

Stakeholders' perceptions towards transition pathways in the Cameroonian cocoa sector, that lead to a higher cocoa quality and livelihood of farming households

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Background

Major findings of IITA's project on "Potential analysis of innovative approaches for the cocoa value chain in Cameroon" (PotinnocC) and the overall literature reveal, that Cameroon's cocoa sector is facing vast challenges (GEITZENUER & MATHÉ, 2018). The quality of cocoa and the livelihood of farming households remain low. Although much effort has been already done to develop the sector (e.g. introducing certification schemes), these interventions seem to be incoherent, to disregard perceptions of actors involved, and to merely take place at production level. Hence, the sector continues to be unprofitable and unstable.

Research question

How can a sustainability transition in the Cameroonian cocoa sector be triggered, that leads to a higher cocoa quality and livelihood of farming households?

Approach

- Conceptual Framework: Transition theory (GEELS, 2002)
- Purely qualitative approach, **based on perceptions of value chain actors:**

		Research Methods
Objective 1	To analyse the sustainability of the present agricultural innovation system of the cocoa sector based on the perceptions of regime actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary data: Literature review • Primary data: <u>12 in-depth stakeholder interviews</u> with exporters, public organisations, development agencies, private entities, cocoa buyers and cooperatives; + <u>questionnaire</u> for assessing present and future sustainability;
Objective 2	To explore regime actors' perceptions towards sustainability transition pathways	
Objective 3	To identify interventions to develop these specific sustainability transition pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>focus group</u> with farmers; • <u>structured observation</u> during the field trip

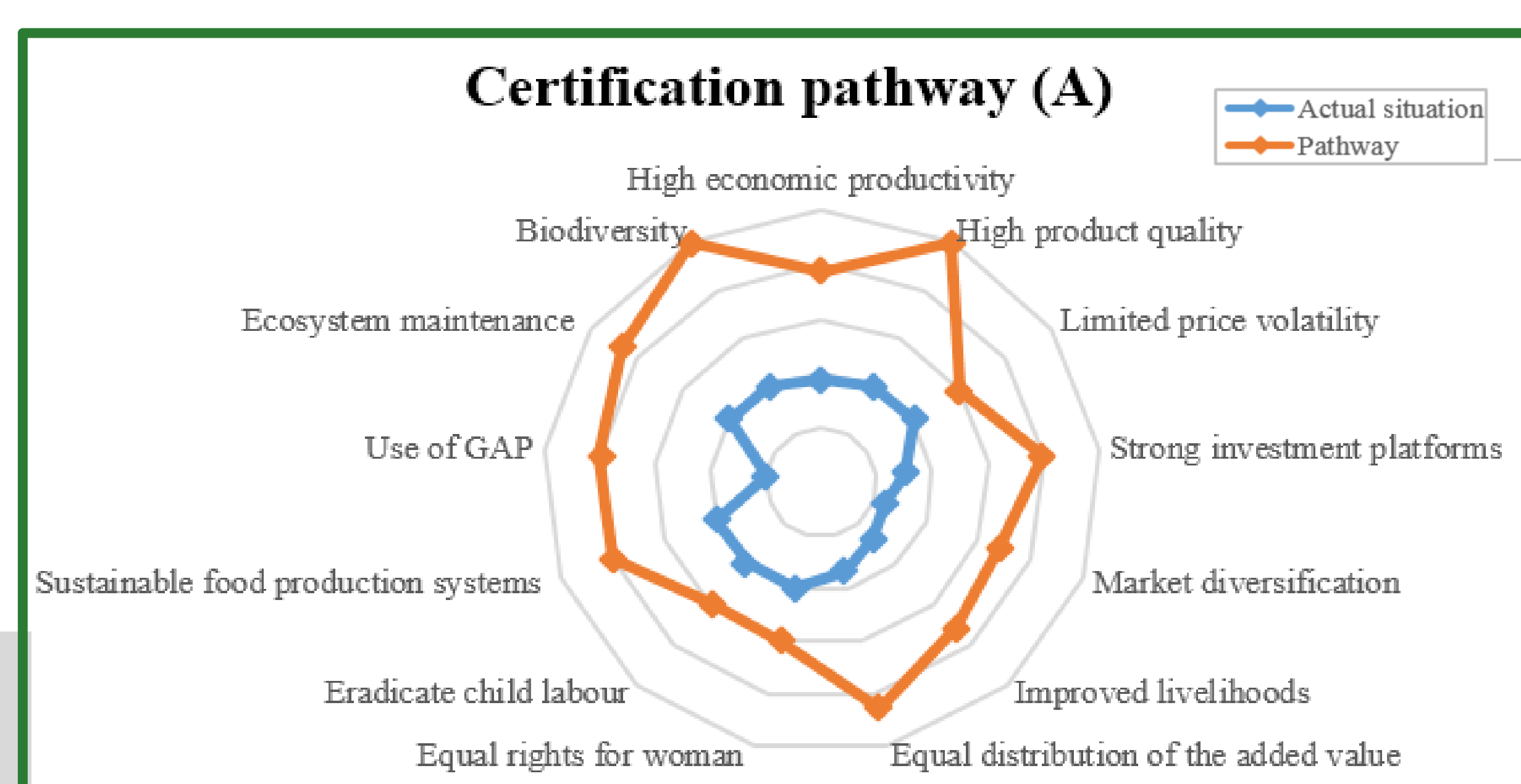


Figure 1: Example of results gained with the questionnaire assessing sustainability



