

**Improving local support services for agroenterprises in
in Yorito, Honduras and Cauca, Colombia**

**Expression of Interest presented to the
Latin American Development Assistance Facility
(LADAF), NZAID**

By

Dr. Christopher Wheatley,
Consultant, Nelson, New Zealand

And

**The International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT),
Cali, Colombia**

**The Inter-institutional Consortium for Sustainable
Hillside Agriculture, Cauca, Colombia (CIPASLA)**

**Local Committee for Sustainable Development of the
Watershed of the River Tascalapa (CLODEST), Yoro,
Honduras**

1. Basic Information

Title.	Feasibility study for the local provision of support services for rural agroenterprises in Yoro, Honduras and Cauca, Colombia
Country/location(s)	Yoro, Honduras and Cauca, Colombia
Counterparts	CIPASLA (Cauca) and CLODEST (Honduras) with CIAT (International)
NZ partner	Dr. Chris Wheatley
NZ address etc	P.O. Box 462, Nelson, NZ tel 03-5442597 fax 03-5442503 email cwheatley@xtra.co.nz
Start and completion dates	From 01/2003 to 06/2005.

2. Assignment Summary

Small enterprises that add value to agricultural production, and are linked to growth markets, represent a promising route out of poverty for many rural communities. Methodologies for area- and community-based small agroenterprise development that combine local strengths with external market, technological and other information are under trial in several locations in Latin America. Specifically, three consortia of local level institutions, representing the community, NGOs and the public and private sectors are operational in Yoro, Honduras and Cauca, Colombia. These consortia also include the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (Rural Agroenterprise Project), which facilitates these local enterprise development processes, as part of an R and D project to develop methodologies for more general application. Existing projects cover (a) the opportunity identification process, a systematic and participatory approach to selection of the most promising small agroenterprise options and (b) integrated agroenterprise projects, which take the opportunities identified from idea to commercial reality, through a sustainable production to consumption chain approach.

The agroenterprises involved in these projects (both new and those previously existing) need a range of services to prosper. These services are often deficient or even non-existent in rural areas, especially for small enterprises. While structural adjustment and free market programs across Latin America have resulted in a reduced range and coverage of public sector services, parallel government decentralization trends have created opportunities for local initiatives to fill these gaps. The consortia of community organizations and NGOs in both locations have identified a priority need for improved services at local level. Meeting this need does not fall within the remit of the existing projects in these locations. This assignment therefore proposes to facilitate and support the consortia of local institutions in Cauca and Yoro, to assess the feasibility of local schemes for providing the support services needed by the agroenterprise projects currently being implemented. This will involve the participatory design and local level pilot testing, monitoring and evaluation of a limited range of services, on a demand-driven basis. If the feasibility study is positive, these local services will expand within the context of an on-going development project in each location. Additionally, a methodology available for application in other localities/communities will be developed. In this assignment, CIAT and the NZ consultant will facilitate the local level processes in both pilot sites, as well ensuring documentation that will assist later dissemination of successful results.

3. Needs/situation analysis

Introduction to local context

Many rural areas of Latin America share a common situation of poverty and environmental degradation. Economic dualism is the norm: a capital intensive, “modern” agricultural sector linked to international markets, coexists alongside small-scale, labour intensive agriculture producing traditional staples. Free market policy changes over the last decade have increased competition on the small farm sector from imported (often subsidized) agrifood products, reducing the ability of small farm agricultural production alone to provide sustainable livelihoods for the rural poor. Increasingly, rural communities turn to employment in non-farm production activities and to urban migration. The increased competitive pressures on farmers also cause more intensive land use, compounding the environmental problems of soil loss and degradation, especially in erosion prone hillside agroecologies. Downsizing of central government has reduced the capability of public sector agencies to tackle these rural problems. In some countries, this has been compounded by natural disasters (e.g. Hurricane Mitch in Honduras) and civil conflict (e.g. Colombia). Thus, while smallholder farmers are facing increased pressures to be more market oriented, the coverage and quality of services (especially in remote, rural areas) to support this transition has decreased markedly.

