation of more than 300 persons. In collaboration with Conservation International, a joint presentation was prepared and submitted to KJWA to highlight the region's viewpoints with respect to the socioeconomic and food security implications of climate change in the agriculture sector.

Agricultural health and food safety

IICA was instrumental in the preparation of the ministerial resolution of the Council of Ministers of Agriculture of Central America in support of the Action Plan to foster the regional harmonization of the regulatory system for pesticides in the countries, with a view to protecting the health and lives of consumers and facilitating international trade. In the Caribbean, public and private stakeholders improved their levels of compliance with international agricultural health and food safety (AHFS) standards with help from the project funded by the EU under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF).

Additionally, countries in the Central and Andean regions strengthened their capacity to harmonize basic concepts and knowledge related to pesticides. At least 7 pesticide training events benefited 99 delegates from 11 countries in those regions, under the agreement between the Institute and the USDA.

The topic "Maximum residue limit for pesticides in agricultural products: Impact on the region and exports" was included in the Central American agenda of CAC ministers. Additionally, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) participated in the Second Virtual Technical Meeting to Follow Up on the Regional Process to Harmonize Procedures for Registering and Implementing Maximum Residue Limits.

As part of the Poultry Admissibility Project, IICA and the USDA worked together to develop technical regulations, train officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) of El Salvador in epidemiological surveillance, and better equip the ministry's Network of Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories.

Continuous efforts undertaken over the course of almost three decades with the National Service for Agrifood Health, Safety and Quality (SENASICA) to contribute to

Mexico's phytosanitary protection⁹ assisted in preventing the entry of more than 1,000 pests and 56 exotic diseases of economic importance, yielding positive results for Mexican agrifood trade, which benefits more than 150 countries.

Together with the International Potato Center (CIP) and the official services of Andean countries, expertise in emerging potato pests was improved in the Andean Region. IICA also continued to address sanitary issues in coordination with the General Secretariat of the Andean Community (CAN).

The Institute held the virtual seminars entitled *The Role of Dairy Products in a Responsible and Sustainable Food System* and *The Importance of Livestock Production and Animal Protein: The Western Hemisphere Perspective*, organized together with the Global Dairy Platform (GDP) and the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC). In attendance were the former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and other leaders from expert organizations such as the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), the WTO, Elanco, Tyson, Cargill, Genus, the Brazilian Agribusiness Association (ABAG), the Working Group on Sustainable Livestock Farming (GTPS) and Agroícone, among others. The sessions were attended by more than 1,100 people from all parts of the hemisphere, who strengthened linkages with other partners. The event yielded reports and concept papers to be presented by partner organizations at the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit. Given the success of these events, IICA was invited by the World Economic Forum (WEF) to present a session entitled "Animals and the future of food systems" during its virtual event *Bold Actions for Food as a Force for Good*, organized in preparation for the UN summit.

With the aim of supporting countries' public and private sectors in drafting official sectoral guidelines and protocols for COVID-19, IICA developed technical guides and toolboxes on preventive measures in the agriculture sector to guarantee a continuous food supply for the population and generate favorable conditions for the reactivation of the agriculture sector. The following examples bear mentioning:

- i. The guide entitled "Preventive measures in the agriculture sector during Covid-19", available in Spanish and English, which became a technical reference document for the preparation of official guidelines and protocols;
- ii. Infographics on COVID-19 to improve understanding of preventive measures at all levels, from primary production to processing and marketing of food products;
- iii. A protocol and toolbox approved by the Costa Rican Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) for the implementation of sanitary

⁹ Regional Program on the Mediterranean Fruit Fly (MOSCAMED), National Campaign to Combat the Fruit Fly (MOSCAFRUT), Diagnostic Program, Inspection Program, Substantive Functions Program and State Strengthening Program in the network of 34 laboratories.

- guidelines and procedures in the coffee sector to overcome COVID-19, in support of the Costa Rican Coffee Institute (ICAFE);
- iv. The *Manual of good practices in the poultry sector* to guarantee the sector's contribution to food security and prevent the negative impacts of COVID-19, prepared jointly with the Latin American Poultry Association (ALA);
 - v. The *Manual of good practices in the cocoa sector* to prevent the negative impacts of COVID-19, in support of SECAC; and
 - vi. A virtual course on preventive measures in the agriculture sector during COVID-19, which was made available early in the pandemic to strengthen the capacities of the public and private sectors, via a mini-MOOC format. The course, available in Spanish and English, had nearly 2,000 participants;
 - vii. A virtual course on good agricultural practices (GAP) for resilient agriculture, in partnership with the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA).

Integrated antimicrobial resistance (AMR) surveillance plans were developed for the agrifood chain in Ecuador, Belize and the Dominican Republic, to provide technical and logistical support to official services in the development of the Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Plan for the Agrifood Chain, with the involvement of all the institutions (ministries of agriculture and health, the private sector and academia) that play an important role in the fight against AMR.

The Institute led a series of meetings to discuss the standards of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), which led countries in the Americas to agree on eight proposals to be shared at the global level, with a view to modifying OIE codes.

A series of seminars and virtual courses on the implementation of international standards and emerging AHFS issues were held with the aim of building capacities and sharing experiences and best practices, including:

- The virtual training event “Strengthening capacities to respond to animal disease emergencies”, which provided an action plan for responding to and managing animal emergencies and was geared towards 40 participants from the Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA), the National Federation of Poultry Farmers of Colombia (FENAVI), the Colombian Federation of Cattle Breeders (FEDEGAN) and the Colombian Association of Pig Farmers (PorkColombia).
- A series of seminars on locust management and regional, hemispheric and international cooperation with Africa and India in this area, which provided more than 500 specialists from national plant protection organizations and researchers with new information and contacts.
- A virtual course on transboundary diseases and African swine fever, prepared and implemented with support from the USDA Animal and Plant Health

Inspection Service (APHIS) and Iowa State University (ISU), which strengthened the capacities of 400 participants from the Permanent Veterinary Committee (CVP) of the Southern Cone and 80 from the Caribbean Region.

- A workshop on transparency with the WTO, which provided participants from 17 countries in the Americas with training in transparency and notification in accordance with WTO provisions.
- Three training workshops on dietary risk assessment, in which 324 delegates from 26 countries participated. A new strategic partnership between IICA and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was also established to build capacities in the member countries within the framework of the Institute's Maximum Residue Limits (MRL) project with the USDA.
- The technical forum entitled "Main challenges and opportunities for agricultural health and food safety services during COVID-19", which fostered knowledge management regarding the institutional mechanisms and technological tools applied by the countries' AHFS services to deal with the pandemic and identified areas of training that those services would require both during and after the pandemic.
- During the technical forum "Adoption of a system for issuing electronic phytosanitary certificates to support trade in Latin America and the Caribbean", 374 AHFS technical specialists from 27 countries promoted the adoption of the ePhyto system and more than 260 plant health professionals shared their experiences with the system, lessons learned and gaps that must be addressed to expand the adoption of the tool.

