

## **A Business Strategy for Technical Cooperation Services**

Three factors guarantee a successful business strategy, but only if they are taken together: get the client to have the perception that he received more than he anticipated; get the client to have the perception that he paid less than he expected; and succeed in selling much more than what the client intended to buy.

Attaining greater participation in the technical cooperation market must follow a business protocol supported by a strategy to strengthen institutional presence. Eight areas have been identified in which IICA has made progress; the aim is that these areas must be strengthened by applying homogenous processes with extensive professional support.

### **1 Position the brand and make it visible**

IICA relies on a technical, political and managerial reputation that must be strengthened using a precise communication strategy.

Filling technical spaces with foresight means generating specialized innovative content and good practices; it means opening up and exploiting critical spaces and moments.

Responses to a crisis on hand must be thoroughly examined and the crisis turned into an opportunity to take a stance that offers innovative solutions based on knowledge to undertake agendas for adaptation and resilience.

IICA must take more risks in terms of positioning itself in relation to critical dimensions in development. It is necessary for IICA to foster extensive debate based on technically supported, highly sensitive and opportune declarations.

### **2 External Relations**

A strategy is needed to establish a revised external relations strategy that combines and balances technical, diplomatic and political content.

The external agenda must permeate from the General Directorate through to the Delegations. At each level—national, regional, hemispheric and global—there must be a protocol for creating opportunities for relations.

Basic training in international relations, international institutional structure, international law, and, especially, the area of international development cooperation and the international system—paying special attention to funding and resources—must be adequately applied throughout the entire institution, especially among all the technical experts.

A specific, ad-hoc strategy for each market segment must be defined and applied at all pertinent levels as a rule of management.



### **Ascribe Value to Project Management**

IICA should conduct a process to re-evaluate its management role in technical cooperation projects, since these are a primary factor in the institution's technical agenda.

Protocols should be established to redefine the processes of project negotiation, design, management, evaluation and execution so that Member States can identify assignments that involve and are relevant to IICA. For this reason, the capacities of the Delegations, mainly in design and negotiation, should be strengthened and this should be done with the involvement of central technical teams.

Management and technical delegation projects should cease to be described by the institution's collective mindset as "administrative projects".

Each management project must guarantee that it will draw on the highest degree of institutional knowledge and that it will feed that knowledge to ensure that its experiences, lessons learned and good practices add to the body of knowledge that will be applied to new management projects in similar or other scenarios.



### **Further Develop the Current Market**

It is necessary to conduct inventory and a thorough evaluation and valuation of IICA's current markets and, based on this, establish a strategy to deepen its relationship with its clients.

The logic to be applied should be to broaden the agendas as they relate to projects, actions, relationships and commitments with counterparts with whom a significant relationship already exists.

It is important to establish segmentation and a differentiated strategy that reflect the potential, real and effective demand conditions so that the relationship with counterparts is clear, with differentiation in dissemination measures, political relationships and sales opportunities, all the while understanding that the latter cannot be left out of any external relations scenario.

The agenda to raise external funds must abide by protocols that would allow any technical expert at any level to have the capacity to identify opportunities and pursue them in the corresponding technical and diplomatic scenarios. These protocols must contain the necessary information on the institution's technical offer, and technical teams should be equipped with adequate training in the matter.



## **Opening up the Private and Social Markets**

Small producers, medium and large businesses, agribusinesses and agro-industries and other links in the supply and logistics chain all constitute a massive universe with multiple opportunities for a trade incursion on IICA's technical cooperation services.

However, this approximation must be placed within the context of the mission principles that link the institution to the public agenda of its Member States and the international environment.

As a result, it is recommended that protocols be established in relation to the offer of services to the productive sector through the following mechanisms:

1. Position the offer along the lines of public policy implementation;
2. Establish relations with business and growers' collectives, whether guilds or producer associations, to guarantee sufficient critical mass for high impact on the sector;
3. In all cases, support mechanisms established by policies relating to innovation systems.

It is fundamental to establish flexible relational, contractual and project execution mechanisms with private stakeholders.

The world of social innovation, which comprises philanthropy, corporate social responsibility, foundations and NGOs, must form part of an explicit agenda of objectives in relation to the sale of services.



## **Pinpointing the Innovative Market**

The services that IICA offers must rely on a portfolio that provides innovative solutions, as well as the capacity to identify alternative instruments from among the best existing offer.

This offer is conceived of as a platform that incorporates technological packages—in the sense of organized knowledge—that are suitable for public, productive or social client demands, and are produced by specialized centers.

IICA must offer its platform to the international scientific development community, mainly through CGIAR with its research centers.

This is a new scenario that requires high technical capacity to establish a win-win relationship with research teams. To achieve this, IICA's technical teams must have access to technical instruments that allow them to connect the scientific knowledge with scenarios for innovation and the implementation of solutions.

New, daring and imaginative protocols need to be defined to establish mechanisms that provide researchers with the incentive to join the platform, and the willingness to manage financial resources that make this partnership possible.

The platform must include a mechanism that makes it possible for CGIAR centers, universities, technological development companies and other offerors to broaden their capacity to attract funds for their research on account of its pertinence and impact, furthered by the connection to the services provided by IICA from its Platform.



## **Opening up the International Cooperation Market**

Similar to what obtains in IICA's main competitor organizations, financing for international technical cooperation must come from financial resources that circulate in the development cooperation system. Historically, IICA has discretely participated in this realm, since it does not rely on an ambitious, structured strategy of incursion.

The external relations strategy proposed earlier must complement an intensive, ongoing campaign to gain space in the bilateral and multilateral cooperation world, by assuming a role that asserts the principles of shared responsibility and differentiation to achieve sustainable development, especially in these critical times for humanity and for the region as it suffers the effects of serious vulnerabilities.

In detail, what is proposed is a broad, intensive and synchronized campaign to accompany the Member States in defending the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, in a rallied attempt with IICA's member Governments. With this objective, and under this banner, a strategy needs to be formed to reverse the decline of official cooperation assistance for the region's development.

To complement this, a protocol must be established to develop concrete mechanisms for south-south and triangular cooperation, which would allow development cooperation to find a feasible, quality proposal that proves attractive and serves as motivation to invest in IICA's innovation platform.



## **Commitment to Long-term Causes**

IICA must undertake a strategy and campaign to establish itself as a hemispheric leader in the field of agriculture and rural wellbeing, in a scenario where product recession and possible depression, high uncertainty and increased vulnerability loom for the region.

This implies having a very strong corporate, cultural and communication strategy that positions it as the advocate of long-term causes.

This means that all units at IICA must assume an active, preemptive posture, by overcoming passive and reactive attitudes that plague management.

Defending a more united, equitable and effective global order and expanding the participation and representation of the national and sectoral interests of Member States should become the institutional “mantra”. For this reason, it is necessary to have a unified dialogue that serves as the real basis of the slogan “One IICA”.

This structural positioning has a high political component, therefore it must be constructed with the region’s States applying technical, political and diplomatic efforts, and should be undertaken as a carefully and laboriously elaborated project executed with a long-term vision.