

Vision to Action Process in Peru

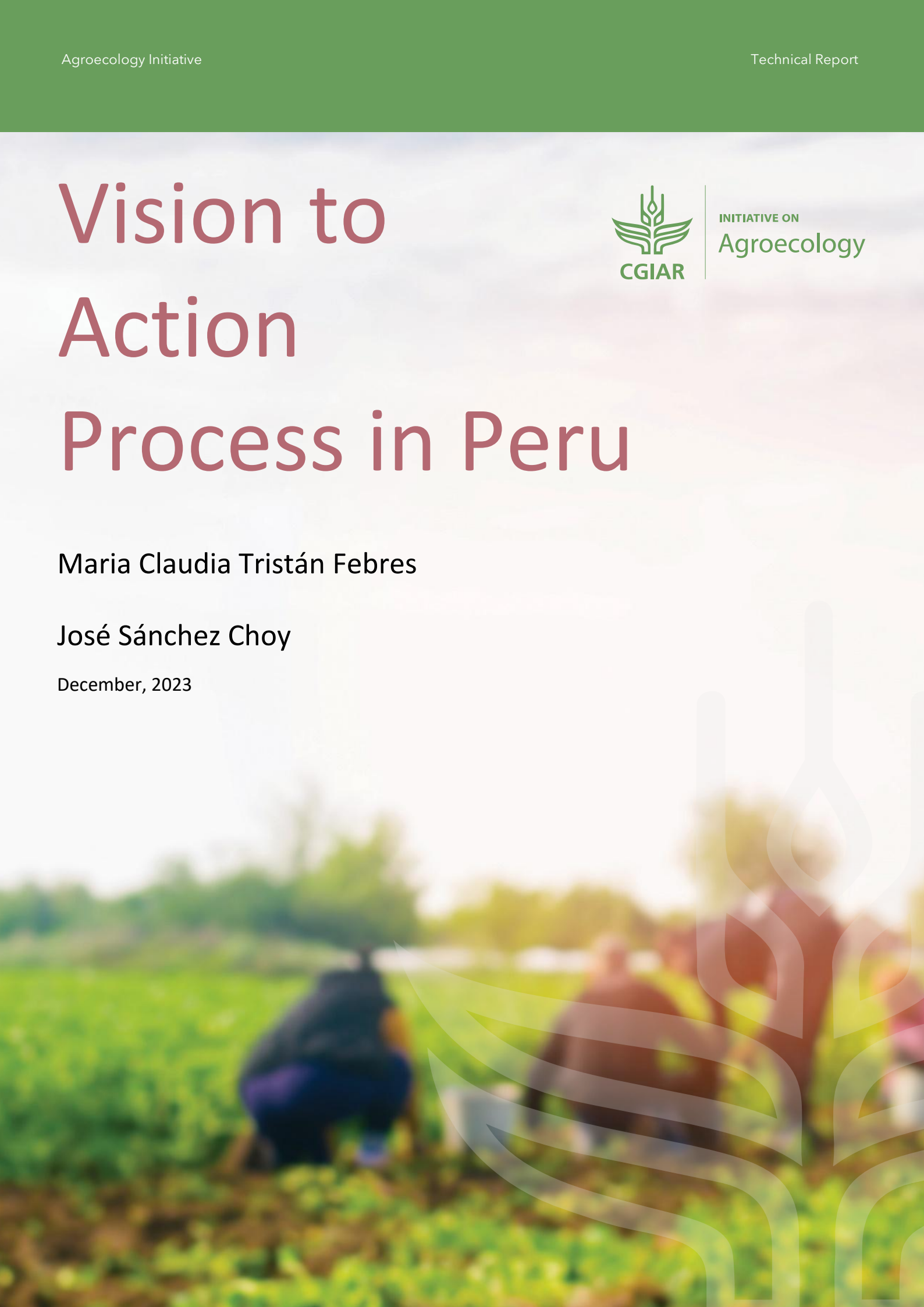


INITIATIVE ON
Agroecology

Maria Claudia Tristán Febres

José Sánchez Choy

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Contents

- Introduction..... 3**
- Addressing a vision to action process in Ucayali 4**
- Methodological considerations 7**
- Results..... 8**
 - Vision to action results with agroforestry corridor stakeholders..... 8
 - Vision to action results with cocoa farmers and their organizations..... 10
- Entry points to contribute to transitions in Ucayali’s ALL..... 12**