Results

- Incoherent perceptions
- Different sustainable transition pathways were identified
- Certification seemed to find great reputation amongst farmers, however not amongst institutional actors
- Nobody opted for a pure production-focused pathway ("Business-as-usual" scenario)
- Strong topics: Diversification of the market, Youth integration, Local market development, Private-public partnership

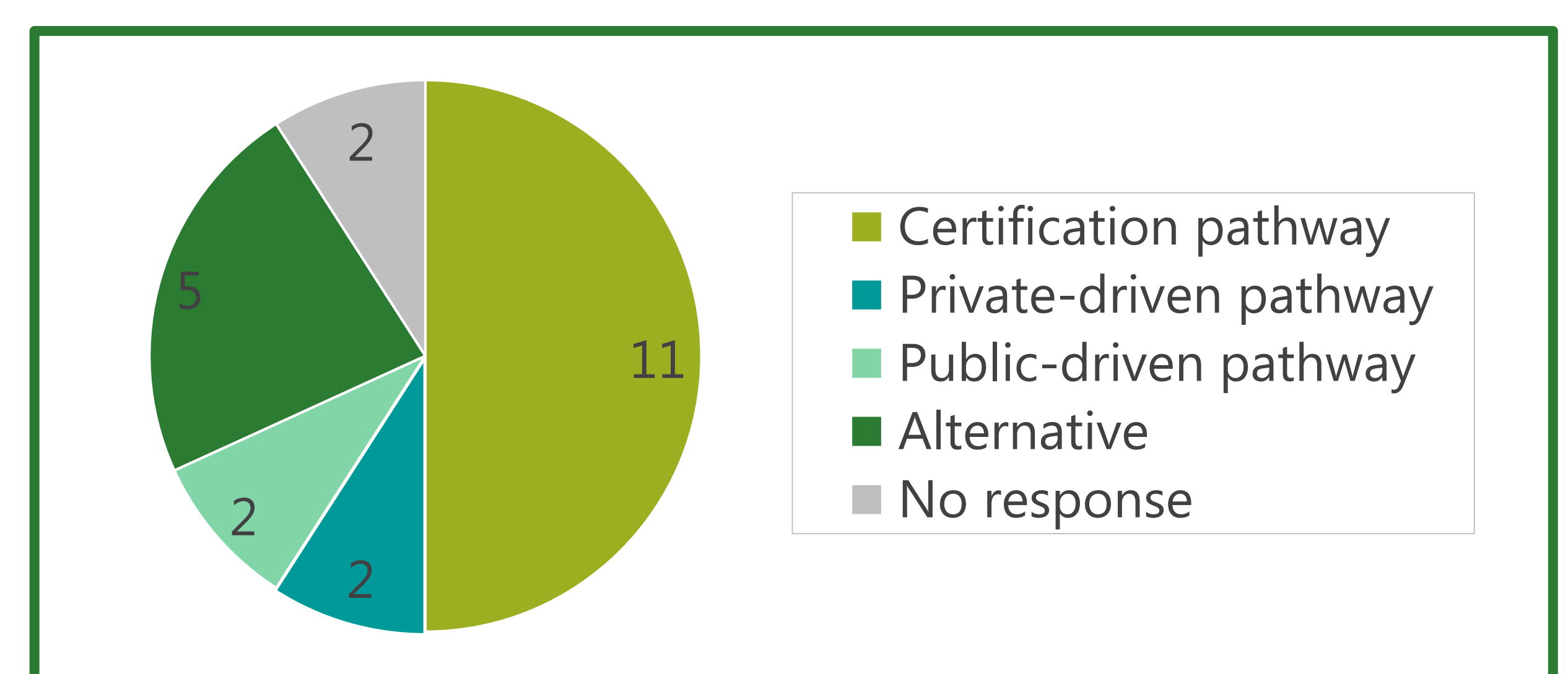


Figure 2: Transition pathways chosen by respondents [n° of respondents]

Conclusion and Recommendations

- Organisational innovation and coherence of actors' perceptions is needed for niche innovations to break through and sustainability transition to be triggered in Cameroon's cocoa sector
- Strengthen private-public platforms of the national cocoa system
- Incorporate and consider the importance of perceptions in innovation transition theory

References:

GEELS, F. W. (2002). Technological transitions as evolutionary reconfiguration processes: a multi-level perspective and a case-study. *Research policy*, 31(8-9), 1257-1274.
GEITZENUER, M., & MATHÉ, S. (work in progress, 2018). Policy analysis of the cocoa value chain in Cameroon.

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