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The Scaling-Up Potential of Agroforestry Systems in Colombia: a Comparative *ex-ante* Assessment Across two Contrasting Regions

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Abstract

Agroforestry systems (AFS) have been recognised as land-use strategies that contribute to biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation, and mitigation, as well as sustainable rural livelihoods. However, these potential contributions remain unrealised as so far AFS spreading remained limited. This results in increasing demand by development programmes to find effective ways to scale-up AFS so that more people can benefit from them. In this sense, it is crucial to identify beforehand what conditions are needed to effectively disseminate AFS in a particular context. This study assesses the scaling-up potential of AFS for cocoa farming and cattle ranching, in two different regions of Colombia. The methodology is based on questionnaires conducted with 20 AFS experts from different institutions (NGOs, research institutes, local government institutions) promoting these systems in both regions using a snowball sampling. These questionnaires were completed through the ScalA-PB mobile app, an *ex-ante* assessment tool of the potential for scaling-up projects or strategies that support agricultural good practices within post-conflict settings. They include seven scaling-up dimensions: (a) AFS attributes such as their affordability or their complexity to implement; (b) capacities of implementing organisations and (c) their strategies for scaling-up AFS; (d) institutional framework at the national level that includes government support to disseminate AFS; (e) institutional setting at the local level such as the presence of AFS supporting formal or informal rules; (f) economic conditions at the local and regional level; and (g) attitudes of communities towards AFS including their willingness to introduce them. The preliminary results suggest that AFS scaling-up potential is perceived slightly higher for cocoa farming than for cattle ranching in both study regions. For both farming systems, AFS scaling-up is hindered by insufficient access to financial means by farmers to afford the cost of the systems and the lack of stable and differentiated markets that guarantee reasonable prices for products derived from them. The *ex-ante* assessment of AFS scaling-up potential based on expert perceptions indicates which conditions need to be improved when promoting agricultural and policy interventions regarding AFS. So, there is a need in these two regions to develop strategies that facilitate financial means for carrying the cost of AFS implementation and recognise their non-market values.

Keywords: Agroforestry, *ex-ante* impact assessment, ScalA-PB, scaling-up, sustainable agriculture

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