

# Laying the foundation for **CATIE's future...now**

The first  
100 days

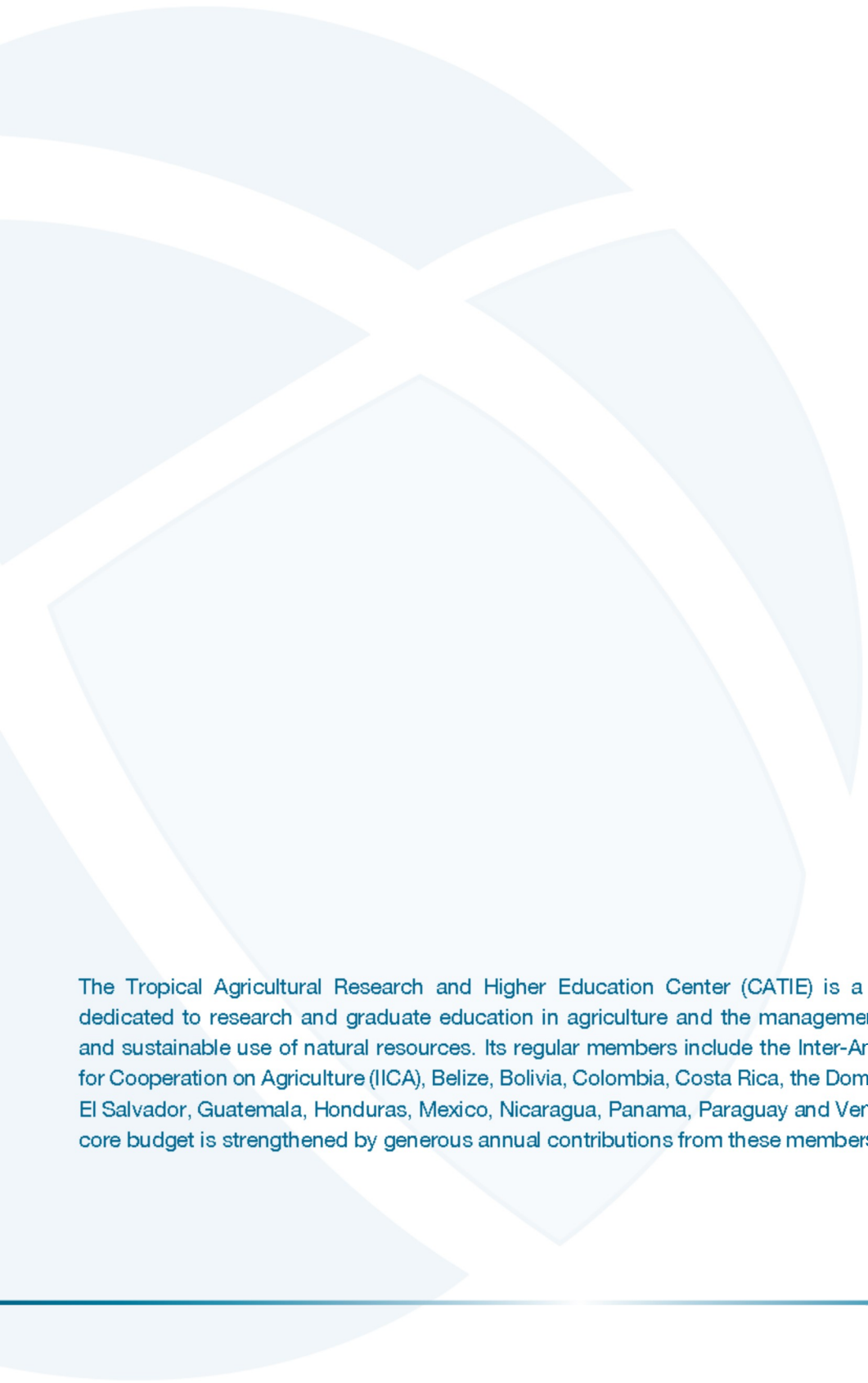
José Joaquín Campos Arce



**CATIE** 

Solutions for environment and development  
Soluciones para el ambiente y desarrollo

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The Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) is a regional center dedicated to research and graduate education in agriculture and the management, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Its regular members include the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Belize, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Venezuela. CATIE's core budget is strengthened by generous annual contributions from these members.