Vision to Action Process in Peru

Introduction

The report systematizes the vision-to-action process that was conducted by the Agroecology Initiative in Peru between July 2022 and June 2023. It includes a description of activities implemented, a methodological reflection and results of the process. The activities described a series of multistakeholder workshops in Pucallpa, Neshuya and Curimaná that facilitated collective discussions and agreements among actors interested in agroecological transitions and other actors with potential role in the transition pathway. The process integrates participatory activities in two scales. One, oriented to facilitate a process with cocoa farmers and their organizations located in the districts of Neshuya and Curimaná; and a second, focused on the agroforestry corridor which is the territorial space of the Agroecological Living Landscape (ALL) in Peru. In this scale, the workshops were implemented in Pucallpa city.

The agroforestry corridor is a territorial unit prioritize by the Regional Government of Ucayali (GOREU) within the framework of implementation of the Low Emission Rural Development Strategy. In this area converge multiple agricultural systems such as cocoa, palm oil, livestock, banana, pineapple, camu camu and rice, in addition to potential for sustainable forest use and ecotourism. The CGIAR initiative in Peru has prioritized this area as the area of influence of the project in view of the fact that it brings together several stakeholders in addition to concentrating the largest area of the cocoa system. In this way, since the beginning of activities, the initiative seeks to aligned itself with the regional policy identifying opportunities to scale multiple agroecological innovations (beyond cocoa system). Since the entry point for some work packages of the initiative in Peru was the cocoa value chain, it was appropriated to address the vision-to-action process with cocoa producers and their organizations also, given them an specific space to discuss and agree around cocoa system and some specific particularities of cocoa households and the role of their organizations in accompanying the change process.

The sequence of steps in the vision-to-action process follows the steps out in the guidelines; however, several of the activities were adapted to the context and the interests of the stakeholders. The process follows a participatory research action approach and was an interesting entry point to connect and involve the various stakeholders in the territory prioritized by the Initiative, while consolidating an ALL pilot in Ucayali. The results combine the activities developed in the multi-stakeholder workshops and the desk work carried out by the initiative team. Among the main results, we have an agreed vision on the two scales mentioned above to mobilize and engaged with FSA, identification of the changes needed to achieve the vision agreed, identification of enabling and disabling factors, which resulted in the co-design of a theory of change that provides a roadmap to reach this vision, aligning all stakeholders toward a common goal of sustainable and resilient family farming within the ALL and a transition pathway narrative. Finally, a first stage of the transition pathway was collectively operationalized in an action plan for the ALL that served to identify entry points for the Initiative and integrates activities beyond the Initiative to compromised other FSA in the territory.

Although the vision-to-action process seems to end in an action plan, for the Peru team it has also meant a starting point to make the action plan available in a formalized and institutionalized decision-making space so that it can continue despite the time of the Initiative. We also see it as a good opportunity to adjust the action plan in one of these spaces looking forward for a second stage of the initiative, which will allow us to connect with other actors who were not involved in this first 3 years of the initiative.

