

Evaluation of the
**COLOMBIA MÁS
COMPETITIVA**
Programme

Final Report
2024



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Embajada de Suiza en Colombia
Cooperación Económica y Desarrollo (SECO)



FEDESARROLLO
Centro de Investigación Económica y Social

Evaluation of the
**COLOMBIA MÁS
COMPETITIVA**
Programme

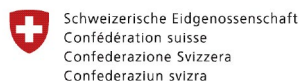
Final Report
2024

Prepared by:

David Forero
Sandra Oviedo
Rafael Puyana
Sandra Zuluaga

Consultants and project assistants:

José Julián Parra
Mariana Villabona



Embajada de Suiza en Colombia
Cooperación Económica y Desarrollo (SECO)

Design and layout:

Eduard Andrés Barrera
BARAJA GRÁFICA SAS

Fedesarrollo

First Edition: February 2024
All rights reserved

Fedesarrollo is thankful for the valuable insights from Daniela Fabel, André Pantzer and Gabriel Cárdenas of SECO, as well as the collaboration of the SwissContact staff when conducting this evaluation.

Content

Relevant acronyms.....	4
Executive Summary.....	5
1. Introduction	7
2. Objectives and description of the methodology	9
3. Characterisation of the beneficiaries of the C+C Programme	11
4. Findings and recommendations for the C+C Programme.....	16
4.1. Evaluation of the C+C Programme: Top level	17
4.2. Macro-level evaluation: Policy Reform Support Mechanism (Component 1)	21
4.3. Meso-level Evaluation: Sector Reform Support Facility (Component 2.1)	24
4.4. Micro level assessment: Subnational Competitive Fund (Component 2.2).....	28
4.5. Evaluation of the Swiss Expert Network (SEN)	34
5. Adjustment recommendations for the C+C Programme	37
6. Conclusions	42
Bibliographical references	44

Relevant acronyms

APC	<i>Presidential Agency for International Cooperation of Colombia</i>
CAD	<i>Development Assistance Committee (OECD Committee)</i>
C+C	<i>Colombia Más Competitiva</i>
CPC	<i>Private Competitiveness Council</i>
CPCGPP	<i>Consejería Presidencial para la Competitividad y la Gestión Público Privada (Presidential Council for Competitiveness and Public-Private Management)</i>
CRCI	<i>Regional Competitiveness and Innovation Commissions</i>
DANE	<i>National Department of Statistics</i>
DiD	<i>Difference in Differences</i>
DNP	<i>National Planning Department</i>
AMS	<i>Annual Manufacturing Survey</i>
EAS	<i>Annual Services Survey</i>
EMICRON	<i>Microbusiness Survey</i>
EN	<i>Statistically significant</i>
IAVH	<i>Alexander von Humboldt Institute</i>
MINCIT	<i>Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism</i>
NES	<i>Not statistically significant</i>
OECD	<i>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</i>
PDET	<i>Territorially Focused Development Programmes</i>
SECO	<i>State Secretariat for Economic Affairs</i>
SEN	<i>Swiss Expert Network</i>
SNCI	<i>National Competitiveness and Innovation System</i>



Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The Colombia más Competitiva (C+C) Programme is a bilateral programme between Switzerland and Colombia that seeks to improve Colombian competitiveness by strengthening the productive sector and creating a favourable business environment. To do so, it focuses on the value chains of specialty cocoa, specialty coffee, sustainable tourism, sustainable construction and natural ingredients, as well as interventions at the macro, meso and micro levels. This document presents the assessment of C+C, formulated in compliance with SECO's directive to document the accomplishments and primary challenges of the Programme, and to provide recommendations for improvement.

The assessment finds outstanding outcomes in terms of relevance and coherence, as well as a positive performance in the efficiency of the programme and its effectiveness in delivering results. Conversely, challenges in the operational management of C+C require attention, and there exist opportunities for enhancing the sustainability through time of achieved impacts and the effectiveness of the Swiss Expert Network (SEN) mechanism.

These results are due to the fact that the C+C Programme has consolidated itself as the main reference on international cooperation in competitiveness policies in Colombia. The qualitative and quantitative evidence shows the great positioning that C+C has had among key actors in competitiveness policy at the national and subnational levels, making it an asset for SECO and the Swiss Embassy in Colombia. In particular, it has played an outstanding role in giving dynamism to the National System of Competitiveness and Innovation (SNCI).

This evaluation also takes an empirical approach based on programme records and quantitative beneficiary surveys. Findings show that C+C had an effect on job creation and retention between 2017 and 2022, as the employment gains of the beneficiaries studied exceeded those of the control group. Likewise, the programme's support increased the volume and value exported by the beneficiaries compared to the control group, especially in the cocoa projects. Positive impacts are also evident in the cross-cutting themes of the Programme: for instance, the evaluation discerned a favorable impact on metrics related to gender equity in employment, and an increase in the financial products developed (in the special cocoa chain).

Despite these achievements, the C+C Programme faces challenges in achieving effective interaction of the three levels of intervention to generate systemic impacts for competitiveness and for the programme's value chains. Improved communication mechanisms are imperative for sharing results between levels and with external actors. Additionally, there are difficulties in the traceability systems of the projects, thus once they are completed the Programme is sometimes unable to study the sustainability of their impacts. Greater emphasis should be placed on SECO-mandated cross-cutting issues for C+C, particularly on financial inclusion, skills development and climate change. Lastly, a strategic reassessment of the SEN mechanism and its management must be rethought in order to refine its focus and make it effective for enhancing collaboration between Swiss and Colombian entities.





Introduction

1. Introduction

Colombia más Competitiva (C+C) is a bilateral programme that seeks to improve Colombian competitiveness by strengthening the productive sector and creating a favorable environment for business, enabling the integration of Colombian products in international markets, particularly in the value chains of specialty cocoa, specialty coffee, sustainable tourism, sustainable construction and natural ingredients, and with a cross-cutting emphasis on green growth, gender equality and financial inclusion. It is led by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) of the Swiss Confederation, the Colombian National Government and the private sector, and since 2017 has implemented a first phase (2017-2020), its second phase (2021-2024) is underway and a third closing phase (2025-2028) is planned.

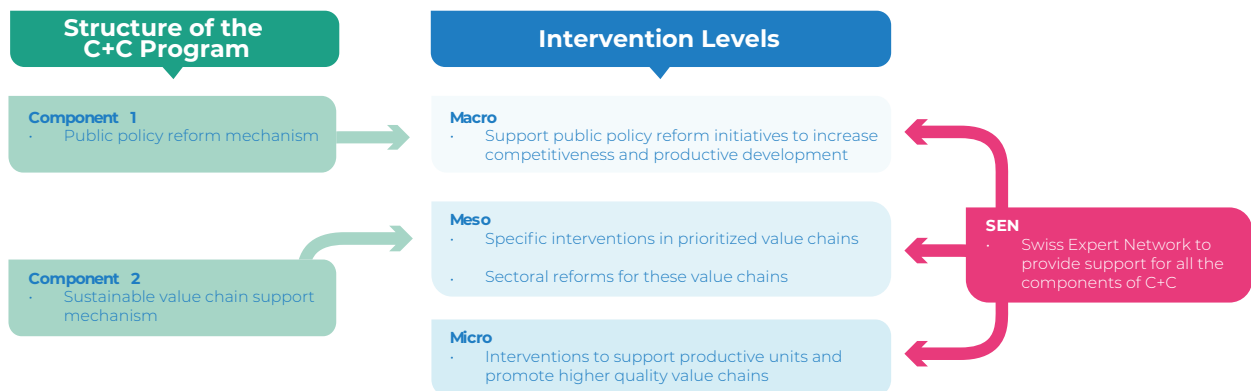
The C+C Programme has established a structure with different levels of intervention: macro-interventions that focus on supporting critical public policy reforms, meso-initiatives for specific interventions in value chains, and micro-interventions that support productive units and contribute to the generation of quality jobs. In addition, it has relied on the Swiss Expert Network (SEN) for knowledge transfer and the strengthening of institutional re-

lations between Swiss and Colombian actors at the three levels of intervention. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between the components of the programme structure and the levels of intervention.

As a general conclusion, the C+C Programme is consolidated as a milestone in international cooperation in public policies for competitiveness, business development and regional value chain development due to its scope, flexibility and adaptability to the changing needs of the beneficiaries, to modifications in the multi-level institutional environment, and its close collaboration with the agenda of the national government, the private sector and value chain institutions at regional and local level.

