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Operational Plan 1992 - 1996

**TRAINING AND
COMMUNICATIONS
SUPPORT PROGRAM**

December 1990

**For Internal Circulation
and Discussion Only**

CIAT

Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical

CIAT

BIBLIOTECA

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

OPERATIONAL PLAN 1992-1996

1. INTRODUCTION

Two distinct operational functions will be brought together in the Institutional Development Support Program (IDSP): the communications support function and the collaborative mechanisms support function. The former has components which will be assembled in operational units around methodological affinities. Training and conferences, which deal fundamentally with face to face interpersonal communications, readily constitute such a unit. Information/documentation which deals with collecting, organizing, giving access to, and redistributing already published information, conforms another one. The rest of the former training and communications support program--publications and graphic arts--deal with media communication of information created by CIAT. These will be integrated into a communications media unit.

The collaborative mechanisms support function is an emerging function in the evolutionary path of CIAT's institutional development activities. First, these have passed from training collaborators to strengthening partner institutions by means of training and information delivery. Now, they are moving towards enhancing an international research system of which the Center is a significant but not central partner. This expanded research-systems-enhancing function implies the needs of knowing the systems of continuously increasing complexity and of facilitating the linkage among relevant institutions which are part of it. These needs will be addressed in an operational area dedicated to collaborative mechanisms, initially under a rather loose organizational arrangement, which may eventually be more formally structured if and when this proves itself necessary.

This document will discuss the activities of the various areas and the human resources adjustments required to execute them; finally it will justify the program's needs of senior staff positions.

2. TRAINING AND CONFERENCES

2.1. TRAINING

Training on commodity research is changing its emphasis from introductory to advanced research training. The NARDS capability to supply the less advanced research training, as well as commodity production training for technology

intermediaries, will be supported by training trainers. Training in resource management will be initiated, and as the new resource management division's inter-institutional projects come on line they may be used as training grounds for research management of such operational arrangements, in collaboration with ISNAR/IICA.

This set of new or modified activities requires adjustments in the support staff's numbers and responsibilities.

Human resources adjustments.

During the 1980s, nine associates supported training at CIAT and in-country on a commodity-specific basis: two associates for each of the Center's four commodities and one for the seed unit.

The support to training at CIAT consisted of: 1. Coordinating both course contents and sequences, and the participation of Center staff as instructors; 2. Making logistic arrangements for lectures and practicals; 3. Some subject-matter teaching. Support to in-country courses consisted in 1. Course design and coordination of instructors' participation; 2. Coordination of logistics; 3. Substantive quantities of subject-matter teaching.

During the next quinquennium the associates will continue their coordinating activities and giving logistic support. In their subject-matter expertise, however, they will gradually change from supplying commodity-production expertise to providing adult education support under the guidance of the training and conferences head.

In the first part of the quinquennium two additional training associates will be necessary to support the training of trainers. This increase is required because in the early part of the quinquennium some of the older type training activities will not yet have been phased-out while the training of trainers will already be on line.

By the end of the quinquennium the two additional positions will be converted to serve the training in resource management. At about the same time it will be possible to phase-out two of the original associate positions as advanced non-degree training shifts to post-graduate degree training, and because visiting scientist rather than trainees will be coming to CIAT to interact with the Center's scientists.

In summary, two additional training associates are necessary at the beginning of the quinquennium, but by the end of the period the total number will be the same than at the beginning, although they will be serving four more programs.

During the 1980s a special group of six support staff was dedicated to the production of audiotutorials. Four of them will shift from producing exclusively stand-alone training materials to producing mainly materials for the direct support of the Center's training activities, especially for the training of trainers and for use by the new national trainers. The other two members of the group will be transferred to the communications media unit to work on audiovisual and electronic media.

2.2 CONFERENCES

The logistics of bringing conferences participants to CIAT, of supporting them while being at the Center, and of having the infrastructure and equipment in good working order have been dealt with satisfactorily during the 1980s.