Addressing a vision to action process in Ucayali

Figure 01 shows the series of multi-stakeholder workshops that took place in ALL Peru to conduct the vision-to-action process. As explained in the introduction, the territory in which this process takes place is the Pucallpa - Aguaytía agroforestry corridor, which brings together a diversity of stakeholders with multiple interests. Observing this diversity, an important step was to define who should be integrated into this process. To this end, the stakeholder mapping prepared by WP1 of the Peru team was used as a starting point to identify relevant stakeholders for agroecological transitions and their potential participation in the ALL. The stakeholder mapping also allowed classifying stakeholders according to their interests, defining three main groups of stakeholders integrated by different types of stakeholders¹: i) Sustainable production system; ii) Regulatory framework and institutional arrangements; iii) Business model and sustainable financing. This classification allowed us to identify actors interested in agroecological transitions, and therefore who can potentially contribute to any change process in a positive way (as an enabling actor). For the work in the cocoa cooperatives scale, we decided that the organizations choose a group of farmers (women and men) to work this process, and the participation of some technicians and management representatives of the cooperative. For farmers, we asked for participative people interested in contributing to changes in the organization and active in their activities. All of this was part of step 1, where we also developed a first workshop doing our own understanding of a vision exercise since we didn't have a clear guide of the full process.

Figure 1. Vision to action process in Peru

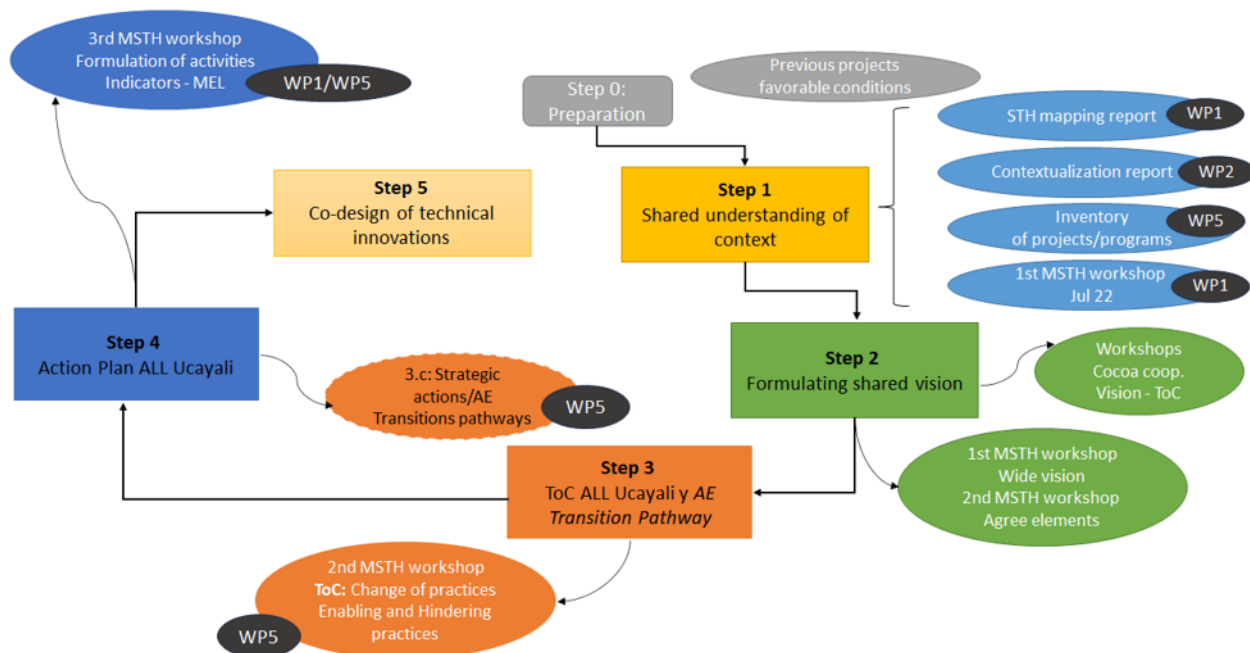


Table 1 summarizes the participation by type of stakeholder, activities, and outputs from the three workshops conducted during the vision to action process at the corridor level.

¹ The stakeholders were classified within these groups: i) Public sector (decision makers and government technicians); ii) private business (transformation, commercialization, finance, etc.), iii) civil society (NGOs and producer organizations) and iv) academia and research (public and private institutions).