The ambitious array of work fronts explains the existence of design, effectiveness, implementation and sustainability challenges that must be resolved for strengthening its short-term execution. Likewise, the actors leading the C+C Programme have the opportunity to refine elements of the programme so that in an eventual phase III, the long-term objectives set by SECO and its Colombian peers can be achieved, as well as an effective “phase-out” process.

Graph 1. Relationship between C+C Structure and Levels of Intervention



Source: Compiled by the authors on the basis of Swisscontact.



Objectives and description of the methodology

2. Objectives and description of the methodology

Objectives: to measure and evaluate the achievements of the C+C Programme at the institutional, operational and results levels; to identify remaining challenges for the ongoing Phase II; to document lessons learned; and to make a series of recommendations for the design of the next phase.

Evaluation criteria of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD): used to assess the quality and effectiveness of development aid (OECD, 2021):

- ◆ **Relevance and coherence:** This refers to the appropriateness of aid to the context and needs of the recipient country. Aid should be aligned with the recipient country's development objectives and priorities, effectively addressing the challenges and problems it faces.
- ◆ **Effectiveness:** Focuses on the ability of aid to achieve objectives through concrete results and the generation of development impact. Effective aid is aid that produces positive and sustainable changes in areas such as poverty reduction, strengthening local capacities and improving development indicators.
- ◆ **Efficiency and management:** This refers to the optimisation of the resources used in the implementation of aid. Efficient aid maximizes the results obtained in relation to the resources invested, minimizing costs and maximizing impact.
- ◆ **Sustainability and impact:** This refers to the ability of the results generated by aid to endu-

re over time and to be sustainable in the long term. Sustainable aid implies not only the continuity of the results achieved, but also the capacity of the recipient country to maintain and expand those results, even when external aid has ended.

The evaluation methodology combines qualitative and quantitative tools, which included, among others, conducting 62 semi-structured interviews with actors at different levels of the Programme, 4 field visits to 10 projects and beneficiaries of the Subnational Competitive Fund, 2 focus groups, collection of primary information from Competitive Fund project implementers, on projects and beneficiaries, as well as a quasi-experimental impact evaluation using the difference-in-differences (DiD) methodology to make causal inferences about the impact of the C+C Programme interventions, which achieved 50% coverage of micro beneficiaries. The evaluation methodology is described in detail in **Annex 1**.

In light of the evaluation outcomes, the assessment of each OECD DAC criterion is appraised utilizing the following rating scale: **Highly satisfactory (1)**; **Satisfactory (2)**; **Unsatisfactory (3)**; and **Highly unsatisfactory (4)**.

At the end of each subsection, the results of the sentiment analysis of the conversations conducted in the semi-structured interviews are included. The sentiment analysis uses a natural language technique to assess the content of the conversations in terms of tendencies to express favourable, unfavourable or neutral opinions towards the C+C Programme, which are grouped into 4 types of ratings: **very positive**, **moderately positive**, **moderately negative**, and **very negative**.



Characterisation of the beneficiaries of the C+C Programme

3. Characterisation of the beneficiaries of the C+C Programme

By the end of 2023, Component 1 has benefited 20 initiatives. Of these, 14 were supported in Phase I and 6 are being funded in Phase II. During Phase I, 29 institutions benefited from the projects, with 17 being Regional Competitiveness and Innovation Commissions (CRCI). As of Phase II, 7 have benefited (Table 1).

In Component 2, the Programme has benefited 37 initiatives, of which 32 were the result of the Subnational Competitive Fund scheme in Phase I and II, and 12 correspond to the Sector Reform Mechanism.

Within the Competitive Fund initiatives, Phase I of the programme served 1944 individual beneficiaries within 17 total initiatives or projects, divided into 5 projects in the Specialty Cocoa value chain, 4 in Natural Ingredients, 4 in Natural Tourism and 4 in Sustainable Construction. For Phase II, an effort was made to expand the number of beneficiaries from the selection process, which resulted in an increase to 3,654, within 16 total projects distributed among 4 projects in the Specialty Cocoa value chain, 4 in Sustainable Tourism, 3 in Natural Ingredients and 5 in Specialty Coffee, which was included for the first time in the Competitive Fund. In this phase, the Sustainable Construction roundtable was also

Table 1. Entities associated with Component 1 “Mechanisms to support public policy reforms” of the C+C Programme

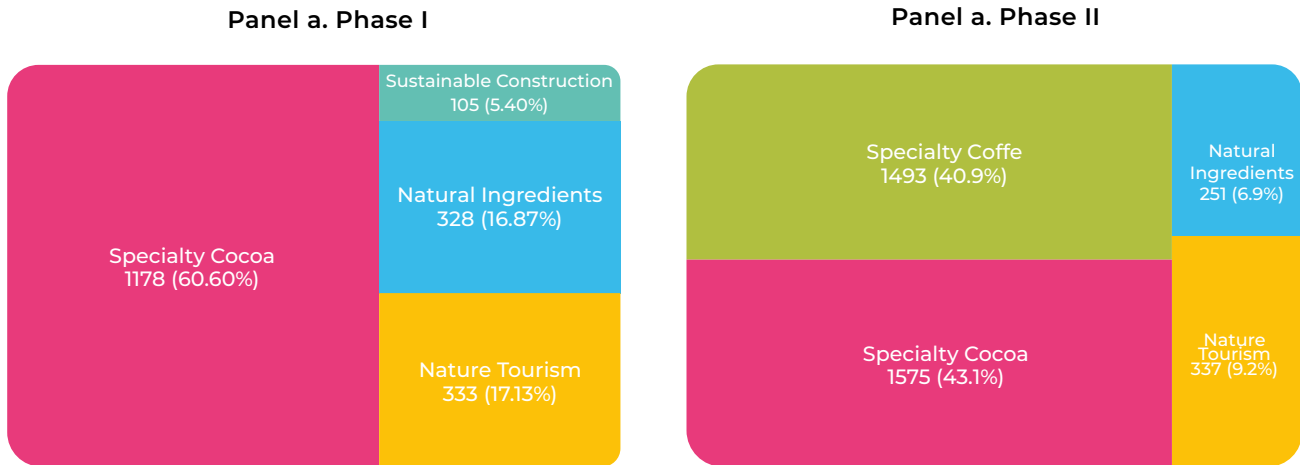
Phase	Proposers	Beneficiaries	
Phase I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Planning Department (DNP) High Presidential Advisory Council for the Private Sector and Competitiveness (APC) Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism (MINCIT) Ministry of Education (MEN) Colciencias National Department of Statistics (DANE) Private Competitiveness Council (CPC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colombia Productiva Confecámaras Private Competitiveness Council (CPC) 17 Regional Competitiveness and Innovation Commissions (CRCI) National Planning Department (DNP) National Department of Statistics (DANE) Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism (MINCIT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of National Education (MEN) Ministry of Labour (MinTrabajo) Ministry of Environment and Rural Development (MADR) Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC) Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MinCiencias) Civil Service
Phase II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confecámaras Private Competitiveness Council (CPC) National Planning Department (DNP) Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism (MINCIT) Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MINCTI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bancoldex Opportunity Banking Confecámaras Private Competitiveness Council (CPC) National Planning Department (DNP) Higher Education Institutions (IES) iNNpulsa Colombia Invima 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Environment and Rural Development (MADR) Ministry of Labour UAESP Non-metallic mineral sector Food and beverage sector Colombian National Government Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism (MINCIT) Ministry of National Education (MEN)

Source: Own elaboration based on information from the C+C Programme and Swisscontact.

created, led jointly with Camacol, so this value chain was not included in the Competitive Fund. In the Graph 2 shows the contribution of the individual be-

neficiaries per chain for each phase, showing that in both phases the chain with the highest contribution was the Specialty Cocoa chain.

Graph 2 . Distribution of Competitive Fund beneficiaries by value chain in Phases I and II of the C+C Programme.