Analysis of problems

Many poor, rural communities in Latin America are starting to seek their own ways out of the complex problems outlined above, realising that their governments cannot provide solutions. Decentralization of decision making to local level (a positive policy development of the 1990s) has assisted these efforts. Communities realize that new, natural resource-based rural enterprises that add value to traditional and novel crops/livestock, and are aimed at higher value national and international markets, can contribute to rural livelihoods/incomes and (if well managed) to environmental sustainability as well. Two such communities with very different social and market characteristics (but similar problems) are located in the watersheds of two rivers: the River Ovejas in Cauca, Colombia and the River Tascalapa in Honduras. In both communities, consortia of local organizations, including community representatives, committed to sustainable agriculture now exist: CIPASLA in Cauca and CLODEST in Honduras. Both these mid-altitude hillside micro-regions suffer from high levels of rural poverty. Cauca province has a lower human development index rating than the national average (Cauca 0.54, Colombia 0.84, Colombian National Planning Ministry, 1993). Honduras is one of the poorest countries in the Americas, with an estimated GNP of US\$650 per capita. Over 50% of the population live in poverty (World Bank, 2000). Both regions have infertile soils, and poor health, education, transport and communications infrastructure. This is compounded in Yoro in Honduras by the human and natural resource disaster of Hurricane Mitch in 1998, and in Cauca, Colombia by the ongoing civil conflict and production of illicit crops.

The Natural Resource Management Division of the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) has been supporting these local efforts since 1996 through a rural agroenterprise project which has entered into partnership with the local consortia in the two regions in order to (a) facilitate the development of locally based rural agroenterprises, while (b) developing the international public goods (methods, tools, organized information, technologies etc) of more general relevance. The CIAT project therefore links development to research, with an orientation for meso-level clients that

support small, rural agroenterprise development, contributing to both poverty alleviation (through local level economic development) and to sustainable use of natural resources.

The Initial focus of these local level initiatives of the consortia, based on the expressed local priorities for diversifying livelihood strategies (and income generation options) was the identification of agro-enterprise opportunities, based on matching local natural, human and financial resources (biophysical, socio-economic) with market demand. This necessarily entailed a synthesis of information from within the community with that collected from outside. Methods that facilitate local farmers to make decisions about which new agroenterprise opportunities to develop, and to ensure that environmental as well as economic and social criteria were incorporated into the process, were developed by CIAT. Following this, Agroindustry subgroups of each consortium have now taken a leading role. A number of Integrated Agroenterprise Projects are now moving forward based on these concepts (CIAT project report to IDRC, 2001).

Enterprises require a wide range of support services, e.g. technical assistance, marketing, finance and accounting, business management skills. Enterprise owners and managers from these poor rural communities, often with limited formal education and little relevant previous experience, have a real need for support. Yet most service providers are urban based. Reaching rural areas is more difficult (enterprises are more disperse, communications infrastructure poor) and hence more expensive. Social gaps exist between rural communities and urban providers, especially if ethnic and gender differences exist. Rural communities have realised that they need a minimum level of locally provided enterprise services. Thus, participatory planning exercises of the Agroindustry groups in each consortium have consistently identified the need to improve local support services as a priority (see section below on how the initiative was identified for more details).

Identification of target groups

The proposal seeks to contribute to improved livelihoods for the poor rural communities of the River Tascalapa, Yoro, Honduras and the River Ovejas, Cauca Colombia. Within these micro-regions, impact can be expected on:

- Smallholder farming households, through improved prices and markets for primary production, and through providing incentives for more sustainable land and water management. Additional income will result from any interest and involvement farming households have in enterprises that add value to primary production, through ownership of such enterprises and through employment in them.
- Households that do not own or rent land can also benefit from increased employment opportunities and enterprise ownership, both in agroenterprises directly, and indirectly through service-related activities.
- Rural women, who are involved in many value-adding activities.