Table 1. Summary of the vision to action process in Peru: participants, activities and outputs

Workshop objectives	Workshop 1: Introduction to the AE-I, common understanding of the territorial context and the agroecology approach + first exercise of visioning	Workshop 2: Formulating a collective vision, identifying changes of practices, and enablers and disablers.	Workshop 3: Validation of collective vision, theory of change and definition of a short-term action plan
Participants	Total participants: 25 Distribution of participants: Public sector: 48% Private sector: 4% Civil society: 40% Research & Academia: 8%	Total participants: 34 Public sector: 44% Private sector: 15% Civil society: 24% Research & Academia: 18%	Total participants: Public sector Private sector Civil society Research & Academia
Activities	Individual and collective reflection to build a common understanding of agroecology. Group discussion to identify initiatives, projects and programs linked to agroecology in the last 10 years. Group activity for causal analysis to adopt agroecological principles.	Building a collective vision through, the identification of common elements for a desired future Group discussion to identify changes in practices to achieve collective vision. Group activity for identify enabling and disabling factors for achieving the collective vision.	Collective reflection of the theory of change co-designed Group discussion to adjust changes in practices and actors involved. Group activity for developing a short-term action plan. Socialization of actions plans.
Outputs	Stakeholders' understanding of agroecology. Inventory of past projects, programs and interventions related to agroecology in the ALL. Main barriers associated with the adoption of agroecological principles in the ALL. Elements for the collective vision of the ALL	Collective vision of the ALL Changes in practices to achieve the collective vision. Enabling and disabling factors for achieving the collective vision Theory of change co-developed	Validated collective vision. Validated ALL's Theory of Change Short term action plan

The results of each workshop were transcribed and reviewed in the office by the team. The revision consisted of giving a better sense and order to the results according to what was discussed in the workshop groups. For the next workshop, the results of the previous session were shared as a validation with the participants. This was a useful strategy as it served as a refresher for some who may have forgotten the results, and for others who were participating in a workshop for the first time.

Table 2 summarizes the scope of workshops focused only on cocoa farmers and their organization.

Table 2. Vision to action process with cacao farmers and their organization

Workshop objectives		
Workshop 1: Reflect on the visioning exercise, build a collective vision(s) of agriculture (as their main livelihood) and discuss the role of the cooperative in that desired future		
Workshop 2: Socialization of farmers vision with cooperative members - identification of common elements between institutional vision and farmers visions, characterization of actual situation of productive areas and farmers, progress and barriers to achieving the vision		
Participants	Total participants: 26 cocoa farmers Distribution of participants: Female: 54% Male: 46%	Total participants: 4 representatives of technical area Distribution of participants: Female: 1 Male: 3
Activities	Putting in context: group reflection and brainstorming of the representation of agriculture, existence of different types of agriculture and farmers preference towards agricultures, final reflection of the future of actual agriculture Group reflection (1 female group) towards a desired future on agriculture and the role of the cooperative in that future	Revisiting cocoa farmers visions and identifying common elements with institutional vision. Diagnose of productive area and cocoa farmers Identification of progress and barrier to achieve the common elements of visions
Outputs	Representation of agriculture in terms of social values, economy, environmental and politics Broad characterization of types of agriculture Perceptions of the future of agriculture based on the actual situation. Three visions and identification of common elements	Common elements of visions Graphics diagnose of productive area and cocoa farmers. Identification of activities addressed by the cooperative to support achieving the common elements of visions. Identification of opportunities to develop or strength ongoing activities to achieve vision. Identification of barriers to achieve the common elements of visions

Methodological considerations

The vision-to-action approach was useful because it allowed for a good initial interaction with local stakeholders, as well as positioning the agroecology approach in the group discussion. Although in practice agroecology is not new to the territory, specifically those principles linked to the farm scale, understanding the integrity of the approach was interesting to share among local stakeholders and to perceive their proximity to this way of doing things. During our first workshop we set aside time for participants to share their perceptions of the meaning of agroecology. This allowed everyone to share and learn about what is known as agroecology and to identify some information gaps.