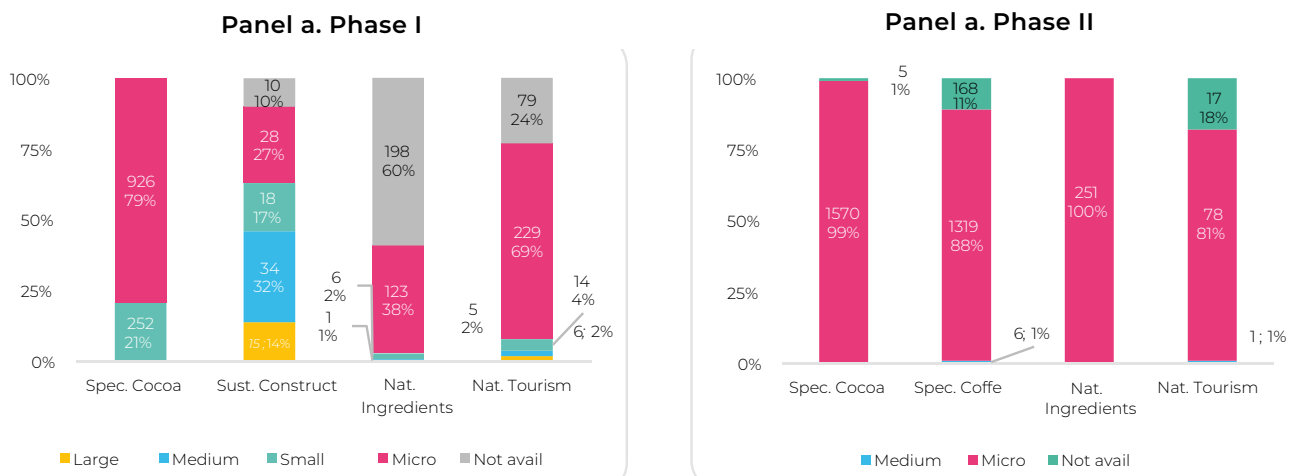


Source: Own elaboration based on data from the C+C Programme and Swisscontact.

The augmentation in the number of beneficiaries during Phase II is coupled with an enhanced homogeneity among the beneficiary types, predominantly focusing on micro-enterprises, including individual producers. In value chains such as Sustainable Construction and Specialty Cocoa, Phase I

exhibited the participation of a significant number of small, medium and large enterprises, while in Phase II the participation of medium-sized enterprises is currently less than 1% and no small or large enterprises participated (Graph 3).

Graph 3 .Distribution of beneficiaries of Competitive Fund interventions by value chain and business size in Phases I and II of the Programme.



Source: Own elaboration based on data from the C+C Programme and Swisscontact

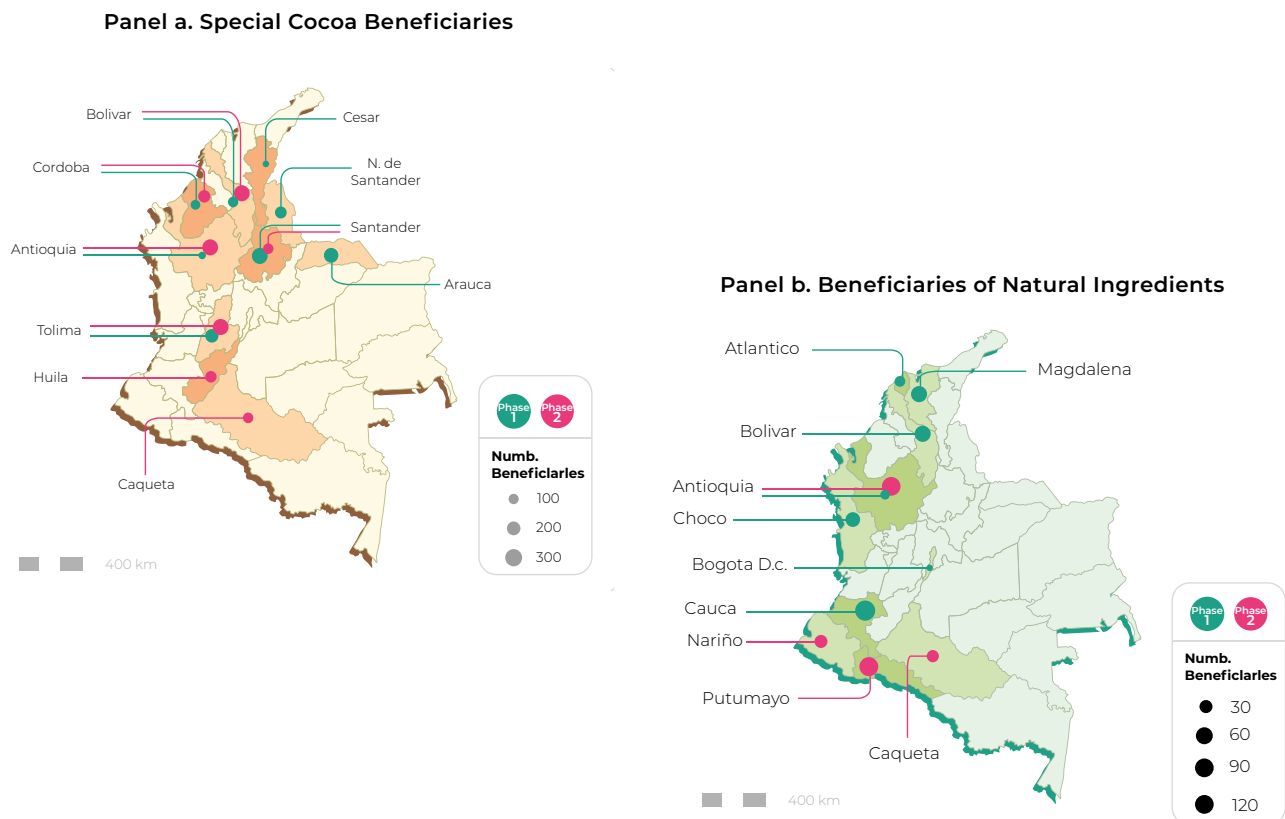
Regarding the geographical coverage of the beneficiaries of the Competitive Fund projects, for Specialty Cocoa Phase I beneficiaries are located in the north-east of the country, in the Andean region and parts of the Caribbean and Orinoco regions. During Phase II, there was an overlap with Phase I in departments such as Antioquia, Córdoba, Tolima, Bolívar and Santander, where three of the projects continued, with a greater presence in the north-west of the country (Graph 5a). In contrast, the beneficiaries of the Natural Ingredients value chain shifted from the east and north-east of the country, in the Caribbean and Pacific regions during Phase I, to the south-east in the Pacific and Amazon regions in Phase II, although maintaining their presence in Antioquia (Graph 4).

A similar change to that observed in the Natural Ingredients chain occurred in Sustainable Tourism.

While in Phase I, a strong presence was observed in the center of the country, in Phase II Phase I shows a strong presence in the center of the country, Phase II shows a greater presence in the north of the country, particularly in the Caribbean region,¹ and in Huila in Phase II (Graph 5a). Additionally, the projects of the Sustainable Construction value chain, included in the Competitive Fund of the C+C Programme only in Phase I, are the ones with the greatest geographical coverage, covering the Andean region and to a lesser extent the Caribbean region (Graph 5).

Finally, the Specialty Coffee chain was included in the C+C Programme from Phase II onwards. The projects were concentrated in the Andean region and the Caribbean region, with an emphasis on the departments of Tolima and Huila (Graph 6).

Graph 4 . Geographical distribution of the beneficiaries of the Competitive Fund in Phases I and II of the C+C Programme: Specialty Cocoa and Natural Ingredients.



Source: Own elaboration based on data from the C+C Programme and Swisscontact.

Figure 5 . Geographical distribution of Competitive Fund beneficiaries in Phases I and II of the C+C Programme: Sustainable Tourism and Sustainable Construction.

