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Message from the Director General

In 2023, agriculture of the Americas demonstrated its resilience once again, as it continued to offer its gift of peace by feeding the world. Despite facing challenges in the supply chain of agricultural inputs due to the war in Eastern Europe and the adverse effects of climate change—which has generated high levels of water stress, especially in the Southern region of our continent—public and private agricultural and rural organizations continue to fulfill the unwavering task of optimizing their resources and capitalizing on the opportunities afforded by sustainable development.

The world's largest net exporting region of food, our hemisphere has the best resource reserves and an innovative vision of sustainable production. This presents the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) with an opportunity to continue pursuing its mission of fostering agricultural development and the well-being of rural areas in its 34 Member States, in its capacity as the food security agency of the Inter-American System, offering results-driven cooperation of excellence.

On many occasions, we have affirmed that it is agriculture's time to shine. At the last Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas, participants agreed to strengthen the Hemispheric Partnership for Food Security and Sustainable Development, which represents a joint commitment to address common challenges facing our countries, such as tackling food insecurity, mitigating climate change, fostering trade and strengthening agrifood systems, through national capacities and regional integration. The Institute was honored to welcome Their Excellencies presidents Mohamed Irfaan Ali, of Guyana, and Laurentino Cortizo, of Panama, at the opening ceremony of the event.

At the end of the year, during the Twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties, the world's leading global summit on climate change, the member countries, together with IICA, reaffirmed their commitment to sustainable and responsible agriculture and recognized their role as part of the solution to global food insecurity.

Both events serve as excellent examples of our institution's power to convene. Year after year, the Institute has continued to consolidate its standing among its Member States as a partner of choice to deliver services to the agriculture sector. Every achievement, initiative and collaboration highlighted in this report reflects our duty to secure a prosperous and equitable future for the Americas.

Beyond our hemisphere, the Institute has established a beneficial relationship with institutions in Africa, with which we share values and interests.

These 12 months of work enabled the Institute to accomplish an unprecedented agenda, with 358 cooperation initiatives, an annual execution of more than USD 209 million and the participation of 129 national and international partners in the 34 member countries. We estimate that these initiatives had a positive impact on at least 10.5 million people involved in agricultural production and rural life in our region.

This report serves as an invitation to continue working together in 2024 to advance the partnership proposed by the ministers of Agriculture, delivering innovative solutions for their agrifood systems. Together, we can achieve great things through dialogue on the bioeconomy, fostering innovation, developing policies for family farming, participating in international markets, responding to health emergencies, driving agricultural digitalization or cooperation in the field to achieve a more sustainable and prosperous agriculture sector.

Our programmatic proposal is underpinned by concrete actions related to soils, water for agriculture, youth leadership, gender equality and rural women's empowerment. Other key elements, such as the Institute's Goodwill Ambassadors Program, "Soul of Rurality" award and partnerships with research centers, reaffirm our commitment to generating synergies and finding innovative solutions to the challenges currently facing agrifood systems.

We are an IICA of Open Doors that is committed to working hand in hand with civil society, the agriculture sector and other stakeholders to drive innovation and inclusion and build a prosperous and equitable future for the Americas. We have built bridges between various national, regional and international stakeholders, visions and efforts to bring together agriculture, the environment and rural areas through a collaborative and inclusive approach to development. Let us continue working together to advance towards this noble goal.

Manuel Otero
Director General

Executive summary

In keeping with its Medium-term Plan for the Period 2022-2026, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) continues to make progress toward meeting its objectives. Through 358 cooperation initiatives, it achieved 89% of its goals at the hemispheric, regional and national levels, and reached a yearly execution of USD 210 million in external resources from 129 partners. It is estimated that the Institute's cooperation agenda benefited more than 10 million rural stakeholders in its 34 Member States—that is, millions of farmers, who are the cornerstone of our work and our institution's *raison d'être*.

Resolution 545 of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) summarizes the Hemispheric Partnership for Food Security and Sustainable Development, IICA's value proposition, which was endorsed by its 34 member countries and will serve as the main framework for its actions in the coming years. The establishment of this partnership involved intense dialogue at 13 hemispheric events aimed at strengthening collective action in the Americas. At the last regular meeting of the IABA, the tenth edition of the report entitled “The Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Development in the Americas: A Perspective on Latin America and the Caribbean” was presented. The report underscores the need for greater regional cooperation to achieve sustainable agrifood systems. The Public Policy Observatory for Agrifood Systems (OPSAa), a key resource to foster a new generation of policies, was also introduced.

In relation to the bioeconomy, several forums for dialogue were created, including the Latin American Bioeconomy Network, the Pan American Liquid Biofuels Coalition and the Hemispheric Bioinputs Platform. Through the technical cooperation provided, eight countries have made progress in developing and implementing strategies, policies and regulations to promote the bioeconomy and have strengthened bioentrepreneurship, training and knowledge sharing in the region. Noteworthy initiatives included the Bioeconomy-based Innovation and Entrepreneurship Hub, the competition “Agrobiotourism: Strengthening Linkages between the Bioeconomy and Tourism” and a process to mentor bio-material based businesses in Costa Rica. With respect to driving innovation, the Institute supports various regional mechanisms, such as the Regional Cooperative Program for the Technological Development and Modernization of Coffee Cultivation, the Cooperative Program in Research and Technology for the Northern Region, the Cooperative Program for the Development of Agri-food and Agricultural Technology in the Southern Cone and the Inter-American Commission for Organic Agriculture, which contribute to strengthening agrifood systems in the Americas. At the national level, significant innovations were made in animal feed, agricultural machinery, seeds, rice, quinoa and sea moss, among others.

Through various studies and analyses, IICA provided up-to-date and relevant technical information to facilitate decision-making on public policies related to family farming, and to capitalize on forums such as the Consultative Committee on Family Farming, the Hemispheric Meeting on Family Farming, the Specialized Meeting on Family Farming

and the Latin American Network of Rural Extension Services. At the national level, IICA assisted in the development of policies and laws in Argentina, Ecuador, Haiti and Panama to promote family farming and improve income for small-scale producers.

With a view to improving the participation of member countries in international agrifood markets, IICA organized, together with the Inter-American Development Bank, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and International Food Policy Research Institute, a regional workshop on “Strengthening Agrifood Trade in the Region to Enhance its Contribution to Sustainable Development and Food Security”. It also consolidated a network of agricultural negotiators to strengthen the region’s positioning in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

With the aim of building capacities in agricultural trade policy and fostering exports in the agrifood sector, IICA held four courses and 25 lectures and conferences with a total of 4,110 participants. Furthermore, together with the Latin American Integration Association and Canada’s Forum for International Trade Training, IICA launched training programs to facilitate the internationalization of agricultural SMEs. The seventh and eighth editions of the Virtual Business Roundtable of the Agrifood Chains in Latin America and the Caribbean were also held with the participation of 1,173 companies, generating USD 50 million in expected business. In addition, 202 companies took part in the third edition of the Virtual Caribbean Business Roundtable, which resulted in expected business totaling USD 1.3 million.

Specific efforts were also undertaken to strengthen the connection between products and markets, including the development of the coconut industry in Dominica, support for coffee farming in Ecuador, strengthening of the mushroom industry in Saint Lucia and support for fishing business processes in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The agricultural climate action and sustainability agenda has consolidated the agriculture sector’s participation in processes related to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Policy dialogue was also fostered through regional workshops and participation in the Twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties in Dubai, where the Home of Sustainable Agriculture of the Americas pavilion generated partnerships among multiple stakeholders to address challenges and drive the sector’s progress in climate action.

The Institute successfully implemented the first multinational Green Climate Fund project in the Caribbean, benefiting nine countries of the Caribbean Community by strengthening the agriculture sector’s participation in climate funding processes. Together with these partners, IICA carried out actions related, among other things, to innovation in the Amazon; sustainable wetland management in Bolivia; renewable energy in rural communities of Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica and Guatemala; and water resources in Suriname.

In an effort to strengthen technical and institutional capabilities in animal health, plant health, food safety and sanitary and phytosanitary measures, more than 12,500 people

consolidated a critical mass in the region through the Growing Safe Produce virtual platform on food safety; the organization of a hemispheric event on the One Health approach, aimed at fostering intersectoral actions in the Americas; and consensus building with respect to Codex Alimentarius, the World Organization for Animal Health and the WTO. In response to health emergencies in the region, IICA provided cooperation to tackle the Fusarium Tropical Race 4 disease, African swine fever, fruit fly, giant snail and foodborne illnesses.

To drive the digitalization of agrifood systems, IICA fostered innovation, productivity and sustainability in the agriculture sector of the Americas by building institutional capabilities and designing innovative public policies, which has solidified the Institute's standing as a hub for services among various public and private stakeholders. At the hemispheric level, IICA organized Digital Agriculture Week to facilitate the sharing of experiences and dissemination of best practices. In the countries, IICA collaborated in the design and management of Panama's Center for Research and Production in Controlled Environments, in spatial mapping in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as in the exhibitions of the Digital Fabrication Laboratory and in the design of virtual tools such as agricultural auctions in Costa Rica.

With respect to fostering gender equality and rural women's empowerment, the fourth edition of the Permanent Forum of Female Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Senior Officials of the Americas was held. The event provided an opportunity to discuss strategies for establishing a care economy in agrifood systems of the Americas, through initiatives aimed at reducing the workload of rural women, guaranteeing their inclusion in public and private policies, and expanding their access to the requisite financial support. In addition, training courses on entrepreneurship and climate change were delivered to rural women, with personalized attention and a direct impact not only on women, but also on youth. Together with various international partners, IICA is fostering youth leadership, driving agricultural digitalization and generating opportunities for rural youth in the region.

Many of these achievements are the result of collaboration provided by almost two hundred partners, including academia, research centers, international agencies and private sector entities. To expand the technical cooperation services it delivers to its 34 Member States, the Institute developed more than 70 proposals, which were submitted to various donors for their consideration.

Lastly, in relation to events organized, IICA held the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas 2023 and the Twenty-second Regular Meeting of the IABA, which resulted in the aforementioned Resolution 545, as well as the Water and Agriculture initiative.

IICA's efficient management is based on a thorough monitoring of its goals and results, as well as the implementation of sound financial strategies that have allowed for meeting budgetary commitments, diversifying the investment portfolio and generating significant returns. The Institute continues to carry out technical cooperation efforts, in keeping with its commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility.

The Institute's focus on sustainability, innovation and equity in agriculture is reflected in every action it undertakes. As a result of the Institute's participation in key international events and its commitment to addressing the needs and demands of civil society and agricultural stakeholders, it has become its member countries' partner of choice to achieve a prosperous future in agriculture.

About IICA

As the specialized agency for agricultural and rural development in the Inter-American System, the mission of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) is to “encourage, promote and support its Member States in their efforts to achieve agricultural development and rural well-being, through international technical cooperation of excellence”.

The annual agenda of the Institute is translated into action by way of close to 300 national, regional and hemispheric cooperation initiatives undertaken with the support of more than 150 partners, namely central and local government institutions, academic and research centers, multilateral banks, the private sector, international organizations and civil society.

The value proposal of IICA is summarized in Resolution 545, approved by the Inter-American Board of Agriculture in 2023, which sharpens the focus of the Institute’s seven technical programs, particularly with respect to:

- The bioeconomy, as a strategy aligned with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda;
- Science, technology and innovation, including digital agriculture;
- International and regional trade, as an engine of sustainable development and food security;
- Climate action and financing, emphasizing agriculture’s capacity to successfully address challenges;
- “One Health”, as an agricultural health strategy in agrifood systems;
- Family farming and inclusive rural development; and
- Equality and gender.

Moreover, the Institute established the Public Policy Observatory for Agrifood Systems, the Leadership School for the Transformation of Agrifood Systems of the Americas and a hemispheric fund for agricultural resilience and sustainability in the region.

A results-oriented approach has equipped IICA to effectively tackle the challenges of agriculture and rural life in an innovative manner, through project formulation, technical and institutional capacity-building, consultation on strategic processes, conceptual and methodological development, as well as the sharing of knowledge and experiences.

The [2022-2026 Medium-term Plan](#) provides a more comprehensive picture of the Institute’s strategy.

Main results in 2023

The 2022-2026 Medium-term Plan of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Institute's roadmap, was implemented in 2023, establishing an agenda of 358 initiatives (operations, projects and actions). Having adopted a results-oriented approach, the organization has achieved 89% of the goals of its hemispheric¹, regional and national plans. On the other hand, it has executed USD 210 million of external resources annually, procured from 129 national and international partners, among them, governments, private sector entities, academia and multilateral banks.

IICA's hemispheric cooperation was concentrated in the Hemispheric Partnership for Food Security and Sustainable Development, which was established with the endorsement of the ministers of Agriculture of IICA's 34 Member States, via Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) Resolution 545.

In the context of this partnership, 13 hemispheric events with 4,531 participants were held, thereby consolidating the collective action of the Americas. These included the Pan-American Liquid Biofuels Summit, the Regional Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation in Agrifood Systems of Latin America and the Caribbean, Digital Agriculture Week, the Pan-American Bioinputs Forum, the 27th Annual International Conference of the International Consortium on Applied Bioeconomy Research (ICABR), the Second Meeting of the Latin American Bioeconomy Network, the IV Forum of Female Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Senior Officials of the Americas, the Hemispheric Workshop on Family Farming, the meeting on "One Health in the Americas: the Importance of Inter-institutional Collaboration in the Hemisphere and its Rural Communities" and the Regional Workshop: "Strengthening Agrifood Trade in the Region to Enhance its Contribution to Sustainable Development and Food Security". Moreover, the international seminar "Towards a New Generation of Public Policies for Agrifood Systems in the Americas" enjoyed the participation of the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), in addition to twenty-one government representatives, thereby facilitating the creation and launch of a Hemispheric Network on Agrifood System Policies for the Americas. The Public Policy Observatory for Agrifood Systems (OPSAa) also organized the "Avanzar2030" workshop.