But the productivity of conferences depends not only on adequate logistic support. Careful planning and management of participants interactions is equally necessary. At present this is done by CIAT's senior staff involved in the ad hoc coordination of conferences. These activities could, however, be performed by support staff. This would not only save senior scientist time; it would also allow to reap the benefits from having one person methodologically specialized in the subject who, additionally, would capitalize on the cumulative experience to be gained in the performance of his/her duties. It is consequently proposed to incorporate a conferences support assistant to give the aforementioned support under the guidance of the training and conferences head.

3. COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

Organizational arrangement.

The communications media unit will consist of four sub-areas: 1. Writing and editing, that is the development of printed materials; 2. Audiovisual and electronic media, i.e. the development of audiovisuals, and of media based on more recent technology such as electronic support for computer software and optical media, or on the combination of several of them (multimedia); 3. Materials production and distribution, which will include the photography, design, and printing facilities for media production and multiplication, and the infrastructure for media distribution; and 4. Machine translation.

Personnel in the writing/editing and in the machine translation sections will report to the unit's head through section supervisors at associate level. The audiovisual and electronic media group will work with a post-doctoral media

specialist, and materials production and distribution will be lead by a GAS position.

A senior writer of the Director General's office will interact with the unit head to utilize the communications media resources while reporting to the DG.

Human resources adjustments.

It is now clear that under-staffing in the writing and editing area has been a major cause of delays in delivery which in recent years have become painfully evident (other contributing causes such as lack of equipment have already been brought under control). CIAT's full publication needs have consistently exceeded the human resources production capacity. Production of serial publications was maintained on schedule at the expense of building up a backlog of delayed books, and when attention was given to reducing this backlog, serials production fell behind schedule. This non-sustainable situation became aggravated by the addition of the demand for communication support from CIAT's rice program which previously had received much less support than the other research programs.

Now the Center is incorporating new research areas which will require additional communications support, and more institutional interfaces will need addressing with newsletters or equivalent media.

To overcome the under-staffing carried over from the past, and to meet the additional demand from the Center's new thrusts, three support staff at the assistant/associate level are necessary in the writing/editing area which presently has only two assistant writers.

A shift in the support staff's profile from mainly editing (three Spanish and two English editing associates, and one editorial assistant) to more writing responsibilities will also be necessary. For this, only materials that absolutely require it, will be submitted to the extremely exacting editing standards which have characterized CIAT. More abundant writing power, also, should substitute for much of the scientists' time devoted in the past to newsletter and Center report production. One of the writer/editor associate positions will function as section supervisor.

To help defining the audiovisual and electronic media activities and to upgrade the in-house expertise on the subject a post-doctoral media specialist is requested. He/she will work with the two assistants who--as already stated--will be transferred from the former audiotutorials production team.

Machine translation made substantial progress at CIAT over the last three years. The Center's experience is unique in the CG-system and ought to be fully capitalized. The output of the translation system is limited almost solely by the number of post-editors because the machine translates approximately 700 words per minute (172,800 words per minute of CPU time) while post-editors finish the machine-produced product at a rate of "only" 15-20 pages of text in a day's working hours. It is proposed to expand the human resources to include one translator/post-editor section supervisor at associate level and two more at assistant level. The section supervisor position would not be new; rather it would be the upgrading of an existing assistant position to the associate level. The two assistant positions would be self-financed by charging for the translation services, which in addition to in-house clients would be offered to sister Centers and to other international, regional, or national agricultural research and development institutions.

Adjustments in the materials production and distribution area will be by phasing-out positions which can be replaced more efficiently by machines. Support staff is thus to be reduced by five positions over three years. The savings will be used to upgrade the remaining staff and improve the areas' output in quality and quantity. Simultaneous with the phasing-out of support staff, the publishing equipment (hardware and software) will need to be modernized to make the whole area more labor-efficient.

