Traceable & Sustainable Cocoa Program
Ecuador

Fine flavor cocoa farmers of six selected regions in Ecuador are provided with a comprehensive support package along the principles of finance, improved yields, labour practices, market access, quality, traceability, social investment and environmental impact.

Context
Ecuador is one of the smallest countries in South America, but the largest producer of fine flavor cocoa. As one of Ecuador’s oldest cultivated crops, cocoa mostly grows on small-scale farms. Despite having abundant land and water resources, agricultural productivity on the small farms is low. The tree stock is often old, leading to low yields and income of the farmers. Many cocoa growing areas in Ecuador show great biodiversity, environmental factors need to be properly addressed while enhancing the yield on the farms.

Project Content
In this one year pilot project, 1,100 cocoa farmers of six regions in Ecuador are organized in groups, and offered a comprehensive support package in the form of:

- Farmer field schools to provide all year round interactive trainings for the farmers
- Training in pre and post harvesting techniques, farmer business practices and environmental management
- Cocoa nurseries for high yielding fine flavor seedling distribution
- Pre-financing for plant protection products
- Solar/gas dryers and fermentation boxes to ensure high quality
- A quality based farmer and farmer group premium
- A social project to develop local community infrastructure

The main objective is to support the farmers in increasing their yield and income, while maintaining an environmentally friendly production. Therefore, farmer trainings include elements such as:

- Integrated Farm Management
- Renovation and rehabilitation of cocoa farms
- Conservation of natural resources
- The importance & benefits of Nacional fine flavor cocoa (the typical Ecuadorian cocoa)

About the Lindt Cocoa Foundation:
The Lindt Cocoa Foundation was found in 2013 and has the declared purpose of working to achieve social and ecological sustainability in the cultivation, production and processing of cocoa and other raw materials used in chocolate production.

Learn more:
www.lindtcocoafoundation.org
The project is accompanied by an extensive monitoring and evaluation system for the participating farmer communities. The system uses GPS to identify the exact farm location, as well as the location of local infrastructure. A baseline farmer survey is undertaken to better understand the needs of the farmers. The survey consists of 50 questions related to the farmer, his/her family, productivity and the farm.

Serving the mission of the Lindt Cocoa Foundation:

The program will bring high-level recognition to Ecuadorian cocoa farmers and serve the public interest across stakeholders at the national government, community and farmer levels. It touches upon two of the focus areas of the Lindt Cocoa Foundation:

1) Create the motivation, capabilities and capacity of farmers to improve their farming practices: through training in pre and post harvesting techniques, farmer field schools to provide all year round interactive training, training in farmer business practices, training in management practices and environment management training

2) Create an enabling environment and remove constraints farmers face to improve their practices: through cocoa nurseries for fine flavor seedling distribution, pre-financing for fertilizer and pesticide, solar/gas dryers and fermentation boxes, social project for community infrastructure

Overall, the project fosters sustainable agricultural development in cocoa growing regions in Ecuador, and enables the farmers to improve their livelihoods.

February 2015