Although the two local areas of Cauca, Colombia and Yoro, Honduras have the similar complex of problems, and agroenterprise solutions, they are examples of two rather different situations. Cauca is more market oriented, with better communications infrastructure and greater human capital and more meso-level institutions active locally. Yoro is more isolated, with fewer market links and poorer infrastructure, human capital and institutional capability. While Cauca underwent the political decentralization process over 10 years ago, in Yoro it is only now incipient. Households in Cauca would generally

have a greater ability to pay for services than in Yoro. It is not expected that the two enterprise support systems for Yoro and Cauca will be identical, i.e. no one “best practice” will be identified. Rather, the two situations will assist in the development of a basket of principles and options for application in other situations/projects, not in a prescriptive methodology for general application.

How the initiative was identified

Since the mid 1990s, when the two consortia were established with strong community representation, considerable local planning has occurred. This is much wider than the current project, involving many aspects of community development. Participatory planning exercises by the consortia, with active community representation, have resulted in clear visions for where they want to be in ten year’s time e.g. “*ingresos que nos permiten comer bien, estar saludables y educar a los hijos*” (income sufficient to eat well, stay healthy and educate our kids). The strategy that they have developed for achieving this local vision is through the diversification of the current limited livelihood strategies, in two ways:

- Expanding the number of crops produced from the current traditional corn, beans and coffee to a more diversified portfolio of 8-10 crops
- Adding value to primary agricultural production through processing and marketing enterprises.

These strategies, identified by the communities themselves, require the presence of a range of support services in the two areas, since they involve production, processing and marketing activities with which farming households are unfamiliar. Thus, the need for a wider range of services (of higher quality than those currently available) in the two areas was specifically identified by the participatory planning processes of the local consortia in Cauca (1998) and Yoro (2000). As a result of this, a basic diagnostic study of currently available services was included in the annual workplans of the two consortia. Funds available through the existing CIAT/IDRC project were limited, and have documented the deficiencies of the current system, but have not be adequate to provide the detailed information needed to proceed to the design and pilot testing of prototype support systems (e.g. assessment of demand for specific new services).

4. Assignment description

Outline of proposed response to need/problem

The need expressed by the local consortia in the two areas for new agro-based enterprise options to enhance livelihoods and the natural environment at local level has resulted in the following development processes being undertaken locally, with CIAT involved in facilitation and monitoring and evaluation (from which new methodologies etc can be derived):

- Identification of market opportunities for new agroenterprises in the two areas, through a participatory process that involves local farmers in the evaluation of agroenterprise options generated through rapid market surveys
- Collective action to develop new or improved agroenterprises based on the priorities identified in the market opportunity identification process, involving all actors in the production/processing/marketing chain. These “Agroenterprise Projects” are run by the local consortia (including community organizations, NGOs etc.)

In Cauca, five agroenterprise projects are currently under development, including dairy products, production and marketing of Anthuriums, rural chickens, cassava starch and *mora* (blackberry) production/marketing. In Yoro, agroenterprise projects on corn

marketing and organic (transition) coffee are operational, while a project on dairy products is in the design stage.

During the implementation of the current agroenterprise projects in the communities the inadequacies of support services have become a major constraint to the long-term sustainability of the new enterprises. The traditional public sector service providers in rural areas (e.g agricultural extension) are no longer present (due to privatisation and a focus on larger scale farmers who can afford to pay consultancy fees), while other services have never been available locally through the public sector (e.g. marketing services, business skills training, technology access and assistance services for post-harvest processing). Funds were available in the existing project to perform a rapid diagnosis of existing service providers, and this revealed that some demand-based services are provided informally, but are of poor quality. The potential for a more demand-based provision of local services could exist, but the existing project (of the consortia and CIAT combined) does not include this within its scope (beyond the initial diagnosis already conducted). Hence, this proposal seeks additional finance for a feasibility study for the establishment and initial operation of local support services for small rural agro-enterprises which will include pilot schemes in Yoro and Cauca. CIAT and the NZ consultant bring to the project a knowledge of other relevant experiences in the small enterprise development field (e.g. FIT in Kenya and USAID projects in Peru). These experiences are urban or non-agricultural sector based, and require adaptation of lessons learned to the agroenterprise projects in Colombia and Honduras.