Now in its tenth edition, "[The Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Development in the Americas: A Perspective on Latin America and the Caribbean 2023-2024](#)", published jointly with ECLAC and the FAO, was presented to the IABA. The report underscores the need to strengthen regional cooperation to build sustainable, inclusive and resilient agrifood systems in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). It has awakened

¹ Through the seven hemispheric technical programs and other initiatives, such as the OPSAa, the Leadership School for the Transformation of Agrifood Systems of the Americas, the Initiative on Water and Agriculture and Living Soils of the Americas.

considerable interest, amassing 1,135 downloads from the Institute’s repository in only three months since its publication.

A collaborative effort by 22 institutions, headed by IFPRI, the University of Notre Dame and IICA, with the support of the World Bank, IDB, the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF) and the Group of Producing Countries from the Southern Cone (GPS), among other entities, strengthened the linkages between science, policy and development, by undertaking an evidence synthesis as part of the Avanzar2030² Project. The intention was to bridge data gaps, analyze the interventions and expenses associated with them and to generate evidence to support the development of a new public policy agenda.

OPSAa

The <https://opsaa.iica.int/> platform was intended to serve as a key forum to facilitate reflection, interaction, knowledge sharing and public policy planning focusing on agrifood systems in LAC. Its work is based on three fundamental pillars: systematization of policies, organization of evidence-based discussions and prospective analysis. On the statistical side, 1,700 new records were added to the platform, among them policy frameworks, funding initiatives, information resources, “evidence” and events. Moreover, the OPSAa now includes 47 new indicators, divided into 19 categories, thereby expanding the data available online to 80,000 records. According to Google Analytics, the site has been visited 86,000 times and has logged approximately 280,000 interactions – a level of activity that demonstrates the growing interest in the platform and its importance to the agrifood sector in the region.

The Institute was recognized as a key partner in the process to update the [national agricultural policy of Ecuador](#), facilitating the design of strategic plans at the national level, through an online digital application developed by the OPSAa. Likewise, the Ministry of Agriculture of Peru received IICA’s assistance to analyze its major public policies and the extent to which they have adopted results-oriented approaches. On the other hand, IICA and the Unión de Gremios de la Producción of Paraguay spearheaded a prospective analysis of the agriculture sector and jointly developed a proposal with strategic guidelines for sustainable development and value chains.

In collaboration with the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in Canada, a work protocol was developed to undertake a comprehensive mapping of regulations on biodiversity and forests in various countries of LAC, which will be completed in 2024. This joint effort, which marks a crucial step in better understanding natural resource management challenges in the region, will serve as a valuable tool to inform public policy decision making and to promote instruments related to forest and biodiversity conservation.

² Focusing on the recent ministerial consensus of the Americas, reached in the lead up to the United Nations Food Systems Summit in 2021, establishing objectives and priorities to address global agrifood system challenges.

IICA's Visiting Professionals and Internship Program organized 95 exchange visits with participants from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Germany, Honduras, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States and Uruguay. Currently, the program maintains partnerships with the World Food Prize Foundation, the ASA Program in Germany, and with the Spanish universities Complutense de Madrid, Politécnica de Madrid and Universidad Politécnica de Valencia (Meridies Program). This has ensured the highly international character and impact of this young professionals' exchange program.

Not to be overlooked is the Institute's Leaders of Rurality program, which recognized 12 outstanding individuals in 2023, all of whom are making a difference in the rural areas of the Americas. The latest group of awardees includes women and men in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Guyana, the United States and Uruguay.

The most relevant results obtained by IICA through its seven technical cooperation programs are outlined below.

Innovation and the Bioeconomy

Through the Innovation and Bioeconomy Hemispheric Program, countries in the Americas were able to play a more active and prominent role in discussions and decision making in the world's major bioeconomy forums. The program also spurred collective regional action to foster South-South cooperation in policy development, projects and investments in this field, as demonstrated by the creation of the Latin American Bioeconomy Network, the Pan-American Liquid Biofuels Coalition and the Hemispheric Bioinputs Platform. Both the Institute and the wider LAC took part in the following events:

- Meetings of the International Advisory Council on the Global Bioeconomy Summit and the International Sustainable Bioeconomy Working Group (ISBWG),
- International Conference of the International Consortium on Applied Bioeconomy Research (ICABR),
- E.U. Bioeconomy Conference,
- Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP) Bioenergy Week,
- Pan-American Liquid Biofuels Summit,
- Pan-American Bioinputs Forum,
- Energy Week of the Latin American Energy Organization,
- Global Science and Innovation Forum,
- LXV Meeting of the Central American Cooperative Program for Crop and Animal Improvement,
- The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum's High-level Policy Dialogue on Agricultural Biotechnology,

- “Grupo de Afines” and
- The Twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, among others.

Through IICA’s technical cooperation, eight countries of the Americas made headway in formulating and implementing strategies, policies and regulations promoting the bioeconomy and its pathways. Specifically, the Institute supported the application of national bioeconomy strategies in Costa Rica and Colombia; the design of bioeconomy plans for the Mexican and Argentinian agriculture sectors; the development of bioinput-related rules and regulations in Honduras; regulations on biofuels in Guatemala, as well as the conclusion of Ministerial Agreement No. 63, in Ecuador, regarding the use of seeds and crops developed through precision improvement techniques.

Bioinputs in Argentina

The Institute has contributed to ensuring the promotion and recognition of bioinput use by organizing several events, such as: a) the National Bioeconomy Meeting, organized by Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto, which discussed bioinput use in agriculture to foster sustainable production in the context of climate change; b) the Bioinput Meetings, held in Mar del Plata, in collaboration with the Argentinian Bioinputs Chamber and authorities from the General Juan Madariaga district, where more than 300 farmers were informed about the benefits of bioinputs in horticultural cultivation; and c) the Latin American Workshop on “Differentiated Institutional Strategies for the Regulation of Bioinputs”, jointly organized with the National Food Safety and Quality Service (SENASA), to share experiences with regulatory frameworks from a regional perspective. IICA also served on the Advisory Committee on Bioinput Use in Agriculture and its sub-working groups.

On the other hand, 400 bioeconomy entrepreneurs strengthened their pre-incubation and incubation capacities to further develop their biobusinesses. Another 7,200 people are now more informed about the potential of biobusinesses and opportunities for their promotion. Among the most noteworthy initiatives led by IICA in this area were: the Bioeconomy-based Innovation and Entrepreneurship Hub (<https://bio-emprender.iica.int>), the competition to identify and compile success stories, entitled: “Agrobiotourism: Strengthening Linkages between the Bioeconomy and Tourism” (<https://bit.ly/4a4yMjY>), as well as the process to mentor bio-material based businesses in Costa Rica, in partnership with the Costa Rican Investment Promotion Agency (CINDE).

Innovation in El Salvador

The Adapted Agroforestry Systems for the Central American Dry Corridor (AGRO-INNOVA), funded by the European Union (EU), directly benefitted 531 farmers in seven municipalities in Santa Ana, implementing multi-strata agroforestry systems, featuring efficient irrigation, rainwater harvesting, the production of organic inputs and the planting of 7,000 trees. Moreover, the “Promoting Reactivation and Agricultural Production for Food Security and Sovereignty in El Salvador” (RECETO) program installed greenhouses built with Israeli technology and irrigation systems to improve the production of vegetables, biofertilizers and sustainable cultivation systems.

Other concrete experiences and achievements at the national level, which were facilitated by the Institute’s technical cooperation efforts, are as follows:

- In Grenada, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) improved their capacities to produce compost at a commercial level. The Institute also strengthened the post-harvest capacities of the ministry’s extension officers and data management for decision making.
- The Jamaica Delegation, through a contract signed with the World Bank, conducted an assessment of agricultural post-harvest facilities and the potential of the cultivation of millet for animal feed. The exercise, undertaken in consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining, identified policy and investment recommendations for the Government and development partners related to the agricultural supply chain and alternative livestock feed.
- In Paraguay, through the Technological and Commercial Innovation in Family Farming project, funded by Itaipú Binacional, IICA supplied tractors, seed drills and sprayers to six organizations and divisions of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), to benefit more than 10,000 sesame, corn and soybean farmers from various regions in the country.
- With the cooperation of the Institute, a study was conducted for the National Poultry Farmers Union on the potential of the bioeconomy for the table egg value chain in Jalisco, Mexico.
- In Guatemala, the Regional Consortiums for Agricultural Research Program (RCAR), funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), benefitted 7,389 farmers, supplying them with seeds and improved seedlings, as well as training on the various stages of production. The Institute also conducted 30 field research projects and improved the infrastructure of various production and research centers in Guatemala.
- In association with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Rice Development Board of Guyana, a new variety of biofortified rice was launched (GRDB IICA 17), as a means of providing an affordable source of elevated zinc in the human diet and increasing immunity to respiratory diseases.

- In Bolivia, the Bioeconomy for Family Farming project, executed with funding from the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), built the capacities of 47 families in quinoa management (soil, water and bioinputs), while contributing to the enactment of two municipal laws in Samaipata and Sorata, and the preparation of a draft National Bioeconomy Law for legislative consideration. Through the Bolivian Bioeconomy Network, the Institute facilitated the dissemination of value-adding bioeconomy practices for quinoa production, biocultural tourism, biotourism and biofuels.

The sea moss value chain in Dominica

In partnership with the FAO and the country's Division of Agriculture, the Institute improved the capacities of farmers and technical officers on best practices for sea moss production; conducted an assessment of commercial production sites and validated technologies for producing dried sea moss.

On the capacity development side, more than 10,500 decision makers, researchers, producers and businessmen are now more knowledgeable about opportunities offered by the bioeconomy and its pathways and have been introduced to cutting edge technology for its development and use. IICA offered an international diploma in bioeconomy in the coffee value chain, along with the Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira in Colombia; two courses in bioenergy and biofuels; four biobusiness courses; and its sixth laboratory course on gene editing, in association with Bioversity Alliance and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). It also held 13 seminars on biotechnology and biosecurity, among others. Specialists from the Program also participated in 10 training programs offered by other projects, partners and allies.

It must be noted that the Institute, in collaboration with the Paraguayan Ministry of Agriculture (MAG), the Agriculture Biotechnology Institute and other partners, organized the Paraguayan Symposium on Advances in Agricultural Biotechnology, thereby strengthening participants' technical capacities in biotechnology and sustainable production.

IICA, UNDP and IDB Lab partnership

With financial assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Climate Change Alliance (+) and the IDB Lab, the Institute provided assistance to the Government of Suriname, by setting up a greenhouse in the Coronie district, for training purposes and to demonstrate plant propagation techniques for fruit crops. The delegation also established crop nurseries in the upper Suriname River Basin and a protected agriculture structure in the Nickerie district. Low-cost solar dryers and a fish processing unit were also constructed in Nickerie and Coronie to improve hygiene and food security. The Coronie farmers underwent training in dragon fruit cultivation and the use of climate smart technologies, whereas irrigation systems were installed on plots of leafy vegetables and fruits in Nickerie.

IICA was instrumental in enabling almost 20,000 people throughout the hemisphere to grasp the potential of the bioeconomy as a strategy for national and regional development, having organized 35 seminars, workshops, lectures, virtual fairs and competitions and published nine documents on the topic.

Thirty international public resources have been developed for agricultural and rural stakeholders in the Americas, in the form of documents, platforms, methodologies, tools and catalogs, to name a few, equipping them to access knowledge, guides, best practices and lessons learned, in a bid to drive appropriate policies, projects and investments on the bioeconomy and its pathways. They can be accessed at: <https://repositorio.iica.int/handle/11324/18571>.

Red INNOVAGRO, led by Mexico

The Network for the Management of Innovation in the Agrifood Sector (Red INNOVAGRO), which seeks to bolster innovation systems in 18 countries, organized its INNOVAGRO Seminar, which hosted 936 participants from 28 countries; 6 webinars, which were attended by 607 persons; and the INNOVAGRO Meeting at Universidad Zamorano in Honduras. The Network has also developed a Diploma program on the Bioeconomy and Sustainable Projects, which will begin to offer courses in 2024.

Through the Regional Fund for Agricultural Technology (FONTAGRO), a portfolio of 48 projects, valuing USD 47.1 million, were developed in 2023 and are still active. Moreover, 1,081 experimentation sites, 739 networks and 171 collaborative working groups were established, producing 685 knowledge products, 47 scientific articles and 256 videos.

Moreover, initiatives were developed by various regional technical cooperation mechanisms, for example by the Regional Cooperative Program for the Technological Development and Modernization of Coffee Cultivation (PROMECAFE), the Cooperative Program in Research and Technology for the Northern Region (PROCINORTE), the Cooperative Program for the Development of Agri-food and Agricultural Technology in the Southern Cone (PROCISUR), and the Inter-American Commission for Organic Agriculture (ICOA). Specifically, PROMECAFE worked with networks of specialists on activities involving genetic improvement, coffee leaf rust management, climate change and local consumption of specialized coffees. The program also participated in the III World Coffee Producers Forum in Rwanda and other important meetings, as well as in various initiatives and projects, in partnership with GIZ, the EU, the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) and the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE), among others. PROCINORTE executed various projects and conducted capacity building sessions with specialists in the region on issues such as vegetable diseases, animal health, agricultural health and food safety, the environment and genetic resource management, among others. On the other hand, PROCISUR established working groups on bionputs, animal health, sustainable livestock, climate perspectives, digital agriculture, soils, gender and institutional transformations. It also

developed studies and projects on bioinputs, gender equality, legumes in livestock systems, citrus greening disease (HLB), gene editing, environmental issues and on science, technology and innovation systems, among others.

PROCINORTE: innovations in Mexico, the United States and Canada

Under the guidance of IICA, the trilateral technology program approved grants for collaborative research projects in various countries of the region³, to address critical issues such as preparedness for African swine fever (ASF), traceability and molecular epidemiology. It also offered online training on gene bank management and celebrated its 25th anniversary with various workshops.

Finally, the Institute's organization of and participation in various events, training opportunities, fairs and international missions furthered the development of the hemispheric organic movement, the updating of organic standards and the strengthening of the ICOA.

Territorial Development and Family Farming

The objectives of the Hemispheric Program on Territorial Development and Family Farming are to formulate, in partnership with the Institute's Member States, a new generation of family farming policies and to support the social and economic inclusion of the sector, primarily by developing associative capacities and fostering regional policy integration.

