

**ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE WTO AGREEMENT ON
SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

Information Presented by the Inter-American Institute for
Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

The following communication, received on 19 March 2012, is being circulated at the request of the IICA.

1. The observer organizations of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Committee) are invited to submit reports on the activities they have carried out to further the understanding and implementation of the SPS Agreement. The IICA wishes to present some of the actions and activities that it considers relevant to the work of this Committee.

Promoting participation in multilateral forums associated with the SPS Committee

2. The IICA has now completed the project to support participation by the Americas in Codex Alimentarius committees. This project, launched in October 2009, was completed in December 2011. Its aim was to support the active participation of IICA member countries in the Codex Alimentarius and to promote their regional interests through support to the Codex Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC).

3. The project was funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the IICA (75 per cent and 25 per cent respectively). The total cost of the project was US\$400,000, and 31 countries participated.

4. The project was a competitive fund, which meant that countries interested in receiving a subsidy had to meet pre-established requirements and participate in a selection process. The project prioritized active participation over capacity building.

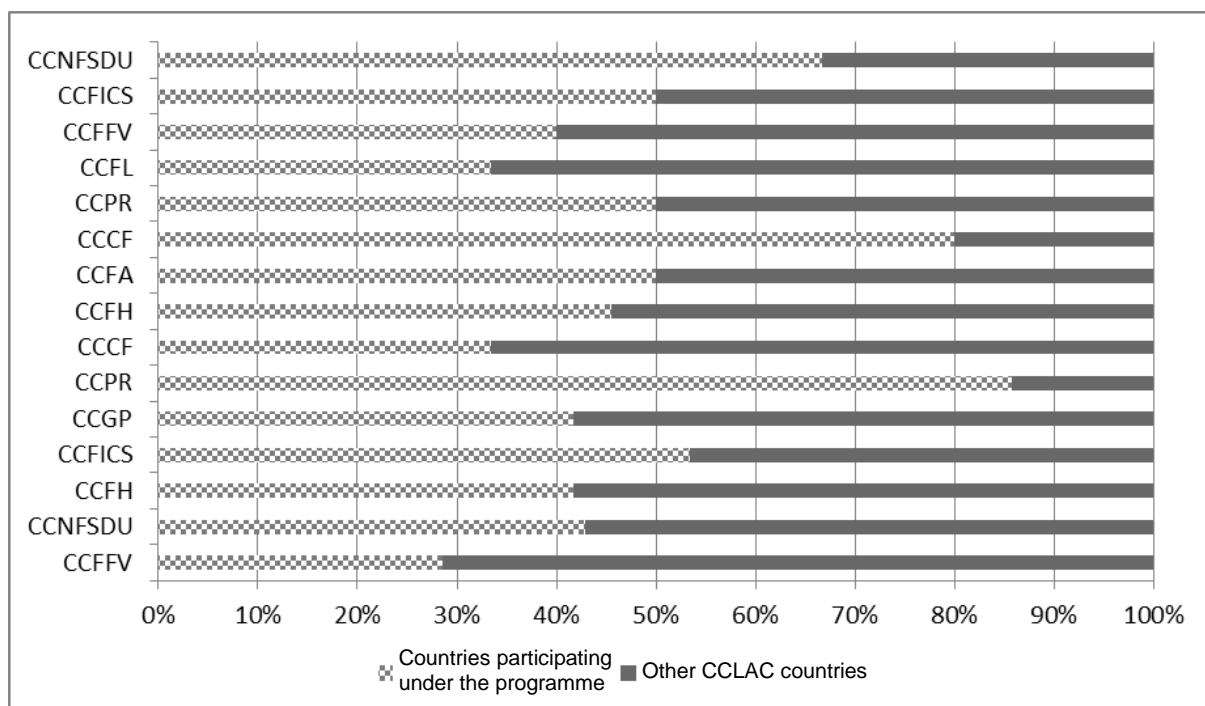
5. Support was provided for participation in 16 meetings of 9 Codex committees, and there were 21 beneficiary countries. On average, there were 4.5 recipient countries per meeting.