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# Laying the foundation for CATIE's future...now

José Joaquín Campos Arce

## Executive Summary

The first 100 days of work have allowed us to define clear guidelines for our current and future administration.

The Strategic Management System will be the mechanism that translates CATIE's strategic planning into specific actions. The Strategic Management System is closely related to the Balanced Scorecard model, which proposes integrated, balanced perspectives for establishing strategic objectives. In addition, a pilot plan on Activity-Based Costing (ABC) will contribute to better decision making in financial management.

We have begun a participative review process of the institution's Strategic Plan. With new managerial tools, a modern organizational structure and a rejuvenated and participative strategic plan, we are establishing solid bases to undertake our daily tasks with new enthusiasm, constant improvement and a positive impact on our environment at all levels.

Financial sustainability has been another of our urgent and most productive tasks. To this end, we traveled to Europe to meet with strategic partners during these first months; these actions will permit us to have additional resources of close to US\$30 million available in the coming years. At the same time, we are intensely engaged in the search for creative ideas and in strengthening the institution's commercial activities to reinforce our financial resilience.

This search concentrates on financial support to be implemented within the Mesoamerican Agroenvironmental Program (MAP), an ambitious intersectoral program of knowledge management and innovation aimed at achieving the sustainable management and use of land that will improve human well-being in rural areas. Working with many partners and using a livelihoods focus, MAP seeks to help the countries of Mesoamerica improve their productivity through a use of natural resources that is environmentally sound, economically competitive and socially equitable.



CATIE has made significant progress in strengthening its position as a resource in the processes of developing regional, national and local policies. The institution provided support to the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD) and to the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC) for the development of the Regional Agroenvironmental and Health Strategy (ERAS), endorsed by Central American leaders during the Summit of Central American Presidents in May 2008. We are also providing support to CCAD to draw up the guidelines and then to implement the Regional Climate Change Strategy, requested by the Central America leaders.

Furthermore, we are taking part in the creation of the Latin American Alliance on Climate Change and Risk Management and we have been able to retain the presidency, the management and the headquarters of the Ibero-American Model Forest Network, which links 21 model territories in 12 countries.

Our outreach and impact in the member countries will be consolidated by strengthening the National Technical Offices (NTOs) and the National Advisory Committees (NACs). One of the essential requirements we have fulfilled is providing increased financial resources and the definition of an Outreach and Development Strategy.

Additionally, we are making concentrated efforts at different levels to modify CATIE's constitutional contract in order to allow the center to grant degrees and diplomas without the need for agreements with other universities. This achieved, we can begin the process to obtain international accreditation ratifying the excellence of our postgraduate programs.

We have reformulated the loan-scholarship system to transfer the financing component to agencies dedicated to this function in each country. Lastly, we are engaged in the search for financial support to modernize the Orton Memorial Library. This undertaking is especially important because of the growth of this information center as an instrument for global consultation via the Google Scholar search engine.

We are plainly living at a time that is crucial for humanity, in which the appropriate management of agriculture and natural resources occupies a preponderant place in the sustainable development of our countries. The world needs voices that define the path to follow, and CATIE is called to be one of them, based on its invaluable human capital, the social capital represented by its governing bodies and its exceptional network of strategic partners. We are starting out on our journey toward the future with a relevant strategy, a renewed managerial system, committed personnel and a promising financial panorama.