WORK PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CVP

The renewal of the agreement with the CVP allowed for bolstering technical cooperation between the two institutions. In 2020, capacities for redesigning foot-and-mouth disease programs and for managing transboundary diseases and African swine fever were strengthened. IICA and the CVP also laid the groundwork for national and regional programs on avian salmonellosis.

The following are examples of initiatives that IICA has undertaken with the private and public sector in the area of pest and disease control:

- In Antigua and Barbuda, a study was undertaken with the Ministry of Agriculture (MA) on the social and economic impact of the **Giant African snail**.
- In Argentina, technical officers received capacity building training in the control and eradication of **fruit flies** and the **South American locust**.

- In Haiti, IICA worked with the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development (MARNDR) to control **caterpillar** infestation of cornfields, by distributing spray equipment and pesticides to farmers in the Central Plateau.
- In collaboration with the Chaco Sur regional division of the Rural Association of Paraguay, the Institute developed a **bovine and caprine brucellosis** project and installed a diagnostic laboratory.
- In Saint Kitts and Nevis, IICA provided assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, in the detection, diagnosis and surveillance of **black sigatoka** in banana and plantain.
- In Venezuela, technical knowledge in the public, private and academic sectors was strengthened through experience sharing on the diagnosis of *Fusarium* Tropical Race 4.

Gender and youth

IICA has always recognized the value of rural women and youth and therefore it has promoted activities to provide greater visibility for their efforts and make known their concerns, needs and strengths. To this end, the Institute organized twelve forums in order to hear their opinions, while promoting dialogue and discussing the perspectives of gender and youth specialists. These activities were widely disseminated on social media, creating a significant impact, while also demonstrating the importance of incorporating these issues into institutional agendas. The information ensuing from the activities was published in infographics and shared at an event in commemoration of International Youth Day.

The study, *Digital Rural Gender Divide in Latin America and the Caribbean*, was presented on International Day of Rural Women. The University of Oxford prepared the study, with the support of the Institute, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). An analysis of the digital gender divide in the ownership of mobile phones was undertaken in 23 Latin American countries. It provided empirical evidence that a first-level digital gender divide exists, that is, a gap that is more a function of access to information and communication technology (ICT) rather than the necessary skills to capitalize on its potential.

Moreover, during International Youth Day, IICA presented quantitative and qualitative information on rural youth in the Americas. It also launched the conceptual and technological Rural Youth Challenge, with a view to establishing the Hemispheric Rural Youth Community of the Americas, which in 2021 will provide a virtual and face-to-face forum for coordination and capacity building among rural youth.

The forums, challenges and celebrations demonstrated the impact of women and youth on rural development and also served to strengthen strategic partnerships with Bayer, the Information and Communication Technology Training Center (CENFOTEC), the Latin American Organization of Young Agro-entrepreneurs (OLAJ), Zamorano University, the Alliance for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (AEI) and 4H Clubs.

IICA systematized three examples of good practices in the area of gender and youth, specifically with respect to capacity building experiences of rural youth, the publication of a periodical on gender in Brazil, as well as an initiative involving the document, [*Cerrando brecha de género: experiencia del EMPRENDESUR*](#) (*Bridging the Gender Divide: the EMPRENDESUR experience*).

At the national level:

- In Argentina, courses were offered to assist in the establishment of rural businesses in the Entre Ríos province and businesses operated by young women in the Tucumán province.
- In The Bahamas, Guyana¹⁰, Suriname¹¹ and Saint Lucia¹², the Institute assisted networks of female farmers in organizational strengthening and product marketing and labelling.
- In Brazil, in partnership with IFAD, there were efforts to promote the development of youth and women in the semi-arid region. Moreover, the Southern Regional Forum highlighted perspectives on the equality of rural women amidst COVID-19.
- In Costa Rica, assistance was provided for the preparation of the 2020-2030 Gender Equality Policy for Inclusive Development in the Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Sector. The “*Jale a la Feria*” marketing platform was developed in collaboration with a group of young people and the National Farmers’ Markets Board (JNFA).
- In Dominica, the project implemented with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Partnership in Sustainable Land Management (PISLM) initiative benefitted women and vulnerable groups in the areas of soil management, sanitary systems, value chains and microfinancing.
- In Jamaica, with the assistance of a Canadian company, support was provided to the gourmet mushroom industry to optimize the supply chain and its investments, generating opportunities for 300 women and youth on the island.

¹⁰ Other allies in gender-related issues were the We Lead Caribbean Women’s Entrepreneurial project and the University of Toronto.

¹¹ Cassava plantations.

¹² Micoud, Babonneau and Laborie.

- In Uruguay, in partnership with the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP), IICA worked on the development of registration tools to establish the Murú brand, which represents the work of rural women from ten family farming sectors. A new competition, “*Aprendemos equidad*”, was also organized, with the participation of 27 rural schools.

Innovation and technology

In its role as a platform for agricultural innovation, the Institute promoted the concept of innovation and technology as a means of equitably and sustainably rebuilding the sector after the COVID-19 pandemic, through the organization of more than 20 forums, seminars and dialogues with partners. In 2020, at its tenth anniversary, the Chilean university, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso (PUCV) honored IICA with the Contribution to Social Innovation prize for its work to strengthen the capacities of 200 farmers and small business owners in the provinces of Quillota and Marga Marga in that region.

At the national level, rural extension projects were developed with IFAD and RELASER to strengthen national entities in Costa Rica, Colombia and Grenada. The Diploma in Rural Extension was implemented with the University of Chile and a proposal regarding agricultural extension plans was developed with Colombia’s Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR) and with the secretariats of various departments. The SAG-Virtual online training campus in Honduras proved to be a key element in the success¹³ of agricultural extension activities during COVID-19.

Listed below are some examples of the research projects implemented:

- In Antigua and Barbuda, sustainable protein sources for nutrition resilience in Antigua were developed and four forage demonstration plots were installed, with the support of the Australian Direct Aid Program, the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and the Ministry of Agriculture (MA).
- In The Bahamas, five demonstration sites were installed and 80 farmers were trained in organic waste management and composting.
- In Barbados, under a New Zealand-funded project, an Artificial Insemination Laboratory was established at the Greenland Livestock Research Station, which will boost the production of black belly sheep.
- In Belize, with the support of Australia’s Direct Aid Program, a backyard poultry biosecurity initiative facilitated the construction of 34 model chicken coops and the training of members of the Belize Poultry Association (BPA).

¹³ More than 13,500 participants in Honduras and other countries in the Region enrolled in the new professional training programs.