We understand the vision-to-action as a knowledge development process. But the question here is how to balance knowledge useful for the purpose of the Initiative, and knowledge useful for participants (in principle there should not be a separation, however, sometimes it felt like this). To address this issue, Peru team focused first in understand the interests and motivation of the stakeholders who will be part of the process, and the specific sociopolitical context when we start the initiative. Taking this as a starting point it was easy to better oriented dialogues between stakeholders and participants with the Initiative. The last workshop we openly asked for what kind of knowledge did the participants take away and the responses were aimed at understanding the value proposition of agroecology better, recognizing that in order to achieve changes in a specific actor (for example, family farming), it is necessary to mobilize other actors in the system, and identifying the need for collaborative work, even though much of it is sectorized.

Starting with the visioning exercise worked because it allowed the stakeholders to find at least minimum points of agreement. To this end, first a group discussion (with diverse stakeholders) and a brainstorming session on the views towards the future was held, where some differences were evidenced, but the most important thing was to rescue those internal agreements or coincidences. Then, we decided to have a broader discussion, putting on the table the results of all the groups and identifying similarities in the group's points of view. Thus, we arrived at a vision that sought to integrate minimum points of agreement, recognizing that although there were issues of disagreement, it was necessary to find a point of agreement in order to channel actions towards the same goal.

Working with this approach within a group of cocoa farmers and their organizations was challenging because they are somewhat resistant to participatory process based on previous experiences where they find no favorable results for them. Since it took us time to develop (as a continuation of the process) the co-design of agroecological innovations workshops, and therefore the implementing stage, it was more difficult engaged with them.

This brings us to a central point, which is the time it takes to develop this process. It is challenging to manage the expectations that are born at the beginning of the process with the time it takes to reach implementations linked to the vision-to-action results. In addition, as an Initiative we did not manage to cover all the desired activities and changes, but rather used the results of the process to identify some entry points that can push the transition process that is happening on the ground. Therefore, it was very important to clarify the scope of the process, such as we need the participation and action by all stakeholders and not only by the facilitating institution (in this case the Initiative).

A last point to noted is to think a better way of share the results of this process with local stakeholders. The concepts of theory of change and transitions pathway can be difficult to digest. In our case, we organized information in a schematic way (following a theory of change scheme) to be presented in the workshops, that function well but we are now thinking in how to share the transition pathway that came out.

Results

Vision to action results with agroforestry corridor stakeholders

As shown in Figure 1, the first step in the vision-to-action process was to have a shared understanding of the context of the ALL. To this end, activities were developed in two stages. First, the initiative team developed specific activities for the mapping of actors, inventory of projects and programs linked to agroecology (semi-structured interviews) and the contextualization report (review of secondary information and literature). Second, in the first multi-stakeholder workshop, we worked on group exercises to review the experiences related to agroecology known to the participating actors (as a complement to the project inventory) and also identified barriers and opportunities for the application of agroecology principles. This gave us a good basis for designing the next multi-stakeholder workshop focused on landing on a shared vision of the territory.

The agroecological transition pathway in Ucayali describes the changes expected over the next 10 years in the food system of the Ucayali agroforestry corridor, the territory of the ALL, where small-scale agriculture, represented by family farming, is identified as the central subject of change, without neglecting changes in other relevant actors in the system. This transition pathway has been constructed based on the theory of change of the Ucayali ALL that was formulated by the actors of the food system as part of the participatory process of vision to action facilitated by the Agroecology Initiative in the territory. We started from a collective reflection on the desired future of the territory and how agroecology could contribute to these changes. The desired future changes focused on family farming and the need to improve its food security, economic income, crop profitability and integration into markets and short chains. It also remarks the need for collaboration between decision-makers and civil society organizations to support changes for the benefit of family farming.