## Laying the foundation for CATIE's future...now

### A pressing need

On taking the reins of this strategic institution, we initiated an extensive, participative and comprehensive process of transformation that will allow us to harmonize a vision for the future, adjust our strategy, reexamine our organizational structure, articulate our efforts and revitalize internal procedures in order to achieve our vision.

This internal momentum is intended to lay solid and effective foundations that, from the outset, translate into concrete actions all the ideas incorporated into the action plan presented to the CATIE Board of Directors and personnel in September 2007 and to the Governing Council in November 2007 in the context of my candidacy for the post of Director General. That proposal defines the social, environmental and political environment in which the institution operates, describes a strategy that is consistent with that environment and identifies five concrete courses of action to contribute to sustainable development and human well-being in our member countries, in close collaboration with regional, national and local organizations.

There is no doubt that we are living in times crucial for humanity, in which the appropriate management of agriculture and natural resources occupies a preponderant place in the sustainable development of our countries. The world needs voices that define the path to follow and CATIE is called on to be one of them.

This report describes the first steps that we are taking on this path, aware of our responsibility and certain of our capacity and accumulated experience. It underscores our comparative advantages as an institution that is a leader in intersectoral and multidisciplinary concepts and approaches, such as the sustainable management of land, water resources and rural areas; environmental governance; multifunctional management of agriculture and natural resources; ecosystemic approaches with a focus on rural livelihoods; integrated development of agricultural value chains; and mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

The five strategic objectives that I presented are intertwined paths along which our work will commence. We ask you to accompany us as we describe and share the way in which, together, we are laying the foundations for CATIE's future...now.

## **A modern structure and a management system with a revitalized spirit**

Experience, clear ideas, competence, critical mass, social commitment...these strategic elements of our task as an institution must be supported by a modern and functional organizational structure, adapted to contemporary management theories.

To this end, from the outset, we began the process of developing the Strategic Management System (as the mechanism that translates CATIE's strategic planning into concrete actions). The Strategic Management System is closely linked to the Balanced Scorecard model, which proposes integrated, balanced perspectives from which we can establish strategic objectives. In addition, a pilot plan on Activity-Based Costing (ABC) will contribute to better decision making in financial management.

The adoption of this modern management system represents a sweeping redefinition with an impact at all levels of CATIE. Based on the two models, we can link strategic objectives with measurable and verifiable goals, articulate efforts efficiently, measure performances and contributions, report results—in other words, we can attune the institution to modern management structures for the 21st century. This new system achieves its full significance when it involves the majority of CATIE's collaborators, using the participative tools of consultation and discussion.

