

Opportunity for Practice Change (OPC)

Country/region

Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, and the Dominican Republic

Title

Enhancing SICA regional policy frameworks to exploit the full value of manure

Situation analysis

The Central American Integration System (SICA), established in 1991, currently includes all of the Central American countries plus the Dominican Republic. As part of its charter, SICA promotes actions aimed at improving the use of natural resources within a framework of respect to the natural endowment of the region. The successful implementation of the Energy and Environment Partnership (AEA), launched in 2010 with the support of the European Union, has significantly enhanced the awareness and development of bio-digestion technology in Central America. Current trends, both at the policy level and in the implementation of field activities, appear to provide special attention to the energy generation potential of manure, the cost/benefits of the incorporation of such technology, and the climate change benefits. However, the complementary uses of manure, such as for fertilizer or soil amendments, are not explicitly addressed in current SICA strategies and policies. However, the value of manure as a soil improver is relevant for many situations in the region (degraded lands, poor soil fertility, and poor drought resilience). This gap in the regional policy, identified during the LMM scoping study, is increasingly recognized by SICA and its member nations. Steps are being taken to revisit the current strategy that guides the management of livestock manure.

Opportunity

The status of CATIE and its partners, such as IICA, as technical advisors to SICA gives these organizations a basis to provide policy-relevant advice to the regional body. The currently proposed revision of the regional strategy that guides agro-environment and health issues, thus, provides a unique opportunity to ensure integrated manure management (IMM) is included. The resultant revised strategy will equally provide an additional basis for building regional partnerships and capacity around IMM, and to inform related national policymaking.

Objective

- A task-force within the SICA platform to identify and address policy and practical issues around IMM (lessons learned and best practices) as part of the revision of the regional strategy that guides agro-environment and health issues, established;
- Policy related advice on IMM for consideration provided to SICA.

Target group(s)

This OPC targets the technical regional office of Central American Agricultural and Livestock Council (SICA/CAC) and national policy makers in the relevant ministries (Agriculture, Environment, Energy) of the member countries of the SICA.

Method and activities

In close collaboration with the SICA/CAC the following activities will be implemented under the OPC:

- Coordination of the establishment of an IMM task force among the thematic groups of SICA;
- Stakeholder meetings and consultations;
- Identification and design of IMM policy amendments and/or policy instruments (using a barrier assessment approach);
- Discussions of recommendations with SICA/CAC for inclusion within relevant policy guidance such as the Environmental Plan of the Central American Region (PARCA), the Central American Agriculture Policy and strategies such as the Regional Agro Environmental and Health Strategy (ERAS) and the Regional Climate Change Strategy;
- Drafting of IMM policy & practice relevant recommendations to SICA/CAC
- Facilitation of regional policy guidance by SICA/CAC to its member countries realized (including the development of supporting actions).
- Liaison and fast-tracking with the SICA/CAC regional technical office and SICA member countries

Implementers

The actions under this OPC are facilitated and coordinated by CATIE. For its implementation the direct involvement of an IMM task force consisting of the SICA/CAC regional technical office, IICA, ERAS, has also been enlisted. Implementation through and by the relevant stakeholders is further ensured by the fact that the request for the revision of the relevant strategy has emerged from the SICA/CAC and its member nations.

(Expected) Results and impact

- A functional SICA/CAC IMM task force;
- A series of stakeholder meetings and consultations to identify and address policy and practical issues around IMM;
- IMM policy amendments and/or policy instruments identified;
- Agreement with the SICA/CAC on IMM policy-relevant guidance;
- Policy & practice relevant recommendations to the SICA/CAC drafted;
- Regional IMM policy guidance provided by SICA/CAC to its member countries.
- Progress well documented, fast-tracked & communicated with the SICA/CAC

Implementation of the resultant regional policy guidance has the potential to influence manure management of an estimated ten million tropical livestock units¹ (cattle, pigs and poultry) in the Central American region, which would result in significant reduction in SLCP emissions, and improve soil fertility, crop yields, and incomes.

Risks & Assumptions

The risks related to this OPC have been managed as follows: Since this OPC is largely based on the involvement of SICA/CAC, this proposal was designed jointly with SICA to ensure their successful engagement. This OPC also builds on the institutional legacy of the EU-funded AEA that focused on biogas promotion, taking advantage of the networks created by that project. In addition, the role of

¹ Figure 9.6 M only cattle in Central America, quoted for 1992 by IICA (1995, EPTD Discussion paper 9)

SICA/CAC as a provider of regional policy advice is well established and supported by the relevant Ministries within SICA member Nations.

Added value LMMC

Current regional and national strategies only recognize the energetic value of manure. This initiative aims to ensure continued SLCP mitigation through biogas by also taking full advantage of the nutrient value of manure. Not only will this lead to significant saving in the acquisition of synthetic fertilizer but also contribute to solving environmental and health problems. Co-benefits of this OPC include higher farm incomes, improvement of soil fertility and structure, water retention, diversification of products and market services, positive image for farmers for good environmental management, and the potential to exploit niche markets for sustainable production.

Multiplier/Leverage

The OPC will collate and act on lessons learnt from the implementation and application of IMM practices at different production systems, farm sizes (species, family farms, and medium sized agro-industries) and policy contexts. The OPC also has the potential to influence a large portfolio of manure management investment, which is currently largely focused on anaerobic digestion only. In addition, the OPC will provide lessons on how regional policy advice can best be used to influence national policy making.

The OPC will also use existing coordination and partnerships that SICA has with other Regional Economic Commissions such as the Andean Community (CAN), the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and the Caribbean States Association (AEC), thus, providing further potential for scaling up.

Communication

The following communication and outreach activities are integral to this OPC:

- The organization of stakeholder meetings and consultations;
- The discussion of recommendations for inclusion of policy guidance;
- The dissemination of regional policy guidance.