We envision a future territory where "...family and community agriculture are strengthened, diversified their production, and innovative. This vision includes an inclusive and organized system, supported by political and civil society actors for effective governance across various levels. Furthermore, we aim to develop short, direct supply chains that connect agricultural producers directly with consumers".

The transition pathway reflects the application of some agroecology principles and the need for changes at multiple scales (farm, landscape, and food system) and involving diverse actors. Taking the first impact - family farming improves their economic income and produces food to guarantee their food security and health through integral farms - we identified desired changes in farming families oriented towards the reuse of organic waste in their plots (recycling); improvement in the use of native species for family food and as a source of medicine (soil health, social values and eating habits) and productive diversification by offering value-added products (economic diversification). Simultaneously, changes are expected from other actors in the system, for example, the adaptation of financial services to the productive conditions of family farming, encouraging diversification; guarantees from the national and regional government on the legal security of productive lands and forests associated with them of family farmers (land and natural resource governance); and finally, the implementation of the National Family Farming Plan and the National Food Security Strategy (participation, social values and diets).

The actors in the system expect that, over the next 10 years, family farming will also improve the yields of their crops, with a special focus on agroecological crops - family farmers in the corridor improve the yields of their agroecological crops. The improvement of agroecological crop yields is sought by optimizing the use of resources in the plots and reducing chemical and external inputs (recycling, input reduction, soil health), in addition to strengthening the capacities of extensionists in good agroecological practices and training methodologies (co-creation of knowledge). Changes are needed in extensionist training programs and university curricula to integrate the agroecology approach. The food system actors also hope that as yields improve, family farming will achieve greater integration into markets and value chains for agroecological products. To this end, the government is expected to play a greater role in financing business plans that demonstrate the integration of agroecology principles, in addition to financing the consolidation of marketing spaces for agroecological products. Stakeholders propose as a strategy the establishment of agroecological fairs that allow family farmers to access commercial spaces with low intermediation and fair prices (fairness). Stakeholders consider that the use of biodiversity resources is important for the articulation of family farming in value chains (economic diversification, biodiversity); however, more information is needed on market opportunities and a culture of consumption that values local and native products. Stakeholders hope that the integration of farmers into markets will take place through their participation in producer organizations that can facilitate access to markets and rural extension programs.

Finally, it is hoped that decision-makers and civil society will collaborate in the development of agriculture and entrepreneurship. To this end, stakeholders expect that a clearer land-use planning policy is needed, in which areas suitable for agricultural production are defined through zoning, a territorial information system and a land-use plan (land and natural resource governance). At the same time, the private sector is expected to resume leadership of the regional technical

roundtables² and consolidate a technical roundtable for the agroforestry corridor that will become a space for coordination to facilitate access to public services and better coordination of private sector initiatives and international cooperation. Finally, it is hoped that the public and private research sectors will have a common research agenda that will help meet some of the needs of the corridor's value chains.

In summary, the changes in the behaviours and practices identified in family farmers are associated with their income, crop productivity and integration with markets.

Resource Optimization: Farmers leverage the resources of their land, integrating biodiversity, which in turn reduces the need for external inputs for family food supply.

Crop Diversification: Farmers cultivate a variety of crops on their land, integrating biodiversity, which further reduces the dependence on external inputs for family food supply.

Biodiversity Integration: Farmers incorporate both cultivated and wild biodiversity to not only supply family food but also offer a portfolio of differentiated products to the market. This integration generates synergies that minimize the need for external inputs in their agroecosystems.

Income Diversification: Farmers explore additional sources of agricultural income, complementing monoculture production and expanding their income sources throughout the year.

We have identified, based on the theory of change, some behavioural changes/ changes in practices by actor to achieve a desired future (vision reflection):

Farmers: change in farming practices (recycling, diversification, rescuing native species), change in the way of eating integrating the production of their crops into their diets, change in knowledge.

Agricultural Technicians: Gain capacity in agroecological innovations.

Financial services: Favor family farming to support diversification and not only monocultures.

