



MARKET INFORMATION ORGANIZATION
OF THE AMERICAS
MIOA

**XV Executive Committee Meeting
Washington, D.C., USA**

July 21 -22, 2009

List of Participants

Mr. Terry Long, MIOA President and Northern Region Representative

Mrs. Adriana Senior, MIOA Vice President and Andean Region Representative

Mr. Pedro Martínez, Ex Officio President and Host Country 2009

Mrs. Erika Ruano, Central Region Representative

Mr. Jorge Esquivel, Southern Region Representative

Mr. Aziz Mohammed, Caribbean Region Representative

Mr. Luis F. Palmer, USDA

Mrs. Blanca Guarneros, Observer

Mr. Bob Riemenschneider, FAS Deputy Administrator

Mrs. Cheryl Claus, Multilateral Affairs Division, FAS

Mr. Wendell Dennis, Multilateral Affairs Division, Deputy Director, FAS

Mr. Frank Lam, IICA Technical Secretariat



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XV MIOA Executive Committee Meeting

**July 21 - 22, 2009
Room 5066
South Building USDA
Washington, D.C. USA**

**Agenda
Tuesday July 21, 2009**

09:00 am	Call to order	Terry Long
09:10 am	Welcoming remarks	Rayne Pegg, AMS Rob Riemenscheider, FAS Cheryl Claus, FAS
09:40 am	Discussion of the Agenda and Approval of the Minutes	Terry Long
10:00 am	Executive Committee Agreements	Frank Lam
10:30 am	Recess	
10:45am	Technical Secretariat Report	Frank Lam
12:00 m	Lunch	
01:00 pm	Discussion of Plan of Action	Terry Long Frank Lam
03:00 pm	Recess	
03:15 pm	Project Updates	Frank Lam Luis Fernando Palmer
05:00 pm	Meeting Summary	Terry Long
05:30 pm	Closing	

Wednesday July 22, 2009

09:00 am	Call to Order	Terry Long
09:10 am	Regular Meeting, Mexico	Blanca Guarneros
10:00 am	Recess	
10:15 am	Presentations by Regional Representatives	
12:00 am	Lunch	
01:00 pm	Consultancy Report Caribbean and Central American MIS	John Van Dyke
02:45 pm	Recesss	
03:00 pm	Next MIOA EC Meeting “How to add value”	Terry Long
04:00 pm	Open discussion	
05:00 pm	Meeting Summary - Review of Agreements	Frank Lam Terry Long
05:30 pm	Closing	

Minutes of the XV MIOA Executive Committee Meeting

Tuesday July 21, 2009

1. At 9:00 a.m. Mr. Terry Long welcomed the members of the MIOA Executive Committee (EC), the Technical Secretariat and special guests.
2. Mrs. Rayne Pegg, on behalf of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Mr. Rob Riemenscheider and Mrs. Cheryl Claus of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) welcomed the members of the MIOA Executive Committee and expressed their wishes for a fruitful meeting.
3. Mr. Terry Long presented the meeting agenda for discussion and approval. Mr. Pedro Martinez suggested including his presentation and the EC decided to include it in the agenda. Mrs. Blanca Guarneros asked why she had not been asked to sign the minutes, and Mr. Frank Lam explained that according to the Rules of Procedure there cannot be more than one representative per country. Finally, the minutes from the previous EC meeting were signed, including the Ex-Officio President as the host country representative for the 2009 MIOA Regular Meeting.

RECESS

4. Mr. Frank Lam, of the MIOA Technical Secretariat, presented his Work Report:
 - a. Follow-up on MIOA Executive Committee Agreements. Mr. Lam presented the progress made regarding the agreements reached at the previous EC meeting, held in Mexico City in January of 2009. To date, there have been no delays and all of the agreements have been carried out.
 - b. External Evaluation of MIS in the Caribbean and Central America. Mr. Lam reported that the consultancy has been successfully concluded in all seven countries. Along the same lines, he commented that Grenada and Guyana have requested information regarding the outcome of the evaluation. Finally, it was reported that the Bahamas is still interested in forming part of MIOA.