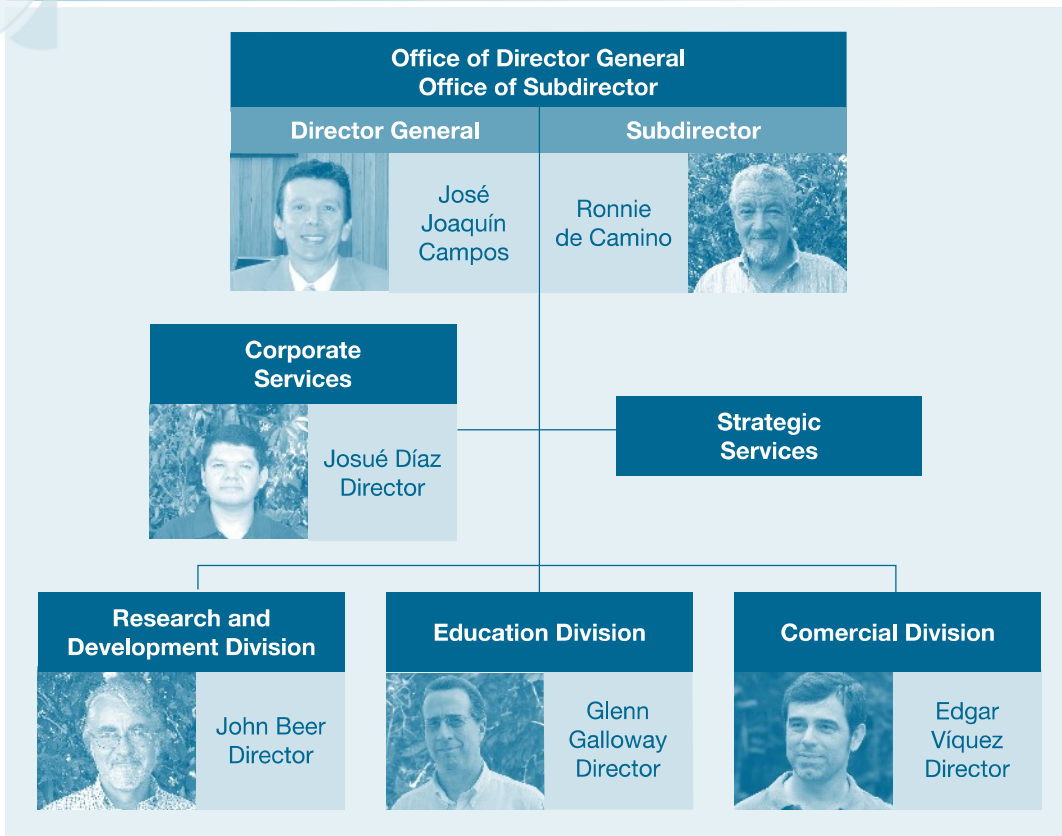
Based on these assumptions, we developed a training model that we call the Leadership School. With the help of a well-known consultant, who is an expert in this area, we held 50 meetings for personnel and students on topics related to leadership, ethics, values and the culture of change. We have redefined the institutional values based on this learning process. Also, and as part of the process of developing the Strategic Management System, we have begun to revise the Strategic Plan, its mission and vision, and we are proposing institutional values that will underpin our current and future development—with the participation of everyone in its conception and development. Participation has been gradual, in order to allow each person to make the maximum contribution at his level of action.

Simultaneously, we are working internally on developing the necessary tools to strengthen our image not only for the external public but also within our institution. Based on the new logo and slogan, we have drawn up key messages to project the institution as a center of innovation and knowledge that combines science and education to achieve competitive agriculture, poverty reduction and environmental conservation.

This process has succeeded far beyond our expectations. The vision and mission are almost complete, the fruit of a highly participative team effort. Following an abundant exchange of ideas and the enthusiasm of the participants, we have advanced toward the subsequent definition of the strategy and then of the institutional goals and objectives.

The management system is based on a new organizational structure, which changes our traditional arrangements to adapt them to the new concepts and achieve the proposed objectives. This model, approved by the Board of Directors in April 2008, is based on a divisional structure, which seeks to make CATIE a more efficient organization.

## Toward a new structure







## Our values...our assets

Teamwork has allowed us to define intrinsic values, those values that are closely related to our daily work; strategic values, those that are fundamental for our Strategic Plan; and desirable values, which include areas in which we are endeavoring to grow.

### **Intrinsic values**

Innovation, excellence and service

### **Strategic values**

Accountability and intrapreneurial spirit

### **Desirable values**

Appreciation of diversity and teamwork

Three other areas have occupied our attention during this period. As a concrete sign, which confirms our vision of the fundamental role of CATIE's collaborators, we have extensively rethought the role of the Human Resource Office. This office assumes the functions of an Office of Human Development and, consequently, must ensure the development of all of us who form part of CATIE—vigorously, clearly, specifically, and with the priority inherent in its new position in the organizational structure.

Following this particular path, we have strengthened internal communication by holding periodic meetings with all personnel at CATIE headquarters—three to date—and their agendas and content were available to all the personnel via Intranet. We have also met with the personnel in El Salvador and in Nicaragua.