The Institute contributed to political dialogue on these policies, through its leadership role in the following activities:

- The creation of a hemispheric consultative committee on family farming with representatives from the public sector (the Executive Secretariat of the Central American Agricultural Council [SECAC] and the Specialized Meeting on Family Farming [REAF]); family farming (Confederation of Family Producer Organizations of the Expanded Mercosur [COPROFAM] and the Rural Regional Dialogue Program); the cooperative sector (Cooperatives of the Americas [COOP]); and academia (the Public Policies and Rural Development in Latin America and the Caribbean Network [Red PP-AL]), to serve as a technical-political forum to facilitate the identification and coordination of joint actions in support of family farming.
- The organization of the Hemispheric Meetings on Family Farming in Brazil, along with the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Family Farming of Brazil, hosting close to 120 representatives from family farming, academia and international organizations.

³ Mexico (2), Brazil (1), Saint Kitts and Nevis (1), Saint Lucia (1), Trinidad and Tobago (1) and Ecuador (1).

- The creation of a working group for public policy analysis on family farming in the REAF of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), comprised of technical authorities in public policy design, execution and evaluation from the ministries of Agriculture of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, which is now evaluating trade, financial, environmental and gender-related policies on family farming.

A new generation of Panamanian public policies

IICA coordinated technical teams from 17 institutions to develop guidelines for the State Agrifood Policy (PADE), resulting in the approval of Law No. 352, which promotes access to healthy food, agricultural competitiveness and economic, social and environmental sustainability. Moreover, the Institute also provided advisory services to support the formulation of the National Agricultural and Rural Development Plan, aligned with the PADE, giving rise to investment projects to foster agricultural and rural development.

Ecuador's family farming seal is another good example of a state policy designed to differentiate the production of this sector and to improve the income it generates in the northern frontier provinces. This was one aspect of the cooperation provided by the Italo-Ecuadorian Fund for Sustainable Development to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. In Argentina, IICA and FAO assisted the National Institute of Family, Smallholder and Indigenous Farming to develop the National Action Plan for the Decade of Family, Smallholder and Indigenous Farming.

The Haiti office, with resources from the Office of Humanitarian Assistance of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), implemented the Food Vulnerability Reduction Project in Gonave, distributing 16,000 food kits to improve the nutrition of 8,000 families, as well as 7.44 tons of sorghum and beans to benefit more than 2,000 farmers.

In Honduras, within the framework of the presidential Technology Productivity Incentive, the Institute contributed to the efficient execution of State resources aimed at improving the food security of more than 473,000 small farmers from 17 departments, by increasing the productivity of their maize, bean and sorghum crops. IICA also supported the implementation of other presidential programs, such as the Coffee Bonus and Livestock Bonus programs in 2023, which provided thousands of small farmers and livestock producers with resources to improve their production practices.

The Institute made updated and relevant technical information available to political authorities, technicians and family farming representatives, to inform decision making on family farming-related public policies, through the following studies:

- “Reflections and Considerations to Guide the Development of a Renewed Public Policy Agenda on Family Farming in the Americas”, prepared based on discussions with experts in different regions of LAC.
- “The Status of Public Policies for Family Farming in MERCOSUR Countries”, prepared in partnership with the REAF.

On the other hand, 600 family farming leaders in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay strengthened their capacity to influence forums for public policy decision making and to strengthen their organizations, through courses developed by IICA in partnership with COPROFAM.

Family Farming in the O’Higgins region, Chile

Along with the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, the training offered to 100 farmers in the Lolol, Pumanque and Paredones communities helped to bridge the gaps in smallholder family farming in the region, equipping the participants with new knowledge and empowering them with more than 32 new sustainable practices for water use efficiency and digital management.

In like manner, technical cooperation in Peru, under the leadership of the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Irrigation (MIDAGRI), facilitated dialogue among multiple stakeholders, levels and sectors by: 1) conducting an assessment and characterization of family farming (Multi-sectoral Commission on the Promotion and Development of Family Farming); 2) contributing to the dissemination of the “For a Peru that Flourishes” campaign, which is aiming to revive the economic fortunes of more than 7,000 small farmers (National Floriculture Multi-sectoral Working Group); and 3) developing a working plan to establish a governance model for the cocoa and chocolate chains in 2024 (Multisectoral Working Group on Cocoa).

Platform of Rural Women of MERCOSUR (REAF/IICA)

In order to ensure greater inclusion of female family farmers in the rural economy, the MERCOSUR’s Rural Women’s Platform (REAF/IICA), which provides information, training and the promotion of knowledge exchange, was updated and is available in Spanish, Portuguese and Guaraní at: <http://plamural.iica.int/home>.

Moreover, as one of its services, the platform designed, structured and offered a sustainable business course aimed at female entrepreneurs in rural Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay and Uruguay. The course was successfully completed by 33 female leaders, representing enterprises in community-based organizations, with a membership of approximately 500 rural women. Thirty-four tutors also underwent training to prepare them to teach the course at the national, organizational and rural levels.

In partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO), support was provided to more than 200 entrepreneurs with an interest in creating cooperatives or social

enterprises in the rural areas of Mexico, namely in Campeche, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Colima, Durango, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Michoacán, Oaxaca, Puebla, San Luis Potosí, Sinaloa, Sonora, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Tlaxcala, Veracruz and Yucatán.

The Institute strengthened its technical linkages in discussion forums promoted by its partners, which highlighted the importance of family farming in territorial development and the need to formulate a renewed policy agenda in that area. These included meetings of the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC); seminars with the PP-AL Network on OPSAa and the status of public policies on family farming; a national workshop on the formulation of the National Family Farming Policy, which was jointly organized by MIDAGRI in Peru and the IICA Delegation in that country; and a seminar by the Global Rural Forum to discuss these issues.

Likewise, through hemispheric virtual events, the Institute shared lessons learned from its experiences in rural development and in relation to the role of family farming in the rural milieu. Similarly, at the national level, assistance was provided to Mexico and Colombia to organize the XIV International Rural Development Forum, which created greater awareness of the topic among close to 300 individuals from the public and private sectors, various family farming associations and from academia in Latin America and the rest of the world. The Institute also made headway in ensuring the inclusion of family farming in the rural economy, with an emphasis on rural women.

Together with Guatemalan authorities, IICA developed the “Project to Strengthen the Local Institutional Framework for Women and Individual Collective Microenterprises”, which was successfully selected in the Empower Innovation Challenge, funded by the 2021 Global Equity and Equality Fund (GEEA) of the U.S. State Department. The project will be implemented in rural Guatemala in 2024, benefitting 124 women from three organizations. Moreover, in Ecuador, pre-approval was granted for the “Innovation and Sustainability Network for Rural Women” project, which is seeking to improve the situation of 100 rural women in Esmeraldas.

Under the COOP-IICA cooperation agreement, initiatives were undertaken to strengthen the digital technology skills of technical and managerial staff in various family farming cooperatives. For example, in partnership with Universidad de Córdoba, Spain, short training courses were offered on the application of digital technologies in agriculture, registering 45 participants. Similarly, a project to enhance the digital literacy of cooperative members was designed, whereas an internet portal was launched to grant various cooperatives access to digital technology training offered by the Institute’s partners.

With a view to promoting the digital inclusion of family farming, the Chilean Delegation, in coordination with the FAO and ECLAC, prepared a document entitled “Mixed Rural Extension Systems: In-Person and Digital Services to Expand Coverage and Improve the Quality of Technical Advice” (in Spanish only), to assist in incorporating digital technology into extension services in Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Uruguay, through the Latin American Network for Rural Extension Services (RELASER).

The aim is to increasingly align family farming with climate action and natural resource management priorities, through IICA's cooperation agenda. In Dominica, collaboration with the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management built the capacities of farmers in five communities, empowering them to develop business plans and grant proposals to facilitate access to credit, while also supporting sustainable agriculture.

International Trade and Regional Integration

Through the Hemispheric Program on International Trade and Regional Integration, the Institute assisted member countries to improve their participation in international agrifood markets, in a bid to strengthen global and regional food security, while also contributing to sustainable development in the region. The cooperation spearheaded by the Program impacted more than [5,878 individuals and 1,375 companies](#).

The Program focused its efforts in two directions: firstly, on trade policy and access to markets, and secondly, on trade promotion. Based on these two spheres of action and six work areas, the following was achieved:

a. Consolidation of the Hemispheric Partnership on trade-related matters

Along with the IDB, ECLAC, FAO and IFPRI, the Institute organized the regional workshop on “Strengthening Agrifood Trade in the Region to Enhance its Contribution to Sustainable Development and Food Security”, which facilitated the identification of collective actions that IICA could spearhead, with the support of its partners, within the context of IABA Resolution 545 on “Strengthening the Hemispheric Partnership for Food Security and Sustainable Development”. Collective actions under the Partnership include: the consolidation of a network of agricultural negotiators to present regional positions to the World Trade Organization (WTO) with a view to promoting open, transparent and predictable international trade; coordinated action to tackle the emergence of regulations that threaten to restrict agrifood trade in the countries of the region; and efforts to increase intraregional trade and linkages through mechanisms and other institutions that foster regional integration.

b. Effective participation of Member States in multilateral forums

The Institute, as an observer member of the WTO Committee on Agriculture, facilitated knowledge building and prompted more widespread discussions on the implementation of measures that restrict or facilitate agricultural trade in the countries of the Americas and their partners throughout the world. In partnership with IFPRI, IICA launched the Latin American Network of Agrifood Trade Negotiators, with 23 members in 17 countries. The work plan with the WTO enabled El Salvador to bring its notifications up to date and the countries now have access to a best practices manual to improve their participation in the Committee on Agriculture. Moreover, the region's contribution to food security and sustainable development was highlighted through

two technical events at the WTO Public Forum – one on biodigital innovation and the other on sustainable agricultural practices. On the other hand, IICA and the WTO signed a memorandum of understanding at COP28 to further the implementation of actions to promote a fairer and more market-oriented agriculture system, as well as other objectives defined in the WTO Agriculture and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) agreements.

c. Widespread dissemination of trade information, indicators and policies

The WTO Reference Center at the Institute developed and disseminated 49 information capsules on agrifood trade in the Americas and published 77 news articles, which attracted more than 34,000 views. The Center responded to 11 technical queries and hosted two video conferences on database management and emerging trade issues for Universidad Santo Tomas in Colombia. The trade indicators module ([Agrifood Atlas](#) and [socioeconomic indicators](#)) was updated and the Center also assisted in incorporating policy frameworks, initiatives and resources into the OPSAa.

d. Strengthening intraregional trade

The Hemispheric Program on Agricultural Health, Safety and Agrifood Quality and the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) jointly organized two technical seminars on regulatory convergence, one on [equivalence](#) and the other on [conformity assessment procedures](#). Two hundred and eighty-nine officials, technical officers and specialists from 13 countries participated in this event, which presented the latest developments in this area and identified possible joint actions to drive policies and practices to facilitate agrifood trade. On the other hand, the Institute collaborated with the Central American Dairy Federation (FECALAC) and SECAC to strengthen the dairy trade and worked with the Latin American Poultry Association (ALA) to disseminate regulations on the trading of poultry products, while seeking to identify areas for joint work with both institutions. IICA and the Southern Agricultural Council (CAS) provided technical support to conduct a face-to-face meeting between CAS ministers and the WTO during COP28. Stemming from that meeting, a technical team was established with the WTO, for the purpose of strengthening the negotiating position of LAC ahead of the upcoming WTO Ministerial Conference, scheduled for February 2024. Furthermore, the [Latin American and Caribbean Network of Agrifood Trade Experts \(RECA\)](#) was established in partnership with the FAO and the IDB, enlisting the participation of 25 experts from 11 countries, in an effort to enhance the technical quality of agrifood trade research in the Americas and capacities to provide technical advice and policy recommendations to governments and the private sector.

e. Strengthening technical capacities to capitalize on international trade

The Institute's efforts to build agricultural trade policy and exportation capacities included the organization of four courses and 25 seminars and conferences, which

registered 4,110 participants. IICA, the FAO, the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA) and SECAC jointly organized two courses: “International Trade and Agriculture” and “Agricultural Trade Policy”. Specifically, a course on building export capacity was held with ALADI, entitled “Training for the Internationalization of Agricultural SMEs”. Another course on “Preparing to Export Agrifood Products” was organized with the Forum for International Trade Training (FITT) in Canada.

f. Linkages between producers and the market

In partnership with the FAO, SIECA and SECAC, IICA held the [seventh](#) and [eighth](#) editions of the [Virtual Business Roundtables of the Agrifood Chains of Latin America and the Caribbean](#), aiming to assist agrifood companies and organizations to build and diversify their presence in regional markets. In total, 1,173 companies participated in the events, generating trade deals of close to USD 50 million. Likewise, the Institute hosted the third edition of the Virtual Caribbean Business Roundtable, in conjunction with the FAO, in a bid to spur intraregional trade of agrifood products. The Roundtable attracted 202 participating companies and generated USD 1.3 million in trade deals.

At the national level, the Institute’s cooperation efforts to increase the access of products to markets included actions to:

- Stimulate the development of the coconut industry in Dominica, in partnership with the International Trade Centre (ITC);
- Support coffee cultivation in the Gonzalo Pizarro district in Ecuador, under the HIDROALTO-IICA project;
- Develop the mushroom industry, in collaboration with the private sector in Saint Lucia;
- Strengthen entrepreneurial processes in the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines fisheries sector, in partnership with the FAO;
- Support the sale of 364 tons of high-quality tomato by 200 producers in Caaguazú, Paraguay, where a commercial center was also established (CERCA-BAYER-IICA project);
- Map the camelid meat and wool value chain in Bolivia;
- Identify ideas for 35 potential businesses in the National Forestry Conservation Program in the value chains of native communities in Peru;
- Re-establish production of Antigua black pineapple, by producing 2,000 plantlets at the Agricultural Biotechnology Center in Saint Vincent;

- Fund the cocoa sector and promote gastronomic initiatives to boost Costa Rican cocoa consumption; and
- Implement the Sustainability Standard for Dairy Farms, in partnership with Chile's Conscious Origin program and its Dairy Consortium, as well as to design a Sustainability Standard for Chilean Dried Cherries with the Agricultural Innovation Foundation, to assist in meeting sustainability standards required by domestic and international markets.

g. The strengthening of market information systems in the Americas

IICA collaborated with the Technical Secretariat of the Market Information Organization of the Americas (MIOA) to assist in strengthening market information systems in five countries; to implement four capacity building processes and to conduct nineteen information sharing initiatives, with the participation of 788 persons from five regions in the hemisphere. These actions attracted 21,148 views on [social media](#).

