

Multi-stakeholder platforms for value chain analysis and upgrading

The case of Cocoa in the Colombian Northern Amazon

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Introduction

The Colombian government is implementing a post conflict agenda that includes rural reforms, focused on areas previously under the FARC guerrilla's control. Simultaneously and connectedly, the country is experiencing increasing rates of deforestation. To align efforts against deforestation and the promotion of new development models for the Amazon Region, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development created a program called Visión Amazonía (VA). One of VA components includes the strengthening of agricultural value chains (VCs) committed to zero deforestation goals (MADS, 2015) through the collective construction of upgrading strategies.

The cocoa VC has been prioritized given its reforestation capacity, suitability to local conditions, market potential and the existence of committed producer organizations in the region. The International Center of Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) facilitated the consolidation of multi-stakeholder platforms for developing the sector's VC upgrading strategy in the departments of Guaviare and Caquetá, by using a participatory process that involves key stakeholders along the entire VC.

Objectives

This study aims at documenting the experience by providing an overview of the approaches and methodologies employed, and by presenting some of the outcomes, strategies and action plans developed during the process for the cocoa VC in Caquetá. The study will also provide a critical review of the tools employed, achievements, challenges and lessons learned.

Methodologies

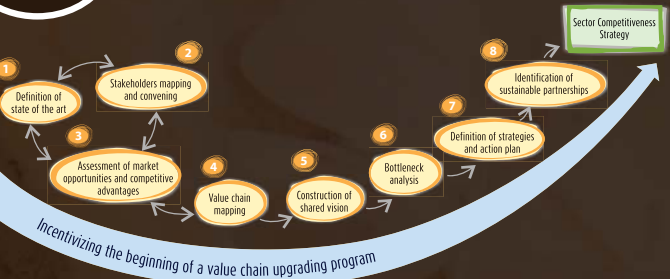


Figure 1. Value Chain Strategies and Action Plan.

Based on the *LINK*, *ValueLinks* and *Participatory market chain analysis* methodologies, we developed a framework consisting of 8 steps, where we employed a combination of **secondary literature review**, **panel and plenary discussions**, **semi structured interviews** and **multi-stakeholder workshops** through the various steps.

In practice, the process did not follow a linear path, since continuous feedback and revision was necessary to refine the sector data, vision, strategies and action plan. To facilitate feedback and implementation, an executive committee with local actors was established.

Results

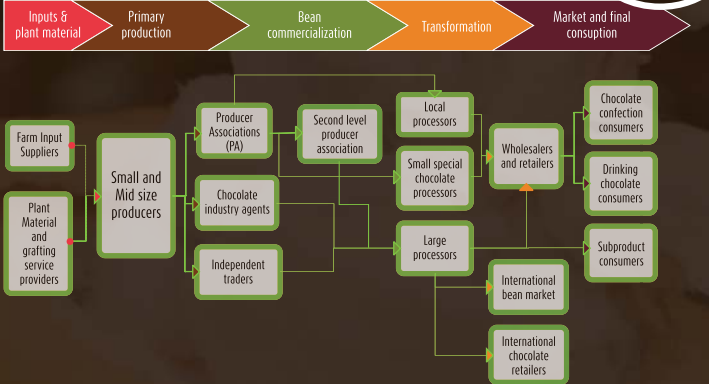


Figure 2. Value Chain Map.

Table 1
Value Chain Strategies and Action Plan

Link	Bottleneck	Strategy	Actions
Plant Material	Lack of knowledge of local cocoa profile	Development of the cocoa organoleptic map for the department	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sampling, field and laboratory evaluations.Characterization of productive models, clones and cocoa profile.Design of production and post harvest training scheme based on results of the analysis.Training of local cocoa tasters among PA.
Production	Low quality and reach of extension services	Establish a scenario for the harmonization of technical concepts for cocoa extension services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Set up a platform/workshop with stakeholders in training and extension services.Consolidate general guidelines practices and concepts for technical assistance.Publish material with harmonized concepts.Train local trainers and extensionists on harmonized concepts.
Marketing	Lack of knowledge of market opportunities	Strengthening of local knowledge on differentiation strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Prepare a forum with expert speakers on differentiation strategies (Protected Designation of Origin, Organic, Fair Trade, Premium cocoa, collective branding, etc.)Workshop with extensionists and PA representatives on differentiation alternatives.

Discussion & Recomendations

Designing viable strategies requires a proper definition of the value chain's state of the art. In areas with scarce or unreliable data, it is possible to build a "close enough" picture through continuous feedback and collective construction. Based on this picture, the active participation of potential commercial partners was vital, since it allowed to connect market needs with producer capabilities and define realistic strategies. The execution of the strategies is currently still on hold, but some initial achievements include bilateral commercial and collaboration agreements between direct actors and service providers. Discussions of VC challenges including lack of coordination and information has reemerged, and the reactivation of stakeholder platforms is taking place for the various value chains intervened.

References

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