- In Bolivia, the second phase of the Fund for Sustainable Access to Renewable Energy and Efficient Technologies (FASERTE), undertaken in partnership with EnDev/GIZ, has revitalized the market for these technologies. Various studies were developed in collaboration with the IDB on the superfoods - chestnut, sesame and peanut.
- In Chile and Venezuela, in collaboration with specialized research centers in each country, experimental plots established under the adapted System of Rice Intensification (SRI), proved useful in the identification of best practices for water use and weed control.
- In Guatemala, the implementation of the USDA-funded Regional Agricultural Research Consortia (CRIA) program, enabled more than 330 farmers to validate 20 technologies to increase their output of avocado, potato, honey, corn, bean, loroco and chile pepper.
- In Guyana, a partnership with FAO facilitated the introduction of protected agricultural technologies in Region 3, Parika, benefitting 40 farmers, including women and youth, in the construction of low-cost shade houses and seedbeds.
- In Mexico, in association with Coca-Cola, the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and the Network for Innovation Management in the Agrifood Sector (Innovagro Network), the Institute developed a 2020-2023 Intersectoral Innovation Agenda for the Sugar Cane Sector in San Luis Potosí, Oaxaca and Veracruz.
- In Nicaragua, joint actions were undertaken with the Nicaraguan Agricultural Technology Institute (INTA) and FAO in support of the project, Innovation and Dissemination of Technologies for Adaptation of Agriculture to Climate Change, which aims to build community management capacities.
- In Paraguay, with assistance from Korea, ten research studies were carried out on tomato, banana, green fertilizer and cassava.

With respect to promotion of **digital agriculture** or **Agriculture 4.0** in the hemisphere, decision-makers in Latin America now have access to the latest information on connectivity gaps in rural areas in the hemisphere, as a result of the development and presentation of the study, "[Rural connectivity in Latin America and the Caribbean: A bridge for sustainable development during a pandemic](#)", developed in partnership with the IDB and Microsoft.

Additionally, producers, extension officers and agricultural researchers in LAC have more information about bioeconomy-based innovation technologies, due to the publication of a study in Spanish entitled, "[Tecnologías de bioeconomía para valorizar residuos y desperdicios: oportunidades de negocio para la agricultura familiar](#)" (Bioeconomy technologies to recycle residue and waste: business opportunities for family farming); the hosting of a virtual seminar, "[De Desperdicios a Negocios: Tecnologías de Bioeconomía para la Agricultura Familiar](#)" (From waste to business:

bioeconomy technologies for family farming), which received more than 500 views; and the development of a [dynamic catalogue with 240 bioeconomy technologies](#).

The following cooperation actions also sought to make more intensive use of ICTs in agriculture.

- A project was undertaken to promote technological solutions for the digital transformation of the sector and the revitalization of the digital agriculture ecosystem, through pilot experiences that will progressively mobilize external resources in the Andean Region. In Ecuador, the Los Ríos and Guayas provinces and six provinces in the Amazon region strengthened their territorial production reactivation strategy by implementing a series of projects, such as the development of: a) an agricultural technological innovation center that will demonstrate techniques associated with Agriculture 4.0 and applied digital transformation; b) territorial business ventures in six Amazon provinces and their linkages to differentiated markets; and c) the *Innovaciones y Reactivación del Agro a través del Riego y el Drenaje* (Innovation and Agricultural Reactivation through Irrigation and Drainage) program.
- Three pilot countries in the Caribbean (Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) were provided with an app to enable producers to access remote extension services, in response to a request by the ministers of agriculture of the region. The AgriExtApp (also available on mobile phones) was designed and developed by a multi-disciplinary team at IICA, in coordination with key extension services actors and producer organizations.
- An online hackathon to develop a short trade circuit prototype for Ecuador attracted 250 participants and 42 teams from 13 countries.
- In conjunction with the Innovative Multi-Strata Agroforestry Systems project for the Central American Dry Corridor (AGRO-INNOVA)¹⁴, ten digital weather stations (currently located on CATIE land) were installed and are now in the testing stage. Transmission of data was validated to develop a decision-making tool for Central America.
- The AgroArt tool was developed. The site is a virtual museum that compiles and disseminates rich and diverse artistic expressions emanating from rural areas of the Americas (<https://agroart.iica.int>).
- Awareness-building initiatives were undertaken in the Region with respect to the use of blockchain platforms and other technologies, such as the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI) and macrodata, many of which were promoted based on experiences in Panama and in partnership with the private sector.

¹⁴ Funded by the EU.

- In conjunction with the Belize Chamber of Commerce, the Hotel Association and the country's Trade and Investment Development Service (BELTRAIDE), a roadmap was developed to reduce digital gaps in strategic regions of Belize.

A commitment to internal innovation

The IICA-Innova initiative was conceptualized and implemented within the Institute, as an innovation management mechanism, which promoted the development of proposals by multi-country teams to tackle institutional challenges in the context of the implementation of the new business model and its value proposition, based on an innovation platform. Of the more than ten proposals submitted, the one selected as the most innovative idea focused on improving levels of internal communication and will be implemented in 2021.

Through other efforts undertaken at the national level, 52 researchers from Peru's National Institute of Agricultural Innovation (INIA) strengthened their capacities in agricultural innovation and its promotion, through a course organized by the Institute under the National Agricultural Innovation Program (PNIA).

IICA addressed and provided follow-up to Resolutions 507 and 519 of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA), as well as to the Executive Committee resolutions regarding the development of a strategic proposal for the future of CATIE to issue recommendations on how to make the land owned by the Institute and CATIE more productive; on facilitating and fostering joint and coordinated work between both institutions on an ongoing basis; and on creating a Joint IICA-CATIE Unit.

The establishment of this Unit has strengthened the work of the Institute and the Center to benefit the technological development of the tropical regions of the Americas. It has also enabled more targeted cooperation to exchange innovation experiences with small farmers and developed research studies¹⁵ and training programs for specialists in the Region. The collaborative projects undertaken by both entities include:

- The tree planting project, "*Bosque de la hermandad IICA-CATIE*", established at the Institute's Headquarters.
- The Food Bank to bolster the food security of vulnerable populations in Costa Rica.
- The Central American Program for Integrated Coffee Rust Management (PROCAGICA).
- The AGRO-INNOVA project.

¹⁵ The most recent research study, entitled [Emblematic trees and palms of the Americas](#), was published in Spanish and English.

- The project “Promoting biodiversity conservation through climate smart agrosilvopastoral practices in landscapes dominated by livestock in three regions of Mexico” (BioPASOS).
- Negotiation of the Agricultural and Agroforestry Technological Innovation Program (PITAG) in Haiti.

On the other hand, the innovation cooperation mechanisms in which IICA is participating maintain an active agenda, providing evidence of their collaborative work and contributions to their member organizations. They include the Regional Cooperative Program for the Technological Development and Modernization of Coffee Production (PROMECAFE), the Cooperative Program for the Development of Agrifood and Agroindustrial Technology in the Southern Cone (PROCISUR), the Cooperative Program in Agricultural Research and Technology for the Northern Region (PROCINORTE), the Inter-American Commission for Organic Agriculture (ICOA), the Regional Fund for Agricultural Technology (FONTAGRO) and the Forum for the Americas on Agricultural Research and Technological Development (FORAGRO).