In addition, we have taken vigorous steps to incorporate the social responsibility component into the day-to-day tasks of the center. In this regard, a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Committee was appointed, a technical coordinator was hired for this committee, and CATIE's CSR policy, using the United Nations Global Compact framework, was adopted.

With new managerial tools, a modern organizational structure and a rejuvenated strategic plan, we are establishing solid bases to undertake our daily tasks with new enthusiasm, constant improvement and a positive impact on our environment at all levels.

However, an environment that is favorable and inspiring for the performance of our functions must be reinforced by the availability of sufficient and growing resources that support the effort and will to influence and lead change. We have excellent news to share with you regarding this demanding task.

## CATIE in front of the mirror

They have not yet been finalized, but even now the mission and the vision portray how we are reformulating our conception of ourselves as a center and our role in society.

### Mission

To contribute to human well-being and the reduction of rural poverty, encouraging sustainable and competitive agriculture and management of natural resources using graduate education, research and technical cooperation.

### Vision

Vision based on strategic propositions (using the Balanced Scorecard model)	
Target population	The rural communities of Latin American and the Caribbean achieve greater human well-being, providing ecosystem goods and services competitively and sustainably for society in general.
Key functions	International center of excellence, leader in innovation with interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches for the generation of knowledge, education and technical cooperation in agriculture and natural resources.
Organizational development	An enabling environment for professional and personal development and creativity of employees and students.
Integrated management	Sufficient resources managed systemically, efficiently and transparently.
Partners and allies	A highly reliable and effective institution, a leader that promotes mutual complementarity and reinforcement with excellent and committed partners.

## Sure steps toward financial sustainability

Soon after assuming the office of Director General, we commenced the urgent task of establishing a concentrated agenda of contacts and meetings with financial partners. We propose to increase the core budget to at least US\$6 million a year and also to raise the current levels of other sources of financing (for example, project funds, funds in custody and commercial activities).

In March of this year, we met with a mission led by the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development of Finland and, in April, we held crucial and successful meetings with international cooperation and strategic partners. On April 23 and 24, we met with the representatives of Norway, Sweden and Finland and on April 25, with the institution's principal donors and partners.

In addition, in May and June we traveled to Europe to coordinate resources from Spain, Switzerland, Italy, France, Norway, Sweden and Finland. The results of these actions have been extremely positive.

- An agreement signed with the Government of Sweden for financial support for the period 2008–2010.
- A commitment from the Government of Norway to provide substantial support for the period 2008–2013. This agreement will be ready in August.
- Virtual incorporation of the Finnish Government as a strategic partner of the institution, and also Finnish forestry agencies (initial period: 2009–2011).
- Advanced negotiations with the National Agriculture and Food Research and Technology Institute in Spain.

The result of these negotiations will translate into additional financial support of almost US\$30 million, part of which will be a direct contribution to the core budget, which will evidently put us on the right road toward the proposed goal. This important injection of resources will allow us to support the work of numerous units that have traditionally faced budgetary constraints that hamper the growth of their work, while providing all of CATIE with budgetary tools to assume the challenge of managing change with greater financial stability.

This search concentrates on financial support to be implemented within the Mesoamerican Agroenvironmental Program (MAP), which has been conceived as an innovative strategic program to help the Mesoamerican countries improve their productivity, competitiveness and sustainability through the implementation of national policies and strategies while complying with international environmental conventions.



## MAP: High impact and multiple results

CATIE proposes to establish the Mesoamerican Agroenvironmental Program (MAP), an ambitious intersectoral platform for knowledge management and innovation, with numerous partners. It uses the livelihoods approach to multiply the environmentally sound, economically competitive and socially equitable uses of natural resources to achieve the sustainable management and use of land that will improve human well-being in rural areas of Mesoamerica.