 **Agricultural Climate Action and Sustainability**

The Hemispheric Program on Agricultural Climate Action and Sustainability adopted a strategy to consolidate the participation of the agriculture sector in processes related to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Moreover, the program strengthened farmers' capacities through various training initiatives and information exchange sessions on technology and practices, thereby eliciting behavioral changes and greater adoption of climate smart technologies and practices to improve soil and water use. The Institute's efforts also increased the participation of women, children and youth in sustainability activities and agricultural climate actions. Moreover, national climate change resilience policies were improved, for the purpose of fostering climate action in family farming in various countries of the Southern Region and regular meetings were held with the community of practice on the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) in the region.

In keeping with the Program's strategic pillars and lines of action (negotiation and participation in processes related to the UNFCCC, livestock production, rice, voluntary carbon markets and climate action in the Caribbean), some of its primary achievements were as follows:

a. Political dialogue for greater inclusion of the agriculture sector in climate and environmental processes

The Hemispheric Program sought to ensure more proactive participation of the sector not only in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP), but also in other

national and international climate events during the year. A series of activities were organized to continue the process of building the capacities of negotiators working on the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work to implement climate action for agriculture and food security. For example, in-person workshops, virtual dialogues and webinars were organized, and support was provided to negotiators to participate in the negotiations of the 58th Session of the Subsidiary Bodies to the UNFCCC in Bonn and in COP28 in Dubai. Two regional workshops were held—one in Colombia, in preparation for the negotiation sessions, and the other in the Dominican Republic, as a means of providing an informal forum to share perspectives and ideas among negotiators from the Americas, particularly from the ministries of Agriculture. This strengthened the region’s negotiating capacity and discussions, thus ensuring more active and informed participation of the sector in UNFCCC processes. Finally, to demonstrate the sector’s contributions and needs in different international exchange forums, the Institute hosted a face-to-face workshop during Latin America and the Caribbean Climate Week in Panama, with the support of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSCC) and the Comprehensive Action for Climate Change Initiative (CACCI). The event, which focused on the potential contribution of agriculture to the UNFCCC process, facilitated regional interaction and enjoyed an unprecedented level of attendance from representatives of the ministries of Agriculture. Overall, 71 persons (38 women and 33 men) from 24 LAC countries attended the three face-to-face events.

As a result of these efforts, the hemisphere’s agriculture sector made a strong showing at COP28 in Dubai. The Home of Sustainable Agriculture of the Americas pavilion, which was installed with more than USD 350,000 in funding from friends of the Institute, enabled IICA to:

- Demonstrate the role of agrifood systems in driving climate solutions and fostering global food security;
- Highlight the contributions of farmers and other sector stakeholders to climate adaptation and mitigation;
- Raise awareness about climate action challenges, proposals and developments in the sector; and
- Establish partnerships with multiple actors to accelerate and expand action and investment, among them, the Food Tank, the IDB, IDB Invest, the Department of Sustainable Development of the Organization of American States and the International Livestock Research Institute.

Twelve ministers and deputy ministers of Agriculture of the region attended COP28. Likewise, negotiators from 15 of the region’s countries participated in the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work. The pavilion hosted 48 events organized by more than 30 partners, presenting a wide range of perspectives, priorities, needs and approaches of the agrifood sector of the Americas. There was also a discussion session on climate financing for ministers of Agriculture, with a view to facilitating greater climate action with various partners (the CAC, CAS, CAF, Producers Trust, Pegasus and PROCISUR).

Nine ministers and deputy ministers were in attendance. Moreover, in partnership with the Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative (VCMI) and Climate Focus, IICA arranged a technical capacity building exercise on voluntary carbon markets for 17 members of the agriculture sector in 16 countries.

Borlaug Dialogue 2023, United States

IICA organized three panel discussions at the 2023 Borlaug Dialogue in Des Moines, Iowa: one on water, another on *Fusarium* Tropical Race 4 (TR4) in bananas and the third on regenerative agriculture. High-level meetings were also held with the Vice-President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Minister of Agriculture of Guyana, as well as with private sector companies.

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) project entitled “Strengthening the Foundation for a Climate Responsive Agricultural Sector in the Caribbean” was successfully implemented, assisting nine Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries to improve preparations for and prioritization of the agriculture sector in climate financing processes. The project focused on addressing the factors hindering the significant and sustained participation of agricultural stakeholders in climate financing processes, by relying on evidence-based arguments and actions.

Consequently, training was provided for more than 700 decision makers, technical experts and stakeholders; and two courses were offered – one on the participation of agricultural stakeholders in climate financing processes and another on greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories and agricultural emissions. The first agriculture and climate change repository in the region was established, containing more than 50 publications, including regional and national technical reports, action plans, concept notes and GCF funding templates, as well as webinars, virtual markets, videos and comics to encourage youth to participate in agricultural climate action.

These activities have led to: 1) the development and strengthening of capacities, systems and networks to support planning, programming and implementation of GCF-funded activities; 2) the restructuring of strategic frameworks to address policy gaps and to improve the experience and preparation of the sector and its environs for GCF programming on low-emission investments; 3) an increase in the number of concept notes developed for high-quality projects; and 4) the development and dissemination of best practices to strengthen institutional capacities and coordination, direct access and the channeling of resources to National Designated Authorities (NDAs), direct access entities and other GCF delivery partners.

For the most part, this will ensure increased and more strategic inclusion of the agriculture sector in the NDCs, the development and rebranding of Caribbean

agriculture as a “low emission” sector, as well as greater public and private investment in the development of the agriculture sector to achieve greater climate resilience.

b. Strategies and mechanisms to guide the sector, drive change and expand successful approaches

The Territorial Development and Family Farming Program and the REAF joined forces to improve the sector’s participation in global climate events, by offering a workshop on “Tackling the Challenge of Climate Change, Public Policies and Family Farming Adaptation: Experiences, Governance and Innovative Strategies for Agrifood System Sustainability”. The aim of the event was to devise a climate change roadmap, to support the development of comprehensive public policies and to design a regional approach. The IICA delegations in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay conducted an in-depth examination of their institutional structures in the overall process to negotiate climate change mitigation and adaptation commitments and targets, to ensure their implementation in national plans and greater and more coordinated impact at the international, regional and national levels.

Hemispheric Initiative on Water and Agriculture

This initiative—a joint effort with ECLAC, the World Bank, the IDB, CAF and the Daugherty Institute of Water and Food of the University of Nebraska—is aiming to build capacities and promote strategic public-private partnerships in the member countries, to improve the integrated and efficient management of water in agriculture, in support of the ministries of Agriculture and their key lead agencies.

Furthermore, in Suriname, with funding from the IDB, training was provided to increase the water resource management capacities of 200 policy makers, instructors and students in this field. The Institute partnered with the Empresa Bahiana de Aguas y Saneamiento in Brazil to conduct a hydrogeological study entitled “Estudo hidrogeológico do Sistema Aquífero Marizal São Sebastião”, which stresses the importance of underground water in that country.

There was greater coordination among members of the external community of practice (public, private and civil society stakeholders, international cooperation and academia) to implement the agricultural components of the NDCs. Thus, virtual exchange sessions were held with the support of the UNOSSC, addressing issues such as the development of strategies to implement practices and ensure participation in the field, climate funding and the transparency of adaptation monitoring and evaluation.

The training in the CARICOM countries facilitated the development of guidelines and mechanisms to more effectively involve agricultural stakeholders, by ensuring evidence-based decision making to prioritize the sector as part of the solution to climate change. Action plans were also developed to improve monitoring, the

presentation of reports and the verification and recording of GHG emissions in agriculture, as well as to build the capacities of technical staff and decision makers to foster, design and implement interventions to transform the sector for greater climate resilience.

One concrete example is the capacity building exercise offered at the Caribbean Agricultural Climate Resilience Forum, which equipped 53 agricultural stakeholders in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to devise integrated soil and water management strategies, as a means of increasing resilience to adverse environmental impacts.

Likewise, during the Regular Meeting of the IABA, the ministers of Agriculture of the Americas mandated the Institute to continue formulating actions to increase the agriculture sector's access to various types of climate funding, such as private funding, voluntary carbon markets, green funds and guarantees, which would call for further capacity development and the development of institutional frameworks with the highest level of integrity, transparency and inclusivity.

On the other hand, working sessions were organized with various stakeholders in the livestock value chain, including farmers, private sector representatives and technical officers from the ministries. The objective was to identify and establish best practices for better monitoring and evaluation of livestock activities to spur climate action in the countries, recognizing the importance of reducing methane emissions, specifically in the production and sale of livestock products.

A concept note was submitted to the GCF for USD 25 million to execute the project "GANA-Mexico: Resilient and Low-Emission Livestock and Green Markets in Mexico/Green Climate Fund", which is aiming to transform livestock production in 10 Mexican states into a more climate resilient, sustainable and low-emission activity. The project is making progress in partnership with the Trust Fund for Agricultural Development (FIRA for its acronym in Spanish), as well as the country's Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit and its Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development. Through innovation, technical assistance and a monitoring, reporting and verification system, livestock farmers will be able to introduce sustainable practices and to access market incentives. A similar initiative took place in El Salvador, with the financial support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and the Regional Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Program for Latin America (EUROCLIMA), for the purpose of establishing nationally appropriate mitigation actions to reduce GHG emissions and to improve the climate change adaptation of livestock farms.

IICA has established a certain level of authority in this area, having defined sustainability indicators in Uruguay, with its final presentation of the "Sustainable Livestock Regional Hub" project. It has also participated in initiatives such as the Uruguay Roundtable on Sustainable Meat and the National Strategy for Livestock Agricultural Development, which is seeking to improve the sustainability of livestock systems in the country.

The EbA⁴ project in the Caribbean: ecosystem health

This project elicited community participation and the use of nature-based solutions to reduce factors triggering the degradation of soils in upland areas, protect ecosystems and their services, build awareness about climate risks and to provide nature-based livelihoods. More than 100 beneficiaries are using vetiver grass to create a new market, avoid water erosion on farms and resolve marine and coastal problems.

The Institute has also assisted in developing strategies to promote a change in rice cultivation practices to build greater resilience and reduce emissions in LAC countries, by exchanging lessons learned and experiences in South-South cooperation processes; formulating national and multi-country rural projects; and organizing webinars and consultation processes to create public policies to promote a more sustainable rice crop. Furthermore, a proposal was presented to the Global Methane Hub to seek funding for actions in Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Uruguay.

Application of the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) in Chile and Panama

In Quilamapu, Chile, in collaboration with the Agricultural Research Institute, IICA implemented the first drip irrigation system for rice cultivation, as an SRI-based innovation system. On the other hand, more than 100 rain producers of rain-fed rice in Panama reduced their production costs by 30%, generating approximately 40 cents in income for each balboa invested and reducing per hectare GHG emissions by approximately one ton of carbon equivalent per hectare.

In a bid to facilitate access to different types of climate financing and to provide technical officers, producers and the private sector in the countries with a sense of the potential of the agriculture sector, the Institute organized capacity building sessions and webinars to discuss available opportunities, initiatives and mechanisms in relation to voluntary carbon markets and the challenges that they pose.

In order to exert greater influence in this area and to reach senior authorities in the ministries and decision makers, IICA collaborated with the Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative (VCMI) and Climate Focus to publish two technical documents:

- 1) "[Agricultural and Blue Carbon Market Opportunities in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)" and 2) "[Carbon Market Opportunities in Livestock Production, and Cocoa and Coffee Agroforestry Systems: An Analysis of Opportunities in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)".

⁴Funded by the Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) Fund of the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund, with the support of the Government of Germany, through the German Development Bank, and with resources from the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of Germany's Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

C. Action in the field

The Institute also undertook climate action efforts in the Caribbean, conducting training sessions to improve the knowledge and capacities of extension officers to assist farmers to apply measures and practices to increase climate intelligence and the resilience of their agricultural operations. This resulted in behavioral changes, prompting more effective use of soil and water, the adoption of nature-based climate-smart technologies and practices, as well as the use of green engineering solutions to improve soil health and increase the resilience of agricultural enterprises to climate risks and other crises.

The *bofedales* of Bolivia

In collaboration with the “Bofedal es Vida” program, two projects funded by AECID and EUROCLIMA are fostering the sustainable management and conservation of high-altitude wetlands (*bofedales*), which are extremely important in various communities in Bolivia, due to their fragility and the crucial role they play in camelid production. The projects conducted surface area estimates, mapping, participatory diagnostics and designed climate smart plans in eight municipalities. More than 100 technicians and 253 producers (108 women and 145 men) received training in the management of this type of ecosystem.

A proposal on resilience and the creation of alternative livelihoods was prepared for various communities in Belize, which was approved by the Adaptation Fund. A concept note for a “Guardians of the Forest” project was also developed and presented to the GCF for its consideration.

Within the framework of the Caribbean Climate Responsive Agriculture Forum (CCRAF), IICA organized four webinars and two capacity building courses and prepared several technical publications on adaptation planning, the development of emission inventories and the application of adaptation technologies. These efforts led to partnerships with Helen’s Daughters and the WHYFARM project to educate school children using the AGRIMAN AGVENTURES tool. The AGRIMAN initiative seeks to offer a unique educational experience that will appeal to children and youth, while also promoting greater awareness of agriculture, sustainability and the importance of agriculture for future generations.

An eight-week Drone4Agriculture training program/course on the use of drones in agriculture was also organized for technical officers in the ministries of Agriculture, as a means of expanding their knowledge and capacities and encouraging drone use in their respective countries.

