

## Director's letter

The VCA4D project is at an exciting juncture. More than 35 studies have been completed or are underway by 110 experts from 36 nationalities and 20 research institutions in 22 countries. The latest studies requested by the EU concern coffee in Angola (third study for this product), maize in Zambia (third study in this country) and cotton in Ethiopia.

But of course the purpose is not solely to accumulate studies, Agrinatura is working more and more with EUDs in the field to embed the results in the decision-making process. Stakeholders' workshops are organised to discuss locally the findings of the studies in order to feed the policy dialogue: Cashew in Sierra Leone (mid-September), Pineapple in Togo (mid-November) and Banana, Mango and Pineapple in the Dominican Republic (January 2020).

Training on the VCA4D methodology has also been requested or proposed in a number of countries including Burundi, Ghana, Dominican Republic, and Burkina Faso, by partners as diverse as the private sector, governments and universities. Agrinatura will be deeply involved in these activities in the coming months, and will be supported by innovative tools such as a VCA4D serious game currently under development.

Agrinatura organised in July a workshop between economists to share their experience of the Agri-Food chain Analysis (AFA) software. The discussion around the economic analysis was very fruitful and resulted in a roadmap to improve the



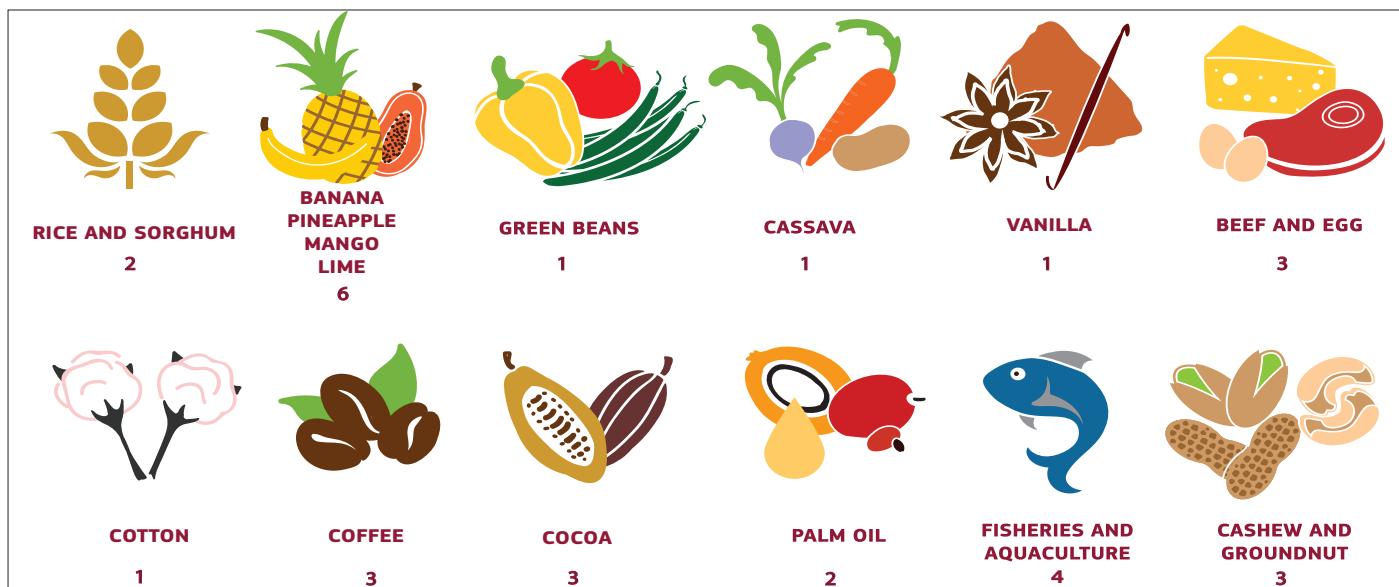
utilisation of this tool in the framework of the economic analysis of the VCA4D methodology.

It is now also time to learn lessons from the first studies as was done for example at the European Development Days (EDDs) organised by the EU in June, where Agrinatura experts compared the situations of green Beans in Kenya and the aquaculture and egg value chains in Zambia through the perspective of reducing inequalities.

Finally, we are confident we will soon move ahead with the information system tool to keep record and disseminate the knowledge provided by the VCA studies to policymakers, stakeholders and scientists.

*Marie-Hélène Dabat, Scientific Director*

## Which value chains have we analysed so far?



## What is it like to work on a VCA4D study?

Sandrine Fréguin-Gresh and Ivonne Acosta-Alba participated in the processed fruits value chain analysis in the Dominican Republic which focused on pineapple and mango. In this interview they share their experiences working on these two VCs.

### What is your background?

**Sandrine:** I am a research fellow at CIRAD. I have more than 15 years of experience working on research on agricultural economics and rural geography in various African and Mesoamerican countries. One of the key areas of my expertise is in agrarian dynamics, rural migrations and local governance of natural resources. I have worked at the University of Pretoria in South Africa and spent 5 years as a visiting researcher at the University of Central America in Nicaragua.