MAP will support the development, validation, communication and implementation of methodologies and technologies to integrate production and conservation in diverse rural areas. It will work on several levels—farms, territories, countries and regions—in order to promote the integral development of agricultural and forestry value chains, equity and good environmental governance at the territorial level. Consequently, MAP's development goal is that "Mesoamerican societies will use strategies for sustainable land management that provide ecosystemic goods and services and that reduce rural poverty." The objective of the program is to ensure that "local, national and regional organizations have the tools, knowledge and capacity to implement technological innovations, policies and programs to develop and promote sustainable land use in order to improve rural livelihoods."

The principal results expected from the MAP areas follow:

- Rural families and producer organizations in priority regions of Mesoamerica adopt practices of sustainable production and sustainable management of natural resources and incorporate value chains.
- Local governments implement effective environmental and good governance mechanisms that lead to integrated, competitive and sustainable management of rural enterprises, communities and regions.
- National organizations and decision makers use the results of the technologies for production and management of natural resources generated by MAP as a resource for their technical assistance programs and in the generation of national policies and legislation, respectively.
- Mesoamerican organizations and decision makers use the knowledge, tools and recommendations of the MAP to strengthen and generate regional policies and collaborative efforts.
- CATIE improves its capability to collaborate with and support local, national and regional partners in the design and implementation of effective strategies and policies for sustainable rural development in the region.

However, another proposal for attaining financial sustainability is the generation of our own resources in creative ways. The ambitious goal is to obtain 50% of our financial requirements in this way in the medium term

One of our advances is the creation of the Commercial Division, which is engaged in the process of developing the type of projects we hope will strengthen the institution's resilience. The Commercial Division is assessing traditional activities to improve processes, increase productivity and, hence, the profitability of the results (for example, the commercial farm). One of the projects, still in its initial stages, that we are very optimistic about is the Educational Park, a space we visualize as a powerful tool for institutional outreach and generation of resources based on an innovative proposal to attract visitors from the perspective of recreational learning. This initiative will be based on the unique and distinct elements that CATIE can offer, providing knowledge while entertaining. It is yet but a dream, however, as the concept evolves, we will be sharing more details with you.

Most of the work still remains to be done; nevertheless, the new concept we have implemented is an excellent point of departure to achieve our final goal.

For now, we will proceed to set out the basic elements underlying our efforts to strengthen CATIE's image as a key partner in regional, national and local strategies and political processes, on the path toward the sustainable development and competitiveness of the member countries.

## **CATIE: the immediate frame of reference**

Our institution possesses acknowledged scientific and technical capacity to serve as key participants in processes related to regional, national and local policies concerning the environment and agricultural development. This singular capability was recognized by the forum that brought together the Ministers of Agriculture, the Environment and Health of the Central American Integration System (SICA), who commissioned us to help develop the Regional Agroenvironmental and Health Strategy (ERAS), adopted at the Summit of Central American Presidents on May 28 this year.

We have aligned the MAP program directly with ERAS, which has a parallel line of action that will allow us to share specific stimulating ideas and actions.

More recently, the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD) asked CATIE to support the definition of guidelines for the Regional Climate Change Strategy, which was presented to the Central American leaders during the Presidential Summit of May 2008. CCAD has asked us to coordinate the development of this strategy, which underscores the significant contribution of our institution as a focal point for providing knowledge on this issue.

Closely related to this, as Director General-elect, I took part in the creation of the Latin American Alliance on Climate Change and Risk Management, in which we are associated with IICA, GTZ, The Tropics Foundation and the University for International Cooperation. We are also making the first high-level contacts to organize the Hemispheric Forum on Climate Change and Risk Management in conjunction with strategic partners.

CATIE has maintained its continuity in the presidency, the management and the headquarters of the Ibero-American Model Forest Network, which links 21 model territories in 12 countries; this reinforces our role as a bridge between Europe and the region.

