Barriers to Agroecological Transition of Coffee-based Farming Systems in the Central Highlands of Vietnam

Tuan Ha[(a)], Eric Rahn[(b)], Sven Anders[(c)], Giang Pham[(a)], Khanh Le[(d)], Cornelis Swaans[(a)]

(a) International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), Hanoi, Vietnam; (b) CIAT, Cali, Colombia; (c) Department of Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology, University of Alberta, Canada; (d) Centre of Environmental Economics and Policy, the University of Western Australia.

I. Introduction

- The expansion of export commodity production systems across Vietnam's Central Highlands (VCH) has come at significant environmental costs for communities.
- Land degradation stemming from unsustainably intensive farming practices particularly threatens the livelihoods of ethnic minority groups.
- The EU's deforestation regulation ((EU) 2023/1115) that restricts the import of coffee if sourced from areas affected by forest degradation further calls for urgent interventions to reverse unsustainable practices.

➢ ***Study purpose***: to investigate barriers and opportunities to the adoption of agroecological (AE) interventions of VCH cropping systems to combat land and forest degradation practices.

Figure 1: Unsustainable production practices (n = 724)

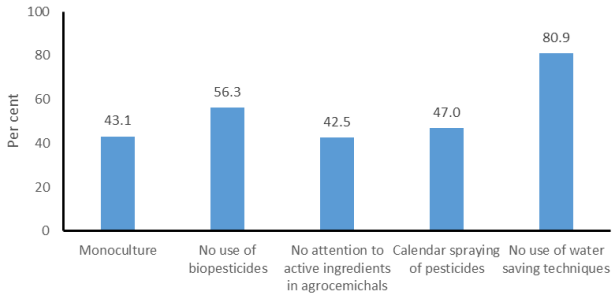
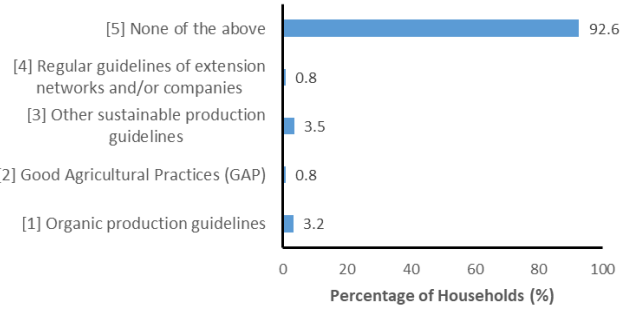


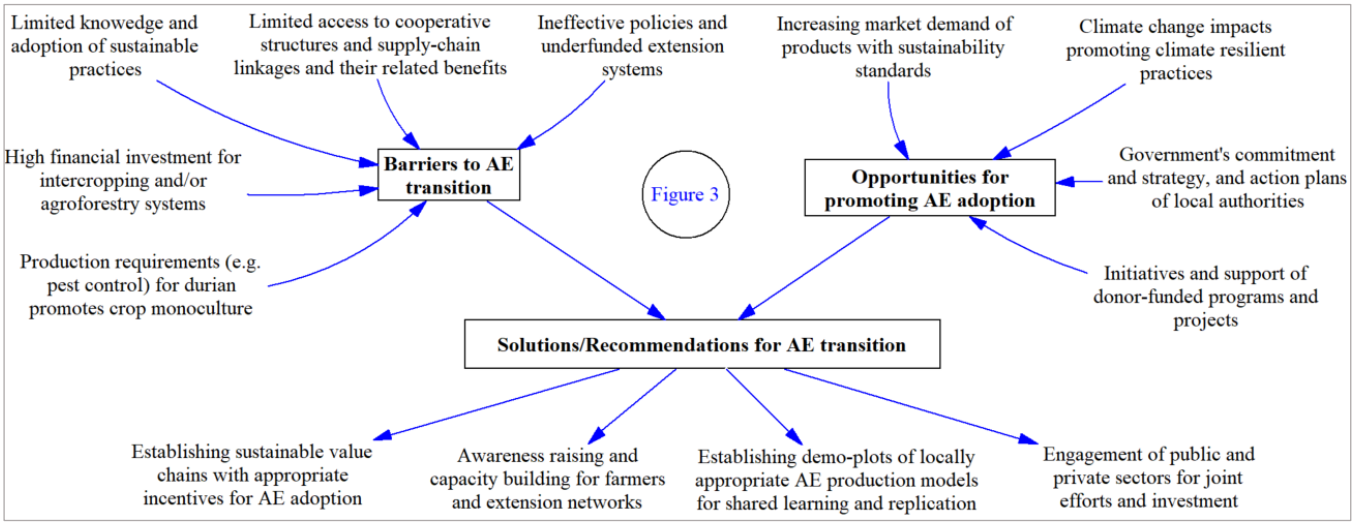
Fig.2: Adoption of standard production guidelines



II. Methodology

- An adapted Rural Household Multi-Indicator Survey (RHoMIS) was conducted during 2022-2023 with 724 representative coffee farmers across 4 districts of Lam Dong and Dak Nong provinces, Vietnam.
- The findings were validated and enriched through stakeholder interviews, workshops, and farmer focus groups.

III. Results



- **Barriers to AE transition** include both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The former comprises limited knowledge and financial resources of farmers for adoption of sustainable practices, and unorganized production among individual farmers. The latter includes ineffective policies and underfunded extension systems, lack of market-based and policy incentives, and specific requirements (e.g. pest control) for durian export that tends to promote monocropping.
- **Opportunities for AE transition** include: increasing market demand on eco-friendly production, climate-induced resilient production practices, commitments on low carbon agriculture and green growth strategies of both central and local governments, and on-going support from donor-funded programs and projects.

IV. Conclusions

- This study provided a comprehensive analysis of both intrinsic and extrinsic barriers and opportunities for AE transition in the VCH. These serve as strong rationale for some recommended interventions (Figure 3).