**Ivonne:** Since 2006, I have been actively involved in deepening the understanding of the sustainability of agricultural systems in several countries. My research questions focus on the operationalization of sustainable development, integrating and applying systemic analysis and multicriteria evaluation. I develop and use the Life Cycle Analysis methodology associated with socio-economic indicators in order to carry out integrated assessments of agricultural production. I have worked for INRA, CIRAD, and CIAT.

### How was your experience in the VCA4D mango and pineapple value chains in the Dominican Republic?

**Ivonne:** The VCA4D studies are extremely rich because in a short time, we have to collect a significant amount of data and analyses to understand the value chains and meet many actors to learn how the sector works, from a technical, organizational and governance point of view. It is also necessary to exchange with the three other experts on the team. In the Dominican Republic, mango and pineapple are two distinct sectors that have particular issues. All actors and participants, public and private institutions, collective organizations and individuals were extremely interested and participated very closely. The decision makers welcomed the results with interest and were very open even with the results that contradicted some of their basic assumptions. In addition, I must admit that the field trip in such an environment was extremely pleasant too!

**Sandrine:** My work included an extensive literature review to draw a first picture of the social, institutional, and political context and detect the main problems and knowledge gaps of the two VCs. I also relied on individual guided interviews with some major stakeholders of the two VCs and representatives of different institutions engaged in the sector. Those interviews were conducted to address specific issues such as: the regulatory and political framework, vertical and horizontal coordination systems within the value chains, the functioning of producers' organizations, the characteristics and formalization of labor (with emphasis on the youth, female participation and child labor), land and water rights, gender equity, livelihoods conditions, food security and migration affecting the value chains. This study was an exciting experience!

### How did you find the application of an interdisciplinary approach in assessing the value chains? What did you learn from working with each other?

**Sandrine:** My experience is highly positive. First, to conduct such an analysis, it is necessary to adopt an interdisciplinary approach, as the social analysis involves different dimensions, which can only be addressed through various disciplines (such as economics, geography, sociology, and political sciences). Then, working with other experts with different backgrounds has also been very useful and helped me to deepen some aspects of my analysis, in particular related to working conditions and labor creation, for which I worked closely together with the other VCA4D experts.

**Ivonne:** I'm used to working with multidisciplinary and multicultural teams on international projects and I'm aware of the great advantages and difficulties that can arise. Here, we must go even further because the first part of the work is a real transdisciplinary approach. We build our respective analyzes with a common base which is the functional analysis. The main question is whether the development of the VC is inclusive and sustainable. To answer those questions, the links between the disciplines are essential. It is necessary to look for common elements which seem obvious between the economic analyzes and the analysis of life cycle. In this study in particular, we also found with the sociologist a great complementarity for the modeling of the systems, in particular on the working conditions and the techniques used which have their impact on the workers.

### Would you recommend participation in VCA4D to a colleague?

**Ivonne:** Without hesitation, I encourage colleagues to participate. One must be aware of the investment required in a short period of time compared to a research project. We are really between applied research and consultancy. These studies make it possible to test hypotheses and methods in real conditions and to reveal new research questions. The result is worth the effort!

**Sandrine:** Of course! I would encourage other social scientist to conduct such analysis. I must also say that working on these two VC with the VCA4D approach has affected my own research projects as I now deepen my analysis on some aspects that I worked on during the study.



© Sandrine Fréguin-Gresh

## EDDs 2019. Are agricultural value chains a driver for equality?

Agrinatura and the European Commission/DG DEVCO took part in a VCA4D project lab during the European Development Days in June 2019.

Out of more than 20 analyses already performed, Agrinatura presented the results and lessons learnt from three value chains, focusing on the opportunities that agricultural value chains can bring as well as on the risks that might derive from value chain development, especially for the most vulnerable actors involved in the chain.

Gideon Onumah (agricultural economist from [NRI](#)), Froukje Kruijssen (fisheries economist from [KIT](#)), and Catherine Allen (social expert) presented findings respectively from the value chain analyses of egg in Zambia, aquaculture in Zambia, and green beans in Kenya.

They explained how value chain dynamics impact on inequalities (increasing or reducing them), providing some insights on the role of policies towards inclusiveness and on the advantages of the VCA4D methodology to analyse the issue of inequality from a multidisciplinary perspective.

The findings from these three value chain analyses showcased the difficulty, especially for small-scale actors, to take advantage of various opportunities offered by the local or international markets, due to their constraints in accessing resources such as credit, inputs, information, infrastructure, training, services etc., in unfavourable macroeconomic contexts or in case of price volatility. They also showed the positive impact of coordination and of governance models in reducing inequalities.

## Agrinatura

VCA4D is a partnership between Agrinatura and the European Commission. Agrinatura is a grouping of universities and research organisations working in agricultural research, food security and nutrition, education, training and capacity strengthening for development.

