Traceable & Sustainable Cocoa Program
Ecuador

Fine flavor cocoa farmers of ten 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.

Project Content
The pilot project supported during the 2014/2015 cocoa season was successful, appreciated and valued by the farmers involved in the project. We therefore decided to extend and upscale the project to cover more farmers with trainings and farm investment services over the next four years. Lessons learned from the pilot project have been consequently incorporated. Support to farmers is reduced over time, and ownership of the target group fostered.

Within the continuation of the project, 5,175 cocoa farmers of ten regions in Ecuador are organized in groups, and offered a comprehensive support package in the form of trainings and farm investments.

Farmers receive a minimum of 7 training modules covering agricultural, environmental, social and business topics during the first two years of their enrolment in the program. From their third year onwards, they receive a condensed version of the course every year based on the implementation of knowledge received. Classroom training conducted by agronomists will be held throughout the year with a more theoretical emphasis. To ensure farmers receive a practical demonstration of the course content, the agronomists further conduct trainings in farmer field schools and on dedicated demonstration plots. Each farmer further receives farm visits for personalized advice on how to improve his farm and closely follow up on the implementation.

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
As training alone is not sufficient to foster a professionalization of the farmers, they additionally receive comprehensive support for farm investments in the form of fine flavor cocoa seedlings, interest free pre-financing for plant protection products, and solar/gas dryers as well as fermentation boxes to ensure high and stable quality of the cocoa beans. A quality based in-kind farmer premium to be invested in the farm completes the support the farmers receive.

The objective of the seedling distribution is to increase the production of fine flavor cocoa through rehabilitation and replanting using high-yielding and disease resistant fine flavor cocoa varieties promoted by INIAP, the National Institute for Agriculture and Fisheries. This avoids monocultures that are not seen as sustainable. As we want to establish a self-sustaining supply of those seedlings for propagation in cocoa farming communities, willing and enthusiastic farmers are organized into “Nursery Groups”, which are thought on how to manage cocoa seedling nurseries and propagate new plants. The aim is to distribute 150,000 seedlings per year, and have the planting and distribution fully managed by the farmers themselves by the end of the project.

The project is accompanied by an extensive monitoring and evaluation system for the participating farmers. 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. Further, the project is also evaluated by an external and independent party.

Serving the mission of the Lindt Cocoa Foundation:
The program brings 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 social as well as 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, as well as an in-kind farmer premium