AGREEMENT CE-XV-2009-01: Send the results of the External Evaluation of the MIS to the delegates of the countries evaluated, and allow a maximum of two weeks for them to offer feedback.

Responsible party: Technical Secretariat (TS)

- c. Letter of Understanding (LOU) between IICA and MIOA. Mr. Frank Lam, on behalf of the Technical Secretariat, presented Terry Long, MIOA President, with

the original signed LOU (in English and Spanish) for his records. He also gave a brief recap of the relationship between the two institutions for the benefit of the MIOA Executive Committee members.

- d. Central America Project – Fruit Sector. Mr. Lam informed the EC as to the status of the project, with the main advances including the hiring of a Project Coordinator, to be based in San Salvador, El Salvador. Furthermore, the IDB is ready to make the first disbursement.
- e. Training activities within the framework of MIOA.
 - Mr. Lam reported that in February of 2009, the workshop entitled “Price Analysis for Market Intelligence” was carried out in Panama City, Panama. The recipient institution was the Agricultural Marketing Institute (IMA, in Spanish) and the workshop was aimed at the Institute staff. The training was carried out by Joaquin Arias, IICA Specialist for the Andean Region, and Frank Lam, IICA Specialist in Agribusiness of the Inter-American Program for the Promotion of Trade, Agribusiness, and Food Safety. Finally, Mr. Lam reported that based on the positive results of the workshop evaluation, the workshop could be repeated in other locations upon request. There is currently a request from the Dominican Republic for a workshop to be held. Mrs. Erika Ruano inquired about the possibility of carrying out this workshop in Central America and Mr. Lam said that it would be possible. Finally, Mr. Lam reported that FAO Chile is also providing support to IMA Panama, mainly in setting up an automated (software) system.
 - Mr. Lam invited the EC members to make a list of the tools or instruments that have been developed and validated by MIOA member countries.
 - Along the same lines, Mr. Lam presented Panama’s initiative to present the experience of MIS-Panama at the 2009 MIOA Regular Meeting.
 - Mr. Lam reported that IICA and the USDA are planning a series of seminars on the PACA laws, Market News and other information regarding the entry of products to U.S. markets. The countries and member institutions where seminars will be held are: the Dominican Republic (IICA Office, Dominican Republic), Ecuador (CORPEI) and Guatemala (AGEXPORT). All these activities are slated for the end of the year. Mr. Long added that this has been the result of the work that the AMS carried out, as an MIOA member, in Costa Rica. Furthermore, he added that in the case of Costa Rica, the request came directly from the Ministry of External Relations and not from the CNP, which is the MIOA member in Costa Rica. Mr. Luis Palmer mentioned that in the case of Guatemala, there are other institutions interested in this seminar.
 - Mr. Lam mentioned that MIOA has received a request from the MAGAP (Ecuador) asking for technical assistance in the evaluation of the first phase of

the MIS project (PL-480), and added that the TOR are included in the documents that have been provided to the EC. A request has also been received from Jamaica for financial support to send staff to Trinidad & Tobago for training. Finally, Mr. Lam presented a request from the Bahamas, specifically to send a USDA official to participate in a workshop on “Market Information Systems”.

- Mr. Jorge Esquivel presented a request from Chile to carry out training activities in the Southern Region.
 - Mrs. Adriana Senior stated that Ecuador has also requested support from Colombia.
- f. Mr. Lam presented the proposed changes to the Rules of Procedure, specifically to Rule 2.2, to be approved by the EC and to be submitted to a vote at the Regular Meeting in Mexico, in October 2009.
- g. Mr. Lam presented the MIOA Financial Report through June 2009 (Summary of Income and Expenses) and Mr. Terry Long, MIOA President, approved and received the report. He also added that the EC meetings are made possible by the USDA.
- h. Mrs. Cheryl Claus inquired as to whether the 8% (NIR) was applied to project management and Mr. Lam requested that she explain the policy to the EC. Mrs. Claus affirmed that IICA has found it necessary to look for other sources of income.