Government: Address issues about land tenure, Implement the National Strategy Plan of familiar agriculture, developing business plans that integrate agroecology, clarity about land use plan, Support spaces for commercialization or agroecological products

Universities: include agroecology in their curriculum.

Private sector: Leading regional technical tables to enhance work between private sector and international cooperation.

Research institutions: respond to the necessities of value chains of different products.

² The technical roundtables of agricultural production chains are spaces institutionalized by the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation (MIDAGRI) that seek dialogue, coordination and consensus-building among public and private chain stakeholders, aimed at improving the competitiveness of the chains.

Vision to action results with cocoa farmers and their organizations

Our implementing partners are two cocoa cooperatives with which the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT has previously worked. For that reason, we have baseline information on the farmers associated with them and the organizational structure of the cooperative. The diagnosis was complemented with activities within the vision-to-action workshops and the business model analysis conducted by WP3 of the Initiative.

The agroecological transition pathway in cocoa farmers and their organizations describes the changes expected over the next 10 years in agriculture as the main livelihood and a reflection of the role of cooperatives in supporting changes. The starting point of the pathway was to envision how cocoa farmers imagine the desire future of agriculture and then share results with the institutional vision of the cooperative. From the workshop with cocoa farmer, we ended with four visions (shown in Table 3) and then identified common elements for our next step.

Table 3. Cocoa farmers visions of agriculture and the role of their organization

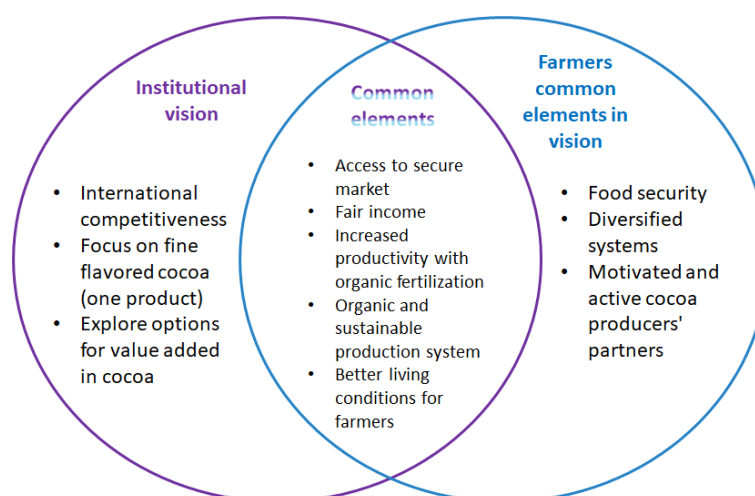
Group outcome	Vision	Common elements
Group 1: gender mixed group of cocoa farmers	<i>"Agriculture should have a good market, with fair prices so we can get a good organic product and have a healthy diet".</i>	Improvement in productive conditions: • Having technologies for sustainable production³ • Ensure the good profitability of production, mainly cocoa. • Having diversified production systems that integrate areas of production for food and for the generation of income⁴. Agriculture as main source of healthy diets: • Organic management ensures the production of healthy food. • To have a diversified system that would strengthen the food security of their families. Access to differentiated markets: • Recognize a fair price for the clean production they carry out. • Not only the product that is valued, but also the price must recognize the sustainable work that they carry out as small producers that are mainly organized at the family level. Role of the cooperative: • Modernization of their productive systems through the technical area that would have to channel technologies and capacity building. • Access to markets for cocoa production
Group 2: gender mixed group of cocoa farmers	<i>"Sustainable/organic agriculture using technology. Happy families, happy Peru"</i>	
Group 3: women cocoa farmer	<i>"Organic agriculture with sustainable and healthy awareness with good environmental practices and well remunerated"</i>	
Group 4: gender mixed group of cocoa farmers	<i>"A more productive and diversified agriculture in income and resilient to climate change"</i>	

³ A sustainable production system is defined as a production free of agrochemicals, preferably organic, where a culture of organic fertilization is developed and where the care of natural resources prevails, with forests and rivers being of main interest.