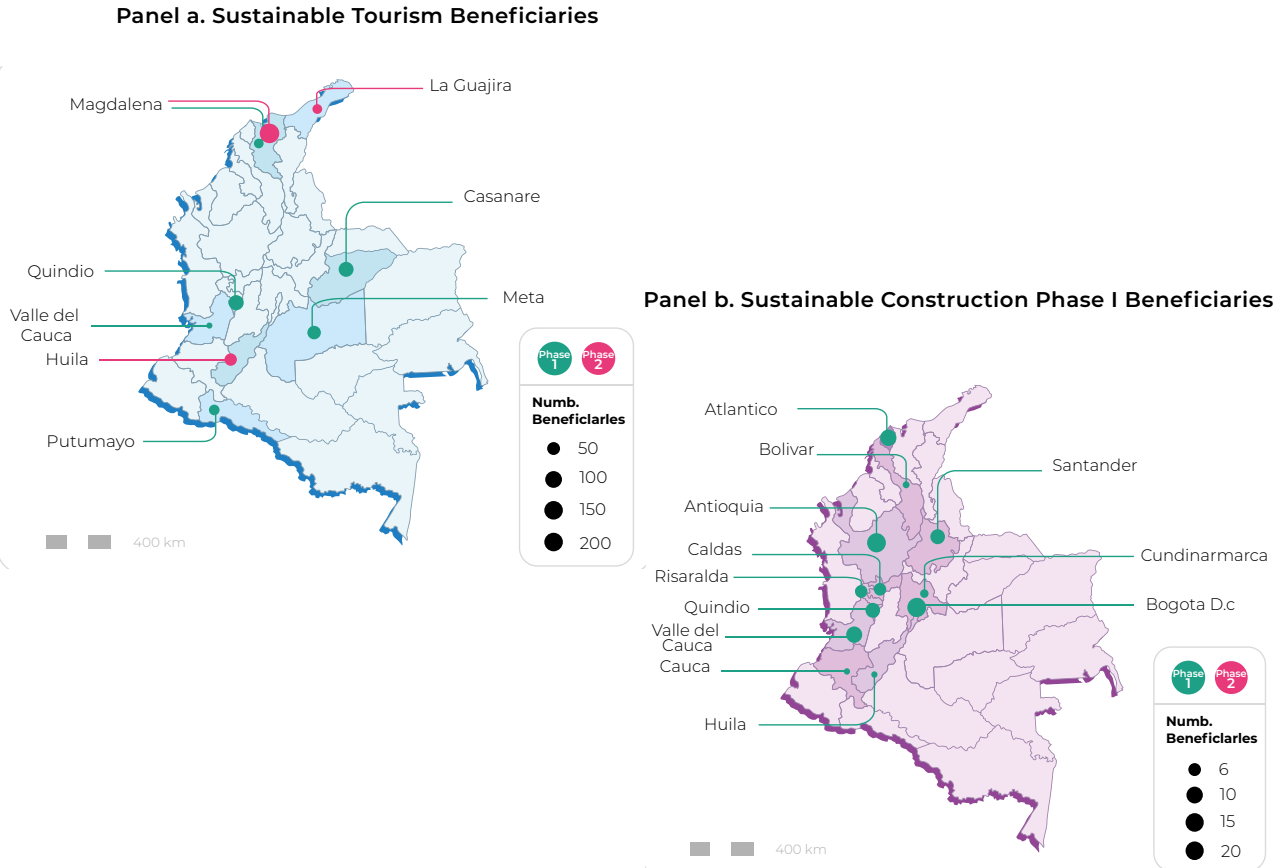
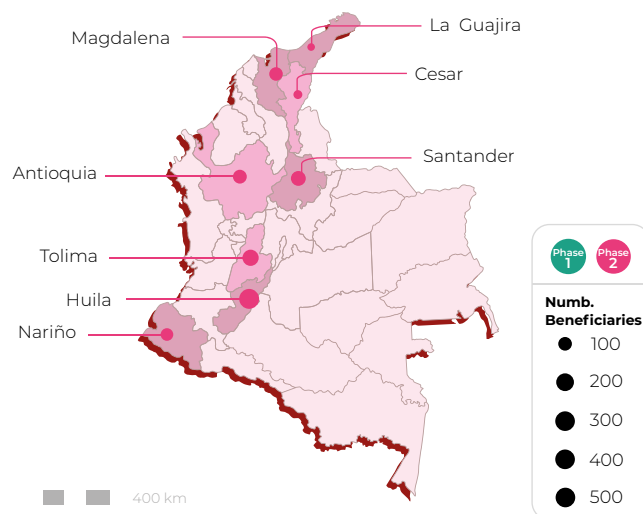


Figure 6 . Geographical distribution of Competitive Fund beneficiaries in Phase II of the C+C Programme: Speciality Coffees.



Source: Own elaboration based on data from the C+C Programme and Swisscontact.



Findings and recommendations for the C+C programme

4. Findings and recommendations for the C+C programme

This section presents the findings and recommendations of the evaluation of the C+C Programme (top level) and of each of its levels (macro, meso, micro and SEN), which were classified into those findings of a strategic nature and those of a more technical and operational or managerial nature. Each recommendation is assigned a priority according to the expected impact of its implementation on the fulfilment of the objectives of the C+C Programme, as follows: *** High priority; ** Medium priority; and * Low priority.

From its design and approach to objectives, the C+C Programme is highly valued by all stakeholders for its demand-driven approach. Its governance system catalyzes institutional and sectoral articulation, which allows for the generation of competitiveness and innovation policies and the strengthening of sustainable value chains in speciality cocoa, speciality coffees, natural ingredients, tourism and sustainable construction.

The C+C Programme has been effective in generating direct and indirect results, and although outstanding individual impacts are identified, there is a weakness in generating sustainability in the initiatives once the implementation time is over, mainly due to the lack of follow-up by the Programme on the results and the subsequent scalability of the initiatives.

4.1. Evaluation of the C+C Programme: Top level



Rating scale: Highly satisfactory (1); Satisfactory (2); Unsatisfactory (3); and Highly unsatisfactory (4).

Strategic Findings

1.1

Finding

There are tensions between the central objective of competitiveness and innovation of the C+C Programme, and the inclusion of the so-called cross-cutting approaches (gender equity, environmental sustainability and financial inclusion). In addition, the Steering Committee and the Strategic Committees do not have the permanent participation of the actors related to the cross-cutting approaches (**relevance and coherence**).

Recommendation

The C+C Programme should seek a balance between competitiveness and innovation and the cross-cutting approaches, in accordance with the capacities of the different initiatives. To this end, it can complement the existing mandates on competitiveness with a guideline from the Steering Committee on the scope of the objectives of the cross-cutting approaches of the C+C Programme, establishing lines of action at each of the levels and consolidating monitoring metrics.

	Finding	Recommendation	
1.2	Perceived trade-off exists between the regions' own institutional capacities and the geographical coverage arising from the bottom-up regional approach pursued by the C+C Programme (Relevance and Coherence).	Address the heterogeneity of institutional capacities, differentiating between initiatives in regions with greater capacity to generate and sustain results, and regions with lower capacities and greater potential for impact.	***
1.3	The C+C Programme does not have a mechanism to measure its aggregate impact, and the lack of articulation between the initiatives carried out at the different levels of the C+C Programme impedes the measurement of an overall impact (Impact and Sustainability).	Organize the documentation of the initiatives financed by the C+C Programme in a bibliographic repository, which allows the results to be shared in a comprehensive manner with all stakeholders; explore the possibility of strengthening knowledge transfer strategies; and design a homogeneous mechanism for all levels, which allows the aggregate impact of the C+C Programme to be measured, such as conducting a summary survey before and after the implementation of the initiatives.	***
1.4	There is a lack of monitoring of projects completed by the C+C Programme to verify their impact beyond the time of implementation (Impact and sustainability).	Define mechanisms for monitoring initiatives with potential for growth, traceability and scalability of results.	***
1.5	In some cases the efforts of the C+C Programme are perceived as isolated from the funder's other programmes, and there is evidence of a lack of synergies between the C+C Programme and other donors acting within the country's Competitiveness and Innovation Agenda (Efficiency and management).	The C+C Programme has the potential for complementarity and synergies with other interventions of the funder (SECO) and with other donors, so synergies between the funder's programmes and with programmes of other donors should be encouraged.	***

Technical and Operational Findings			
	Finding	Recommendation	
1.6	The technical support of the C+C Programme facilitator, operational processes and information systems are perceived as adequate. However, there is evidence of opportunities for improvement in operational processes to improve timelines and shorten pre-implementation times, especially as delays in schedules shorten implementation times (Efficiency and management).	Align expectations regarding the scope and outcome of each of the instances of the process pathway, from funder to implementer, proponents and evaluators.	***

1.6

Finding

Coordination for the management and achievement of results is one of the most positive and outstanding aspects of the C+C programme. However, delays are perceived in the current implementation with respect to the previous phase. Among the causes are the rotation of government actors involved in the C+C programme, lack of feedback between the funder and the facilitator, and lack of follow-up to recommendations (**efficiency and management**).

Recommendation

Align expectations between the funder and the facilitator, and generate spaces for dialogue that facilitate this alignment, which can be accompanied by instruments that facilitate timely follow-up of recommendations, implemented actions and their effectiveness, and allow for adequate feedback from the parties.

1.8

A set of initiatives that were a direct and indirect result of the C+C Programme stand out, and there is a predominance of positive views on the effectiveness in achieving the objectives, but there is a lack of communication and positioning of the results with the actors of the Strategic Committees and external actors to demonstrate their sustainability (**Effectiveness**).

Carry out periodic and systematic compilations of beneficiaries' results, improve mechanisms for internal and external socialization of progress, results and impacts, and define mechanisms for monitoring initiatives once they are completed.