Downstream project objectives (for implementation phase)

The goal for the rural agroenterprise development project currently in progress in Yoro and Cauca is: *Increased rural employment and income in marginal and fragile hillside communities where small holder farming predominates, while providing sustainable resource use.*

The objective for the complete project is: *To promote rural business development through the identification and development of opportunities for crop diversification and value added processing.*

The outputs and activities of this project, currently being implemented, are funded by:

- The core budgets of the CIAT Agroenterprise project, based on a grant from DFID, UK (covers CIAT staff costs) and previous market opportunity identification studies. While DFID funding for the CIAT Agroenterprise project is periodically reviewed, medium term stability in funding support can reasonably be expected.
- A project funded by IDRC, Canada, from 1999-March 2002, for design of integrated agroenterprise projects in the two locations.
- Budgets of local counterpart organizations for their staff and logistics
- Diverse funding sources for implementation of Integrated Agroenterprise Projects, including public sector grants/loans (e.g. in Colombia, from the PADEMER project of the Ministry of Agriculture - see support letter attached) and commercial credit.

The assignment proposed here is a support to the above project in the two locations of Cauca, Colombia and Yoro, Honduras. At the termination of this assignment, it is envisaged that the demand-driven support services will be operational on a pilot level, and that no further support will be required in those two locations, beyond that available through the existing project with the two local consortia and CIAT. Beyond this, CIAT will

disseminate and promote the international public goods (methods, tools etc) that result from CIAT's involvement with these local processes, to other meso-level, development oriented clients in Latin America and beyond.

Assignment objective

Assignment Objective: *To strengthen local capacity for rural agroenterprise development in two hillside communities in Latin America over 2.5 years.*

All project outputs contribute to this overall, developmentally-oriented objective, in three phases:

Phase I: in which a detailed diagnosis of current services provides the baseline information needed for the design, by all stakeholders (including actual and potential, formal and informal sector service-providers), of a prototype support service system. It provides a baseline against which the project can be evaluated at the end of Phase II. The diagnosis will include, and pay special attention to, locally-provided informal services which are often ignored. The diagnosis will also assess demand (willingness to pay) for a range of services. The output from this phase of the project is a design for a prototype demand-driven local agroenterprise support system, and an action plan for its implementation in Phase II.

Phase II entails the implementation of the action plan for a prototype support system (and the individual services this comprises), together with the monitoring and evaluation processes that accompany it. The major outputs are feasibility and other studies for each individual service or mechanism. This will enable the consortia in each location to identify which mechanisms and services are most applicable/in demand and sustainable in their situations.

Phase III ensures that both scale up (with the two locations) and scale out (to other regions and Latin America) will occur, building on CIAT's existing strategy for this. Close collaboration with arrange of International NGOs in the incorporation of the lessons learned into their area-based rural development efforts, is a feature of this strategy. (see objective and outputs in section 8).

5. Introduction to stakeholders

CIPASLA, Caldono, Cauca, Colombia

See the letter of support from the CIPASLA Director, which provides full information on the composition, goals and experience of the consortium. The local Municipal Unit for Agricultural Technical Assistance is part of CIPASLA - see support letter also attached).