PROMECAFE

Through PROMECAFE, there was continued integration and technical cooperation among nine countries in the region and agricultural research and development institutions, such as the Institute, CATIE, World Coffee Research (WCR), the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), and other partners. The efforts enabled the analysis, prioritization and development of plans, strategies and activities to assist institutions, producers and other actors in the value chain to improve their capacity to tackle and overcome major challenges, such as the lack of production profitability, climate change, the intensification of pests and diseases and the limited involvement of youth and women in agriculture.

Thus, in accordance with directives from the Board of Directors and Technical Committee, as well as networks of specialists, this has contributed to sustainability, resilience and the modernization of the regional coffee sector. Major results include:

- Capacity building in coffee institutions and their technical teams, through the development of a Diploma in Innovative Coffee Production and other specialized initiatives promoting innovation, reciprocal cooperation and the generational transfer of technical expertise.
- With funding from the International Coffee Organization (ICO) and all of its partners, PROMECAFE carried out a project to promote domestic consumption within coffee producing countries, as a means of increasing the demand, and in turn, improving the prices paid to producers for their crops and the sustainability of coffee production.

- The Program facilitated bloc participation and provided regional leadership in discussion forums¹⁶ with international and regional organizations, such as the ICO, the World Forum of Coffee Producers, the Re:Co Symposium and other forums and regional events, advocating on behalf of producers in the region, establishing priorities and defining regional plans and actions to assist in resolving various problems in the coffee sector.
- In partnership with WCR, the Maximizing Opportunities in Coffee and Cocoa in the Americas (MOCCA) initiative and PROMECAFE's partners, the Regional Center for the Genetic Improvement of Coffee was launched. It will coordinate efforts and strategies for the development of varieties and material to support coffee cultivation in the future, aiming for improved productivity, mitigation of the effects of pests and diseases, adaptation to climate change, and cup quality, among other essential factors for sustainability and the development of coffee growing families in the region.

Management, support and monitoring by various networks of regional specialists improved the efficiency of the reciprocal cooperation process among countries in the region, enabling more in-depth analysis of priority technical issues in the networks, specifically, the genetic improvement of coffee; climate and coffee; the environmental footprint; promotion of domestic consumption and races of rust.

In this same vein, various virtual technical forums were organized to address topics of interest to regional coffee production, such as genetic improvement of coffee, the impact of La Niña on coffee production, as well as the Central American locust and its effect on coffee. These efforts contributed to leadership and to the creation of an excellent technical cooperation environment, which assisted in the acceleration of advancements made by member countries, streamlining of resources, knowledge capture and the capitalization of experiences by the members.

In response to the pandemic, PROMECAFE organized regional capacity building initiatives for its members, as a means of tackling challenges linked to coffee production during COVID-19. Communication and virtual training mechanisms incorporated protocols and prepared infographics with prevention measures against the disease. A related radio series was developed for the harvest season. Moreover, a pandemic database was established on the PROMECAFE website and the International Diploma in Innovative Coffee Production was adapted for virtual delivery.

PROCINORTE

Through a partnership among research institutions in Canada, the United States and Mexico, with the backing of IICA, a testing system for avocado maturity was developed, which results in improved quality of the fruit, reduces waste and boosts the profitability of farmers. A similar system was used for cherries and mangoes. In 2020, other issues

¹⁶ The forums dealt with issues such as tackling COVID-19, climate change and the low economic sustainability of production.

addressed were animal health and plant health, particularly in relation to tomato production, which is currently tackling the brown rugose fruit virus (*Tobamovirus ToBRFV*).

PROCISUR

The signing of a new four-year cooperation agreement with PROCISUR has reaffirmed the commitment and recognitions of the national agricultural innovation institutions members and the Institute with respect to the Program. This was finalized after a year of negotiations, in which adjustments were made to certain elements, such as commitments, responsibilities and contributions of members, including the technical involvement of IICA in the Program, in relation to its administrative role.

The following results bear mentioning:

- The Institute established greater technical linkages with the activities of PROCISUR, organizing national technical officers into working groups for issues such as youth and family farming innovation. The project also undertook training activities, such as the “Use of legumes in livestock systems in Latin America and the Caribbean: Cooperation platform”. Moreover, cooperation opportunities with other regions and countries were identified (e.g., with Guatemala’s Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology, ICTA).
- A new collaborative project on gene editing in plants (soy and potato) and animals was approved and is slated to begin in 2021. It will aim to establish a training platform for this new and promising technology. Project participants include the Colombian Agricultural Research Corporation (AGROSAVIA), the National Agricultural Research Institute (INIAP) of Ecuador, as well as the Don Mario Group and the Argentine Cooperatives Association (ACA), which will co-fund the project.
- The PROCISUR group of young family farmers was established, as a means of driving innovation processes. The group also identified topics of common interest for discussion at the regional level (e.g. digital commerce during the pandemic). Moreover, youth who are members of this group participated in the Regional Youth Forum for the Southern Region, organized by IICA.

The execution of 80% of the activities in the 2020 Annual Work Plan called for the organization and coordination of more than 80 virtual meetings, which were attended not only by specialists from member institutions, but also by an additional 1,000 persons. Among other events, the Institute organized a series of conferences on the agriculture sector and climate change, in which 300 people participated. Furthermore, virtual tools were implemented to facilitate interaction between research groups in the Southern and Andean regions for the purpose of formulating two projects – one on gene editing (that was approved) and the other on sustainable livestock production.

There was a budgetary adjustment and administrative follow-up mechanisms were introduced, which allowed the program to achieve budgetary execution levels comparable to the pre-pandemic years. This follow-up was carried out through coordinated efforts by PROCISUR and Institute staff.

ICOA

The institutional framework of ICOA was strengthened through the updating of its Statutes and internal regulations; the execution of its 2030 Strategic Plan and the creation of five technical working groups on organic and sustainable agriculture, as areas of interest for member countries. Three new agreements were signed with the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and the International Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA).

In total, 21 ICOA member countries and observers participated in training activities on the contributions of organic agriculture, undertaken with different partners. More than 70 officers from national organic production control systems benefitted and there were more than 150,000 views by the general public. Some of the issues that were covered were remote inspections, waste, statistics gathering, health and production, Fusarium Tropical Race 4, the effects of COVID-19 and aquaculture.

As a result of its positioning actions and the relationships established in international forums and knowledge exchange mechanisms, ICOA was included in the booth of Spain's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Supply (MAPA) at the 2020 Biofach international trade fair for organic products, held in Nüremberg, Germany. Furthermore, ICOA member countries participated in Organic Food Iberia 2020-2021 (OFI) and were given special benefits for participation in OFI 2021 (preferential rates for ICOA member countries).

In Ecuador, ICOA was instrumental in the organization of a virtual business roundtable, "*Ecuador Bioexportador Global*", held in coordination with the CleIR Program, as well as in the organization of an international organic production congress – *III Congreso Internacional de Producción Orgánica*.