1.9

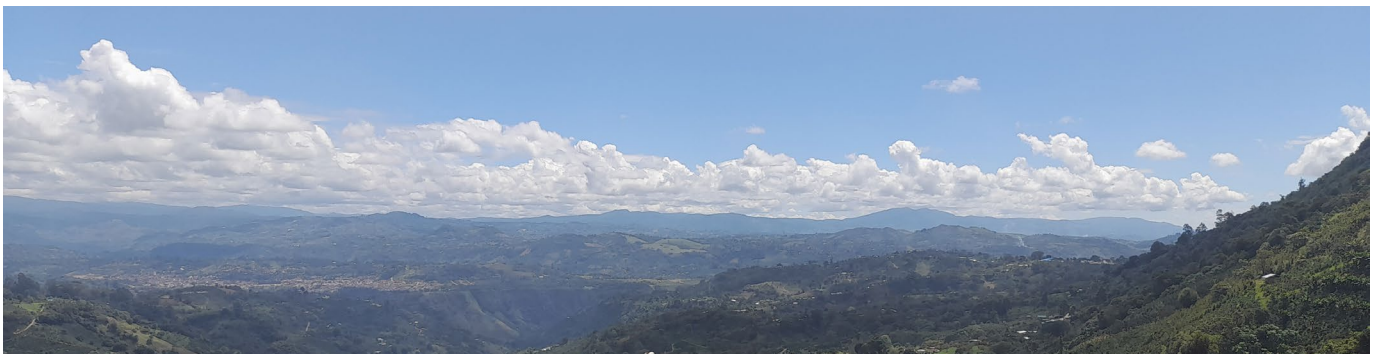
The C+C Programme concentrates the dissemination of results within each level and value chain, and neglects external actors (**Effectiveness**).

Design and implement a strategy for communicating the progress, results and impacts of the C+C Programme in terms of competitiveness, and in facilitating dialogue between actors, which involves the creation of spaces for dissemination coordinated with other cooperating partners and actors at different levels.

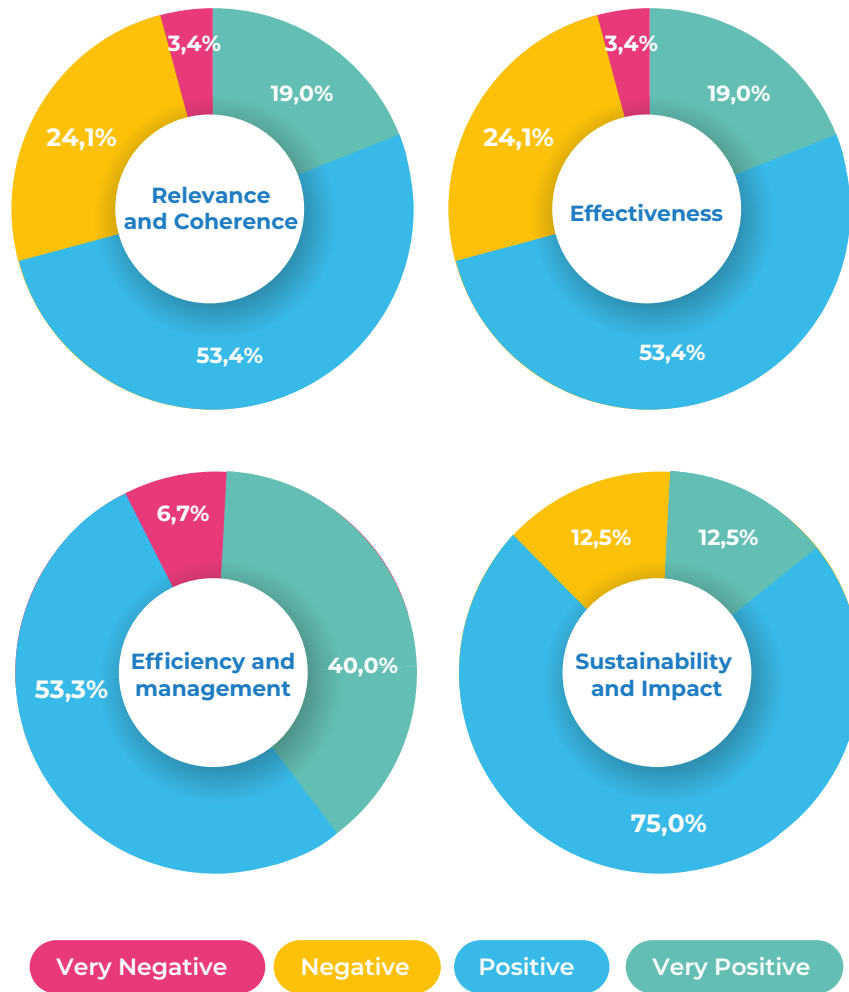
1.10

The different levels work in isolation, and are unaware of the scope and objectives of the C+C Programme at all levels. Within the macro and meso levels, internal communication is effective; however, at the micro level there is a lack of interaction between executors that could facilitate the generation of synergies (**relevance and coherence**).

Generate instances/dynamics of interaction between partners, beneficiaries, leaders or other actors representing the C+C Programme levels; design and execute a communication strategy of the C+C Programme for new members of governance or strategic actors in the national government; and, implement tools focused on measuring the degree of satisfaction of the actors who will interact with the C+C Programme and receive timely recommendations.



Graph 7. Sentiment analysis of the text of conversations from all interviews conducted as part of the evaluation of the C+C Programme.



Source: Own elaboration based on interview inputs (NVIVO processing).

4.2. Macro-level evaluation: Policy Reform Support Mechanism (Component 1)

There is a highly positive perception of the macro level of the C+C Programme (Component 1), due to its focus on the demands of the public and private sector in terms of competitiveness and innovation, its flexibility to respond to the needs of the actors, and the fulfillment of objectives that have boosted the generation of policies and public goods. In addition, the C+C Programme has facilitated the articulation of actors around the SNCI agenda. However, it is a priority to increase efficiency in the use of resources in order to increase the usability of the results and to find regional private and civil society allies to promote the sustainability of the C+C Programme in the regions.

For more details on the policies and public goods supported by the C+C Programme, **Annex 2** describes the initiatives undertaken in Phase 1 at the macro level.



Rating scale: Highly satisfactory (1); Satisfactory (2); Unsatisfactory (3); and Highly unsatisfactory (4).

Strategic Findings

2.1

Finding

Good coordination, planning and governance at this level is valued, however, there is a tension between achieving sustainable impact and concentrating capacity building on key national government actors, which highlights the importance of rethinking the focus on the needs of government entities that the C+C programme has had until now (**Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability**).

Recommendation

Identify strategic bets or innovative mechanisms for the C+C Programme that can be addressed with private actors generating public goods and that do not depend on changes in government every four years, as well as finding regional private and civil society allies to promote the sustainability of the C+C Programme in the regions.

2.2

At the macro level, weaknesses are evident in aligning the pre-existing national competitiveness and innovation policy, valid until 2022, with the vision and strategic commitments of the current national government; in responding to the demands or needs of short-term actors, which do not always respond to a long-term vision, and in adapting to the dynamics of the entities that lead the formulation of projects at the macro level (**relevance and coherence**).

Aligning the C+C Programme and its competitiveness and innovation objectives with the vision of the new government and in a long-term horizon. To achieve this, it is recommended that a permanent channel of communication be established with the MinCIT, which currently leads the national and regional dialogue of the SNCI.

2.3

The C+C Programme aspires a regional impact of the results, but has not defined a targeted geographical coverage. In addition, work is being carried out in geographical areas that do not have the capacity to implement initiatives such as those developed by the C+C Programme at the macro level **(relevance and coherence)**.

To approach the C+C Programme regionally in an intentional way from the macro level, based on variables such as feasibility, potential impact, results, sustainability.

2.4

It is recognised that the C+C Programme explicitly emphasizes on the permanence of results in the long term. However, there is a lack of socialization of results and learning experience among stakeholders to achieve impact and sustainability of initiatives in the long term **(Efficiency and management)**.

Ensuring the implementation of policies or their generation goes beyond the scope of the C+C Programme. However, follow-up mechanisms should be defined for initiatives with implementation potential, and traceability to results and scalability.

2.5

The acknowledgment of gaps in human capital formation as one of the main bottlenecks to sectoral competitiveness in the country is aptly identified. The promotion of dual education through one of the components of the C+C Programme innovative and a methodology that improves the relevance of this type of educational offer. However, for sustained impact, it is imperative to materialize the expansion of dual education in Colombia, in order to generate a critical mass of dual education supply that makes it visible as a viable alternative for the training of human capital in strategic sectors **(relevance, coherence, impact and sustainability)**.

Map high quality higher education institutions interested and with the capacity to implement dual education programmes in the territories, as well as promoting the accompaniment of Swiss academic institutions that have successfully implemented the dual education model, in order to expand this educational offer in strategic regions and sectors (sustainable construction, wastewater treatment, land management, cocoa, tourism, entrepreneurship, etc.).