Sustainable agriculture in the Ecuadorian Amazon

The PROAmazonía program benefitted 3,549 families, many of them women-led, enabling them to bolster their coffee and cocoa systems, without the need for deforestation, as well as to increase their productivity and the price obtained for their products. Additionally, an initiative in partnership with the project “Production Development in the Amazon Provinces through Agricultural Innovation and Differentiated Marketing” provided support to more than 1,200 families, in the form of equipment, production infrastructure and innovation systems, to boost the quality of their products and their competitiveness in national and regional markets.

In collaboration with the Brazilian Amazon Environmental Research Institute (IPAM), a technical reference document was prepared on the bioeconomy and sociobiodiversity as key integrating factors in the Amazon countries, which will provide technical input for national and international conferences. IICA is also taking part in the Amazon Dialogues, in which governors and the Legal Amazon Consortium are developing an agenda. In Colombia, a collaborative effort with the Universidad Nacional resulted in the development of the Amazon in Colombia’s Land-Use Strategy plan, as well as a project on land-use planning in that region.

The Institute conducted a rapid soil health assessment in Jamaica to inform decision making on declining cocoa and coffee productivity across the agro-ecological zones of the country. The project was funded by the International Trade Centre (ITC), with technical assistance from the Jamaica Agricultural Commodities Regulatory Authority (JACRA) and the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA).

In collaboration with the CCRAF and the UNOSSC Project, various webinars were conducted to enhance the knowledge of local producers in Caribbean countries about agricultural applications specific to the region. The webinars sought to assist farmers to adapt to climate change; to empower children, youth and women, by sensitizing them about the opportunities available in agriculture, as well as about climate action and sustainability. Other areas of focus were drone usage, as well as strategies to increase the capacity of beekeepers to adapt to climate change.

As a communication and outreach tool, the CCRAF developed a repository with all of its technical products, which is housed on the Agriperfiles platform: [CCRAF Repository](#).

With the assistance of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), partnerships were forged with religious and educational organizations in Antigua and Barbuda, to implement hydroponic systems and to revive pineapple production, through the use of environmentally friendly technologies. A mangrove nursery was also established in collaboration with BarbudanGo.

Under the regional project “Capacity Development in the Use of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in Rural Communities of Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica and Guatemala”, which was funded by the AECID, prefeasibility studies were undertaken,

and clean energy technologies installed in five rural Bolivian communities in Pucarani, Viacha (La Paz), Tomave and San Pedro de Macha (Potosí), benefitting 104 farmers (41 women and 63 men). In Colombia, 250 producers in the Cauca district participated in renewable energy projects, expanding their production opportunities.

The Innovation and Bioeconomy Program validated the results of the Terraviva project in Colombia, which focuses on the processing and use of coffee pulp and mucilage, for greater efficiency and productivity, thereby reducing the overall costs involved in commercial coffee production. The participation of women and youth in economically viable production activities was particularly noteworthy, allowing them to increase their household income.

Agricultural Health, Safety and Agrifood Quality

The aim of the Hemispheric Program on Agricultural Health, Safety and Agrifood Quality is to build technical and institutional capacities in this area; to harmonize, update and implement rules; and to develop capacities for the adoption of best practices.

To this end, more than 12,500 persons were trained on issues related to animal health, plant health, food safety and SPS, by way of more than 85 in-person/hybrid technical events and more than 130 virtual technical events. Technical specialists from the Program delivered more than 40 technical presentations in international symposiums, meetings and workshops.

The virtual platform and 2023 training program included:

- A virtual course by the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI), registering 50 participants from 12 countries;
- A course on Agricultural Best Practices in the Dairy Sector, which registered 205 participants from 10 countries;
- Growing Safe Produce (<https://pci.iica.int/>) – a virtual platform on food safety, which was accessed by more than 650 users from 20 countries on the day of its launch and which now boasts more than 2,000 registered users; and
- The Electronic Training Course on BPA Auditing, which was attended by more than 200 participants.

IICA celebrated its first hemispheric event on the One Health approach, bringing together participants from animal health, plant health, public health and the environment in the same in-person and virtual space. Its aim was to promote intersectoral actions and the results were used to develop the One Health approach for the Hemispheric Partnership. Seventy people attended the face-to-face session, 189 connected via Zoom and another 200 logged on via the Institute's social media pages.

Twenty meetings on international standards were held, registering 1,650 participants and reaching a consensus on improving trade in the countries of the Americas. There were also three sessions (two virtual and one in person) coordinated by the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), which had 205 participants; three virtual sessions on SPS, with 300 participants; three virtual Codex Alimentarius colloquiums for the private sector, with 190 participants; and a training course on consensus building for Codex staff, which had 40 participants. There were also eight virtual interregional Codex Committee colloquiums involving the United States, LAC and Africa and attracting approximately 800 participants from 30 countries; and two workshops on the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC): one for the Caribbean, featuring 20 plant health experts from 14 Caribbean countries and another for Latin America, with 95 plant health experts from 17 countries and six regional and international organizations.

Together, the three primary regional integration mechanisms—the Inter-American Group for Coordination of Animal Health in the Southern Cone (GICSV), the Plant Health Committee (COSAVE) and the Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (PVC)—were responsible for 90% of the technical management of the various activities. As the host organization of the GICSV Secretariat, IICA managed the activities of five regional organizations with 33 member countries, a coordinating committee, seven working groups, 29 meetings, seven technical products and five webinars with more than 400 participants. COSAVE managed the activities of seven countries, an annual cooperation program, three virtual events with more than 700 participants, a hybrid event with more than 200 participants and an in-person event with more than 60 attendees. The Institute, in collaboration with the PVC, coordinated the 20th anniversary meeting of the committee, with over 300 people in attendance.

Strengthening of Argentinian health institutions

The Institute led innovative initiatives to improve the implementation of public policies on health and agrifood safety, within the framework of the “Senasa Siglo XXI” project, offering modernization solutions and consensus-based strategies on how to tackle current challenges. “The Program for the Strengthening of Agricultural Health and the Sustainable Management of Maritime Resources in Argentina”, strengthened capacities at SENASA, with regard to new technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and also improved infrastructure in strategic regions, enhancing the organization’s capacity to respond to health emergencies.

At the national level, the Regional Center of Excellence for Latin America and the Caribbean in Pesticide Sciences was launched in Colombia. IICA, along with the USDA, the Minor Use Foundation (MUF), the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) and Universidad Nacional de Colombia organized the first training activity of the Center, discussing magnitude studies for chemical pesticide residues and biopesticide efficacy tests. It was attended by 82 professionals.

The project “Improving Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing to Support Management of Cadmium (Cd) Levels in Cocoa in Latin America and the Caribbean”, funded by the STDF and the 11th European Development Fund, along with national agencies in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago, agreed to formulate nine recommendations to mitigate levels of cadmium in the cocoa value chain for their incorporation into national plans for the cocoa sector. It also analyzed the fundamental sources of contamination at critical points, in order to provide specific solutions for each country and location. Three countries completed aptitude tests for laboratory standardization, with a view to detecting cadmium in soil and plant tissues, whereas the fourth country is now conducting the tests.

In Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, cooperation was offered to strengthen capacities in the preparation of emergency drills, and three drills were carried out based on the needs of each country to respond to the Fusarium TR4 emergency. In Mexico, together with the National Agri-Food Health, Safety and Quality Service, pest and disease control programs were carried out and inspections and assessments were coordinated to prevent the entry of more than 1000 pests and 56 exotic diseases and preserve the country’s plant health status.

ASF: the case of the Dominican Republic

With USDA resources, technical and administrative cooperation was offered to strengthen the capacities of the Ministry of Agriculture in the strategic and operational management of ASF to contain and fight against the disease. Additionally, in coordination with the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), compensation was offered to more than 200 pig farmers affected by this disease, to address incidents and provide compensation in a timely manner through the Agricultural Bank of the Dominican Republic.

In relation to pests and diseases of agri-food interest, the Institute, together with public and private partners, universities and donors, focused its work on: 1) improving the population and health of bees affected by the Varroa mite in Antigua and Barbuda; 2) the transboundary management and control of avian influenza, Fusarium TR4, the screwworm and the giant snail in Nicaragua; 3) the import of 1,000 in vitro banana seedlings of the *Cavendish Formosana* variety, tolerant to TR4, and their adaptation to the conditions of Saint Kitts and Nevis; 4) surveillance and assessment of livestock diseases (e.g. Salmonella species), training more than 200 stakeholders from rural Trinidad and Tobago, in collaboration with WOA, Washington State University and the government; 5) vaccination against classical swine fever in 102 municipalities of Alagoas, Brazil⁵; 6) the exchange of knowledge between Argentina, Bolivia and Chile on the technique of releasing chilled adult fruit flies; and 7) together with the Chilean Agency for Food Safety and Quality, the development of a methodology to estimate the social and economic costs of foodborne diseases in Chile.

⁵ In partnership with the Brazilian Association of Pig Breeders and the Brazilian Association of Animal Protein, under the coordination of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply, the State Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock and the Alagoas Agricultural Defense and Inspection Agency.

Prevention of entry of *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. cubense TR4

This program reinforced the biosafety knowledge of 1,800 musaceae producers from Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, to control and prevent the entry of this fungus into their plots. This training process in field schools is part of the cooperation actions between GIZ and IICA.

The Institute completed a total of 20 externally funded initiatives in the areas of safety, trade, produce, pesticides, ASF and SPS. Specifically, 14 initiatives remained on the agenda and six new ones were added, for a value of USD 10.3 million. These initiatives included ASF, maximum residue limits (MRLs), AMR Mobile App, food safety, SPS, harmonization of food safety processes in LAC and the STDF. This involved working with at least nine strategic partners: USDA, Food and Drug Administration and the CODEX Office in the United States, STDF, EU, MUF, WOA⁶, the Program on the Global Burden of Animal Diseases (GBAD)⁷ and the U.S. Dairy Export Council.

Partnerships for animal health

Together with South American countries, and in collaboration with the CVP, IICA provided technical cooperation in response to the emergence of highly pathogenic avian influenza. In addition, in coordination with the USDA, multiple regional meetings and capacity-building activities were held to provide technical assistance to the countries, with participation in meetings organized by the WOA⁶, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases.

Within the framework of the strategic meetings on WOA⁶ standards, discussions were held with the delegates of the countries of the Americas regarding a proposal from the Collaborating Centre for the Economics in Animal Health (CCESA), which was approved in the General Session of the Assembly of Delegates, held in May in Paris.

In coordination with the University of Liverpool, the GBAD technical lead and the CCESA director for the Americas, a technical conference on the GBAD and the potential of the Americas was organized within the context of the technical seminar focusing on the 20 years of operation of the CVP in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

In order to strengthen the integration between programs, cooperation actions were carried out with ALA, ALADI, APHIS of USDA, PAHO, FECALAC and SECAC.

⁶ In three strategic meetings with several delegates from the hemisphere, ten joint positions were drafted on relevant issues for the Americas regarding the formulation of the WOA⁶ codes.

⁷ The Institute participates in this Executive Committee.

Digitalization of Agrifood Systems

The Hemispheric Digitalization of Agrifood Systems Program aims to promote digital transformation, institutional strengthening and the design of policy initiatives, as well as capacity building and support for the implementation of successful digitalization experiences.

Given its extensive knowledge and connections, IICA has positioned itself as a key organization at the service of different public and private digitalization stakeholders. Specifically, at the hemispheric level, Digital Agriculture Week has been consolidated as a benchmark event, with the participation of seven public and private strategic partners, more than 50 attendees from different countries (policymakers and representatives of AgTechs, corporations, research institutes and producer organizations) and more than 1,000 people who followed each day of the event online.

Panama's Center for Research and Production in Controlled Environments

The Institute assisted in the design and management of this new center, including land acquisition and strategic planning. Assistance was provided for the development of a USD 19 million loan project for 2024. In addition, there was approval from the National Laboratory of the International Space Station and the Center for the Advancement of Science in Space of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of the United States to conduct research on this space station on varieties resistant to Fusarium TR4.

Likewise, with the contribution of internationally recognized experts, a high-level technical activity on AI applied to agriculture was carried out, benefiting more than 1,000 people from various organizations and countries in the hemisphere. IICA generated diagnostic information and recommendations to promote the development and use of digital solutions in the countries, based on various studies carried out (on the development of AgTechs in the Andean region, the mapping of policies for digitalization and the use of digital technologies to manage droughts).

The Digital Fabrication Lab (Fab-Lab) of the Institute

Within the framework of the Fab-Lab, 12 events were held in Costa Rica with the Asociación de Desarrollo Integral de San Rafael de Heredia, Asociación de Comercio Justo Bosque, the municipality of Pérez Zeledón, the Lapa Verde shelter, Asociación Edunámica, the Center for Environmental Law and Natural Resources (CEDARENA), aqueducts of the Central Valley, the Trade Promotion Agency (PROCOMER), the National Women's Institute (INAMU), entrepreneurs from the Central region, the Puntarenas marine park, NASA-SERVIR, the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) of UNDP and two editions of "Chicas a Volar" ("Let's Fly Girls"). The most recent edition of the Women's Rally was one of the most relevant initiatives, held together with BIOFIN, and where 22 women from indigenous territories participated.

At the regional level, IICA assisted in the organization of a session on digital agriculture during the Caribbean Week of Agriculture, where the program was presented and support was offered to ensure the participation of some of the presenters.

Through the support offered by the Program to the group created by PROCISUR, the national agricultural research institutes engaged in a rich discussion on potential actions in the new digital scenario.

During the sharing of experiences, the IICA AgTech Network was consolidated, made up of 30 leading AgTechs from 16 countries. This has boosted interaction, direct contact⁸ and collaboration between companies from different nations.

The first version of the interactive repository of AgTechs was also developed, with more than 200 AgTechs identified and characterized. In the very short term, this will allow Institute staff members, member countries and partners to explore various solutions all in one place.

Experience with applications in Trinidad and Tobago

IICA provided training on digital applications such as FarmVue and AgriFindr and geospatial mapping tools to improve decision-making and data recording related to coastal soil erosion. This initiative benefited 64 technical and field officers of the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries, the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation and the Cocoa Research Center.

