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Farmers’ and academia’s views”

The innovation system for deforestation-free cocoa value chains: A case study from the Ucayali region of Peru

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Abstract

Cocoa cultivation is often cited as a major driver of deforestation, especially in West Africa and Southeast Asia. In the case of Latin America, the literature suggests that in Colombia, despite evidence that cocoa cultivation is not a major cause of forest loss, zero deforestation initiatives have been implemented in the cocoa value chain. However, these initiatives do not fit the local context and economic development and lack complementarity with other development efforts. In the Peruvian Amazon, CIAT-Biodiversity Alliance managed a project funded by Germany’s International Climate Initiative (IKI) to develop zero-deforestation business models between 2018–2021. The project focuses on the cocoa and oil palm value chains in Ucayali, a Peruvian province with a high deforestation rate. The CIAT-Biodiversity Alliance and its implementing partner, Climate Focus, have developed several workshops with the objectives of strengthening the regional technical roundtable of cocoa stakeholders in Ucayali and promoting good practices in cocoa cultivation to increase productivity and reduce deforestation, such as optimising the application of fertilisers and soil amendments, the use of organic fertilisers, and the introduction of agroforestry systems, among others. Using the Q methodology and other Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools, as well as in-depth interviews, this study seeks to analyse the perspective of Ucayali farmers on the implementation of the zero-deforestation business model. In this study, the analysis was conducted partly in the framework of group discussions, in which farmers expressed, on the one hand, their concern about the loss of forests, biodiversity and its effects on the climate, but on the other hand, they also expressed their unease about the lack of support they receive from the State and their low yields, which leads them to expand their agricultural land. The first results show that farmers actively participate in the workshops and identify the lack of organic fertilisation and pruning of their crops as the cause of their low productivity. However, they reject some innovations such as agroforestry intercropping because it generates a microclimate conducive to the development of diseases. The study concludes with recommendations for future interventions in the value chain with zero deforestation.

Keywords: Cocoa value chain, deforestation, Perú, Q methodology