

STRATEGY 2: Innovation value chain platform

Technical cooperation products and services (portfolio)

<p>Overview</p>	<p>Knowledge management is a value chain that brings together a series of specific processes, specialized actors and intermediary products that act as inputs from one link to the next. It includes the definition of a knowledge problem, based on a concrete need; scientific and technical research seeking to provide a solution; the systematization of a best practice, invention or technology, based on the findings or on an innovation or reconversion process, resulting in the adoption, adaptation and scaling-up of suggested solutions.</p> <p>The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) is one link in the knowledge management chain—with extensive specialization in innovation processes—that is heavily interdependent on the other links, particularly those involved in knowledge generation and consumption. However, currently, it is not fully integrated in the chain, thus it is operating below its potential. Of even greater concern, is the fact that it not fulfilling its major responsibility.</p> <p>This is partially because its linkages with actors in the chain are weak, intermittent or sometimes non-existent—except for one-off, rather than structural linkages—since the technical teams at IICA have not all embraced the concepts and strategies of the value-added knowledge chain, shared values and innovation.</p> <p>The Institute’s program agenda is divided into five programs and two cross-cutting areas of focus that span all the priority agendas of the sector. Innovation is identified as a cross-cutting issue in IICA’s 2018-2022 Medium-term Plan, which emphasizes its capacity to transform and its contribution to the achievement of development goals, but within the constraints of the technological innovation of agricultural research institutions. Thus, innovation should be considered a critical part of all the Institute’s program agendas and should no longer be relegated solely to technological and production areas.</p> <p>The knowledge value chain calls for the creation of long-term agendas that cover the entire knowledge chain—from conception to use—so that it can be applied to resolve concrete problems. IICA is involved in ongoing efforts to identify common objectives with institutions linked to these chains. However, these links do not lead to permanent long-term agendas, but instead are limited, in most cases, to temporary and sporadic actions. Thus, the Institute has not managed to consolidate strong, long-term linkages with value chain actors.</p> <p>The Institute’s technical cooperation services include mentoring, advisory and training activities, as well as project execution for a user or client. These services draw on the technical expertise that the Institute has acquired, based on two pillars: the skills and abilities of its professional teams, on the one hand; and on the other, the concepts, methodologies and tools developed in the knowledge management value chain of IICA’s area of activity. The development, formalization and dissemination of these products are not a major part of the Institute’s activities, which has reduced the number of technical solutions in its portfolio of services, given the low level of production and the underuse of the store of available knowledge.</p> <p>Currently, the Institute’s portfolio is restricted mainly to its expertise, which, although valuable, is extremely limited, given the challenges and potential of the new situation. The technical cooperation services offered by the Institute rely on the knowledge and capacity of the technical team to satisfy the requirements of the demand. Overall, IICA has not been able to devise instruments that have been widely recognized at the international level as products of the Institute. Technical products developed by the Institute in recent times have been utilized only to a limited extent by its own technical staff, which has limited and restricted their internal impact and has had an even greater effect on their perceived importance by users, clients and partners. Thus, another weakness that has been identified is the excessive caution in developing products and in the failure to disseminate them internally.</p>
<p>What does the strategy seek to achieve?</p>	<p>It seeks to apply the underlying logic of the model and value proposition of IICA’s technical cooperation services, in the form of an innovation platform to: a) determine the current situation in the knowledge management networks and chains in the spheres of action of the Institute’s technical agenda; b) implement an action strategy that leads to significant value-added partnerships with complementary links in the innovation chain, which will consolidate IICA’s role and competence as a contextualizer, bridge and facilitator; and c) strengthen the institutional culture of developing technical cooperation products, which includes the formalization, documentation and implementation of technical content for users and clients, as solutions to their needs.</p>
<p>What are the expected results?</p>	<p>The Institute will have consolidated its position as a leading institution in innovation processes and established the idea that “IICA knows who knows”.</p> <p>IICA will have integrated the logic of the value chains, the principles of shared value and collaborative services into its technical cooperation services, programs and operations, with a view to developing mechanisms for permanent and long-term partnerships and fair compensation to the parties involved.</p> <p>IICA will have developed a series of practical instruments, tools or technical products—as final solutions, adaptable to specific contexts—in support of technical cooperation services in the innovation platform.</p>
<p>What are the possible courses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a map of key actors and analyze the situation in each specific area of knowledge, the available products and the demand, as well as the relevance of the knowledge to the cooperation agendas of the Institute