LUNCH BREAK

5. Mr. Terry Long and Mr. Frank Lam presented the Work Plan (WP) to be carried out by MIOA during the 2009-2010 period. Mr. Lam explained the details of the WP, beginning with the four MIOA strategic objectives to which this WP corresponds.
- Create mechanisms to facilitate the exchange of agricultural product market information among member countries.
 - Foster conditions that will facilitate the exchange of experiences and technical knowledge, and identify training opportunities to improve market information systems in the member countries.
 - Work on the standardization of the terminology, methodology, processes and technology used in market information systems for agricultural products.
 - Promote the concept of precise, timely and reliable market information, in the interest of contributing to the efficiency of the agricultural product market and helping to identify market opportunities.

6. In relation to Objective #1: “Create mechanisms to facilitate the exchange of agricultural product market information among member countries”, the following actions were proposed:
- VIII MIOA Regular Meeting (Mexico, 2009). The TS has made the first deposit of \$12,000.00 to the Hotel Fiesta Americana to reserve the space for the meeting.
 - IX MIOA Regular Meeting (Trinidad & Tobago). Trinidad & Tobago has been proposed, but this is to be confirmed at the meeting in Mexico.
 - Regional Meetings. These meetings may be physical or virtual and their objective will be to exchange information related to the functions that the MIS carry out in the region, as well as information on agricultural markets. Each regional representative will present a proposal at the next EC meeting. Mrs. Senior suggested that meetings be physical, but financed by MIOA. Mr. Lam also suggested taking advantage of the annual meetings and allocating a time for the regions to meet, in addition to other mechanisms, such as videoconferences. Mrs. Ruano expressed her support for Mr. Lam’s suggestion and mentioned the importance of assigning a budget for the meetings, as well as taking advantage of the meetings for other activities, such as training. Mr. Long mentioned that there has been an increase in the number of requests and that MIOA resources are limited, with no guarantee of additional funds to date, for which reason he stressed that it is important to prioritize, and suggested comparing funds against objectives. Mr. Esquivel suggested more time for regular meetings in the interest of lowering costs. Along the same lines, he stated that Brazil could provide support, as long as they have MIOA’s backing, and that Chile can also provide support, including support for Paraguay. He also mentioned that there is a possibility of obtaining funds through the IICA Office in Chile. Mr. Lam commented that IICA had developed a forum to improve communication among MIOA members, but that this initiative hadn’t panned out, and he went on to suggest other means available at no cost. Mr. Martinez shared the idea that meetings should be focused on a clear objective. Mr. Long concluded that there should be more time for regional meetings during the Regular Meeting that topics should be developed for each regional meeting, and that funds should be classified for special activities. Finally, he suggested that any requests should be submitted to the EC for approval, rather than to the President. Mr. Lam suggested that the position of the EC should be proactive and not reactive, anticipating the needs of the various regions, of which the regional representatives have ample knowledge.
7. In relation to Objective #2: “Foster conditions that will facilitate the exchange of experiences and technical knowledge, and identify training opportunities to improve market information systems in the member countries”, the following specific actions were proposed:
- Training workshop on “Data Collection”. The objective of this workshop is to train personnel of MIOA member countries on data collection using a standardized methodology. Mrs. Senior mentioned that Colombia has already developed a