The distribution and marketing arrangement, located in the present publications unit, has an assistant-level supervisor and two auxiliary staff. The latter will be incorporated into the materials production and distribution area, directly under the section's head's supervision; and the supervisor position will be converted into a program leader's assistant position.

4. INFORMATION/DOCUMENTATION

Since 1989, the information/documentation unit has undergone substantial modernization, to fully incorporate state-of-the-art technology for the benefit of both CIAT's own scientists and NARDS partners. As a consequence, internal and external demand for the unit's services has grown markedly and is expected to continue to grow in the foreseeable future as resource management activities expand. Capital investments will undoubtedly have to be made to meet the growing demand and to keep the unit at the technological forefront. Whether human resources will need to be expanded is not clear, however, at least with regard to core funded resources. It is proposed to distinguish between a core clientele, which is to be served with core funds, and a

non-core clientele which ought to be served with funds from other sources (special projects, revenue from charging for services, donations, etc.). The information unit's statistics at present do not allow to draw this distinction and it may take about two years to collect the necessary data.

An exception to this uncertainty is the need of establishing a rice information system for Latin America comparable to those developed for the rest of the Center's commodities. It is proposed that this need be met with an associate position to be covered with funds either from IRRI, or from a special project, or from core.

5. COLLABORATIVE MECHANISMS

The addition of a new area of collaborative mechanisms to the former training and communications support program is a vital step in the change from single-institution-enhancing activities towards a research-systems-enhancing approach. The new approach has three fundamental implications: it is necessary to know the research systems of increasing complexity (need of an information system), to strengthen the various component institutions or teams, and to also strengthen the links among them. This is a challenging new dimension which requires overcoming traditional attitudes of institutional closeness to develop a system based on truly horizontal cooperation among all partners. For this, CIAT will build upon its strengths developed over the years in networking and other cooperative mechanisms.

Projects will be an organizational arrangement of increasing importance in CIAT's collaborative activities, be they research efforts, pre-development activities, or human resources development programs. It is therefore proposed to establish in-house expertise on project design and development by means of a senior staff equivalent position to be funded from project overhead revenues.

A fundamental operational objective is to establish an information system on the research systems to be strengthened. It will be a tool for supporting the Center's programs' collaborative activities with the NARDS, and to help prioritizing and targeting the Center's institutional development activities. This is in line with meeting a specific recommendation of the Third External Program Review Panel that "CIAT systematize its on-going inventory of national program training needs".

The system will be developed in close interaction with all CIAT programs and units, and it should be shared with sister Centers and NARDS. A consultant's advice on how to develop the system on the basis of presently existing databases will

be sought, and an associate position is proposed to full-time support this activity.

The system's database(s) should be in place at the end of 1993. The completely structured system, containing permanently updated information on institutions, persons, and on inter-institutional linkages, ought to be fully operational by the end of the quinquennium.

In addition to the institutional information system, expertise on inter-institutional linkages may be necessary. Initially this would be obtained through consultants. In a more advanced stage a research fellow could be dedicated to the subject, and given the affinity with ISNAR's objectives and activities, the sister Center could be invited to detach an associated scientist to team-up with the CIAT fellow for mutual complementation. If the course of events did finally show a need for it, a specialist on inter-institutional linkage mechanisms would eventually be incorporated at senior staff level.

The development of new supply mechanisms for seeds and other planting materials which are not available through existing commercial seed supply systems, is a special case of institutional development for which CIAT has a comparative advantage in its Seed Unit with its facilities and accumulated expertise. The Unit will shift from a focus of strengthening existing conventional seed systems to supporting the development of new supply systems for seeds or planting materials of CIAT commodities, where such systems are lacking, and, if required, of key species for the development of sustainable agriculture in the agroecozones addressed by the Center's resource management activities. The Unit will have two senior staff positions, one of them will focus on institutional mechanisms, particularly on small enterprise arrangements, for the deployment of seed-embodied technologies. The other position will provide the necessary expertise on seed technologies appropriate for the new supply systems.