In Costa Rica, the Institute's Agrihub platform has a training section that offers courses on the development of business plans linked to the bioeconomy and on photogrammetry with drones to design farm plans. Furthermore, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, a hybrid course was created for 30 specialists who are now able to make better use of the equipment at their disposal. A platform for the auction of agricultural products in wholesale markets was also developed, in order to ensure transparency in commercial processes.

Efforts were made to complete the study on digital transformation in agriculture, and virtual seminars were organized with the participation of 204 people. A strategy was designed to strengthen agricultural digitalization in Venezuela.

Finally, actions were coordinated and IICA's internal digitalization capacities were increased, as a result of the establishment of a community of practice, with the participation of almost 30 staff members from more than 20 units.

⁸ A WhatsApp group with the AgTechs was established and participants are actively coordinating actions.

Gender Equality and Youth

Within the framework of the Hemispheric Partnership for Food Security and Sustainable Development, the Hemispheric Program on Gender Equality and Youth organized the Permanent Forum of Female Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Senior Officials of the Americas, whose objective is to foster gender equality and the empowerment of rural women in the Americas through exchange spaces that promote dialogue, collaboration and policymaking to prioritize and strengthen their role in the region's agrifood systems.

During the fourth edition of this forum, 26 panelists gave presentations discussing the path towards a care economy for agrifood systems in the Americas, and described the public and private initiatives which are in place or that need to be scaled up to engage in dialogue with financial entities, recognizing the importance of care to strengthen the agrifood systems of the Americas. During this dialogue, collective actions were described in support of reducing the excessive burden of care activities that falls on rural women, formalizing this unpaid work and guaranteeing that this intersectionality is considered in public and private initiatives, while ensuring sufficient financial support. The initiatives that will guide the work of the Institute in 2024 were also discussed.

IICA carried out the first course of the Training Program for Rural Women, entitled Introduction to Entrepreneurship for Rural Women, in which 56 women from the Andean and Central regions, as well as from Mexico and the Dominican Republic, were trained. Participants received a personalized approach to guide them in their concerns and support them in their empowerment. This had a direct impact on their communities and contributed to the fulfillment of the mandate of Member States to reduce gaps through capacity building.

Another relevant initiative was the course on climate change and green recovery, geared towards 70 rural women and held in collaboration with the General Directorate of Rural Development of Uruguay. Participants rated the course as excellent.

On the other hand, the Institute's cooperation was consolidated through strategic alliances, especially with the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), with which a general technical cooperation agreement was signed during the IV Forum of Female Ministers. This is one of the efforts to consolidate the Hemispheric Partnership for Food Security and Sustainable Development, in favor of the Declaration on the Decade for the Rights of All Women, Adolescents, and Girls in Rural Settings. As part of this initiative, IICA joined the Dialogue Roundtable of Rural Women, led by CIM, with the objective of building a joint agenda and carrying out actions to achieve programmed objectives.

A new strategic partnership was consolidated with Rotary International District 4240, aimed at bridging the identified gaps. This partnership will allow in-person training to be offered to rural women entrepreneurs in the Andean and Central regions. Finally, an

institutional collaboration agreement was signed between the Institute and ECLAC, which establishes joint actions with its Gender Division, including publications, forums for female ministers and the gender indicators seminar, organized annually by this entity.

Young leaders of Honduras

IICA established the School of Agricultural Leaders in Danlí, with the objective of training young people in digital agriculture and leadership. Regarding community initiatives, the reforestation campaign “Planting a tree is planting life” stood out, carried out in the municipality of Alauca in collaboration with various entities and with the active participation of the community.

The Institute has highlighted the central role of youth in the development of agrifood systems. An example of this is the work carried out with strategic partners such as the Global Network of Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD), the NextGen Ag Impact Network (NGIN), I4Nature, 4H, the Young Americas Business Trust (YABT), FAO and UN Women.

Below is a list of specific initiatives:

- In Colombia, together with YPARD, support was provided to the Latin American Meeting of Youth for Rural Development, held in Palmira. With FAO, GIZ, the EU, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research and the Colombian Agricultural Research Corporation, IICA had a significant participation in the organization of this international event and delivered a presentation at a conference on youth and digitalization.
- In collaboration with the NGIN coalition, of which IICA is a board member, a methodology was developed for the selection of youth ambassadors, which constitutes the main pillar of said coalition. In addition, the Institute contributed to developing the NGIN's communication strategy, by drafting articles highlighting the work of youth in agriculture in the Americas, and took part in the World Food Forum, organized by FAO to bring youth closer to decision makers.
- With I4Nature, IICA commemorated World Milk Day at the event entitled “Youth in the Dairy Sector: Sustainable Dairy Value Chain”, during which young professionals in this sector played a leading role.
- Together with the YABT, the Institute participated in high-level forums, such as the International Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Symposium, held in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico; the Policy Laboratory at the 2023 Democracy Summit, held in Costa Rica; and the ICT Americas event, which was held virtually to spotlight the key role of rural youth in agrifood systems.
- In Guyana, the partnership with the national chapter of WeLead Caribbean, through the Dream Builder Program of the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs, provided intensive training in business development to 80

participants from different regions. At the Guyana School of Agriculture, the gender perspective was integrated into the curriculum.

- In Antigua and Barbuda, training was carried out to raise gender awareness among agribusiness service providers. Likewise, more than 25 women and youth strengthened their agricultural processing capabilities for the local market.
- In Suriname, together with the IDB Lab, solutions were designed to increase resilience to the impacts of climate change in the production of women's groups in the Kapasikele area.
- In the United States, the Institute joined forces with global women's associations, meeting in New York City, during the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, to focus on gender gaps faced by rural women and girls in the Americas.

Furthermore, different initiatives have sought to raise awareness on gender and youth issues for IICA and its counterparts. This includes the commemoration of International Women's Day (March 8), International Youth Day (August 12), and the International Day of Rural Women (October 15). Through this approach, which has contributed to promoting greater awareness on these issues, the Institute has demonstrated its commitment to equality and inclusion, in an effort undertaken with the other hemispheric action programs, delegations and units at Headquarters, such as the Human Talent Division. Likewise, during 2023, a professional network on the topic of rural youth was created to share experiences and identify good practices to develop projects, and whose main focus is to contribute to the reduction of gaps that affect rural youth in the Americas.

Finally, key topics have been addressed such as the care economy, promoted in the IV Forum of Ministers, through 53 policy frameworks, six resources and one event systematized in the OPSAa.

Institutional Relations and Project Management

IICA has expanded its accountability process by preparing three annual institutional reports: a) Green Climate Fund 2022 - Annual Institutional Evaluation, b) Commitment of International Organizations to the Lima Agreement within the Framework of the Organization of the American States, and c) Principles and Practices of Supervision and Management for International Organizations of the United States Department of Agriculture. These reports have demonstrated the Institute's ability to be accountable and fulfill its commitment to the efficient management of financial resources and obligations under international agreements. This has positioned the Institute as a reliable partner for agricultural and rural development in the Americas and the world, which not only facilitates the Institute's access to additional financial resources that contribute to preserving its financial sustainability, but also allows it to engage in further negotiations with international partners.

Canadian cooperation and agriculture in LAC

IICA formalized a new project with Global Affairs Canada (GAC), valued at CAD 5 million, with the objective of using satellite data and remote sensor technologies to improve sustainable livestock management in Guatemala and Mexico, with technical support from Argentina. The project sought to promote innovative visions on food security, climate change, food safety and agrotourism through multiple international conferences and seminars, as well as internships with McGill University and the University of Ottawa.

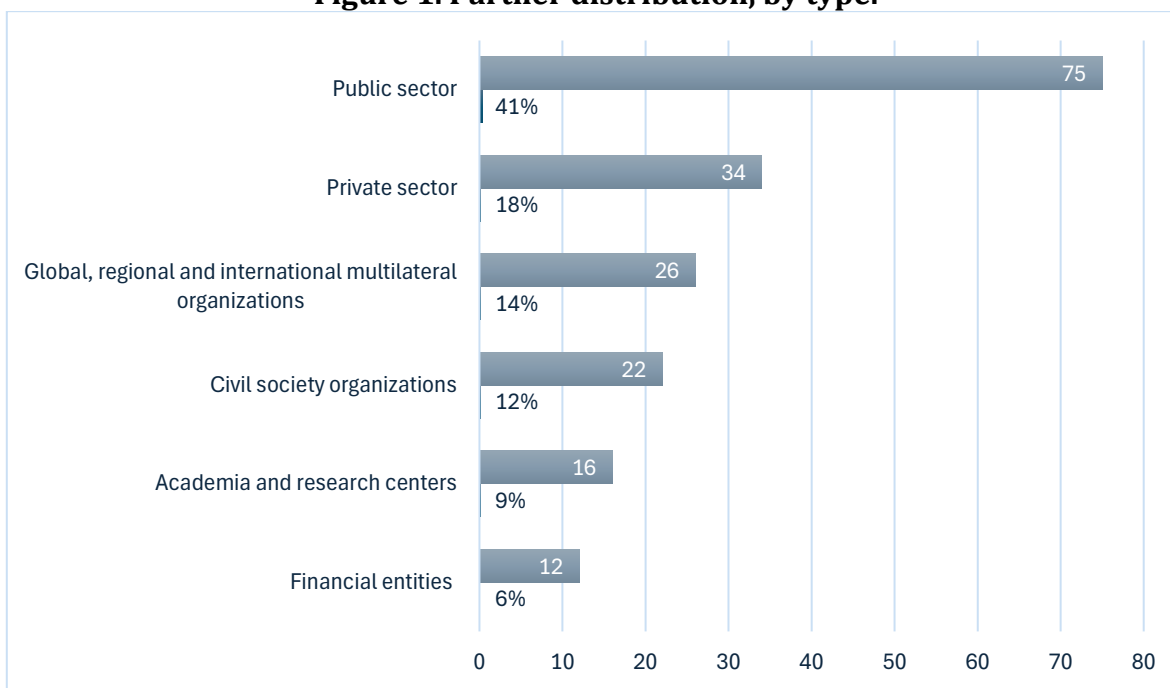
The Institute's management of strategic partnerships was enhanced with the development of an institutional dashboard of strategic partnerships classified by categories, regions, countries, programs/projects, etc., developed as part of the Institute's information access and transparency efforts. This dashboard, a new addition to the hundreds already in operation, is a dynamic and proactive tool for the effective management and monitoring of strategic partnerships, as it centralizes and simplifies member information and is accessible to all Institute staff.

General Secretariat of the Andean Community (SGCAN)

IICA provided support to MIDAGRI of Peru in its role as *pro tempore* President of the SGCAN, to continue the development of the Andean Agricultural Agenda, implement digitalization and redesign version 3.0 of the agenda. In addition, the Institute collaborated in the formulation of the project "Capacity development of organized farmers with emphasis on family farming to promote formal insertion initiatives in markets in the Andean Region".

In 2023, 318 legal instruments were signed with 185 partners, distributed as shown in figure 1:

Figure 1. Partner distribution, by type.



IICA has carried out a series of activities aimed at strengthening the relations of the LAC countries with the EU, namely:

- Strengthening the relationship with the Government of Spain, specifically with the highest authorities of the agrifood sector in this country.
- Renewing agreements with universities, such as Universidad de Córdoba⁹, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Universidad de Alcalá de Henares¹⁰ and the European Business School, with which at least seven university internships were completed.
- Raising awareness about the role of rural women in LAC by making their voices heard, and through photographic exhibitions, round tables and participation in awards and prizes.

Additionally, the Institute’s Network of Partnerships was launched, aimed at complementing the management of strategic partnerships and optimizing the achievement of results. Through the development of a comprehensive strategy for the management of partnerships in the EU, IICA was able to sign new agreements with universities and other academic entities in Europe and to receive specialized

⁹ Promotion of the Master’s degree in Digital Agriculture, which benefited students from Argentina, Costa Rica and Panama.

¹⁰ “La Iberoamericana” art exhibition.

scholarship holders from these institutions, who reinforced the technical capacities of the Institute.

Some of the institutions with which IICA engaged in strategic partnerships in 2023 are the following:

- Fine Cacao and Chocolate Institute
- Global Affairs Canada
- Grenada Bureau of Standards
- Heineken Brazil
- I4NATURE
- International Labour Organization
- Ministry of Economy of Argentina
- Social Innovation Cluster for Change
- The Trust for the Americas
- World Environment Center
- World Rural Forum
- Agriagency for Development Cooperation (ACODEA)
- Corteva
- PepsiCo
- CropLife America

The Institute has held more than 350 high-level meetings and conferences, in which it was responsible for administrative and logistical arrangements, moderation and the provision of editing, translation and protocol services. These meetings featured the participation of Heads of State; members of the diplomatic corps; high-level government officials; representatives of national, regional and international organizations, academic institutions and private sector companies; farmers (including women and youth); and other key stakeholders. Thanks to the success of these events, there is greater appreciation for IICA's work and a stronger commitment from the strategic partners and authorities of its member countries to continue providing their support in the future.

Partnership with the Nicaraguan academic sector and the Ministry of Education

The Institute collaborated closely with academic institutions such as Universidad de Ciencias Comerciales, Universidad Nacional Francisco Luis Espinoza Pineda and Universidad Nacional Agraria, through seminars, technical talks and participation in high-level academic activities. This strengthened IICA's network of national partners in Nicaragua. Additionally, the pilot project "Environmental Initiative" benefited 200 students from two secondary schools in Managua and expanded to ten schools, with acceptance from the Ministry of Education.

Regarding specific actions in the countries, it is worth highlighting the leadership of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in the execution of the 2023 work plan of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), which has allowed this

country to strengthen the promotion and development of agrifood systems in the Americas and improve South-South cooperation initiatives in agriculture.

On the other hand, based on Argentina’s experience in triangular cooperation and the efforts of the Foreign Ministry of this country, through its Agro.cooper.ar program, the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA) and IICA, projects were implemented for the dairy chain of Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, as a result of missions led by technical experts from these Central American countries to the province of Misiones.