The institution took part in the High-Level Technical Meeting on Food Security, held by the Mexican Ministry of Agriculture (SAGARPA) in Mexico in May, with the participation of six Ministers of Agriculture and representatives of the governments of 12 countries of the region, as well as representatives of international agencies. The central purpose was the exchange of opinions and knowledge and the definition of possible joint actions to combat this growing problem. During the forum, participants



## **Board of Directors and foundations A common goal**

In order to integrate efforts under common premises, the Director General's Office and the executive team have held meetings with the boards of directors of CATIE, The Tropics Foundation and Fundatrópicos.

Rather than formal activities, the meetings gave rise to a productive two-way exchange. The CATIE executive team shared its management guidelines and goals as well as its strategic objectives for the development of the institution.

For their parts, the CATIE Board of Directors and the boards of both foundations outlined the role they will play in achieving these goals within this new framework, a task that is essential for the institution's future.



identified the need for CATIE's expertise in training on ecological agriculture, sustainable management of natural resources, rural agribusiness development, geographical information systems, methodologies and development of agricultural value chains and tools to mitigate the effects of the climate change on agriculture. To better support these demands, we have initiated an internal discussion on CATIE's contribution to the issue of food security, and to this end, we have established a high-level working group.

We are aware that in order to have an impact on political policies in member countries, we must take concrete actions to strengthen the National Technical Offices (NTOs) and establish National Advisory Committees (NACs), and these are already underway. Here also, we have made significant contributions.

## **With a horizontal vision**

Each member country is CATIE, and CATIE exists for each member country. This maxim reflects our firm interest in strengthening a transversal approach for the institution, based on strengthening the NTOs financially, improving communication channels and adopting innovative strategies that ensure that our work is conceived integrally, that is, without frontiers or constraints.

To this end, we have implemented some fundamental actions. As a point of departure, we are working with the Outreach and Development Department on a strategy, the essential component of which is the strengthening of NTOs and the NACs.

This planning is based on the fundamental role of the NTOs in linking the demands of the member countries with CATIE's capacities and of the essential role of the NACs as consultation, advisory and liaison bodies for the key stakeholders and civil society in those countries.

In addition to working on the strategy, we have taken specific measures in this regard. We have destined additional internal resources of about US\$100,000 to the 2008 budget for the NTOs. With the implementation of MAP in 2009, the NTOs will receive a strong injection of direct funding, together with funds CATIE's partners can apply for.

In order to achieve effective feedback from the member countries, we are working hard to activate the NACs, and this effort has already borne its first fruits.

## Establishing closer IICA–CATIE ties

From the outset, the Director General's Office has worked to strengthen and bring about closer collaborative ties with IICA. This interest is clearly reciprocated by the Director General and executive personnel of IICA, allowing us to envision productive joint activities.

A permanent committee with representatives of both institutions holds periodic meetings to define priority issues and opportunities for synergy. The meetings constitute the first firm steps toward the establishment of an agreement facilitating cooperation between the two institutions, but more important still, concrete actions for the greater benefit of the member countries.

During the first days of our mandate, we visited and met with ministers and representatives of El Salvador, Colombia, Panama and Nicaragua, in addition to maintaining contact with high-level representatives in Costa Rica. We are constantly trying to intensify the work with member countries, with the commitment to be accountable for the work carried out in each of them. As part of this initial process, we are organizing the first meeting of this administration with the Governing Council on July 24, when we will also receive the Executive Committee of IICA.

These actions are designed to reinforce our conception of the NTOs as a fundamental part of CATIE's action, with national strategies, action plans, strengthened budgets and monitoring and accountability systems, to ensure efficiency in their actions and alignment with the strategies of CATIE and of the member countries.

In addition, we are pleased to inform you that, during this period, we have developed strong and fruitful coordination with the senior authorities of IICA, seeking to make significant progress toward strengthening our collaboration in order to maximize our contributions to the member countries.

## Strengthening the Graduate School

The strength of our graduate system is a fundamental pillar that nourishes our research work while allowing the institution to produce highly trained professionals to take part in the search for integrated management models for agricultural development and natural resources.