CLODEST Yoro, Honduras

CLODEST, in the municipality of Yorito is an inter-institutional consortium active in the two administrative regions located in the watershed of the River Tascalapa (Yorito and Sulaco). It brings together local government, NGO and community organizations around common development goals for the region. Representatives of regional (e.g. IICA) and international organizations (e.g. CIAT) are also members of the consortia. The consortium has a Rural Agroindustry Commission whose mission is to promote rural

agroenterprise development. In 2000, the Commission initiated the development of integrated agroenterprise projects on coffee and maize. Two further commodity chains will be prioritised for support in 2001.

CIAT

The International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) based in Cali, Colombia, is one of the 16 Future Harvest centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Its mission is to contribute to the alleviation of hunger and poverty in the tropics. Research at CIAT focuses on the genetic improvement of beans, rice, cassava and tropical forages, and the management of natural resources in hillside, forest margin and savannah ecosystems. An important component of the Center's strategy for natural resource management is the identification and development of options that increase incomes and generate employment through diversifying and adding value to smallholder production. Placed within a framework of sustainable rural development, the successful implementation of these options will motivate farmers and processors to employ ecologically-sound production practices. This research is undertaken by CIAT's Rural Agroenterprise Project, counterpart to the present project initiative. CIAT's HQ is two hours drive from the CIPASLA watershed in Cauca. CIAT maintains an office and staff in Honduras who work closely with CLODEST and CIDES in Yoro. The consortia and CIAT have a strong track record of implementing projects funded by international donors e.g. IDRC (Canada) and DFID (UK). The principal clients of the Rural Agroenterprise Development Project are meso-level institutions active in rural enterprise development in developing countries. Currently, CIAT is building alliances with major international NGOs (e.g. CARE, World Vision) as well as with networks of national and regional institutions (e.g. the PRODAR and Chorlavi networks in Latin America). Thus, the developmental impact of the CIAT Rural Agroenterprise Project is necessarily indirect, through the application of the research results (obtained through projects with local actors such as those in Yoro and Cauca) by these development oriented clients. Since project inception in 1996, impact can be seen in:

- Increased cooperation and coordination between meso-level institutions in areas where CIAT projects are active.
- Implementation of locally managed agroenterprise projects in Colombia, Honduras, Nicaragua and Peru.
- Increased institutional capacity for use of participatory methods in agroenterprise development by meso level agencies in Latin America.
- Opening of new markets to some small farmer groups in Colombia.

The proposed assignment would be integrated with existing CIAT and consortia activities in the two sites. Preparation of the full proposal will be undertaken with consortia and CIAT staff in each site to ensure that workplans are compatible and integrated with existing activities. The input from LADAF would supply information on the support service component of agroenterprise development that is lacking within the existing project in each site.

Dr. Christopher Wheatley, Consultant, New Zealand.

Dr. Chris Wheatley was formerly an Enterprise Development Specialist in the Rural Agroenterprise Project at CIAT. He has over 15 years experience in Latin America (and 5 years in S.E. Asia) working in R and D for small rural agrifood enterprises, including agroprocessing, marketing, and enterprise organization. His last year in CIAT involved significant effort in developing the concept of viable rural services for small enterprises in Latin America. He has recently graduated (with distinction) from London University (UK)

with an MSc. in Food Industry Marketing and Management, complementing his previous academic qualifications in Horticulture (London, 1981) and Plant Sciences (Reading 1977). He is fluent in Spanish and has been a permanent resident of New Zealand since January 2000, working as a freelance consultant.

6. Development Merit

Poverty reduction

Linking small farming households to growth markets through rural agroenterprises provides a pathway out of poverty that builds on local strengths. The rural community can benefit through increased employment, through profit distributions from a share in enterprise ownership, and through better prices and a more secure market for primary agricultural production. In addition to these tangible economic benefits, communities can also benefit from the social capital that results from joint action towards common enterprise goals, and from the benefits of more sustainable natural resource use. A recent comprehensive analysis of rural poverty in Latin America (de Janvrey and Sadoulet, Food Policy, 2000, vol 25 p 389-409) identified four mechanisms out of rural poverty in Latin America: urban migration, improved agricultural technology, income from non-agricultural production activities, and targeted assistance. Of these, the second was the least effective, while the third was the most important, and also the most neglected by policy makers. This mechanism includes activities that add value to agricultural production through processing and marketing.

