

The Agronatura Science Park welcomes CODER

The Agronatura Scientific Park is formed by institutions that are dedicated to research and development activities, complementing and sharing CIAT's mission. To help strengthen this mission, CODER (Corporation for Rural Business Development) is incorporated into the Park, as from January 2010.

A new NGO is born

An independent NGO—CODER—was created to continue with the rural business development projects that were being executed by the former Rural Agroenterprise Development Project at CIAT.

CODER's multidisciplinary team includes Carlos Felipe Ostertag (Director); Diego Izquierdo (Economist); Oscar Andrés Sandoval (Agroindustrial Engineer); Andrés Barona (Business Administrator); Juan Francisco Barona (Marketing Expert); and Carlos Chilito (Rural Agroindustry Expert). The team will work in partnership with the Group for Rural Business Development—Research, which will remain at CIAT.

CODER's mission is to facilitate the formulation and execution of rural development projects that have a business and market approach. It will also promote a greater business and marketing orientation in organizations of small rural producers and their respective support entities.



Work team

Its principles include business and marketing orientation, development of local capabilities, involvement of local actors in decision-making, promotion of value chains, favoring of social and economic equity, and protection of natural resources.

Participants in these rural development projects may include rural producer organizations, NGOs, state agencies, and the private sector.



Working in community

Results of years of experience

CODER is supported by broad experience in the generation of participatory methodologies, tools, and information that facilitate the sustainable insertion of small rural producers in growth markets. This, and CODER's experience in the formulation and implementation of rural development projects with business and marketing orientation, will enable CODER to establish itself as an independent corporation.

CODER's central approach is described as the *Territorial Orientation for Rural Business Development* (OT-DER, its Spanish acronym). It comprises a set of methods for organizing interinstitutional regional work teams, identifying market opportunities, and analyzing selected production chains to design and develop plans for strengthening competitiveness.

- **Work groups for rural business development:** Form a work team, prepare a basic characterization of the territory, carry out strategic planning, and define an action plan. This OT-DER module is essential for laying a firm foundation for the later development of the next set of modules:
- **Identification and evaluation of market opportunities for small rural producers:** Traditional and new products are identified and prioritized, ensuring that they are feasible within a given territory, marketable, and acceptable to rural producers of limited resources.



Farmers undergoing training

- **Design plans to strengthen production chains:** The different links of a selected production chain are analyzed in a participatory manner to identify trends in demand, limitations, and existing opportunities, and then develop an action plan. It includes the analysis of organizational and business aspects, and of support services throughout the production chain.
- **Develop plans to strengthen support services for rural business development:** Analyze the supply and demand for local support services to identify gaps and deficiencies in the provision of these. By promoting the supply and demand for these services in a given territory, their local market is stimulated and, hence, the support system improves.

In addition, CODER uses other participatory methodologies, the principal objective of which is to strengthen human capital. These include SAE (Partners for Business Action), Formation of Value Chains, Establishment of Inclusive Businesses, Setting Up of Revolving Funds, Market Tours, Learning Partnerships, and GIAR (Managers of Innovation in Rural Agroindustry). CODER also has simple and user-friendly training materials on key business themes.

CODER will work in rural development projects with development agencies from the private (NGOs) and public sectors, both national and international; and with rural producer organizations, which may include small farmers of mestizo, indigenous, or African descent, and displaced people.



"CODER is currently able to have major projects at national and international levels because of the recognition given to the work carried out by CIAT and the *Provincial Center for the Management of Agroenterprise in Southeast Valle* (CPGA) Administration", Carlos Ostertag points out. He added, "CIAT has worked for more than 20 years and CPGA [Spanish acronym] for almost 4 years in this field". Projects include partnerships with entities such as the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), USAID, Pan-American Development Foundation (PADF), ARD, Creative Associates, MDF (Netherlands), FIDAR, the Guambía Council, the Colombian MADR, the Government of Valle, and others.