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Farmers’ and academia’s views”

## Transitioning to zero deforestation cocoa supply chains: Multi-stakeholder platforms are no silver bullet

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### Abstract

Around the world, multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) have been established to solve several environmental and social challenges. MSPs are innovative and promising network governance approaches that aim to balance the interests and approaches of various stakeholders involved in complex sustainability challenges. Evidence on the effectiveness of MSPs is mixed and context-specific. Knowledge gaps remain, especially regarding the scaling potential of MSPs.

This paper aims at analyzing the governance mechanisms of MSPs involved in initiatives aiming to develop business models that are deforestation free and have low greenhouse gas emissions in the cocoa value chain in Ucayali, Peru. Therefore, fieldwork was conducted and the infrastructure of the Sustainable Amazon Business (SAB) project was used, collaborating with the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). The paper analyses the characteristics of the different MSPs, identifying and visualizing the roles, interests, power relations, incentives and investments of different actors of the platforms. Furthermore, farmers responses as well as the functionality of the MSPs are discussed.

To allow an in depth analysis of different levels in the cocoa value chain, a comparative case study approach is used. The analysis relies on MSPs case studies: (1) technical roundtable on cocoa in Ucayali (2) cocoa association Curimana (3) cooperative Colpa the Loros, and uses different qualitative research methods for data collection, in-depth expert interviews and the Net-Map tool.

The results show that the MSPs differ in characteristics and functionality. They have been initiated either by the government, farmers or jointly farmers and the private sector. Governance challenges can be observed in the domains such as market failure, state failure and community failure. Due to a lack of funding, lack of commitment by the stakeholders and its institutional design the technical roundtable is not functioning. Farmers seem to lose “trust” in the technical roundtable as a result of the limited achievement of stated objectives. In the case of Colpa de Loros, the main success factor is the inclusion and commitment of the private sector, that is absent or not committed in the other cases. These results highlight MSP is not a one size fits all, however more participatory approaches and private sector incentives and involvement offer a potential for a best fit MSP for transitioning to zero deforestation cocoa supply chains.

**Keywords:** Cocoa value chain, governance, multi-stakeholder platforms, Peru

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