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## Multi-Stakeholder Platforms for Value Chain Upgrading. The Case of Cocoa in the Colombian Amazon

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### Abstract

Colombia is currently undergoing a historic process that requires reshaping the country’s agricultural and environmental policy. On the one hand, Colombia is implementing a post conflict agenda after concluding peace negotiations with the FARC guerrilla. The agreement includes important agricultural reforms which are expected to have major social and environmental impacts across the country, especially in the regions previously controlled by the FARC. Simultaneously and in connection, the Colombian northern Amazon has been experiencing greater rates of deforestation. As an attempt to align governmental, private and international cooperation efforts for addressing these issues integrally, the Colombian Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS), the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR), various private and public research institutes, the country’s public rural credit institute (FINAGRO), with support from international cooperation, have designed a strategy called Vision Amazonía (VA). One of VA five components recognises the role of the agricultural sector as both a driver of deforestation and at the same time, as an alternative to initiate a green growth economic pathway. One of the strategies to mitigate deforestation is to support four agricultural value chains (VCs) committed to zero deforestation goals.

The cocoa VC has been among the four prioritised VCs given its reforestation potential, its suitability to local soil and climatic conditions, niche market potential and the current presence of producer organisations and development projects in the region. In the period between January and June 2017, the International Center of Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) has been facilitating the consolidation of multi-stakeholder platforms for redesigning the sector’s VC upgrading strategy, including zero deforestation and market differentiation goals in the departments of Guaviare and Caquetá, by using a participatory process that involves key stakeholders along the entire VC. This study aims at documenting the experience by providing an overview of the approaches and methodologies used, and by presenting the outcomes, strategies and action plans developed during the process. The study will also provide a critical review of the tools employed, achievements, challenges and lessons learned that will inform policy makers and implementing organisations to better design participatory zero deforestation VC development interventions.

**Keywords:** Agroforestry, cocoa, LINK methodology, multi-stakeholder platforms, value chain analysis