FORAGRO

In its capacity as the Secretariat of FORAGRO, the Institute represented the Forum on the Steering Committee of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) and gained approval for a proposal for collective action and inclusive digital agriculture, headed by FORAGRO and IICA. Moreover, FORAGRO and the Institute enhanced the visibility and positioning of the Forum, as leaders of a parallel event during the General Assembly of the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP). They also worked in coordination with RELASER on the development of the EU project "Digitalization: Economic and

social impacts in rural areas” (DeSIRA)—administered by FAO—to evaluate LAC’s use of approaches and capacity building innovation tools developed by TAP.

Knowledge management

In 2020, the Institute implemented a knowledge management strategy that prioritized virtual training, horizontal cooperation, as well as scholarships, professional visits and internships. Information on the main results achieved in these areas is outlined below.

IICA e-learning campus: A total of 52,981 participants registered on this platform, with 18,637 certificates being issued (representing a 35.18% completion rate of the courses). In all, 75 courses were offered, 50 of which targeted the general public (36 in Spanish, 4 in English and 10 in Portuguese), and 25 which were offered within the framework of government actions, projects and partnerships with external institutions (24 in Spanish and 1 in English). The participants were from 80 countries. Highlights included the execution of external resources with *Oikocredit*; organization of Bayer’s internal training program; and the approval of USD 186,000 for a proposal submitted by the Institute in response to an open call by the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) to conduct training on the CCORAL tool via the e-learning platform, with funding from the EU.

Horizontal cooperation: The Institute submitted a successful proposal to the Pérez Guerrero Trust Fund of the Group of 77 (G-77) and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), with respect to combatting the South American locust plague, in collaboration with the health authorities of Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay. The G-77 approved funding to the tune of USD 22,000. On the other hand, under the Climate Change, Natural Resources and Management of Production Risks program, an article was published on the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) in the UNOSSC publication, “Good practices in South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development” (Volume 3). A mapping exercise was also conducted of horizontal cooperation in the Americas, resulting in the identification of 67 good practices employed by IICA and its partners, as well as in the implementation of a process to systematize the documentation of 12 experiences.

Scholarships, professional visits and internships: The Institute, in conjunction with the Ibero-American University Fund (FUNIBER), issued two calls for scholarship applications, from which 93 scholarships were granted. The countries that benefitted the most were Costa Rica (26 scholarships), Mexico (13 scholarships) and Colombia (12 scholarships). IICA strengthened its policy regarding professional visits and internships, in launching the “virtual voluntary internship” program, which had 40 participants. A database of internship applicants was also created, which contains the profiles of 150 people from more than 15 countries who are available for consideration

by the delegations and other units of the Institute. Since 2019, 95 young professionals have participated in IICA's professional visits and internship program.

Institutional relations and project management

In keeping with its new business model, the Institute engaged in targeted and prioritized actions to strengthen strategic partnerships. This was outlined in the document, "Working Framework to Build Strategic Partnerships", which is a support guide for the offices and units to expand their cooperation efforts at the national, regional and hemispheric levels.

To this end, it bears mentioning that IICA was approved as a Green Climate Fund (GCF) Delivery Partner and passed the Financial Management Capacity Assessment under its Readiness and Preparatory Support program, which enabled it to submit two projects during that window of opportunity.

- *Strengthening the Foundation for a Climate Responsive Agricultural Sector in the Caribbean*, which covers thirteen member countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and represents a value of USD 1,199,943; and
- *Post COVID-19 Green Recovery for Food, Health, and Water Security Strengthened by Financial and Technological Innovations in Latin-American Countries*, which targets eight Latin American member countries of the Institute and represents a value of USD 2,037,047.

The GCF has designated IICA to develop and secure approval of these proposals in a relatively short time (one year or less); the projects will benefit 21 member countries.

The Institute also advanced to Phase 2 (of a total of 3 phases) in the accreditation process to the GCF and in the accreditation under the new Pillars of the EU, which will allow it to access a wider range of projects funded by these entities in the near future. Moreover, it re-established contact with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), with a view to defining common lines of action, as well as with the Adaptation Fund, as part of the accreditation process to gain access to that platform, once IICA has been classified as a regional organization.

On the other hand, regional meetings were held with CAF—The Latin American Development Bank—and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for the purpose of exchanging information on work agendas and identifying issues and strategic spheres of action that these institutions will drive in their member countries in the post-COVID-19 period.

Through the Delegation of the European Union to Central America, IICA received a request for collaboration from the Tri-national Border Federation of Río Lempa to

address the serious food crisis that the communities of the region are facing due to COVID-19. The Institute designed a technical proposal valuing USD 300,000, with a view to contributing to the food and nutritional security of 1,500 families, by providing them with agricultural inputs to guarantee basic grain production, as well as poultry for egg and meat production. To this end, IICA proposed the use of a combination of budgetary resources from the PROCAGICA and AGRO-INNOVA projects and the designation of the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) as the subdelegated partner to execute the technical activities of the project entitled "*Diversificación agro-productiva de granos básicos y cultivos anuales, para contribuir a la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional de familias de pequeños productores en la región del Trifinio afectadas por el COVID-19*" (Diversification of agro-production of basic grains and annual crops to contribute to the food and nutritional security of families of small farmers in the Trifinio region affected by COVID-19).

From Canada to LAC

Various project proposals were developed in collaboration with Canadian partners to benefit the Andean, Central and Caribbean regions. Specifically, Cannexion and the Institute are seeking to promote the development of agroindustry, cooperativism and associative models for female farmers in the goat value chain. The partnership with the Société de coopération pour le développement international (SOCODEVI) aims to strengthen indigenous cooperatives in Latin America. Work with the Trade Facilitation Office (TFO Canada) focuses on increasing the ability of Panamanian businesses to export to Canada, whereas the initiative with Global Affairs Canada is intended to address the impacts of COVID-19 in Jamaica, Guyana and Saint Lucia.

The technical cooperation agenda of the Institute was strengthened with the addition of new partners to the ecosystem of public and private entities, academic institutions, as well as regional and international organizations that work with IICA. Some of these new partners are as follows:

- Syngenta;
- Ohio State University (United States);
- Precision Agriculture for Development (PAD);
- The Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials (RSB), to seek alternatives that promote the sustainable production and use of aviation fuel;
- The company, Acclimatise, for the bid submitted by the CCCCC; and
- The NGO, Friends of Cooperation and Development, for a proposal for Belize, which was submitted to the Darwin Initiative (a funding program of the government of the United Kingdom).

With the closure of the Technical Center for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), headquartered in Holland, the Institute was classified as a key partner to maintain the knowledge assets of this important EU-supported organization, which for decades provided cooperation to the Caribbean in issues related to areas such as agrotourism, culinary arts, information and communication technologies, knowledge management and youth, among others.

