

Director's letter

Dear Reader,

Value Chain Analysis for Development is entering its sixth year of operation. Despite the slowdown in activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Agrinatura has maintained an honorable trend in studies. We have tried to alleviate as much as possible the difficulties of traveling to the field for European researchers, by relying on national experts and digital tools. Of course, this required more adaptation and coordination within the teams, which sometimes led to some frustrations for Agrinatura researchers, but ultimately made it possible to test new modalities of operation for the future.

The same is true for workshops and training activities planned in partner countries, which were suspended, or for some carried out by video. Let us hope that the lull currently observed on the ground due to the pandemic will make it possible to resume activities in-country at full capacity in the long term.

Partnerships with COLEACP for the analysis of market trends, and with the JRC for the analysis of potential risks to biodiversity, are now up and running. The latest studies carried out include these dimensions in their analyses.

The slowdown in studies allowed us to progress on several transversal activities: the creation of an information and knowledge system, the construction of serious games for the training of European Union Delegations (EUDs) staff, the production of a video on the updated VCA4D methodology, are all well underway. The video should be available in

November. It will take a little longer for the information system and serious games.

A call was also launched to request the assistance of Agrinatura researchers for cross-cutting analyses through scientific papers. The EU is keen to ensure that the ideas proposed by the experts inform on its strategies, are based on the studies carried out and have a transversal or integrative dimension. These scientific papers will feed into an international VCA4D conference in which researchers and political actors will participate, and will be held during the summer of 2022.

Moreover we are planning a webinar on October 25th & 26th with a large number of EUDs to promote the VCA4D tool to those who have yet to work with us; discuss the achievements of the VCAs as some EUDs have requested up to three studies since the beginning of the project; and to better understand how the findings are used in cooperation activities (political dialogue, project formulation, evaluation, etc.).

Last but not least, VCA4D activities are increasingly focusing on capacity building and lessons learned; be it on the methodology to prepare for the post-project period; on value chains knowledge through reviews and syntheses; or on improving practices and partnership between researchers and policy makers.

Marie-Hélène Dabat, Scientific Director

How does VCA4D engage with stakeholders?



Stakeholder workshops



Webinars



Agrinatura outreach



Masters trainings on the VCA4D methodology



Capacity4Dev



Partner events

Why get involved with VCA4D!

We asked Agrinatura researchers who have participated in VCA4D to date what they found interesting about working on our studies, here's what some of them had to say...

Muriel Figuié, CIRAD
Social scientist, beef VC in Zimbabwe

"To be together in the field and to compare the diagnoses of the different disciplines ... To have a new look at familiar ground ... The multi-institutional nature allows the in-depth and detailed analysis of a sector ... In some years, we will evaluate what has become of the industry with the same tools."

Ulrich Kleih, NRI
Agro-economist, green beans VC in Kenya & groundnuts VC in Ghana

"The analysis showed the importance of the value chain for the national economy in terms of foreign exchange earnings, employment creation, environmental impacts, profit distribution, tax income, and imported inputs."

António Guerreiro de Brito, ISA
Environmental scientist, egg VC in Zambia and mango & lime VC in Guinea-Bissau

"Working on the project is an amazing interdisciplinary experience that results in a broader and deeper knowledge from an LCA practitioner's perspective. Furthermore, the project outcomes prompt further research and stimulate the production of scientific publications, thus increasing the know-how and adding value to our environmental engineering group."

Ben Bennett, NRI
Agro-economist, beef VC in Zimbabwe

"An opportunity to dive deep: spending time to understand the business of individuals and actors and their contribution to the economy."

Thierry Tran, CIRAD
Environmental scientist, cassava VC in Ivory Coast

'Providing feedback to policy makers and value chain stakeholders was a highlight of the assessment, given the high interest this study generated.'

Fayçal Boureima
Environmental scientist, beef VC in eSwatini, coffee VC in Tanzania and pineapple VC in Togo

"A step ahead on the sustainability analysis pathway... consider socio-economic and environmental challenges for a sustainable and inclusive development of agricultural VCs... The presence of all experts in the field and cross analysis of data allows fine tuning of challenges and recommendations that fit the local context."

Steve Cole, WorldFish
Gender scientist, aquaculture VC in Zambia

"The social profile tool was very useful and enabled a rather rich analysis that can be tracked by future assessments given the tool's systematic methodology."

Paul Sfez
Social scientist, coffee VC in Honduras and Ecuador

"A multidisciplinary methodology with strong potential to reduce the gap between research, decision-making and the implementation of development actions."

Angel Avadi, CIRAD
Environmental scientist, aquaculture VC in Zambia, fish VC in The Gambia and cocoa VC in Ecuador

"Where in a complex agri-food value chain to invest? Highlighting the challenges of policy and investment decisions, as alternative agri-food system types contribute differently to the various pillars of sustainability."

Akoua Adaye, Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny in Abidjan
Geography scientist, cassava VC in Ivory Coast

"Discovery of a very original methodology was appreciated by my institution, takes into account all social aspects in the analysis of a value chain, ... Tool at the heart of the collection of primary data, based on the actors concerned."

WEBINAR - "Covid-19: new challenge or new opportunity to enhance sustainability of agricultural and fisheries value chains in EU partner countries?"

In November 2020, Agrinatura organised a webinar within the framework of VCA4D which was attended by more than 100 participants. The event was an opportunity for reflection and dialogue between experts involved in the VCA4D studies and policymakers on disruptions which occurred in various VCs as a result of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as pathways of adaptation and their effectiveness.

The webinar looked at non-health impacts, including general economic contraction, food and nutrition insecurity as well as rising income uncertainty among the poor and those whose livelihoods depend on agriculture and the informal economy. Some of these concerns were already visible before the pandemic and the crisis has brought about an opportunity for policy makers and researchers to address these deep-seated problems by rethinking and/or renewing strategies which can turn around the performance of agricultural VCs, ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth and development.