In May 2019 the Agrinatura General Assembly was held at Gembloux Bio-Tech at the University of Liege, back to back with the closing workshop for the Agrinatura [CDAIS](#) project. The VCA4D Project Management Unit was in attendance! The General Assembly is an excellent opportunity for the PMU to meet with all members whose researchers may be interested in participating to our studies. Researchers from across the membership bring to each VCA rich expertise with a in-depth country and product knowledge.

By always using multi-institutional teams' researchers engage and share new ideas and perspectives, not just amongst each other but with all stakeholders they encounter. Our researchers are passionate about feeding back results of the studies with all parties through workshops already being held in-country and many more are planned for the coming months. Central to Agrinatura's focus on education and training the VCA4D

The representative from the European Commission, Regis Meritan, underlined the added value of the VCA4D project and stressed the need to keep investing in robust and evidence-based information. This allows policy makers to better understand the extent to which value chains contribute to inclusive growth and are socially and environmentally sustainable. This knowledge is crucial to support policy dialogue with national partners, as well as investment decisions and project management.

The VCA4D project lab attracted a large and interactive audience and exchanges were rich and stimulating. It demonstrated the mutual interest of researchers and policy makers to work together for a more effective, efficient and inclusive international cooperation in agriculture. The session was moderated by Isolina Boto, head of the [CTA](#) Brussels office.

To read more about the event, listen to the podcast and to see some more photographs visit our page on Capacity4Dev: <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/value-chain-analysis-for-development-vca4d->



methodology is also being taught as part of education programmes in Europe, Africa and South America.

Our scientific director will travel to the University of Ouagadougou in November to teach a module on VCA4D as part of a course she conducts each year. Researchers who have taken part in studies are also integrating the VCA4D methodology and case studies in their teaching, as is the case in [ISTOM](#), who joined Agrinatura this year.

We look forward continuing to work closely with all members and to meet again at the General Assembly in Cork next year!



## VCA4D Stakeholder workshops and trainings

### Cashew in Sierra Leone, September 2019

Experts from [Gembloix Agro-Bio Tech](#), [NRI](#) and [CIRAD](#) joined the national expert from Sierra Leone to present findings of the study on the cashew VC with local stakeholders and moderate discussions at a workshop in Freetown. The workshop, requested by the local [European Union Delegation](#), hosted more than 50 participants on 23rd September 2019.

Following on from the VCA4D study in 2018, the EU-funded 'Boosting Agriculture and Food Security Program' supported the drafting of a Cashew Policy for Sierra Leone and its implementation plan, which were both recently endorsed (July 2019) by the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF). The workshop was an interactive discussion fed by the VCA4D study and the Cashew Policy.

The main themes of discussion were the findings of the VCA4D analysis on cashew; the recommendations of the experts and future scenarios for VC development; and the possible actions that stakeholders can take to increase the value chain's sustainability.

### Pineapple in Togo, November 2019

The findings and recommendations of the experts who participated in the VCA4D study on pineapple in Togo were first shared during the first [Togo-EU Economic Forum](#) organised in Lomé in June 2019.

This further workshop, requested by the [EU Delegation](#), will be a new opportunity to discuss strategic issues and constraints that hinder the sustainable development and inclusive growth

of Togo's pineapple VC and the actions to be taken.

The VCA4D study is a reference for the Togo component of the Regional Program for competitiveness in West Africa implemented by GIZ. This workshop aims to capitalize on the study and to facilitate the dialogue between the government and the private sector for a concerted strategy on investments in the VC. The presentation of the VCA4D study in its various dimensions will be complemented by a presentation of [COLEACP](#) on the position of Togo in the European pineapple market and by DG Agri on the new EU organic regulation.

### Banana in Burundi, March 2020

In collaboration with the Agrinatura Technical Assistance in Burundi ([ATAB project](#)), also supported by the EU, a joint mission and event will be held at the beginning of 2020. This will include a workshop to present and discuss the VCA4D study on banana (focusing on the banana sub-chains used for beer, dessert and cooking) made by independent and [Gembloix Agro-Bio Tech](#) experts.

This will also be an opportunity to increase awareness among several local partners (Government, University, development projects, etc.) on VCA4D and to evaluate needs for further training on the methodology. The idea is to transfer knowledge and strengthen the capacities of national experts to themselves undertake value chain analyses according to the VCA4D methodology, in partnership with European researchers. Such activities would then be performed in the framework of ATAB, implemented by Agrinatura members such as [ICRA](#), [CIRAD](#) and [SLU](#).

## The VCA4D PMU - Get in touch!

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All of our VCA4D calls can be found on the Agrinatura website: <https://agrinatura-eu.eu/>

On our Capacity4Dev page you can find more information about the project, methodology and studies: <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/value-chain-analysis-for-development-vca4d>

You will also find a short video introduction to VCA4D on the [Agrinatura Youtube channel](#).



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