

# Central American Cacao Project



Workshop Report Number 1

June-July 2009

## Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop

Report for Producer Cooperatives and Associations

### Presentation

The Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop (PM&E) of the Central American Cacao Project (PCC) took place from June 29-July 4, 2009, in Coronado, San José, Costa Rica.

Sixteen women and 22 men attended the workshop, representing 10 regional partner organizations from six Central American countries and the CATIE (Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center), organization which coordinates the PCC1.

The workshop's program was endorsed by a participative methodology that was able to embrace participants in the different activities and discussions. This allowed for better closeness between the organizations and their representatives, through the exchange of experiences; a better understanding of the components, indicators, products and activities of the PCC; and the strengthening of trust among organizations aiming for a common business goal and product: cacao.

Participants' contribution and teamwork were the basis for the successful development and outcome of this workshop.

<sup>1</sup> Note: APROCACAO from Honduras did not participate in the workshop due to the country's political situation.

### Participation by country and organization at the PCC workshop

Country	Organization
Guatemala	Guatemala's South-West Cacao Producer Association (APROCA)
	Nahualate's Watershed Association of Cacao Producers (ASECAN)
	Faculty of Agronomy of the University of San Carlos Guatemala (FAUSAC)
	Fray Domingo de Vico Institute
Honduras	CATIE's National Technical Office
	Municipality of Puerto Cortés
Nicaragua	Cacao Agroforestry Cooperative of Nicaragua (CACAONICA)
	CATIE's National Technical Office
Belize	Toledo Cacao Growers' Association (TCGA)
Costa Rica	Small Producers Association of Talamanca (APPTA)
	Bribri Indigenous Women's Association in Talamanca (ACOMUITA)
	Community Agroforestry Association of Peasants and Indigenous peoples (ACICAFOC)
	CATIE's Headquarters
Panama	Multiple Cacao Services Cooperative in Bocas de Toro (COCABO)



## Our idea

- Benefit cacao producers
- Recover cacao crops
- Strengthen business organization
- Develop human resources in the communities on the subject of cacao
- Strengthen cooperatives and associations (COA) through technical assistance
- Improve the environment
- Improve the quality of life of partner families
- Improve knowledge about cacao

## Values

- Honesty
- Attitude
- Culture
- Working with Others
- Social work
- Support
- Responsibility
- Institutional Strengthening
- Transparency
- Dedication
- Communication
- Principles
- Democracy
- Respect
- Solidarity

## Objectives of the workshop

At the beginning of the PM&E Workshop, team members agreed to work in order to achieve the following purposes:

- Strengthen COA's vision and commitment regarding the development of the PCC
- Assess PCC taking into account the first and second semester of 2009
- Show progress, obstacles and useful

tools for the development of the PCC components, with emphasis on the business organization component

- Develop the operations plan and 2010 budget in a participative manner
- Exchange experiences and demonstrate lessons learned by COA and CATIE
- Improve knowledge on gender, agroforestry systems and communications
- Promote the productivity and environmental research protocol

## Strengthening the PCC in its vision on gender

### Gender

**Gender** is the understanding of the evolution of the relationships between men and women in a society. It refers to the valuation of the masculine and feminine in society, looking for balance.

To move forward on the gender issue, it is important to reflect on the following questions:

- ¿How do we see each person in society?
- ¿How do those men, women, children and elderly participate in society?
- ¿How are families and the community organized?
- ¿Is everybody –all who are part of the PCC activities at the COA and the communities– making the most out of the opportunities and acquiring new capacities and skills?

### Our accomplishments

The following table shows the percentage of women participating in PCC's fields schools in 2008:

COUNTRY	COA	% of women
Costa Rica	ACOMUITA	53%
Honduras	APROCACAHO	43%
Nicaragua	CACAONICA	39%
Panama	COCABO	41%
Belize	TCGA	39%

## PCC Agroforestry Strategy

Objective: Families introduce 60,000 good quality timber and fruit trees and other medicinal species of ecological value in the shade canopy in at least 8,000 ha of cacao plantations.

In this way, the PCC seeks to regulate shade and improve cacao's growth and yield, diversify the production of goods for family consumption, use production in the farm or for sale (timber, fruit, honey, fuel wood, leaves for roofs and other construction materials) and increase the botanical richness and structural complexity of the cacao plantation to raise its ecological value (biodiversity conservation, landscape connectivity, atmospheric carbon sequestration and storage).

Featured species include: cedar (*Cedrella odorata*), almond (*Dypterix panamamensis*), rambutan (*Nephelium lappaceum*) and peach palm (*Bactris gasipaes*).

The main sources of seed and plant material are CATIE and Fundación Hondureña de Investigación Agrícola (FHIA).

Several technologies can be used to produce plants: local seeds, nurseries, direct planting, buds and pseudo stakes.

## PCC Research

The topics and the way in which research will be developed in Central America, based on the experience of Talamanca, Costa Rica, comprise:

### Thesis 1: Production and Environment

In this research we analyze the reasons for having very productive cacao plantations with few environmental services or low yields but which offer many environmental services. Research is based on including as highly diversified as possible farms regarding management, altitude, surfaces and neighbors. Cacao plantations in Talamanca, Costa Rica, are an example of a diversified agroforestry system, characterized by its different elements and functions: shade strata, diversity of species, integrated landscape elements, and purposes and uses.

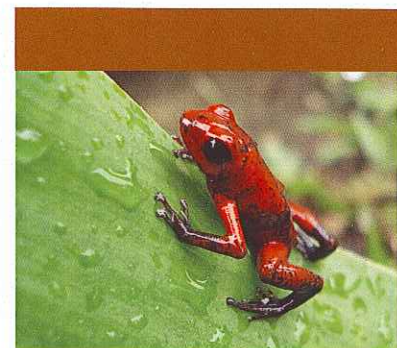
### Thesis 2: Do cacao plantations in Talamanca help conservation of amphibians and reptiles?