6. The main results achieved through the implementation of the project were the following:

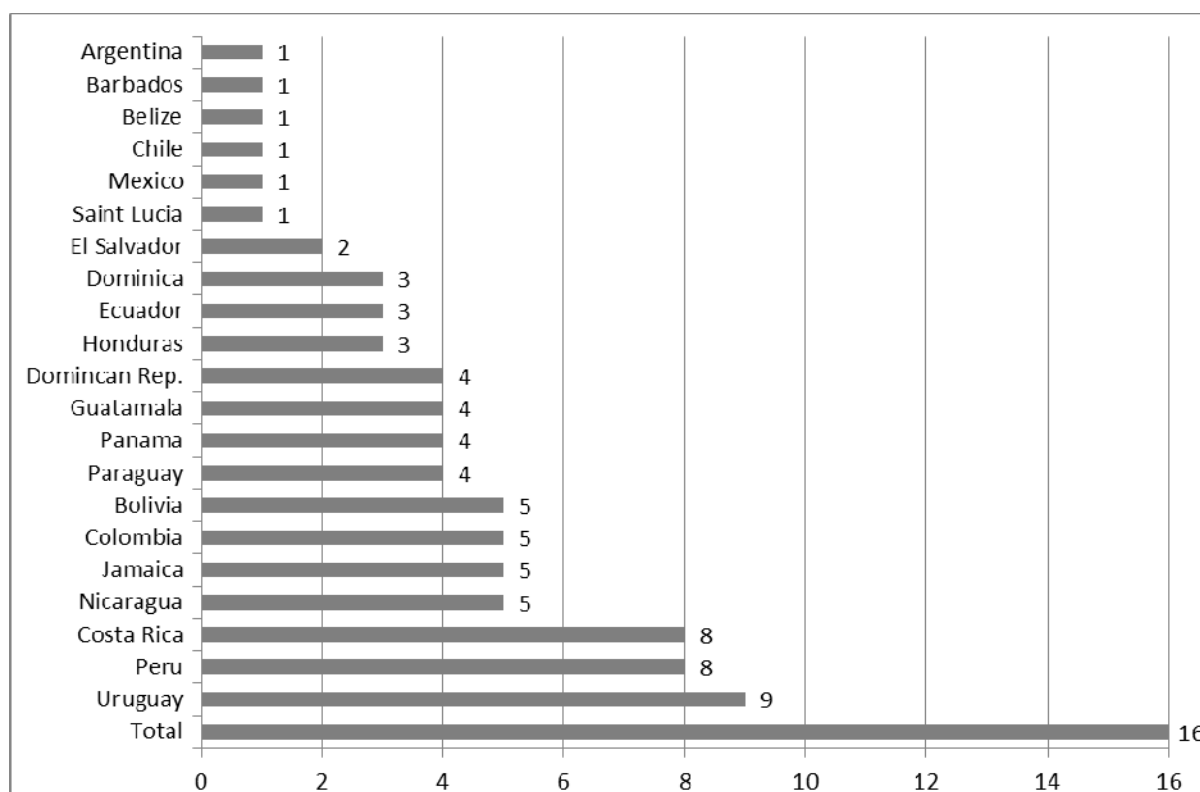
- (a) CCLAC's position in various Codex committees was strengthened thanks to the presence of a greater number of countries and a better regional position;
- (b) countries with direct interests in Codex committees and with clearly defined national positions were able to participate actively in these committees.

7. The main conclusions drawn from the implementation of the project are the following:
- (a) It is difficult for countries with weak or non-existent institutional infrastructure to define a national position, participate actively and benefit from programmes that facilitate participation in this type of forum;
 - (b) the benefits of the programme are maximized when supplemented in parallel by activities such as the colloquia organized by the USDA, which make it possible to examine issues in a regional and face-to-face context before participation in Codex committees.

Participation of CCLAC countries in Codex meetings within the framework of the programme or otherwise



Number of subsidies received by beneficiary countries



8. In addition to the project to support participation in Codex Alimentarius committees, a cooperation project is currently being implemented to assist Costa Rica in its role as CCLAC coordinator. This project seeks to develop the skills of delegates and promote regional coordination.

9. Successful online coordination meetings have been held before Codex committee meetings to identify and consolidate regional positions.

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Technical and institutional capacity building

10. The IICA provided technical cooperation for the modernization of phytosanitary services in Haiti through the application of the Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) tool for phytosanitary protection organizations. This resulted in a plan to strengthen the national phytosanitary service. The IICA is also contributing to the development of a strategic plan for the National Animal Health Service (SENASA) of Costa Rica.

11. Within the framework of a four-year project aimed at CARIFORUM countries, the SPS component of which was recently entrusted to the IICA by the European Union, national agricultural health and food safety agencies and equivalent coordination mechanisms will be supported, created and strengthened.

12. In order to encourage the examination of the new US Food Safety Modernization Act, the IICA organized a second technical forum in conjunction with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The forum was transmitted via the Internet to IICA member countries in the Caribbean region.

13. Under a contract with the IPPC, the IICA developed a new online IPPC course on pest risk analysis. The course is for global use and is available on the IPPC website. An English version will soon be available.

14. The Central American countries, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic have benefited from a pest risk analysis workshop attended by the IICA, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), USDA-APHIS and the IPPC. The workshop consists of three modules: (i) an online course; (ii) a classroom workshop; and (iii) an internship. Only the third part of the workshop remains to be completed.

15. The IICA, in cooperation with the Southern Cone Plant Health Committee (COSAVE), organized a workshop on good agricultural practices (GAPs) for a number of South American countries. The workshop resulted in a document that is now being finalized on the situation and outlook for GAPs and the approach that should currently be adopted in this area.

16. A new cooperation agreement has been signed between the IICA and the Andean Community of Nations (CAN). The agreement will lead to joint programmes for strengthening agricultural health and food safety in CAN member countries.

17. As part of a four-year cooperation agreement between the IICA and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), an IAEA-funded project has been approved for the control and eradication of fruit fly in the Andean region. The four-year project will cover Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

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