In this area, we are directing our efforts at various levels. First, we are developing a full agenda of contacts with legislators, offices responsible for the educational sector in Costa Rica and officials of the Executive Branch in order to modify CATIE's Constitutional Contract to allow it to award postgraduate degrees and diplomas without the need of agreements with national universities. The legal provisions of the contract are an evident constraint that unnecessarily conditions our authority to grant such degrees and by amending it, we can begin the process of seeking the international accreditation that will ratify the excellence of our graduate programs.

Another area of our effort is to achieve the goal of creating at least two new chairs, financed by an endowment fund, on issues such as climate change, agroecological food production, sustainable animal production, agroforestry focused on perennial crops, competitiveness of rural ecoenterprises, sustainable management of land and water resources, sustainable rural livelihoods, environmental governance and ecosystemic management of protected areas. We are drawing up a comprehensive strategy on the required chairs and we have rethought how they come into being: we will first create them and then secure the endowment fund that will support them and not the inverse, as originally proposed. To this end, we will negotiate the support of strategic partners to assign to us, with shared costs, the specialists to initiate two of these chairs in 2009.

The loan-scholarship model has also undergone substantial changes. Under the new paradigm, we have decided to establish agreements with national educational credit institutions so that these specialized institutions manage the loan component of this program. CATIE has already signed agreements with ICETEX in Colombia, CONAPE in Costa Rica and FUNDA-PRO in Bolivia.

In addition to the initiatives to strengthen the Loan-Scholarship Program, CATIE is seeking new sources of scholarships and devoting efforts to take care of the relationships it has already established. Currently, agreements are in force with the OAS, the World Bank, the Ford Foundation and the National Council for Science and Technology (CONACYT) in Mexico, among others. Another important strategy



relates to including funds for students in CATIE's research and development projects. Similarly, in the coming months, we will be actively seeking financing for other projects financed with international resources that are underway in the region, even those that are being implemented without CATIE's participation.

In the final part of this report, we would like to emphasize one of CATIE's most significant achievements for the dissemination of our abundant research activities, which will give us momentum to attain a leading position in knowledge generation on the international scene.

## The Orton Memorial Library: the world only a click away

As part of the Agricultural Information and Documentation System of the Americas (SIDALC), the Orton Memorial Library (OML)—a successful example of collaboration between IICA and CATIE—has given a qualitative leap forward as a consultation resource for researchers throughout the world. Since the inclusion of SIDALC in Google Scholar, the number of hits has increased from a few hundred a day to nearly 19,000 a day.

This impressive response to our work fills us with pride and calls on us to increase efforts to renew and strengthen the OML. The proposal submitted to American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA), designed to obtain resources for the renovation and modernization of the library, is part of this effort. The proposal was sent to USAID-ASHA by The Tropics Foundation in June. Similar efforts are being made in Washington, D.C., to obtain additional resources for renovation of the library, complementing the contributions received from USDA-ARS and Harvard University.



## The effort continues

During these first 100 days, we have defined clearly the areas in which we will pour the foundation for joint efforts, innovative ideas and concrete contributions to social development with environmental responsibility.

We are preparing for years of turbulent change. With its invaluable human capital as the backbone, the social capital represented by the governing bodies such as the Board of Directors and the Governing Council, as well as its valuable network of strategic partners, our institution starts out on its voyage toward the future with a relevant strategy, a renewed managerial system, committed personnel and a more than promising financial outlook.

From this base, we hope to strengthen a work ethic based on values such as the search for excellence, management of change using creativity and innovation, teamwork and empowerment, effective communication and collaboration with partners, and an entrepreneurial spirit.

These values will create the enabling working environment that CATIE requires to develop the new paradigms, the conceptual approaches, the tools and the leaders that are needed in this changing world.

The best is still to come, but all important works are built on solid foundations—the foundations for CATIE's future...now.