



IMPROVING AGROFORESTRY SYSTEMS OF COCOA PRODUCTION

Increasing the efficiency of cocoa agro-forestry in Bahia, Brazil.

This project can help the profitability of **farmers and growers** involved in agro-forestry production of cocoa.

The project was set up to help the Bahia Region of Brazil which was in crisis after Witches' Broom Disease cut production of cocoa beans from 400,000t/year to only 100,00t. Around 200,000 workers lost their jobs and moved to the cities, which in turn increased social problems. A fifth of the valuable

CABRUCA is a system of production in which cocoa is cultivated under the shade of Atlantic Forest trees. Each hectare has around 70 large Atlantic Forest trees and 800 cocoa plants.

The system has many advantages:

- *protects the cocoa plants against direct sun light and winds,*
- *maintains high level of moisture in the soil and in the air,*
- *protects and maintains biodiversity ,*
- *serves as corridors for the native fauna and the flora,*
- *reduces the attack of insects on the cocoa plants,*
- *sequestrates and stocks carbon and cycles nutrients,*
- *avoids soil erosion,*
- *is a sources of medicine, fire wood, fruits and nuts for local people.*

This system is also present in other cocoa producer regions of the world, especially the African countries Cameroon and Ghana.

Cabruca was cut down and replaced by pasture and coffee plantations.

The project aimed to study the Cabruca in detail to enable farmers to improve cocoa production with the support of informed public policies. The project has had many outcomes:

- Four research projects to explore the sustainable use of Cabrucas.
- Training strategies for small farmers and their families to improve farming practice.
- A pilot project for reforestation and seedling production.
- Implementation of activities to use all elements of the Cabruca to increase profitability. (For example using dead wood for furniture making, implementation of fruit processing etc.)
- Setting up loans, (FNE-VERDE) for farmers for use in improving the Cabruca.



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- Spreading information through local and international forums.
- Development of a labeling *Cacao Superior Bahia* to indicate the high quality and good flavour of this fine chocolate produced in the Cabruca. This is developed in connection with local institutions and will protect and add value to the product.
- Initiation of the certification of cocoa by the Rain Forest Alliance.
- Publishing of articles*.

As a result of the pilot project, cocoa areas under management increased annual productivity from 195 kg/ha to 645kg/ha. Data collected proved invaluable in helping policy makers create useful public policy. Farmers have been empowered by combining their existing knowledge with new approaches and to increase their income by fully using the potential of the area. The development of specific labeling for this local product not only increases its value, but also has a positive effect on the status of local farmers. This, in combination with the organization of farmer cooperatives, will increase the professionalism of growers and processors leading to a more commercially successful approach.

The project is still underway. To date four summaries have been published*. An article will be published in the journal *Agricultural EcoSystems and Environment*. Information is available through the technical reports.

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This project was implemented with financial support from the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation in the Netherlands. The financial support was made available from the subsidy programme for sustainable development of the cocoa and chocolate sector (also known as 'the Buffer Stock Fund'). The responsibility for the implementation of the project and its outcomes lies with the project partner(s). The outcomes of the project do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Ministry. The Ministry is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained in this project summary and other documents related to this project.