6. JUSTIFICATION OF IDSP SENIOR STAFF POSITIONS

1. Training and Conferences Unit Head. Training is a basic function of CIAT, and conferences are an essential communications mechanism in the Center's collaborative activities with the NARDS, with resource management institutions, and with basic research institutes. The two activities need expert guidance in adult education technology, group dynamics, and interpersonal communication skills; also the size of the enterprise and the number of support staff involved are such (see TCSP annual reports 1987-1990) that a senior staff position is essential to provide the necessary expertise and supervision.

2. Communications Media Unit Head. Information is one of CIAT's main outputs. The development, production, and distribution of media for the dissemination of this output is large and specialized enough a task (see TCSP annual reports 1987-1990) to require a senior staff position to provide the required expertise and supervision.

3. Director General' Office Public Information Officer. The office of the Director General needs to inform CIAT's shareholders on the Center's objectives, activities, use of resources, and achievements. Also it needs to interact permanently with this audience to promote its support to CIAT and to mobilize resources for the Center. These communication activities will be covered by a senior staff position in the DG's office which will receive full media support from the communications media unit.

4. Information/Documentation Unit Head. Information is a vital input to research. CIAT's information bank and its links to information banks world wide provide this input to the Center's scientists and to their partners in the NARDS. Similarly to training and conferences, and to communications media, the size of the enterprise, the resources involved, and the expertise required to maintain the information services at the technological forefront of a highly dynamic technical field (see TCSP annual reports 1987-1990) warrant a senior staff position to provide the necessary guidance and supervision.

5. Project design and development specialist. Projects will be an organizational arrangement of increasing importance in CIAT's collaborative activities, be they research efforts, pre-development activities, or human resources development programs. It is therefore proposed to establish in-house expertise on project design and development by means of a senior staff equivalent position to be funded from project overhead revenues.

6. Seed and planting materials supply systems specialist. The lack of seed supply systems is a major constraint to extending the benefit of seed-embodied technologies to the end users of CIAT commodities. It is also foreseen that the same constraint can become severely limiting to resource conservation or enhancement in CIAT's new resource management initiative. It is therefore proposed to incorporate expertise on institutional mechanisms for the development of seed supply systems where their lack is a major limitation for the adoption of CIAT technology. The corresponding position is one of two senior positions in the seed unit.

7. Seed technology specialist. The institutional mechanisms for the development of seed supply systems need to be complemented with seed technology expertise to give solution



to seed production problems and to give credibility to the institutional initiatives. To provide the necessary expertise will be the responsibility of the second senior staff position in the seed unit.

8. Program leader. To give strategic leadership to the institutional development support program in close collaboration with CIAT's research programs and units.

SUPPORT STAFF CHANGES

CORE FUNDED	No.
<u>Additions</u>	
Training associates	2
Conferences assistant	1
Writing assistants/associates	3
Info/Documentation associate	1
Collaborative mechanisms	1
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<u>Reductions</u>	
Training associates	2
Materials production/distribution support staff	5
	<hr/> 7
NON-CORE FUNDED	
<u>Additions</u>	
Machine translation assistants	2

SENIOR STAFF POSITIONS

	No.
TRAINING AND CONFERENCES	1
COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA	1
INFORMATION/DOCUMENTATION	1
SEED SUPPLY SYSTEMS	1
SEED TECHNOLOGY	1
PROGRAM LEADER	1

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POST-DOCTORAL/RESEARCH FELLOWS

AUDIOVISUAL/ELECTRONIC MEDIA	1
COLLABORATIVE MECHANISMS	1

SPECIAL PROJECTS

PROJECT DESIGN SPECIALIST	1
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DG'S OFFICE

PUBLIC INFORMATION	1
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