A cacao plantation in Talamanca can be compared to a forest. Both have similar amounts of amphibians and reptiles (20 species of amphibians and 25 of reptiles). Amphibians

such as toads, frogs and salamanders, and reptiles such as lizards, crocodiles and snakes, help in controlling rodents and insects, and work as indicators of environmental disturbances. Cacao plantations play an important role in the conservation of amphibians and reptiles and are actual alternatives for the constant loss of forest cover and resulting disappearance or decrease of wild animal populations.

### Thesis 3: Health of soil in cacao plantations: preliminary results

A healthy soil is necessary for the provision of environmental services and good yields. This research studied invertebrate organisms such as ants, spiders and worms (macrofauna) that live in cacao plantation soils and mature forests in Talamanca. Results showed no difference between the diversity of organisms living in cacao plantation soils and those living in forest soils. The most fertile soils have more macrofauna and cacao; however, they have less diversity of associated plants. This research will extend to other cacao producing areas in Central America in the near future.



A partir de agosto de 2009 iniciaremos los estudios sobre anfibios y reptiles, salud del suelo y servicios ambientales en Guatemala, Honduras y Nicaragua

## Our accomplishments and limitations during the first semester of 2009

COA	Accomplishments	Limitations
APROCA	Organizational growth, funding for strengthening, and participation in the small producers organization	Price instability and deviation of activities
ASECAN	Implementation of field schools (training, exchange, materials for educating and engrafting) and establishment of agroforestry, timber and fruit species nurseries	Pending contracts and lack of a consolidated marketing strategy
Fray Domingo de Vico	Participation in Guatemala's national cacao producer organization, agreement FDV/CATIE and establishment of clonal gardens launched	Delays in launching actions: agreement, ditches and disbursements
FAUSAC	Plants in nurseries ready to be grafted, and study about carbon sequestration in cacao agroforestry systems to be initiated	Difficulties in managing funds and importing twigs
TCGA	Over 75% of the families reached in reproductive biology field schools; land and temporal shade prepared for 10 clonal and multi-clonal trials, and improved grafting results	Limited support from TCGA partners regarding the project and restricted privileges to use funding in different areas
CACAONICA	Integration of families with gender equity and strengthening of PCC towards CACAONICA	No disbursements and lack of integration and interest of the previous managerial board
APPTA	Integration of resources from several allies, including the PCC, for the establishment of nurseries and clonal gardens; accounting system changed, and manual on positions and accounting procedures implemented	Lack of general and administrative management, and of genetic material for grafting plants in cacao nurseries
ACOMUITA	TSIRUSHKA chocolate brand created and over 308 families participating in the field schools	Shortage of permanent technical assistance; administrative methodology changed and poor capacity to answer new grafted cacao crops planting needs
CATIE	Family approach adopted, countries positioned (by COA and in the MAP)	Scarce prioritization of duties and pro activity; need to improve internal communications
COCABO	Government institutions and local NGO involved in the country's cacao activities and field schools timely developed with a high participation of producers	Actions identified in the consultancies developed in the COA need to be corrected and implementation of clonal and multi-clonal gardens must be finalized

## Agreements for the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of 2009

### Agreements about communications

- CATIE must create a recording system to keep track of all media which include notes about the PCC in order to monitor compliance with the communications indicator.
- COAs must indicate in their quarterly reports all publications where the PCC has appeared in their countries (radio, interviews and local bulletins, among others). It is recommended that documents are sent to add to our records.
- Everybody must check the Internet at least once a day.
- There is often no time to answer all messages and information requests. In order to guarantee the flow and confidence of the reception of the message, it must be answered immediately, confirming its reception and indicating the date in which it will be responded or requested information will be delivered. This agreement is valid for CATIE and the COA.
- The use of Skype is of great help as speaking directly to the person is sometimes better than writing.
- For ACOMUITA, communications must be done by phone with the administrator.

### Agreements about reporting

- A good report means circulating information on COA's work among the board of directors; among COAs and their partners; among COAs and CATIE; among CATIE and the various media and among PCC and donors.
- We must change our opinion about reports from "something that is time consuming" to something more strategic and constructive, conceived as tools to "learn about and register the work that strengthens us." Reports contribute to hand out information and disclose our organization's successes.
- There is a need to integrate the analysis of administrative and technical areas reflecting upon the activities and the approach to indicators.
- There is a procedure manual on how to prepare reports (you may contact Marilyn Villalobos, Regional Coordinator of PCC, for assistance if there are any concerns).
- The technician sends the monthly report, as well as the promoters report summary and his or her work plan, to the board of directors on the fifth day of the month.

### Agreements about improving performance according to indicators

- Starting July 1st, all COA will adjust the technicians' work so they can achieve the expected results in the Annual Operations Plan.
- The technician will devote 90% of his or her time to fulfilling PCC activities and 10% to other COA activities.
- TCGA receives support from Jazmín Salazar, Administrative Assistant of PCC.
- Guatemala's NTO will support capacity building for ASECAN and APROCA, Nicaragua's NTO will second CACAONICA and the rest will be assisted by the PCC office in CATIE.



"On the cacao path" fair-tour allowed exchanging experiences between the cooperatives and associations of producers



2,400 families participate in the field schools of the PCC in Central America

Please remember that you can always contact us:

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[www.catie.ac.cr/pcc](http://www.catie.ac.cr/pcc)



Workshop participants in front of the National Theater in San Jose, Costa Rica, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009.