In Colombia, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) are promoting the strengthening of commodity production to consumption systems for specific products. The MED special project states “.the starting point for the formulation of strategies to promote mini-commodity systems will be a market-driven social and ecological economy model, that recognizes the marginality of a region and applies concepts of solidarity and subsidiarity. the construction of intervention methodologies for this type of economic structures is of special importance....The projection and strengthening of these production-consumption chains requires the design of an integral program that should include technical assistance, finance, marketing support, technology, institutional and business development

In 1995, the government of Honduras started a decentralization process in the agricultural sector, to give local communities a more active role in establishing alternative mechanisms of commercialization (Nunez and Castillo (1995). This strategy is now under implementation with the support of the Research and Technology Transfer Department (DICTA) and lately with the launching of the National Programme for Sustainable Rural Development (PRONADRES), with a mission to reduce poverty and improve rural welfare by promoting participatory processes that strength local capacity. This fits well with the overall objectives of this proposal.

Capacity building

The entire Agroenterprise Development process has entailed substantial building of local capacity at the micro-level (community/enterprises) and at meso-level (the institutions involved in the consortia). The current assignment will indirectly continue this process, through a learning by doing and mentoring approach during the pilot experiences proposed as part of the feasibility study in both locations. At meso level, consortium

members will gain skills involved in market testing, designing, providing and evaluating services for small enterprises, while the enterprises themselves, at micro-level, will gain from the specific services provided, which may include training in an area of their business (e.g. technical, organizational, market).

Direct and indirect benefits

While the direct benefits of this assignment are focused on the two rural communities, their natural resources, and the institutions that support them, the indirect benefits will flow further afield. If the feasibility study is positive, this will provide other communities across Latin America with a methods, experiences and tools that can be utilized for their own development. The Rural Agroenterprise Development Project at CIAT will incorporate project outputs into the suite of methods and tools appropriate for use by local enterprise development efforts across Latin America. These will be available in manuals, via the project website etc. CIAT collaborates closely with PRODAR, the Latin American and Caribbean Program for Rural Agroindustry of the Inter-American Institute for Agricultural Cooperation, in the diffusion of such materials. Alliances are being built with Major international NGOs (e.g. Care and World Vision). Finally, the development of rural agroenterprises will, through forward linkages, stimulate other enterprises in the agrifood value chain, and the rural economy in general. A vibrant rural economy provides multiple benefits to the country as a whole.

Sustainability and participation

Local enterprise support services will be sustainable to the degree that they themselves can operate as rural businesses, even if they are provided on a non-profit basis by NGOs etc. The feasibility study will determine they type of services most in demand, the willingness and ability of enterprises to pay for the fair cost of providing the service (or a reasonable proportion of costs), and the availability of other types of finance/support on a long term basis. Experiences in other rural enterprise situations has shown that many services are provided (and paid for) informally, while formal sector services are often free, but of poor quality and coverage. The ability of the local scheme to offer services designed to meet demand will determine their sustainability.

The processes involved in this assignment are all highly participatory. The partner consortia include strong community representation in all decision making situations. Market opportunity identification and Integrated Agroenterprise Projects have all been designed through workshops with community participation. This assignment will follow these methods, which are now commonplace in these communities. Another CIAT research project on Participatory Research Methods is also a close partner of the two consortia, and ensures that effective and timely participation occurs.

7. Downstream implementation and sustainability

As stated above, this assignment is proposed in support of an on-going R and D process in two communities in Latin America. Implementation of the assignment outputs (feasibility study) is ensured since, in each location, the local consortium and community will own the results, and already be involved in the pilot scheme. The outputs of this assignment will contribute to the overall objective and development goals of the Agroenterprise project itself, ensuring widespread diffusion of the results, in order that other communities across Latin America can use them. The outputs will be sustainable in the measure that the feasibility study is positive.