In 2020, IICA improved the technical quality of the proposals it submitted to donors. For example, this was demonstrated by the Institute having received a rating of 100/100 in the EU bid submitted to the CCCCC, as a sub-contract of the project *Enhancing Climate Resilience in CARIFORUM Countries*. The winning consultancy project is entitled *Consultancy Services for the Development of an Online Training Platform for the Caribbean Climate Online Risk Assessment Tool (CCORAL) and Associated Translation Services-Belize*.

Thirteen (13) international calls were published on the Open Calls Portal of the Institute and another eleven (11) were sent directly to those Delegations to which they were applicable. Eleven (11) proposals were presented to financial entities, four of which were approved.

As a result of Institutional Sustainability Week, which in 2020 focused on project management and the capture and mobilization of external resources, IICA has been improving the coordination of its efforts in both areas, in a bid to strengthen the financial structure envisioned in its new business model.

Governance and official meetings

Executive Committee (EC)¹⁷

The Fortieth Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee—which took place on 21 July 2020—adopted a virtual format, although based at IICA Headquarters in San Jose, Costa Rica. Chairing the meeting was Mr. Carlos María Uriarte, Minister of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries of Uruguay. The following agreements were adopted:

- *Institutional policy and technical cooperation services*

The Executive Committee recognized and expressed support for the Institute’s strategy in response to the international emergency stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Member States highlighted IICA’s innovative efforts to maintain and improve the performance of the agriculture sector at the national, regional and hemispheric levels, while seeking to guarantee food security and protect the well-being of rural workers through a variety of solutions to address the demands and needs of countries.

The Executive Committee endorsed the Director General’s initiative to enhance the institutional transformation process by way of a new business model, the design of a new financial architecture and the mobilization and procurement of external resources from different funding sources. Moreover, it tasked the Special Advisory Committee on Management Issues (SACMI) to establish an extended permanent working group to support, analyze and develop a proposal for the overall transformation of the Institute.

- *Budgetary and financial matters*

The 2019 financial statements of IICA and the report of the external auditors were approved by the Executive Committee, as evidence of the effective management of the organization’s financial resources. Moreover, the Committee recognized the importance of maintaining the measures established by the Executive Committee and the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) to urge Member States to pay quotas on a timely basis and to settle outstanding quotas from previous years, given the difficult situation that the Institute and its member countries were facing because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹⁷ The Committee was comprised of the following Member States: Argentina, The Bahamas, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Guyana, Haiti, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, the United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela.

- *Partnerships with international organizations*

The Executive Committee received the 2019 report of the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) and the report of the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) for the 2019-2020 period.

It also endorsed the recommendations outlined in the report by the Special Committee on CATIE—made up of Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico and the United States of America—and asked the Directors General of IICA and CATIE to create a joint unit in charge of implementing these recommendations and developing a “master plan” for the strategic use of real estate and production assets of property owned by the Institute and CATIE.

- *Matters related to IICA’s governing bodies*

The EC approved the Report of the 2020 Regular Meeting of the SACMI, as well as the reports on the status of the resolutions adopted at the Twentieth Regular Meeting of the IABA and the Thirty-ninth Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee.

It endorsed the 2019-2020 Report of the Inter-American Commission for Organic Agriculture (ICOA), tasking the Director General of the Institute with preparing a proposal, in consultation with the ICOA member countries, regarding modifications to the statute of the Commission, which would be submitted for the consideration and possible approval of the Executive Committee at its next regular meeting.

Official meetings held in 2020

Official name	Date	Venue	Place and date of publication of the report or proceedings of the event
2020 Regular Meeting of the Special Advisory Commission on Management Issues	6 May 2020	Virtually from IICA Headquarters in San Jose, Costa Rica	IICA, San Jose, Costa Rica, 16 June 2020
Fortieth Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee	21 July 2020	Virtually from IICA Headquarters in San Jose, Costa Rica	IICA, San Jose, Costa Rica, 30 September 2020
First Extraordinary Meeting of the 2020 Special Advisory Commission on Management Issues	1 October 2020	Virtually from IICA Headquarters in San Jose, Costa Rica	IICA, San Jose, Costa Rica, 17 November 2020
Second Extraordinary Meeting of the 2020 Special Advisory Commission on Management Issues	3 December 2020	Virtually from IICA Headquarters in San Jose, Costa Rica	IICA, San Jose, Costa Rica, 30 January 2021

Main results of corporate management

Strategic management

In keeping with its commitment to foster a process culture, IICA continued the effective implementation of 12 macroprocesses, which began in 2019. These processes have been adjusted to the dynamics of the new institutional reality, have been documented based on best implementation practices and are subject to review, with a view to optimizing them in the short term.

To begin optimizing administrative processes, various digital tools were used to align them with best practices, reduce costs and guarantee the efficiency, transparency and traceability of information. Among the first administrative processes to be reviewed and optimized were the 2020-2022 tactical planning associated with the Institute's ten strategic statements, intensive data use (business intelligence) to support decision-making processes, the processing of documents at Headquarters, and procurement and contracting processes in the Delegations.

New regulatory instruments were updated or created in order to align them with the optimized processes; comply with the requirements for the achievement of EU Pillars 7, 8 and 9; and pursue accreditation by international funds, including the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Among these instruments were:

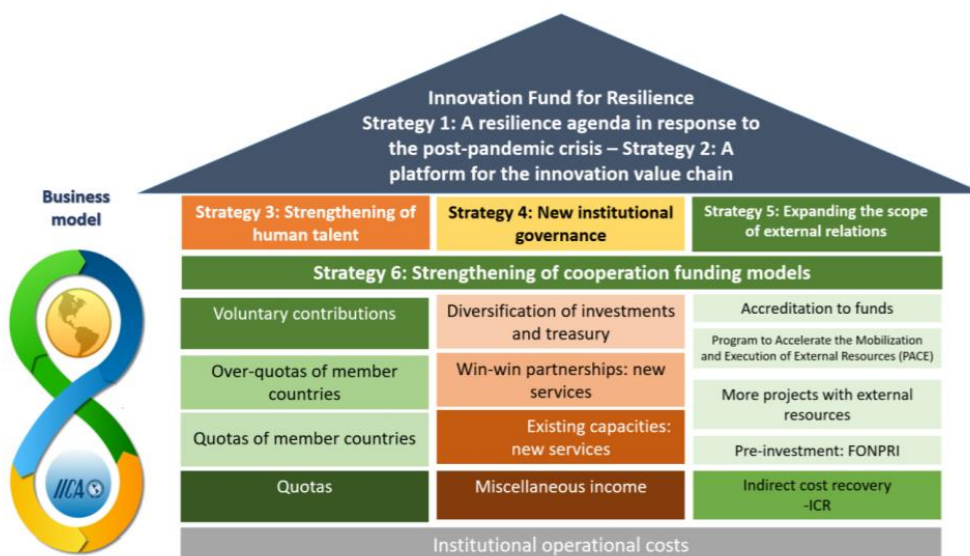
- Personal Data Protection Policy;
- Policy against Human Trafficking and Child Labor;
- Manual for the Management of External Resources;
- IICA Guide to Risk Management;
- Chapter VIII of the "Personnel Manual", related to official travel;
- Procedures for the Processing of Reports or Complaints, included as an annex to the Policy on the Protection of Whistleblowers and Witnesses;
- "Know your Client" form, included as an annex to the Policy for the Prevention of Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism; and
- an article on whistleblowing, which was incorporated into different institutional policies.