⁴ Generation of income such as permanent crops (for example cocoa), home gardens, better animal management and the sustainable use of resources from the forest

The next step was to share the results of farmers' visions with the technical area of the cooperative and contrast these results with the institutional vision (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Identification of common elements between institutional vision and farmers' vision



After a discussion, common elements were identified, resulting in the following vision:

Cocoa farmers improve their quality of life and income by increasing cocoa productivity and diversifying their farms under an organic, environmentally sustainable, and economically profitable production scheme.

The desired future changes, based on the identification of common elements between cocoa farmers and the organization, focused on transformation of cocoa family farming to improved economic income based on agricultural activities under diversified systems, improved food security by diversified productive system for foods available and accessible on farms, and recovery and maintenance of natural resources (forests and rivers) linked to cocoa systems.

The transition pathway for cocoa farmers focuses on to entry point: Strengthening the technical capacities of producers and technical area to implement environmentally sustainable and economically profitable organic production (not only cocoa); and the diversification of cocoa farms with species for food security and commercialization.

Entry points to contribute to transitions in Ucayali's ALL

From the results of the process the Peru team have selected several entry points to contribute to the transition. For example, in relation to the improvement of the yields of agroecological crops in family farming, we co-design three experiments with cocoa farmers and their organizations. The experiments are aimed at testing different ecological treatments to prevent the appearance of monilia (a fungus that affects cocoa productivity) and different formulations of biofertilizers that can support the nutrition and improvement of the cocoa plantations.

In relation the economic income and food security of family farming, we identified opportunities to explore a carbon credit project with one of the cocoa cooperatives. We developed a feasibility study on the Carbon Project in Colpa de Loros under the Plan Vivo Standard which includes a comprehensive assessment of carbon stocks in associated forest cover, agroforestry systems, and soil. The main question revolves around the viability of implementing a carbon project for the purpose of trading carbon credits. Kaoka, our commercial partner, expresses its interest in financing or seeking funding to enable Kaoka's partners to act as buyers. The standard Plan Vivo ensures that 80% of the transactions go directly to the farmers, allowing income to be channeled towards improving their production systems under a sustainable approach. For 2024 we are planning activities to strengthen diversification of family farming, specially of cocoa farmers, through enhancing agroforestry systems, and home gardens that integrates food preferences of households.

To address the integration of family farming into markets and value chains of agroecological products, we seek to support for 2024 the process of formalization and institutionalization of the participatory guaranteed system (PGS) in the region. That means, in this first stage, working with members of the Regional Council of PGS in sensibilization and awareness of agroecology; and in the ground working with farmers interested in being organized to access local markets. We are also developing a study on rural youth linked to one of the cocoa cooperatives, as we seek to identify strategies to involve young people in businesses linked to agroecology and cocoa. We will have tangible results on 2024.

Last, in terms of the articulation of decision-makers and civil society to provide a favorable institutional framework for family farming we co-developed in partnership with TerraNuova, a Strategic Plan for Bio Trade with focus on agroecology for Ucayali region. This was made through a participatory process involving local stakeholders and also national members of the Ministry of Environment and is now approved by the Regional Commission of Bio Trade. For 2024, we have programmed activities in collaboration with other interested institutions, in order to achieve its acceptance as a regional public policy. So far we have succeeded in inserting the agroecology approach in the political discussions associated with bio trade. For next year, and based on the interest of ALL members in consolidate ecological markets (market place) in the territory, we are conducting a study of lessons learned from the systematization of experiences of 16 ecological fairs at a national level. We will share recommendations in institutional and decision-making spaces to contribute on the discussion on how a market place for agroecological products can be develop in the ALL.

Maria Claudia Tristán Febres, Senior Research Associate, m.tristan@cgiar.org

José Sánchez - Choy, Senior Research Associate, j.g.sanchez@cgiar.org

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