The Institute carried out various actions in collaboration with the Brazilian government and multilateral funding agencies, including the approval of seven new projects, six addenda and various reviews of current projects. These initiatives covered a variety of priority topics related to family farming, public rural development policies, access to water, rural connectivity, the bioeconomy and natural resource management, among other projects of interest to the Government of Brazil.

Regarding projects, IICA engaged in processes of identification and negotiation of at least 40 international calls for proposals and tenders. Additionally, the Institute formulated and presented more than 70 project proposals to donors or other entities interested in the services provided by the Institute. Five of these initiatives were presented to the EU, three to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), six to the GCF and one to the Global EBA Fund, all related to capacity development, solid waste management and family farming, which will potentially benefit countries such as Peru, Paraguay, Haiti, Brazil, Paraguay, Jamaica, Chile, Ecuador and all of Central America.

Based on efforts carried out with the Government of The Bahamas, two new projects from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) were approved, aimed at addressing soil degradation, reducing climate risks, integrating protected areas and reducing threats associated with non-native species, habitat degradation and pollution.

Table 1. List of the ten main projects developed by IICA.

| Title | Source of funding | Amount in million USD | Partner country |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| GCF Project Preparation Facility: “Project Preparatory Facility Application for conducting studies and developing the funding proposal of the project: Mitigation and adaptation to climate change under agroforestry systems in cocoa production in the Amazon and Atlantic Forest biomes” | GCF / UNOPS | 21.8 | Brazil |

| | | | |
|---|------------------------|------|-----------------------|
| Innovation Lab for Irrigation | United States: USDA | 19 | Honduras, El Salvador |
| Bosques Vivos de Honduras (AVA and Alianza Forestal) | EU | 16.9 | Honduras |
| Renovación Cafetalera | Government | 15 | El Salvador |
| ProMaize | USAID | 5.7 | Guatemala |
| GAC Global Affairs Canada | Canada: GAC | 3.5 | Guatemala, Mexico |
| Comunidades Rurales | Saudi Arabia | 2.2 | El Salvador |
| VPA FLEGT (AVA and Alianza Forestal) | EU | 2 | Guyana |
| Empowering Small-Scale Farmers in the Agroecological Transition through Participatory Rural Advisory Services | GFRAS/Agridea | 1.2 | Chile |
| Situation Room Guyana | Government | 1 | Guyana |

Source: Directorate of Projects.

The Institute has put together a new Program to Strengthen Technical Capacities in Project Management for the Mobilization of External Resources, through which 125 specialists from ten IICA delegations, including technical experts of the main local counterparts, refreshed their knowledge on the subject and reduced the cognitive gap of staff members in terms of negotiation skills and project formulation. To complement this training, an instrument was designed for the definition, registration and administration of a project portfolio for each of the Institute's delegations based on 15 evaluation criteria to prioritize proposals.

Finally, an institutional proposal was developed for the establishment and administration of a pre-investment fund, whose purpose is to make seed capital available to the delegations, so they can, in turn, present competitive proposals after evaluating multiple criteria to make the institutional decision to present them to donors or not.

Governance and official meetings

Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas 2023 – Twenty Second Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA)

The Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas 2023 – Twenty Second Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) was held from 3 – 5 October at IICA Headquarters in San Jose, Costa Rica. Fernando Mattos, Minister of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries of Uruguay chaired the meeting.

The ministers and heads of delegation expressed full support for the creation of the Hemispheric Partnership for Food Security and Sustainable Development, based on seven strategic principles for collective action, and urged the governments of the Institute's Member States to undertake and strengthen actions to enhance the partnership. They also instructed IICA to build on its technical cooperation services through concrete actions in the following areas identified by the Conference:

1. The bioeconomy as a strategy aligned with Agenda 2030.
2. Science, technology and innovation, including digital agriculture.
3. International and regional trade as a catalyst for sustainable development and food security.
4. Climate action and financing, with an emphasis on the capacity of agriculture to tackle the challenges.
5. The “One Health” approach as a strategy to achieve agricultural health in agrifood systems.
6. Family farming and inclusive rural development.
7. Equity and gender.

Likewise, the IABA endorsed the “Water and Agriculture” initiative, recognizing the strategic importance of increasing the involvement of ministers of Agriculture in designing and implementing intersectoral public policies that facilitate the integrated management of water resources.

The IABA also instructed the Director General of the Institute to support the participation of ministers and secretaries of Agriculture of the Americas, and of IICA itself, in the Twenty-eight Conference of the Parties (COP28), as well as to install a pavilion at that conference, for the purpose of promoting national, regional and global analysis and action on issues related to the correlation between agriculture and climate change.

On the other hand, the IABA endorsed the “Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Development in the Americas: A Perspective on Latin America and the Caribbean” report, jointly prepared by the Institute, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the

Caribbean (ECLAC), which provides governments in the region with useful insights for policy analysis and formulation.

The ministers also requested that the IICA Director General organize hemispheric meetings to assess and determine the current status of animal and plant health in the Americas; devise joint cooperation strategies; explore successful public-private experiences; and promote a comprehensive approach that will lay the foundation for effective and coordinated hemispheric collaboration.

The IABA accepted the offer from the Federative Republic of Brazil to host its next regular meeting in that country.

Executive Committee (EC)

The Forty-third Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee was held on 19 – 20 July 2023¹¹ at the San Jose, Costa Rica headquarters of the Institute. Indar Weir, Minister of Agriculture and Food Security of Barbados chaired the meeting. The main agreements adopted were as follows:

- To approve the 2022 Annual Report of IICA.
- To express support for the proposal of the General Directorate of the Institute with respect to the Hemispheric Partnership for Food Security and Sustainable Development and the “Water and Agriculture” initiative.
- To ask the Director General to prepare and present for the consideration of the IABA a proposal on strengthening the participation of ministers and secretaries of Agriculture of the Americas, and of IICA itself, in COP28.
- To recommend that the IABA approve the overall allocation of resources from the Regular Fund for the 2024-2025 biennium.
- To approve the 2022 financial statements of the Institute and the report of the external auditors, which attest to the effective administration of IICA’s finances.
- To accept the 2021-2022 biennial report of the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Learning Center and the 2021-2022 report of the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute.

¹¹ The Committee was made up of the following Member States: Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela.

Official meetings held in 2023

| Official name | Date | Venue | Place and date of publication of the report or proceedings of the event |
|---|------------------|--|---|
| Regular Meeting of the 2023 Special Advisory Commission on Management Issues (SACMI) | 26 April 2023 | Virtually from IICA Headquarters in San Jose, Costa Rica | IICA, San Jose, Costa Rica, May 2023 |
| Forty-third Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee | 19-20 July 2023 | San Jose, Costa Rica | IICA, San Jose, Costa Rica, September 2023 |
| Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas 2023 - Twenty-second Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) | 3-5 October 2023 | San Jose, Costa Rica | IICA, San Jose, Costa Rica, March 2024 |

Main corporate management results

Strategic management and organizational design

At the end of the implementation period of the 2018-2022 Medium-term Plan (MTP), the organization assessed the gains achieved in the six strategies of the institutional business model, which demonstrated that 90% of the established objectives had been met.

As of 2023, the entire IICA embarked on an integrated planning process, within the framework of the 2022-2026 MTP. All teams conducted a tactical planning exercise, based on the Institute's five Strategic Statements and their corresponding performance indicators and in alignment with the collective and individual operational plans. This facilitated a performance evaluation of each staff member and the implementation of a performance incentive program. Moreover, the teams at Headquarters and in the 34 offices updated their risk matrices, thereby helping to build a culture of prevention.

IICA's experience in this area has been shared with authorities from the ministries of Agriculture of Argentina, Costa Rica, Guyana and Peru, as well as from institutions specializing in coffee and rural development in Honduras and the Dominican Republic, respectively, which are seeking solutions similar to those obtained by the Institute or are striving to analyze their public policies, taking into account these value chains or using a results-oriented approach.

The entire exercise provided IICA's senior management, divisions and representatives in the 34 Member States with updated information, via more than 130 business intelligence dashboards, thereby facilitating the development of new programs for follow-up, monitoring, control, statistical generation and the evaluation of our goals. The reports on the results were also presented in due time and form to the governing bodies and to the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS). The 2022 Annual Report, [which is available online](#), was designed to create greater visual appeal than previous reports.

In keeping with the evaluation plan, the Directorate of Technical Cooperation at Headquarters conducted an appreciative evaluation exercise; the team in the Venezuela office completed a self-evaluation exercise; and performance evaluations were carried out with respect to the IICA Brazil and Trinidad and Tobago offices.

More than twenty lessons learned were identified through 229 self-evaluation exercises undertaken during the 2022-2023 period, which were shared with the entire organization, in a bid to promote institutional learning.

The shift from a culture of hierarchy to a culture of netarchy, focusing on decentralization, effectiveness and efficiency, reduced the time and steps needed to

carry out daily tasks, while ensuring optimal use of resources to concentrate on delivering first-class services. Stemming from this change, the following results were achieved:

- All the Institute's technical and administrative teams at Headquarters and in the Member States prepared a tactical plan aligned with the 2022-2026 MTP.
- A total of 388 initiatives were programmed in a timely manner, and the expected results, indicators, targets, completion dates and resources defined.
- Thirteen interconnected macroprocesses and the corresponding 303 processes, subprocesses and procedures were mapped, encompassing all of the operations at IICA. Of particular note were the design of the technical cooperation macroprocess¹² and the improvements in administrative processes in the Institute's delegations in Argentina and the Dominican Republic.
- A course was developed on process-based management and a guide on real-time institutional monitoring.
- Twenty-five network teams were created, involving two thirds of IICA's technical and administrative staff (225 staff members), whose efforts have been optimized through the use of online forms and visualization via business intelligence dashboards that illustrate the progress achieved through a process culture.
- A decentralization plan for the 2023-2025 period was approved, with the aim of spurring dynamic and modern administrative management by delegating responsibilities for service delivery to the delegations.
- A proposal on updating the Staff Rules was presented for consideration by the governing bodies of the Institute, aiming to eliminate disparate and obsolete rules and to incorporate a gender focus and best practices for human resource management.
- The Integrated Management System (SIG) and the Travel System were upgraded. New systems were also introduced for asset control and external resource management.
- Response times for contract management and processing were reduced to a maximum of two days on average.

¹² It includes the following processes: a) technical and institutional capacity building; b) the exchange of knowledge, expertise and experiences through networks; c) consultancy and the development of strategic processes; and d) conceptual and methodological development for technical cooperation.

- Reports were prepared on the results of Single Fund for Technical Cooperation initiatives and on the in-house capacities in our offices.

Budget and finance matters

IICA collected the quota resources needed to fund 100% of the budget approved by the IABA, as well as quotas from previous financial years. The Institute honored all of its financial commitments, enabling it to actively mobilize external resources for cooperation projects, as well as to participate in international tenders and competitive bidding processes to access assistance or investment resources for development.

The institutional strategy to ensure the rational and frugal use of resources was further strengthened with the creation of a process reengineering plan aimed at improving operations and cushioning the impact of escalating costs, by making use of institutional capacities and economies of scale.

As part of effective budgetary management, IICA sought to improve the management of cash resources, generating USD 6 million of savings on average in the annual budget, by more effectively managing the budget allocated for technical cooperation and making greater use of information and communication technologies. A more robust financial architecture, thanks to improved investment of resources and a reduction in the costs for services, has enabled IICA to increase its cash flow by USD 38.5 million over the last five years.

The strengthening of the financial architecture, as set out in the Institute's business model, called for the diversification of its investment portfolio, which generated close to USD 6.5 million in returns.

For the fifth consecutive year, the financial statements of the Institute received a clean and unqualified opinion in the external auditors' report, which stated that the financial resources of IICA were effectively managed in a reasonable and transparent manner.

The soundness of the Institute's financial/ accounting position was further strengthened with the implementation of a new accounting standard, which was tested by the auditors and adopted in all our offices, after the necessary training had been provided. Furthermore, staff from various delegations were trained on how to make better use of the SAP financial system and on accounting matters; and the purchasing module for the system was implemented in Panama.

Human talent

In 2023, the third “Our Voice” survey was conducted to assess the organizational climate and culture and was completed by eighty-six percent of the staff. Based on the results, which have been increasingly positive (See Table 1), the different teams are now better equipped to devise organizational improvement plans.

Table 2: Results of the “Our Voice” survey.

| | Percentage value | | |
|---------|------------------|------|------|
| | 2019 | 2021 | 2023 |
| Climate | 70 | 78 | 81 |
| Culture | 72 | 79 | 82 |

On the other hand, the institutional incentive program was successfully implemented, awarding staff according to the level of performance of the more than 70 technical teams, as well as for the results achieved by 99% of the staff throughout the hemisphere in their annual performance maps.

Mindful of staff well-being, there was an annual salary review based on the cost of living in each country, in particular for Costa Rica, Colombia, Uruguay and Peru. IICA closely monitored the situation in those member countries that experienced hyper-inflation during the year, to maintain the purchasing power of employees. Staff Week 2023 was a particularly significant initiative, as it served as the main platform to integrate new staff; conduct health (vaccination) and wellness campaigns and blood drives; and to organize recreational/ sporting activities, among other events that took place in all the offices of member countries.

Within the framework of the business model, the organization implemented a strategy to strengthen human talent, certifying 90 staff members in project negotiation, conflict resolution and the handling of difficult conversations. Moreover, the language instruction program continued, training 80 staff members in the four official languages of the Institute.

Information and communication technologies

Integrated planned also called for important adjustments in IICA’s planning, programming, evaluation and performance map systems. Moreover, cooperation demands related to information and communication technologies (ICTs) included innovations, such as the Public Policy Observatory for Agrifood Systems (OPSAa) and websites designed to highlight the role of rural women and youth.

Through the use of ICTs, more than 500 online or hybrid meetings were held, which facilitated language interpretation, group collaboration and streaming on social media.

Cyber security was enhanced through technological mechanisms and best practices aimed at strengthening institutional infrastructure, for example, the upgrading of

equipment, server migration, updating of the Active Directory, renewal of domain controller certification, configuration of intrusion detection services and the implementation of multifactor authentication for the Microsoft 365 accounts at Headquarters.