IICA rigorously complied with the financial and budgetary austerity measures that were established, especially in light of the pandemic. The Institute's various sources of resources were reorganized under the Single

Fund for Technical Cooperation, which made it possible to focus on priority actions, increase the effectiveness of institutional resources and fund 25 operations representing nearly USD 500,000.



An organizational transformation process led by the Director General was launched, based on a **new business model** aimed at increasing institutional relevance, productivity, innovation and sustainability. The model includes a roadmap consisting of six work strategies in the following areas: an agenda to foster resilience in the post-pandemic period, an innovation platform, the strengthening of human talent, institutional governance, the expansion of external relations and financial strengthening for cooperation.



To advance in the development of a new financial architecture, the Institute explored different sources of external resources and opportunities to expand the portfolio of projects to generate greater benefits for the Member States, including though accreditation to global and climate funds, the use of installed capacities, the

diversification of investments, the establishment of partnerships to scale up solutions and the creation of funds geared towards boosting the resilience of agrifood systems.

With respect to governance, structure, networks and project management, the proposed model, which was implemented by a multidisciplinary team, seeks to enhance the Institute's competitiveness and capacity, with special emphasis on the attraction of resources.

Budget and finances

IICA executed regular resources totaling close to USD 34 million in a rational and transparent manner, while expanding the execution of external resources from USD 113.9 million in 2019 to USD 129.9 million in 2020.

With respect to the payment of annual quotas by Member States, proactiveness on the part of governments and the collection efforts undertaken by the Institute made it possible to collect USD 25.2 million, which corresponds to 85% of the program-budget amount, with a balance of USD 17.3 million that has yet to be collected. In addition, USD 3.1 million was collected in advance corresponding to the 2021 fees.

A strategy was applied to optimize the use of resources—an imperative during the pandemic—which allowed for reducing the expenditures of the regular budget by USD 7 million, from USD 41 million to USD 34 million. This was possible thanks to savings generated through the implementation of the work-from-home modality starting in March 2020, as well as other savings in the procurement of goods and services through negotiations, renegotiations and internal adjustments (USD 258,209).

Human talent

Based on objective indicators such as income and costs, the Institute conducted an analysis of the structure, efficiency and productivity of all the Delegations, which made it possible to implement actions aimed at increasing efficiency and productivity, adjusting structures and reducing costs. Workload assessments were carried out using tools that allow for objectively analyzing the installed capacity that is available or would be required to meet institutional objectives. Furthermore, a manual was prepared to conduct this type of study in a standardized manner, based on IICA's specific needs and characteristics.

The delegations in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Panama, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela were restructured, and organizational changes were made at Headquarters and in the delegations in Brazil and Costa Rica. This included the development of new proposals for incentive plans, training and skills certification within the framework of the new business model; the creation of multi-country administrative clusters organized under a "central delegation" to optimize the management of a group of "client" offices; and the provision of secretarial support through staff pools, all of which will be implemented as of 2021.

As an immediate response to the health emergency triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, and with a view to protecting the health of all staff members, work-from-home and flexi-work arrangements were implemented at Headquarters, in the 34 delegations in the Member States and in the Permanent Office for Europe, yielding positive results, given that staff demonstrated improved performance of their duties.

Information and communication services and technologies

The Institute's infrastructure was kept in perfect condition through strict maintenance, safety and cleaning services. This made it possible to keep the Institute's facilities open despite the COVID-19 pandemic, in strict compliance with the safety protocols established by Ministry of Health authorities.

Improvements in the efficiency of administrative management were demonstrated by the reduction of the average response time to formalize requested contracts (consultancy, services and specific projects) to less than 48 hours. IICA automated the management of contracts and processing of invoices using an electronic document management system.

The Institute migrated its cloud storage from Dropbox to OneDrive, which generated savings of more than USD 35,000 per year and improved technological conditions for staff. Additionally, the SAP hosting service was renewed, yielding better technical and economic conditions, as well as annual savings of more than USD 15,000.

A few of the technological tools that were developed or updated were the:

- Electronic Document Management System (GED), which automates institutional processes;
- IICA Travel System;
- Strategic-tactical planning module of the Unified Institutional Management System (SUGI); and
- Institutional website (www.iica.int), which now includes an [agenda of cooperation initiatives](#).

The Interpretive Center for Tomorrow's Agriculture (CIMAG), located at IICA Headquarters and geared towards highlighting the potential of Agriculture 4.0, was provided with technological equipment. Furthermore, as part of the efforts to expand the center, a new Bayer stand was set up.

Internal evaluation and control

As part of its continuous improvement process, the Institute conducted a performance evaluation in the Guyana Delegation and followed up on improvement plans for the offices in Barbados, Ecuador and Uruguay. Given the travel restrictions imposed during

the COVID-19 pandemic, the Institute utilized a dashboard that facilitates quick assessments in order to develop a broad characterization and analysis of the offices within the context of the pandemic. Furthermore, the mechanisms of the Single Fund for Technical Cooperation, rapid response actions and the portfolio of externally funded projects were evaluated.

IICA also strengthened its off-site audit process, which involves requesting a specific or random sample of documents from a delegation in a member country for review. The use of virtual tools made it possible to carry out ten of the eleven processes for the transfer of IICA Representative duties in the Member States without any delays, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Annexes

Annex 1

7 rapid response actions carried out in 2020

Start date	Name	Country	Amount allocated (USD)
2019	Caterpillar Central Department	Haiti	0
2019	Rehabilitation Bahamas	Bahamas	0
2019	Sustainable stock-raising for cattle in Tabasco State	Mexico	19,020
2019	Workshop on Biosecurity <i>Fusarium oxysporum f. sp. cubense</i> – tropical race 4	Headquarters	9,000
2020	Public policy guidelines	Bolivia	24,700
2020	Co-organization of the International Bioeconomy Conference – Support for and funding of technical activities in Argentina	Headquarters	21,500
2020	St. Vincent and the Grenadines Livestock Development Support	St. Vincent & the Grenadines	29,700
Total IICA resources invested: USD 103,920			

Source: Directorate of Corporate Services/PMED.