The two institutions that fund the Rural Agroenterprise Development Project at CIAT were contacted by CIAT for comments about this proposal. DIFD briefly commented that, if funded, "...the proposed study could add an important dimension to your rural enterprise work, and could therefore complement the work we are already funding at your reference sites" IDRC provided more detailed comments highly supportive of this proposal (see enclosed letter). Based on this response, it is highly likely that IDRC would support the application of project results by CIAT to other relevant IDRC supported projects in Latin America.

8. Design

Assignment objective and outputs

Assignment Objective <i>To strengthen local capacity for rural agroenterprise development in two hillside communities in Latin America over two years</i>
OUTPUTS PHASE 1
Outputs 1 and 2 A design for a prototype demand-driven local agroenterprise support system (LASS) compatible with the local situation in both Yoro, Honduras (Output 1) and Cauca, Colombia (Output 2) and, based on a participatory diagnosis and design process involving all local stakeholders
OUTPUTS: PHASE 2
Output 3 and 5. Sustainable new and improved services in operation in Yoro and Cauca, through facilitation by CLODEST, according to the plans developed in Phase I
Outputs 4 and 6. New and improved services supported by the fund monitored and evaluated in Yoro and Cauca
OUTPUTS Phase 3
Output 7 Organised information to support scale up and scale out processes
Output 8: plan for sustainable operation and scale up of services in Yoro and Cauca.
Output 9. Local agroenterprise service systems operating sustainably in Cauca and Yoro.

Methodology

The process outlined in the objectives/outputs and workplan is one of gathering and analysing information required to assess the feasibility of establishing a local support service for agroenterprises. The information will be obtained through surveys and workshops with local actors, and through pilot support service schemes operating in the two communities. This process will involve:

- The employment of participatory methodologies designed to generate information, shared analysis, collective action and a common vision within a framework of local capacity building.
- The use of the existing Agroenterprise/Agroindustry committees and local assets
- Building on current activities, to assess needs and define future actions.
- Facilitation by the external consultant and CIAT

Monitoring and evaluation

- The CIAT/consortium monitoring and evaluation process focuses on the research to development continuum and impact assessment, based on achieving sustainable rural livelihoods. Causal uptake paths and milestones are defined to record both tangible (quantifiable) and intangible (e.g. changes in behaviour or attitudes of stakeholders) progress and/or learning as it takes place. This is not a participatory

process but one driven by institutional needs and, as such, part of a continuing CIAT led process to measure the impact of their interventions.

- The Agroenterprise/Agroindustry Committees' monitoring and evaluation process is more qualitative with greater reliance on recorded and systematized perception rather than quantitative data sets – and focused on information useful for the participants themselves. While the outcome will focus on the results of committee work and the performance of the support system, the actual details regarding information to be collected, methodologies, participants, analysis, tabulation and reporting will be defined with each committee (adaptations will be made to the “outcome mapping” methodologies proposed by Earl et al, IDRC, 2000).

Impact analysis

Although this assignment is related to production of a feasibility study, it will include, in Phase II, a pilot level activity in each community from which developmental impact can be expected. Thus, those specific agroenterprises supported during the pilot phase can be analysed for the impact of the support services in terms of enterprise performance (production volumes, turnover, product quality and price), employment, and profitability. The M and E process will capture this information. CIAT has developed a conceptual framework and operational methodology for measuring the socio-economic impact of its natural resource research in the reference sites where the Centre is working. The information generated by the present project will provide a baseline for future impact analysis.

Risks and constraints

- Natural disasters (Honduras) and insecurity (Colombia) could be unpredictable risks to project execution.
- Stability of local personnel of partner institutions
- Changing government economic policies and others that may affect the competitiveness of agricultural products and support to local development
- Changing and negative access by rural inhabitants and their institutions to capital (financial and human principally)