IICA of Open Doors

The Plaza of Agriculture of the Americas, as the main point of entry to the Institute and to the various areas set up to conduct demonstrations on the future of agriculture, has increased IICA's social and cultural ties with the neighboring Vásquez de Coronado community.

Costa Rica's National Carbon Neutrality Program (PPCN) recognized the Institute as a carbon neutral organization, after IICA adopted various measures to reduce and offset greenhouse gas emissions, which was verified through a series of audits. The official Executive Committee and IABA meetings were the most notable examples of carbon neutral events taking place at the Institute in 2023.

Other relevant activities organized under the IICA of Open Doors program were events such as the "Ethanol Talks Costa Rica" seminar, the "ALTA Fuel & Environment" conference and the XIII National Robotics Olympics.

The Institute welcomed more than 12,000 visitors in 2023, who had the opportunity to strengthen their digital capacities and to experience first-hand technologies that are revolutionizing the world of agriculture today: robotics, spatial information collected via satellites¹³, solar energy¹⁴, drones¹⁵, regenerative artificial intelligence and augmented reality.

Other memorable events included: a) the first Minecraft Education Challenge for Agriculture, which allowed Costa Rican high school students to take part in developing solutions to agricultural problems; b) Creativity Week; and c) the First Meeting of High-Potential Students, organized in collaboration with Costa Rica's Ministry of Education.

More than 100 trees were planted in the Forest of the Americas, and environmental variable monitoring devices and automated vertical gardening systems were installed. On the other hand, the IICA souvenir store adopted a socioenvironmental responsibility focus and today sells products manufactured using renewable resources, under the slogan, "IICA NATURA".

All of the aforementioned environmentally friendly actions enabled the Institute to achieve a perfect score (100% and 5 stars) in Costa Rica's Blue Flag Ecological Program.

¹³ A new exhibit area displaying satellite information generated via the Copernicus program, which was mounted at the Institute, with the support of the European Union, through the AGROINNOVA project.

¹⁴ Installation of a solar pump donated by Enertica and Ennos.

¹⁵ A new module at the Interpretive Center for Tomorrow's Agriculture (CIMAG), which was established in collaboration with the company, Indigo.

Annexes

Annex 1

IICA pre-investment initiatives in 2023

| Start date | Title | Country | Amount allocated (USD) |
|--|--|---------|------------------------|
| March | Formulation of a concept note to be presented to BHA/USAID | Haiti | 1,500 |
| May | Support for the formulation of a proposal to participate in the REM MT Program – Phase II | Brazil | 6,000 |
| May | Technical assistance for “Sustainable Business - A Circular and Inclusive Economy” | Peru | 5,500 |
| June | Identification, negotiation and development of profiles and proposals for the Northeast project. | Brazil | 30,000 |
| June | Development of Concept Note: Support program for the Global Climate Change Alliance. | Haiti | 3,600 |
| July | Formulation of an external resource mobilization strategy. | Bolivia | 15,525 |
| August | Preparation of concept notes on climate change, agrotourism and/or AHFS. | Canada | 15,000 |
| August | Development of the “Incitations liées a la production animale” project | Haiti | 9,800 |
| Total IICA resources invested: USD 86,925 | | | |

Source: Directorate of Corporate Services/PMED.

Note: Through these institutional pre-investment initiatives, IICA expects to mobilize USD 53.7 million in financial resources.

Annex 2

Main partners in IICA's 2023 agricultural and rural development agenda

| Countries | Organizations |
|-----------------------|--|
| Antigua and Barbuda | Global Environment Fund (GEF), German Development Bank (KfW), European Union (EU), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM) and UN Women. |
| Argentina | International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). |
| Bahamas | Global Environmental Facility. |
| Barbados | CARICOM and Committee Linking Entrepreneurship-Agriculture-Development (COLEAD). |
| Belize | CARICOM, Protected Area Conservation Trust in Belize, World Bank, FAO and Green Climate Fund (GCF). |
| Bolivia | Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC). |
| Brazil | Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), GCF, FAO, UN Women, Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). |
| Canada | Global Affairs Canada (GAC), Forum for International Trade Training (FITT), IFAD, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and University of Guelph. |
| Chile | Consorcio Lechero, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, IDB, National Forestry Corporation (CONAF), Latin American Network of Rural Extension Services (RELASER) and FAO. |
| Colombia | GIZ, Ohio State University, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), EU, Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF), GCF and AECID. |
| Costa Rica | AECID, Fundación Biomatec, Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE), Costa Rica United States Foundation for Cooperation (CRUSA), Costa Rican Investment Promotion Agency (CINDE), Livestock Corporation (CORFOGA), International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA), USDA, EU, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA). |
| Dominica | FAO, International Trade Centre (ITC), United Nations Partnership Initiative on Sustainable Land Management (PISLM). |
| Ecuador | Amazonian Integral Forest Conservation and Sustainable Production Program (PROAMAZONIA), STEA, GCF, GIZ, Italian Ecuadorian Fund for Sustainable Development (FIEDS), Hidroalto, Banco de Desarrollo del Ecuador B.P. and Ecuadorian Agency for Agricultural Product Quality Assurance (AGROCALIDAD). |
| El Salvador | USDA, AECID, EU and Agricultural Development Bank (BFA). |
| Grenada | CARDI, EU and Grenada Bureau of Standards. |
| Guatemala | USDA, Fundación Fidesma, Corazón del Tejido S.A, GCF, Italo-Latin American International Organization (IILA) and RIKOLTO. |
| Guyana | Presidency, CARICOM, CATIE, IDB, United States Department of State, Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), FAO and World Bank. |
| Haiti | CATIE, IDB, USAID and the Project to Reduce Food Vulnerability in La Gonave (PREVAG). |
| Honduras | Instituciones del Café, State of Honduras and National University of Agriculture (UNAG). |
| Jamaica | Codex Alimentarius, CARICOM, CARDI, EU and World Bank. |
| Mexico | World Resources Institute (WRI), German government- IKI initiative, GCF, International Labour Organization (ILO), Universidad Zamorano de Honduras, Trust Fund for Agricultural Development (FIRA), International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), National Agricultural Council (CAN), Syngenta, Bayer, Nestlé and Veolia. |
| Nicaragua | Ministry of Education of Nicaragua (MINED), Institute of Agricultural Protection and Health (IPSA) and various universities. |
| Panama | IDB Lab, GIZ, EU and CAF. |
| Paraguay | BAYER, AECID, EU, Fundación ArgenINTA, Regional Fund for Agricultural Technology (FONTAGRO), Agricultural Biotechnology Institute (INBIO) and FV. |
| Peru | GIZ, General Secretariat of the Andean Community (SGCAN), PROJECTA+, GCF and IDB. |
| Dominican Republic | USDA, Agricultural Bank of the Dominican Republic (BAGRICOLA), Dominican Agricultural Institute (IAD) and Special Fund for Agricultural Development (FEDA). |
| Saint Kitts and Nevis | Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum (CPHD), GEF, GCF and Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC). |
| Saint Lucia | Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (O ECS) Commission, GEF and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Saint Vincent and the Grenadines | Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and FAO. |
| Suriname | IDB Lab, UNDP and Australian Government. |
| Trinidad and Tobago | IDB Lab, Caribbean Development Fund, EU, CARICOM, 4-H and National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO). |
| United States | United Nations (UN), FoodTank, IDB, Organization of American States (OAS), Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), IFAD, FONTAGRO, FAO, USDA, PAHO, IDB, World Bank, Corteva, U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC), PepsiCo and CropLife America. |
| Uruguay | Plata Basin Financial Development Fund (FONPLATA), MEVIR, IDB, GCF and Southern Agricultural Council (CAS). |
| Venezuela | World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), GCF, Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI), Alianza Global and various research centers. |

Annex 3

Principal IICA knowledge products

| | |
|---|--|
| IICA virtual campus https://elearning.iica.int/ | This virtual training platform offered 75 courses in 2023, further developing the capacities of 21,127 participants from 61 countries. It bears mentioning that 152,995 have participated in these training courses since 2018. |
| Alliance of Agricultural Information Services (SIDALC) https://www.sidalc.net | It has become a leading mechanism for strengthening cooperation and facilitating the exchange of knowledge resources generated by agricultural institutions in the Americas. Its knowledge resources include magazine articles, bibliographies, research data, courses and professional profiles. One aspect that must be mentioned is the creation of the specialized information resource centers on topics such as family farming, water for agriculture, bioinputs, bioeconomy, climate change, gender and agrifood systems, among others. SIDALC provides access to 3,278,241 million documents, 95% of which are digital resources, representing a 44% increase in relation with 2022. |
| AgriPerfiles https://agriperfiles.agrid.net/ | This platform contains 19,620 profiles on professionals involved in the agriculture sector of the Americas, having grown by 20 % in 2023. The registry also includes 5,656 organizations and 22,306 publications. In 2023, 130,412 users accessed the platform, viewing 376,304 pages, thereby representing a 3% and 17% increase respectively. |
| Integrated IICA-CATIE library management system https://opac.biblioteca.iica.int/ | This system facilitates the management of the IICA and CATIE libraries. In 2023, the addition of 1,534 new library resources increased total resources to 149,466 documents (physical and digital). The system was accessed by 10,335 users, who viewed 72,775 pages. |
| Institutional repository https://repositorio.iica.int/?locale-attribute=en | This has proven to be an important tool for the organization and distribution of institutional knowledge. It contains 21,683 digital documents, 617 more than 2022. The items uploaded to the system include 1,219 audiovisual resources (354 of them being AgroEnlace programs), as well as 551 videos, virtual forums and webinars. Also available are IICA annual reports dating back to 1943 and country reports from 2010 to 2022. A total of 12,313,272 users accessed the platform in 2023, representing a 116 % over the previous year. |
| IICA Blog https://blog.iica.int/ | The platform was consulted by 41,000 readers and received 60,000 views, which demonstrates that there is a growing interest in its content. Google Analytics also identified 151,000 events or interactions in relation to the Blog, thus demonstrating the importance of the knowledge and experiences shared by the Institute |

| | |
|--|--|
| Scientific databases https://acceso.biblioteca.iica.int/ | IICA and CATIE professionals are able to access international databases containing journals and articles of significant technical and scientific value, which may be accessed from any physical location. This was made possible due to an estimated investment of USD 48,000. |
| Technical cooperation initiatives http://apps.iica.int/dashboardproyectos/ | Provides information on more than 736 technical cooperation initiatives implemented between 2019 and 2023. |

Examples of recent publications:



[El estado de los biocombustibles líquidos en las Américas 2023](#)
(Spanish only)



[What is Food and Nutrition Security and How Can It Measured?](#)



[Strengthening Collective Action in Agrifood Trade to Boost the Region's Role in Economic Development, Food Security and Global Sustainability](#)



[Energías renovables en el mundo real](#)
(Spanish only)

Source: Center for Knowledge Management and Horizontal Cooperation Services.

Acronyms

| | |
|-----------|---|
| AECID | Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation |
| AI | Artificial intelligence |
| ALA | Latin American Poultry Association |
| ALADI | Latin American Integration Association |
| APHIS | USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service |
| ASF | African swine fever |
| BIOFIN | Biodiversity Finance Initiative |
| CAC | Central American Agricultural Council |
| CAF | Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean |
| CARICOM | Caribbean Community |
| CAS | Southern Agricultural Council |
| CCESA | Collaborating Centre for the Economics in Animal Health |
| CCRAF | Caribbean Climate Responsive Agriculture Forum |
| CIM | Inter-American Commission of Women |
| COOP | Cooperatives of the Americas |
| COP | Conference of the Parties |
| COP28 | Twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties |
| COPROFAM | Confederation of Family Producer Organizations of the Expanded Mercosur |
| COSAVE | Plant Health Committee of the Southern Cone |
| CVP | Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone |
| EbA | Ecosystem-based Adaptation |
| ECLAC | Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean |
| EU | European Union |
| EUROCLIMA | Regional Program on Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability for Latin America |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| FECALAC | Central American Dairy Federation |
| GBAD | Program on the Global Burden of Animal Diseases |
| GCF | Green Climate Fund |
| GHG | Greenhouse gas emissions |
| GICSV | Inter-American Group for Coordination of Animal Health in the Southern Cone |
| GIZ | German Agency for International Cooperation |
| IABA | Inter-American Board of Agriculture |
| ICOA | Inter-American Commission for Organic Agriculture |
| IDB | Inter-American Development Bank |
| IFPRI | International Food Policy Research Institute |
| IICA | Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture |
| INNOVAGRO | Network for the Management of Innovation in the Agrifood Sector |
| ITC | International Trade Centre |
| LAC | Latin America and the Caribbean |
| MAG | Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (Paraguay) |
| MERCOSUR | Southern Common Market |
| MIDAGRI | Ministry of Agricultural Development and Irrigation (Peru) |
| MUF | Minor Use Foundation |

| | |
|------------|--|
| NDCs | Nationally determined contributions |
| NGIN | NextGen Ag Impact Network |
| OPSAa | Public Policy Observatory for Agrifood Systems (IICA) |
| PADE | State Agrifood Policy (Panama) |
| PAHO | Pan American Health Organization |
| PROCINORTE | Cooperative Program in Research and Technology for the Northern Region |
| PROCISUR | Cooperative Program for the Development of Agri-food and Agricultural Technology in the Southern Cone |
| PROMECAFE | Regional Cooperative Program for the Technological Development and Modernization of Coffee Cultivation |
| REAF | Specialized Meeting on Family Farming |
| Red PP-AL | Public Policy and Rural Development of Latin America and the Caribbean Network |
| SECAC | Executive Secretariat of the Central American Agricultural Council |
| SENASA | National Food Safety and Quality Service (Argentina) |
| SGCAN | General Secretariat of the Andean Community |
| SIECA | Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration |
| SPS | Sanitary and phytosanitary measures |
| SRI | System of Rice Intensification |
| STDF | Standards and Trade Development Facility |
| TR4 | <i>Fusarium</i> Tropical Race 4 |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| UNOSSC | United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| USDA | United States Department of Agriculture |
| VCMi | Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative |
| WOAH | World Organisation for Animal Health |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |
| YABT | Young Americas Business Trust |
| YPARD | Global Network of Young Professionals for Agricultural Development |

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