methodology and manuals. Mr. Lam suggested that there should be duly validated proposals. Mrs. Ruano recognized the work that Colombia has done, but explained that in Guatemala they already have their own methodology, which they are not interested in changing. Mrs. Guarneros commented that they also have their own methodology, but at the same time felt it was important that these methodologies be evaluated by external evaluators, especially in terms of statistics. Mr. Esquivel emphasized that efforts should be focused on the training of data collectors more than on the methodology per se. Mr. Long mentioned that data collectors should be professionalized, as this is a critical point within the system. Mr. Mohammed referred to this point saying that this kind of workshop helps to refine the existing methodologies, as they need to be more effective in the work done by the MIS. Mr. Lam suggested focusing training efforts on the MIS that need it the most, based on the evaluations of the consultants. Mr. Long added that it would be best to concentrate on those that have the least developed MIS. Mr. Lam further added that for those whose MIS are more developed, the focus should be on how value could be added to the data collected. Mrs. Ruano mentioned that those countries that participate in one workshop shouldn't take part in other workshops (for example, those who attend the Data Collection Workshop shouldn't attend the Price Analysis Workshop). In the case of Mexico, Mrs. Guarneros mentioned that there is a lot of interest in training on Price Analysis.

AGREEMENT CE-XV-2009-02: Prepare an MIS classification proposal based on consultants' evaluations in order to concentrate efforts on the MIS that are least developed.

Responsible party: Technical Secretariat (TS)

AGREEMENT CE-XV-2009-03: Develop the proposal for the "Data Collection" Workshop.

Responsible party: Mrs. Adriana Senior, Andean Region Representative

AGREEMENT CE-XV-2009-04: Develop the proposal for the "Price Analysis: A Tool for Market Intelligence" Workshop

Responsible party: Technical Secretariat (TS)

- Administrators Workshop. The objective of this workshop is to bring MIS managers in MIOA member countries up to date in terms of the latest developments in administration, technology, etc. Mr. Long mentioned that there are now 27 countries, with needs relating to the growth of MIS, media relations, the private sector, etc.

AGREEMENT CE-XV-2009-05: Develop the proposal for the “Effective Administration of Agricultural Market Information Systems” Workshop

Responsible parties: Technical Secretariat (TS): Frank Lam, Blanca Guarneros and Jorge Esquivel

- Seminar on “How to achieve effective access to the U.S. Market for fresh and processed products”. This seminar is aimed at MIS users in the member countries that require information about the U.S. market, particularly regarding the entry requirements for agricultural and processed products, entry processes for such products, agencies involved in the process, price information sources, etc. Mr. Long mentioned that this proposal by Mr. Lam does not require any additional MIOA funds, except for those related to the travel costs for the facilitators and other costs related to carrying out the event. Mr. Mohammed asked about the time period allotted for the seminar and Mr. Lam responded that the seminar would last four days. Mr. Esquivel suggested looking for a way to reduce costs and to charge for participation in the seminar. Mr. Long proposed a meeting with Mr. Miguel Garcia and Mr. Frank Lam of IICA to discuss the details.

AGREEMENT CE-XV-2009-06: Develop the proposal for the Seminar on “How to achieve effective access to the U.S. Market for fresh and processed products”

Responsible parties: Technical Secretariat (TS) and USDA (Luis Palmer)

- Mr. Lam reported that within this objective, support for the “Central America Competitiveness Program for Fruits” Project (financed by the IDB) is also included, specifically the subcomponent on “Market Intelligence”.

AGREEMENT CE-XV-2009-07: Support the “Central America Competitiveness Program for Fruits” Project, specifically subcomponent A: Market Intelligence.

Responsible party: Technical Secretariat (TS)

RECESS

8. In relation to Objective #3: “Work on the standardization of the terminology, methodology, processes and technology used in market information systems for agricultural products,” the following activities were discussed:
 - Preparation of an MIS model. The objective of such a document is to specify the minimum requirements that an MIS should have in order to offer its services in an efficient manner. Mr. Lam reported that this document shall be mainly based on the experience of the USDA and that cases of MIOA member countries could also be included to illustrate certain points.

AGREEMENT CE-XV-2009-08: Prepare the “MIS Model” document.