Technical and Operational Findings

Finding

2.6

Tension between competition and quality of projects to be co-financed at the macro level. Although the project selection mechanism is deemed as transparent. It is perceived that some proposals are not submitted with the expected quality and, given the governance scheme, there is no competition between the organizations that can submit proposals that would encourage them to improve **(Effectiveness)**.

Seek mechanisms to broaden proposals beyond those submitted by members of the Component 1 Strategic Committee, and assess the desirability of linking regional actors with an active role in the Committee.

**

2.7

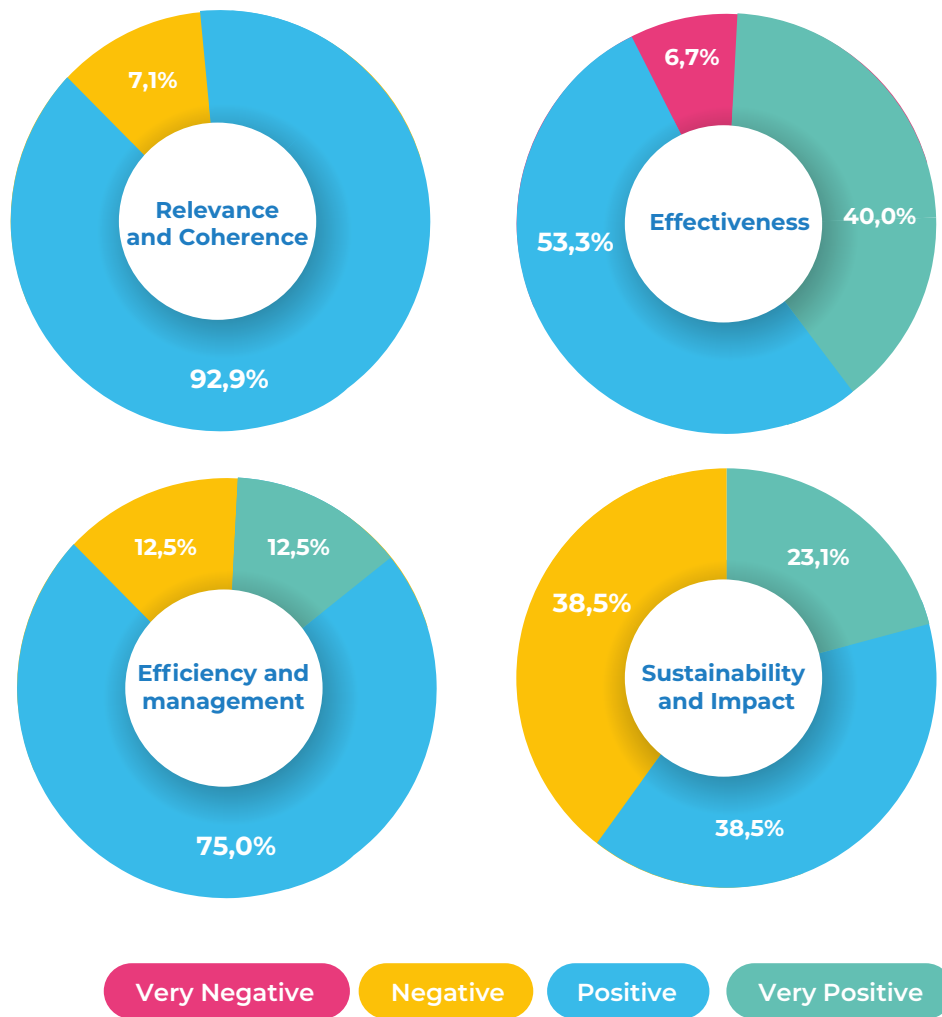
The facilitator's technical support, as well as the operational processes and information systems are perceived as adequate. However, there are delays in the pre-implementation process, which is affecting project implementation timelines **(Efficiency and management)**.

Review the process route and bottlenecks, in particular those identified at the stages of submission, selection of candidates, granting of the no objection concept, and structuring.

**

Finding	Recommendation
<p>2.8</p> <p>It is evident that the C+C Programme has had an impact on strengthening the country's competitiveness and innovation, and on institutional articulation. However, the sustainability of its results is questioned due to the heterogeneity of institutional capacities and the budgetary restrictions of public entities for implementation (Impact and sustainability).</p>	<p>***</p> <p>Improve the mechanisms for internal and external socialization of progress, results and impacts, and define mechanisms for monitoring initiatives once they are completed.</p>

Figure 8. Sentiment analysis of the text of the macro-level interview conversations in the framework of the evaluation of the C+C Programme



Source: Own elaboration based on interview inputs (NVIVO processing).

4.3. Meso-level evaluation: Mechanism to support Sectoral Reforms (Component 2.1)

The demand-driven nature of the C+C Programme at the meso level is a very important asset and is seen as a differentiating component compared to other partnerships. The governance scheme of the Strategic Committees has made it possible to align public-private actors around specific actions required by the sustainable value chains included in the Programme, but their results do not trickle down to the chains and the initiatives are not always articulated with previous efforts of the chains. Likewise, after the end of the implementation of initiatives at this level, there is no follow-up of neither the results nor of the agenda, which prevents the impact of the initiatives and the C+C Programme in Component 2.1 from being measured.



Rating scale: Highly satisfactory (1); Satisfactory (2); Unsatisfactory (3); and Highly unsatisfactory (4).