During the webinar, experts provided some general recommendations such as support to promote diversification of production by smallholder farmers and the review of government support programmes which focus exclusively on export crops and/or major grain staples. The pursuit of markets diversification for export commodities should also be supported and strong and independent farmers organisations promoted. Bailouts in the form of ineffective input credit schemes need to be reviewed; and collaboration between

governments and the private sector should be amplified so that joint programmes can be implemented to address the long-term structural constraints and vulnerabilities in the VCs.

Further research is still needed to quantify, analyse and understand the impacts across the VCs as well as coping strategies. Indeed, it is clear that data matters for fact-based and transparent government and EU action which confirms the VCA4D initiative and approach. Analysing the extent to which a VC is viable, inclusive and sustainable, has demonstrable benefits in feeding into long-term development strategies, but it has also been shown to be useful in understanding how actors can cope with adversity. Despite the severe adverse impacts, the pandemic has offered an opportunity to revamp dialogue between policymakers and the private sector, with the support of research, to take joint action. This is particularly pertinent as it coincides with the pursuit of the European Green Deal, a priority of the EU, which offers a way forward and a roadmap for the promotion of a truly green, resilient and innovative recovery in the EU and its partner countries.

To access the recording of the webinar and presentations displayed, visit our webpage at: <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/value-chain-analysis-for-development-vca4d-/photo-albums/recording-webinar-covid-19-new-challenge-or-new-opportunity-enhance-sustainability>

Learning-by-doing in Burundi

This project is developing an original training experience on the VCA4D methodology in Burundi, through the strong involvement of national expertise in a study on the milk VC. This initiative follows the workshop held in March 2020 in Bujumbura to discuss methods for value chain analysis and assess future opportunities for VCAs and capacity strengthening in the country (see the [Newsletter N°3](#)). This workshop was organised by ATAB (Assistance Technique Agrinatura au Burundi) and VCA4D and financed by the EU Delegation to Burundi.

Given the success of the banana study carried out in 2019, a milk VC study was requested by the EUD, to which a particular format was given in line with the conclusions of this workshop. The study combines disciplinary pairs of experts (economics, sociology, environmental sciences); each pair consists of a European expert, from a Agrinatura center, and a Burundian expert, teacher and researcher at the University of Burundi. The experts carry out the study together, some learning the [VCA4D methodology](#) along the way, others benefiting from their pairs' excellent knowledge of the local situation. The national experts will then be in charge of building a training course for their colleagues and for students in the country.

The dynamics of this study are excellent and can serve as a

model for future project activities. In fact, in this later phases, particular emphasis will be placed on training researchers, in Europe and in partner countries, for a better grasp of the tools that make up the VCA4D toolkit and that were adapted to the needs of the EU. More traditional training is also planned in the future which will also mobilise the expertise of Agrinatura.

This operation in Burundi was made possible thanks to the close partnership of VCA4D with ATAB, which is co-financing the learning-by-doing dimension of this study with EU funds.



Cross-cutting analyses

The VCA4D programme has been running successfully for over five years, undertaking more than [30 studies](#) across different commodities and geographies. As such, VCA4D now has a rich portfolio of studies upon which to review, analyse and reflect. In considering where the VCA4D project goes and how it develops in the future, Agrinatura is commissioning a series of short research papers amongst its members to learn lessons and help policy makers improve future operations.

These papers will be presented at a Conference that will gather researchers and policymakers and be held in the summer 2022. We hope these proposals will touch on:

- Making use of the VCA4D studies already produced either by adopting a commodity perspective (through different country contexts) and/or through geographical perspective (covering different commodities);
- Analysing a theme with a cross-cutting approach and focus on specific topics proposed by the VCA4D project such as, among others, certified/fair-trade sub-chains and inclusiveness; tension between social and environmental sustainability; institutional context and performance of the value chains; responsible value chains and agroecology; land and water rights and inclusiveness; VCA findings and policymaking;
- Evaluating the effectiveness and relevance of the multidisciplinary VCA4D approach – economic, social and environmental - in addressing questions on growth, inclusiveness and sustainability related to value chains, and for supporting interventions and policy decisions.

VCA4D and COLEACP partnership

As VCA4D continues to grow we are proud to be working with partners to further expand our services/assistance. One such collaboration has recently begun with [COLEACP](#). COLEACP is a non-profit inter-professional association committed to sustainable agriculture with the aim to develop inclusive, sustainable trade in fruit & vegetables and food products, they offer market intelligence services, monitoring food regulations, private quality and societal standards; studying specific developments in the international market for fresh and processed fruit and vegetables.

The COLEACP collaboration brings complementary elements to the VCA4D functional analysis, giving an in-depth and overall perspective on the markets; and gives more thoughtful interpretation to economic and inclusiveness indicators.

As the scope of a standard VCA4D analysis of a value chain is limited to the country's borders even when (part of) the VC production is exported, COLEACP will offer insights on the VC demand and supply markets and trends, within international, regional dynamics which is information needed by EU and partner countries' policy makers to structure their projects, programmes and policy dialogue inside the country. COLEACP will also aim to provide information on international product prices and qualitative insights, as well as providing an overview of obstacle faced by partner countries when exporting to the EU market such as food standards regulations and sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS) measures.

The VCA4D PMU - Get in touch!

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All of our VCA4D calls can be found on the Agrinatura website:
<https://agrinatora-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](#).

Ongoing VCA4D studies:

- Zambia Maize
- Nigeria Maize
- Ecuador Cocoa
- Ecuador Coffee
- Nicaragua Cocoa
- Georgia Freshwater aquaculture
- Burundi Milk



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