10 pre-investment initiatives implemented in 2020

Start date	Name	Country	Amount allocated (USD)
2019	Definition of a model for the comprehensive management of hydrological basins	Venezuela	9,762
2019	Peasant Family Farming Seal	Ecuador	20,517
2020	Proposal to implement the Program for Non-Intrusive Inspections with Dogs (INI-CAN)	Costa Rica	1,512
2020	Development of a readiness proposal for the Green Climate Fund (GCF) for ECS in the region	Suriname	30,000
2020	Digital technology alternatives to improve the competitiveness, inclusion and sustainability of family farming	Ecuador	30,000
2020	Expanding national and international market access for family farming	Brazil	10,000

2020	Digital management in family farming production and marketing services in the Americas	Headquarters	30,000
2020	Scaling up of renewable energy technologies in agriculture	Headquarters	2,936
2020	Green Climate Fund (SKN)	St. Kitts & Nevis	30,000
2020	Strategy for supplying food to vulnerable groups during the COVID-19 emergency	Mexico	50,000
Total IICA resources invested:			USD 214,727

Source: Directorate of Corporate Services/PMED.

Annex 2

New partners and allies in IICA's 2020 agricultural and rural development agenda

Countries	Organizations
Antigua and Barbuda	Australia Direct Aid Program (DAP), Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF)
Argentina	French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), FONPLATA
The Bahamas	FAO, Grand Bahama Beekeeping Cooperative
Barbados	UNWTO, University of Florida, European Union
Belize	Australia Direct Aid Program (DAP), Ohio State University
Bolivia	Embassy of New Zealand, Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), France's National Research Institute for Sustainable Development, International Potato Center
Chile	IFAD, University of Chile, Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaíso, Dairy Consortium
Colombia	National Association of Entrepreneurs of Colombia, The Nature Conservancy, Alexander Von Humboldt Institute, PAD, UNDP
Costa Rica	Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy (MIDEPLAN), National Farmers' Markets Board (JNFA), Ministry of Science, Technology and Telecommunications (MICITT), University of Costa Rica
Dominica	UNDP, Partnership Initiative on Sustainable Land Management (PISLM), FAO
Ecuador	The banana sector and Agrocalidad (public-private partnership), Italo-Ecuadorian Fund for Sustainable Development
Guatemala	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), Embassy of Canada
Guyana	FAO, CARICOM, Basic Need Trust Fund Implementation Agency
Haiti	World Bank
Jamaica	University of Technology
Mexico	Coca Cola, National Tourism Fund, Mexican Association of Food Banks, Autonomous University of Mexico
Nicaragua	Catholic Relief Services, CATIE, CIAT, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), FAO
Panama	Foodchain, European Union
Paraguay	European Union, Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Korean Institute for Development Strategy (KDS), Rural Association of Paraguay (ARP)
Peru	UNDP, FAO, CIP, CATIE, CIAT, Helvetas, Practical Action, University of Chile
Dominican Republic	Special Fund for Agricultural Development (FEDA)
St. Kitts and Nevis	Syngenta, Green Climate Fund (GCF)
St. Lucia	Massy Stores, St. Lucia Marketing Board
Suriname	Yucatan Center for Scientific Research (CICY), CIAT
Trinidad and Tobago	The Cropper Foundation, WHYFARM, Tobago Agroprocessors Association, Caribbean Biodiversity Fund
Venezuela	Central University (UCV), Institute of Advanced Studies in Administration (IESA), Grupo Orinoco Energía y Ambiente, Agricultural Products and Inputs Exchange (BOLPRIAVEN), Metropolitan University (UNIMET)

Annex 3

Main IICA knowledge products

IICA virtual campus https://elearning.iica.int/	75 courses available.
Alliance of Agricultural Information Services - SIDALC http://ww.sidalc.net	There was an increase in the number of views and resources entered into the hemispheric and internal information management platforms. A total of 179 institutions participated; 2,889,135 users visited the website and 15.4 million pages were viewed. An estimated 12,652 scientific articles were exchanged, which represented the mobilization of knowledge resources worth USD 632,600.
AgriPerfiles http://agriperfiles.agri-d.net/	Includes 14,243 profiles of professionals dedicated to agriculture and rural life. A total of 48,111 users viewed 318,628 pages.
Integrated library management system http://opac.biblioteca.iica.int/	IICA and CATIE reconstructed their Library System (http://biblioteca.iica.int/), which includes 143,624 resources from the Orton Memorial Library, Headquarters, Argentina, Brazil, Jamaica and Colombia. The resources were accessed by 23,066 users.
Institutional repository https://repositorio.iica.int/	Contains 13,684 institutional digital resources, an increase of 65% compared to 2019. A total of 2,217,489 users accessed the repository.
Scientific databases https://acceso.biblioteca.iica.int/	This new platform provides professionals throughout the hemisphere with access to international databases. Thanks to an investment of approximately USD 40,000, IICA and CATIE saved nearly USD 900,000.
Technical cooperation initiatives http://apps.iica.int/dashboardproyectos	Provides information about more than 500 technical cooperation initiatives.

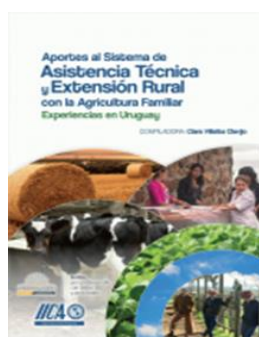
Examples of recent publications:



[Liquid biofuels in the Americas: Current situation and potential for development](#)



[Aprendizajes y trayectorias del sector agroalimentario mexicano durante el TLCAN](#)



[Aportes al Sistema de Asistencia Técnica y Extensión Rural con la agricultura familiar: experiencias en Uruguay](#)



[Digital rural gender divide in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)

Source: Center for Knowledge Management and Horizontal Cooperation Services.

Acronyms

AGRO-INNOVA	Multi-Strata Agroforestry Systems project for the Central American Dry Corridor
ALADI	Latin American Integration Association
CAC	Central American Agricultural Council
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CAS	Southern Agricultural Council
CCCCC	Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre
COPROFAM	Confederation of Family Farmer Organizations of the Expanded MERCOSUR Region
COVID-19	Coronavirus 2019 disease
CVP	Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAS	Foreign Agricultural Services (United States)
FECAGRO	Central American Federation of Agricultural and Agroindustrial Chambers
FONTAGRO	Regional Fund for Agricultural Technology
FORAGRO	Forum for the Americas on Agricultural Research and Technological Development
G-77	Group of 77
GCF	Green Climate Fund
IABA	Inter-American Board of Agriculture
ICO	International Coffee Organization
ICOA	Inter-American Commission for Organic Agriculture
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
KJWA	Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market
MTP	Medium-term Plan (IICA)
OAS	Organization of American States
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
PMED	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IICA)
PROCAGICA	Central American Program for Integrated Coffee Rust Management
PROCINORTE	Cooperative Program in Agricultural Research and Technology for the Northern Region
PROCISUR	Cooperative Program for the Development of Agrifood and Agroindustrial Technology in the Southern Cone
PROMECAFE	Regional Cooperative Program for the Technological Development and Modernization of Coffee Production
SACMI	Special Advisory Commission on Management Issues (IICA)
WTO	World Trade Organization

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