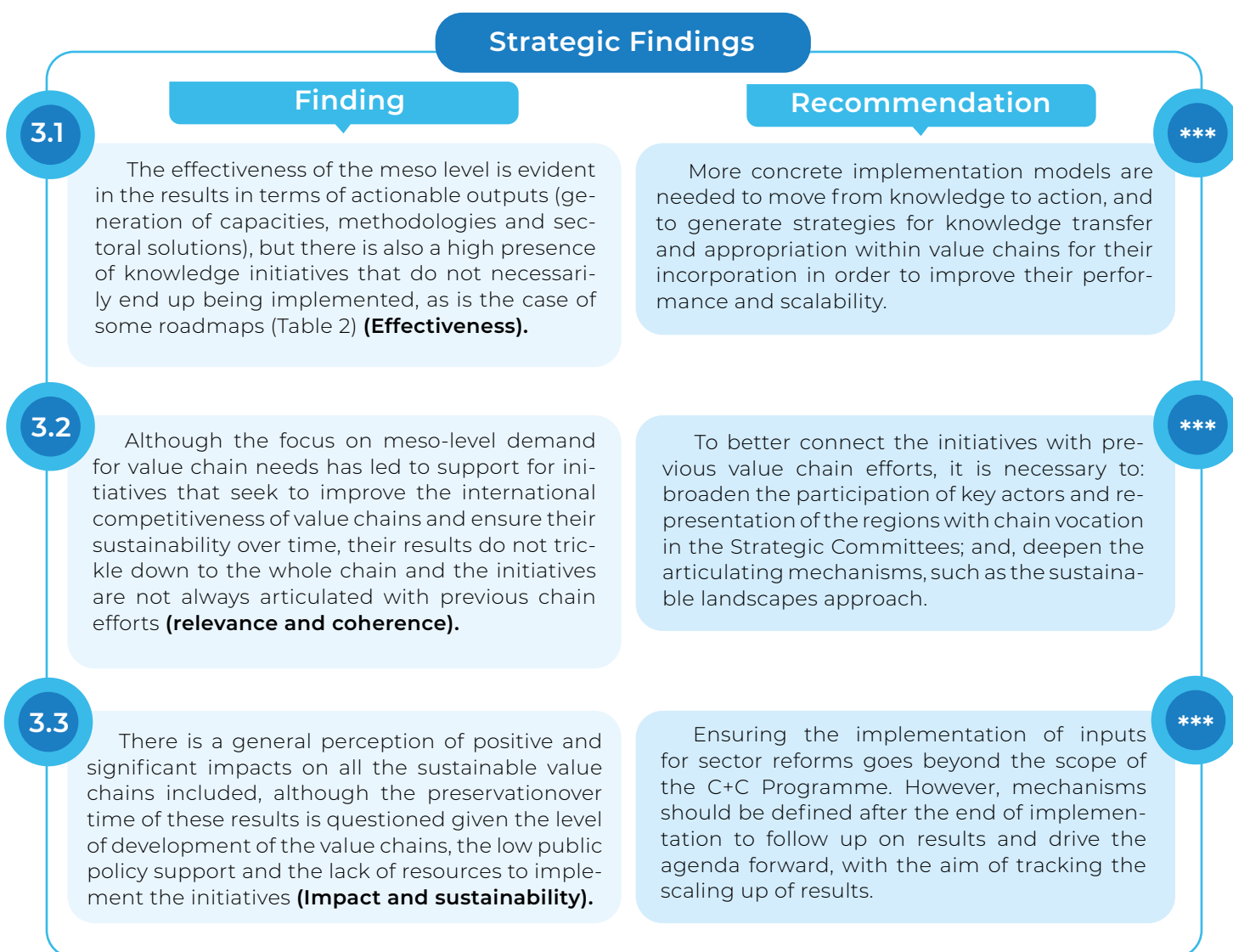






Table 2. C+C programme: sectoral reform initiatives at the meso level

	Special cocoa	Specialty coffee	Sustainable construction	Natural ingredients	Sustainable tourism
Phase I	National strategy for the mitigation of cadmium in the cocoa sector (2019)		Qualifications catalog for the construction sector (2020)	Action Plan for Closing Competitiveness Gaps (2020)	More Competitive More Sustainable Destinations Phase II (2021d)
	Patent for cadmium removal using nanotechnology (2021a)				
Phase II*	Sustainability protocol for access to the European market (n.d.)	Roasted coffee export strategy for Colombia (2021b)	Colombo-Swiss Roundtable on Sustainable Construction (2021c)	Strengthening the sustainable management of wild flora and non-timber forest products (2023)	More Competitive More Sustainable Destinations Phase II (2021d)
	Vertical integration for value addition in the cocoa chain (n.d.)	Management system for monitoring, traceability and control of chemical residues in Coffee (2021b)			

 Roadmap

 Capacity building

 Sectoral solutions

 Protection of competition

Note: *Except for the Sustainable Construction chain project, the meso-level projects in Phase II are still in the formulation stage.

Source: Own elaboration based on C+C Programme and Swisscontact databases.

3.4

Finding

Highlights the positive impact of regional coverage, although it is perceived that its success depends on pre-existing regional capacities in value chains. The regional competitiveness gaps in the country, which exceed the scope of the C+C Programme, raise doubts about the scope that the Programme should delimit in regional contexts (**relevance and coherence**).

Recommendation

**

Capacity building in the regions is required to increase coherence between the objectives pursued, especially sustainability, as well as the establishment of long-term relationships with Swiss private sector entities.

3.5

Regarding to skills development, the strengthening of the governance of the SNCI that the C+C Programme, enabled through the development of the catalog of qualifications for the construction sector, can be a key instrument on the promotion of sustainable construction in the country. However, this has been a one-off effort that has not been replicated for any of the other value chains, beyond two documents produced in 2017 analyzing strategic competences for the tourism and cocoa sectors. Not having the human capital needs of the other chains structured can become a structural barrier to promoting their competitiveness in a sustainable manner (**relevance, coherence, impact and sustainability**).

**

Expand the construction of qualification catalogs to strategic value chains, such as cocoa, coffee and tourism, to promote the formation of relevant and high quality human capital that complements the efforts of micro-level interventions and facilitate achieving substantial improvements in competitiveness that allow reaching international markets with high quality standards in production processes.

Technical and Operational Findings

Finding

Recommendation

3.6

The efficiency and management of the Strategic Committees is perceived as positive by their members. However, there's a demand for linking new actors from the regions to improve the likelihood of continuity, such as academia and the private sector (**Efficiency, management and impact and sustainability**).

Link actors from academia and the private sector that can trigger articulation with local governments, and give a greater role to the private sector with specific companies or foundations that can provide demand-driven support, as is the case with other international cooperation initiatives.

3.7

Several of the meso-level initiatives turn out to be implemented by the Programme facilitator, which may reduce quality and reach in the absence of increased competition (**Efficiency and management**).

Define a competitive selection mechanism at the meso level to ensure that qualified private actors with expertise or representativeness in the beneficiary chains become executors, without extending the time of the operational process.

**

3.8

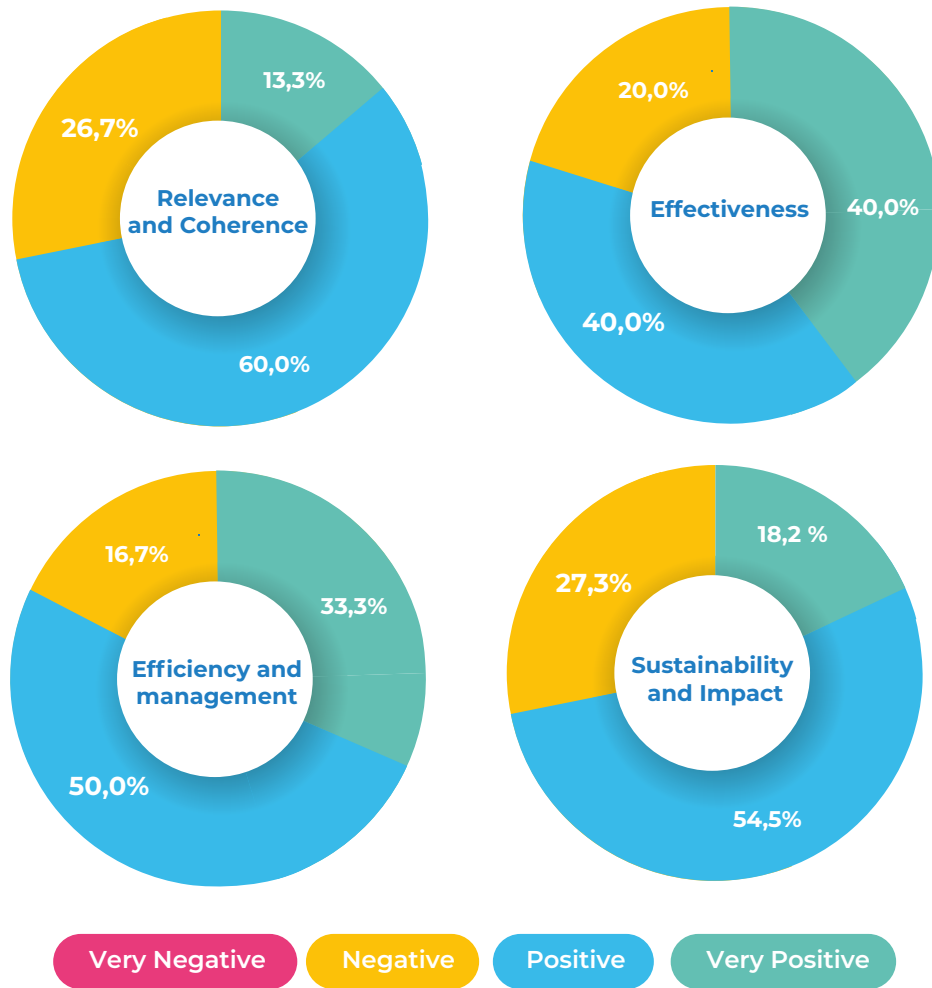
Internal communication, governance and decision-making mechanisms at the meso level are perceived as positive. However, there is a lack of linkages with the other levels of the C+C Programme (**Efficiency and Management**).

Promote communication between levels of the C+C Programme, to achieve better articulation with the macro level, and to irrigate initiatives at the micro level.

**



Figure 9. Sentiment analysis of the text of the interview conversations conducted at the meso level in the framework of the evaluation of the C+C Programme.



Source: Own elaboration based on interview inputs (NVIVO processing).

4.4. Micro-level evaluation: Sub-national Competitive Fund (Component 2.2).

Through the Subnational Competitive Fund, the C+C Programme has implemented initiatives that meet the needs of the value chains of speciality cocoa, speciality coffees, natural ingredients and sustainable tourism (formerly nature tourism) of both the executors and the beneficiaries in the territory. It is worth noting that 45% of the latter are located in PDET municipalities.¹ With this approach, the C+C Programme has achieved positive results and impacts on commercial and social indicators, such as exports, sales, employment generation and the participation of women in leadership roles. For example, cocoa exports in the Programme's chains had an increase four times higher than the national average between 2017 and 2021 (Graph 10.a).