Responsible parties: Technical Secretariat (TS) and USDA (Luis Palmer)

9. In relation to Objective #4: Promote the concept of precise, timely and reliable market information, in the interest of contributing to the efficiency of the agricultural product market and helping to identify market opportunities,” the following activities were proposed:
 - Participation in the NAAMO Meeting with the aim of presenting MIOA to its members. This meeting, which brings together high-ranking officials and those in charge of agricultural marketing, was held in the state of Florida and. Terry Long led this initiative and commented that he participated on behalf of AMS and MIOA.
 - Participation in the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) Meeting to be held in October of 2009, with the aim of presenting MIOA to the Ministers of Agriculture of the Americas. Mrs. Cheryl Claus suggested that it may be possible to participate in the exhibition hall with an MIOA stand. Mr. Long commented that this is the kind of opportunity to promote MIOA and the value of Market Information. Mr. Terry Long and Mr. Frank Lam are in charge of this initiative.
10. Mr. Lam, on behalf of the Technical Secretariat, thanked the USDA for its valuable support in financing MIOA activities.
11. Mr. Long suggested that the Administrators Workshop be held at the IICA Headquarters, as they are conveniently located. Mrs. Guarneros suggested modifying the workshop methodology and model. Mr. Long mentioned that the workshop evaluations reflected an interest in greater interaction on the part of the participants.
12. Mr. Lam made reference to the requests of the following countries: Ecuador. The MAGAP has asked MIOA for support in carrying out a technical evaluation of the first phase of its MIS project. Mrs. Senior mentioned that Ecuador has also made the same request of Colombia. Mr. Palmer indicated that there could be some confusion, in that Ecuador’s request is very specific and he suggested looking into Ecuador’s request in greater detail. Mr. Long mentioned that the project was financed by the PL-480 program and it is being requested that MIOA evaluate the first phase. Mr. Long suggested addressing the request by means of the creation of a team of evaluators.
13. Mr. Long officially closed the session.

CLOSING OF THE FIRST DAY’S SESSION

Wednesday July 22, 2009

14. The session was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Mr. Terry Long, MIOA President.
15. Mrs. Blanca Guarneros, on behalf of Mexico, presented the details of the planning process for the VIII MIOA Regular Meeting to be held in Mexico City, October 7 – 9, 2009. Her presentation included information about the hotel facilities, arrangements being made, social calendar, logistics, etc. She also mentioned the possibility of member countries having a space to share information relevant to the work they are doing on their MIS. Mr. Lam suggested establishing five such spaces, one for each region, thereby maintaining a balanced distribution among all the regions. Mr. Long commented that dietary needs should be taken into account (for example, vegetarian diets, etc.).
16. Mr. Lam presented the draft of the agenda for the VIII Regular Meeting to the EC for discussion. Mr. Long mentioned that the Minister Counselor of Agricultural Affairs of the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City will attend the opening ceremony. Mr. Lam mentioned that he has spoken with MERCASA of Spain about inviting a speaker in the interest of learning more about their experiences in information and market development. Also, Mr. Lam suggested establishing a space to facilitate an open discussion among the various country delegates. Mr. Mohammed suggested the possibility of bringing a guest from FAO to the meeting. Mr. Long supported Mr. Mohammed's proposal and expressed that it is important to involve FAO and take a proactive stance, which should apply to other countries and international organizations as well. Mr. Lam concluded that MIOA should adopt a more open position and try to involve FAO.

RECESS

17. Mr. Wendell Dennis of FAS mentioned the importance of the different countries supporting ties with FAO.
18. Mr. Long invited the Regional Representatives to present the reports on their regions.
 - Mrs. Erika Ruano of the Central Region presented the advances regarding the “Central America Competitiveness Program for Fruits” Project. She also reported on the change in the delegate from El Salvador. Finally, the region has requested support for a training workshop and has been collaborating on the publication of a document entitled “Agricultural Trade Balances: Imports and Exports.” On an administrative note, she explained that for reasons beyond his control, the delegate from Guatemala will not be able to attend the MIOA Regional Meeting. Mr. Lam mentioned that a new delegate has already been named.
 - Mrs. Adriana Senior of the Andean Region informed that Peru and Bolivia have an agreement with the European Union and the Colombian Ministry of Agriculture and CCI offered workshops in Peru and Bolivia. Mr. Long mentioned that the meetings are a public forum and in the case that an observer attends, this should be approved beforehand.

