# Strategies for the development of a sustainable beef value chain in the Colombian Cauca Department

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The value chain concept is gaining importance in the development of sustainable commercial relationships for agricultural goods and for national and international sector competitivity. Compared to traditional production chains, where each actor is trying to maximize his own benefits and where not much communication happens among the involved actors, the value chain concept is about joint efforts, good communication and sharing of benefits among the involved actors, which results in an overall improvement of competitivity. In many countries there exist national strategies and plans for value chain development and upgrading for various agricultural products, considering the nature of the involved stakeholders and their relationships. Unfortunately, many of these strategies do not lead to the desired outcomes due to a lack of understanding of regional contexts, wrong planning or missing governance. As a result, the existing production chains do not transform into value chains, potential gains in competitivity cannot be harvested and the actors run the risk of a comparative disadvantage and a loss of market share.

In this study, we will analyze the beef production chain in the Colombian Cauca Department (Patía and Mercaderes) with the purpose of providing recommendations to regional authorities and chain actors on how to design a comprehensive and sustainable strategy that leads to the transformation of the production chain into a competitive and sustainable value chain. From October 2015 until July 2016, over 500 semi-quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews were or will be conducted with the various direct or indirect actors of the production chain, such as livestock producers, intermediaries, processors, sellers, consumers, financial institutions, or authorities.

The authors expect to obtain a clear map of the existing value chain, which shows all involved actors, the product flows and the communication among the actors. By this, existing bottlenecks will be identified that limit a sustainable development of the chain and its transformation. A SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) will be the input for the formulation of recommendations.

**Keywords:** Value chain, beef production, sustainable development, Colombia.

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