of action?	<p>at the national, regional and hemispheric levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Systematize information about the portfolio of cooperation services, the innovation products and the structure of networks and technical capacities, aiming to provide high-level knowledge that would enable one to properly assess the existing portfolio and other products that should be included in the technical cooperation agenda. ▪ Agree on collaborative actions to integrate innovation agendas, which would require a process of identifying, negotiating, contacting and establishing relationships, based on mutual areas of interest, objectives and goals between IICA's specialist teams and their technical counterparts in other organizations. ▪ Based on a joint innovation agenda with partners and collaborators, establish focused, relevant and targeted criteria that incorporate long-term objectives and precise elements with respect to technical content; the management structure and logic of project portfolios; institutional engineering; process modality; project actions and the identification of funding strategies, among other aspects of governance and verification. ▪ In keeping with specific parameters, ensure that cooperation products are strictly in keeping with the priorities of cooperation agendas and that they are disseminated and applied in all the Institute's cooperation agendas. Program managers must incorporate the development and implementation of actions in the collaboration agendas into their work. ▪ Ensure consistent and structured development of products, in keeping with the strategies for the collaboration agendas that have been agreed on with chain actors, partners and collaborators. ▪ Develop a protocol that establishes guidelines for the development of cooperation products, including criteria, requirements, quality standards, criteria of applicability and documentation rules. ▪ Implement a more rigorous process to evaluate the development of products and their applications in specific cooperation actions.
What are the expected outputs of these actions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A map of actors (including the Institute) that are actively involved in the knowledge value chains, to identify and capitalize on technical cooperation opportunities. ▪ An innovation process observatory or reference systems¹ that facilitate the identification, classification, systematization and integration of knowledge that is relevant to the management of agricultural and rural development in the hemisphere, while ensuring its availability. ▪ Joint innovation pilot projects by IICA and its partners, aiming to assess collaborative strategies as a permanent mechanism for institutional management. ▪ Negotiated collaboration agreements that are designed and signed with organizations and entities linked to the innovation value chain. ▪ Concrete collaboration agendas that include action and project portfolios, implementation strategies and funding mechanisms. ▪ Technical protocols that define standards for cooperation products, establishing categories of concepts and methodologies; training or capacity building; communication, applied techniques and digital tools, among others. ▪ A product line in each of the program areas, in keeping with national, regional and hemispheric priorities. ▪ An array of projects that make up the Institute's portfolio, which will be available in all the Delegations, with different areas of emphasis, depending on the specific needs of each country. ▪ Ongoing evaluation methodologies for technical cooperation products and processes, in keeping with institutional policies. ▪ Strategies and training material covering the management and application of cooperation products, geared towards technical staff – specialists and project or cooperation service officers.
What is the timeline?	<p>Map of actors and pilot project: December 2020 Implementation of agreements, agendas and observatory: August 2021 Protocols, rules, methodologies and training strategies: July 2021</p>
Who should be a part of this working group?	<p>The group will be coordinated by Federico Villarreal and will comprise the Directorate of Technical Cooperation, the Center for Knowledge Management and Horizontal Cooperation Services, the Office of the Chief of Staff, the Directorate of External and Institutional Relations, the Directorate of Corporate Services (the Divisions of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation; Information and Communication Technologies; and Human Talent).</p>

¹ The Institute has undertaken significant actions in relation to this product, including the Interpretive Center for Tomorrow's Agriculture, Agriprofiles and the Library System. These tools serve as the basis for an innovation reference and dissemination system, which includes directories, case studies, best practices, smart links, classification and consultation systems, as well as facilities for network management.