- Mr. Jorge Esquivel of the Southern Region informed that the International Technical Agency from Chile was going to finance a workshop for “Market Reporters”, but that said initiative had been cancelled, for which reason he is now requesting financial support from MIOA. In the case of Brazil, they do not collect retail price information, which leaves only Paraguay pending. In the case of MIS-Paraguay, Chile has been working closely on exchanging information.
- Mr. Aziz Mohammed of the Caribbean Region informed that his region is made up of seven countries. He also explained that during the CARICOM Consulting meeting, it was requested that Trinidad & Tobago support the MIS in the Caribbean. Along those lines, a representative from Jamaica recently visited Trinidad & Tobago in order to learn more about the system. They have been discussing the possibility, together with UNTAC and FAO, of setting up an “Agricultural Commodity Exchange” in Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago, as well as in St. Vincent and Guyana. He also mentioned the workshop “Training the trainers”, which will be held in Trinidad & Tobago at the end of this year. Finally, he reported that Guyana recently launched their MIS in the country and that the Dominican Republic is interested in the Market Reporters Workshop. Mr. Lam mentioned to Mr. Mohammed that with the results obtaining in the external evaluation, efforts could be undertaken to identify the main needs and to prepare a proposal regarding the development and strengthening of the MIS in the Caribbean. He also reported that Barbados is now part of MIOA, as the letter of intent has been signed; however, delegates have not yet been named. Along the same lines, the Bahamas and Surinam should also be considered potential members of the organization.
- Mr. Terry Long of the Northern Region informed that the information technology experts from Mexico, the United States and Canada met in Canada at the beginning of the year. The U.S. and Canada signed an equivalency agreement as to regulations for organic products. They will hold their regional meeting in North Carolina in August.

LUNCH RECESS

19. Mr. John Van Dyke presented the main results of the consultancy carried out at the beginning of the year in seven countries of the Caribbean and Central America: Belize, Granada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Trinidad & Tobago. The individual reports for each country were also sent to the members of the Executive Committee, and will be published as soon as those countries that were evaluated send their comments to the Technical Secretariat.
20. Mr. Long expressed his agreement with the proposal presented and set a two-week period to receive feedback from the countries evaluated.
21. Mr. Jorge Esquivel presented the request from Chile on behalf of the Southern Region and asked for a response from the Executive Committee. Mr. Lam suggested that the Technical Secretariat present a more formal and integral proposal in the interest of the

different regions and countries having more transparent and equitable access to MIOA resources, and at the same time stimulating the countries to be more creative with new ideas and a different attitude. Along the same lines, Mr. Lam stated that when MIOA funds are used, there should be a system of accountability for each of the activities carried out. Mr. Long supported Mr. Lam's idea and suggested working on this initiative in the future. Mr. Martinez suggested that a report be prepared.

AGREEMENT CE-XV-2009-09: Support the Southern Region through Chile's leadership for this specific activity (Market Reporters Workshop), on the condition that it does not exceed \$3,500.00 (three thousand five hundred dollars). Such initiatives will not be approved in the future unless they are contemplated as part of the MIOA Work Plan.

Responsible parties: Southern Region Representative (Jorge Esquivel) and Technical Secretariat (TS)

22. Mr. Esquivel mentioned Chile's interest in hosting the 2011 Regular Meeting.
23. Mr. Long closed the session at 5:30p.m.

----- LAST LINE -----

Terry Long, MIOA President and Northern Region

Adriana Senior, MIOA Vice President and Andean Region Representative

Blanca Guarneros, Host Country 2009 Representative

Aziz Mohammed, Caribbean Region Representative

Jorge Esquivel, Southern Region Representative

Erika Ruano, Central Region Representative