The aforementioned achievements can be deepened and scaled up if: greater articulation is sought with the actors present in the territory, a better balance is established between efficiency and quality in the initiative selection processes, the evaluation criteria are segmented according to the capacities of the proponents in each value chain, and if the terms of the calls for proposals are adjusted to the level of development and characteristics of the beneficiary chains and territories. In addition, there is a need for greater articulation between market goals and those of the cross-cutting approaches, which are perceived as too ambitious. Finally, the visibility and quantification of the impacts of the C+C Programme on value chains

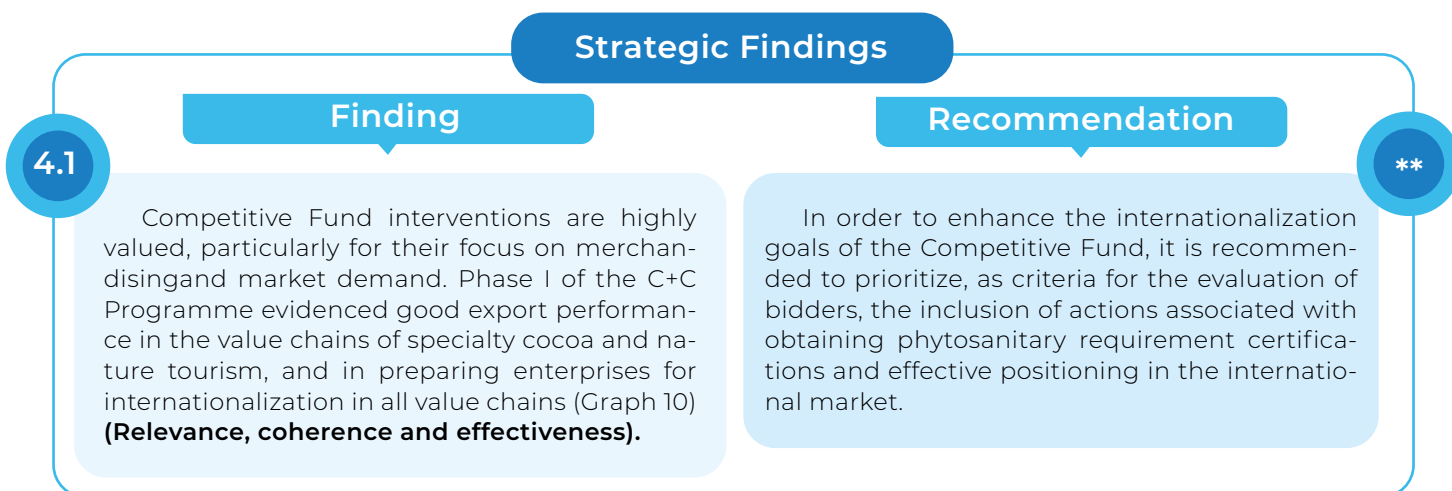
¹ The Territorially Focused Development Programmes (PDET) is a special planning and management instrument for municipalities with a high incidence of violence and lagging social and institutional indicators as a consequence of the armed conflict



Rating scale: Highly satisfactory (1); Satisfactory (2); Unsatisfactory (3); and Highly unsatisfactory (4).

and territories depends on having standardized information systems, on which significant progress has been made during Phase II.

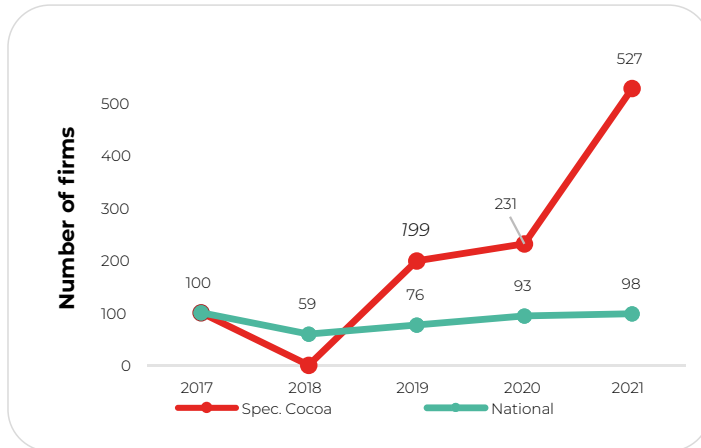
Annex 3 presents in detail the results of the Competitive Fund projects in the cross-cutting approaches (environmental sustainability, financial inclusion and gender equity), according to the results of the surveys carried out with executors. Complementarily, **Annex 4** presents the impact evaluation coefficients in their original units to facilitate comparison with future evaluations.



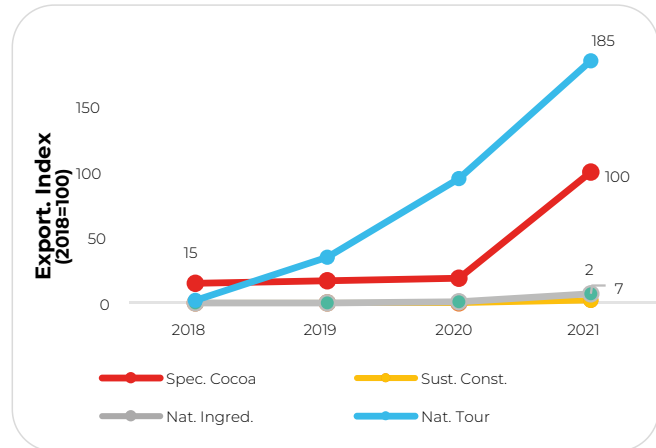
Graph 10. C+C Competitive Fund: Phase I export and internationalization results

Note. Export growth in the Specialty Cocoa value chain outpaced national cocoa export growth by almost four times between 2017 and 2021 (panel a). Projects in the Nature Tourism value chain managed to prepare the largest number of enterprises to operate in international markets, a result consistent with the targets defined for this indicator (panel b).

Panel a. Exports of Specialty Cocoa (base year 2018).



Panel b. Companies trained for internationalization by value chain



Source: Own elaboration based on data from Swisscontact and Fedecacao.

Finding

4.2

According to the impact evaluation of the Competitive Fund, the projects considered in the evaluation for Phase I and Phase II increased the total employment of their beneficiaries when specific objectives that stimulated the demand of labor were contemplated in their design, such as the construction of new infrastructure or increases in production. This is the case of the special cocoa projects in Tolima and Santander, and the Natural Tourism project in Valle del Cauca and Quindío, which showed increases in total employment of close to 0.5% (Graph 11) **(Impact and sustainability)**.

Recommendations

**

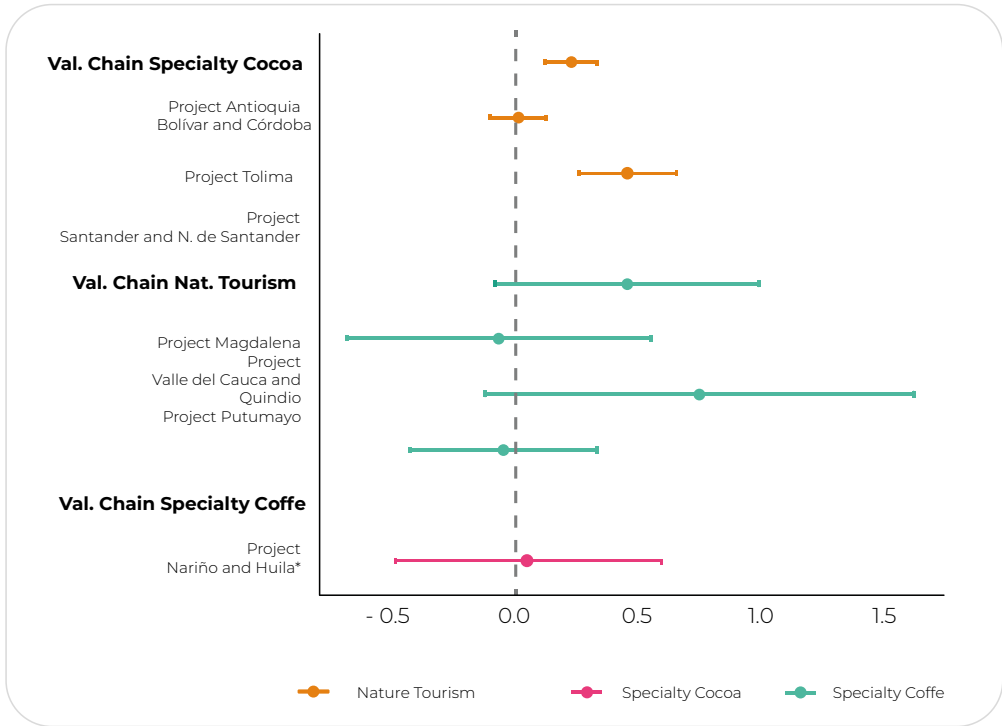
Include specific goals from the design of the projects that are associated with the impact to be generated, and are in line with the execution time, the profile of the executors and the regional conditions of the beneficiaries.

4.3

According to the impact evaluation of the Competitive Fund, the specialty coffee, nature tourism and specialty cocoa projects considered in the evaluation increased the sales of their beneficiaries (Graph 12); however, the quality of the data does not allow attributing the effect to the C+C programme. On the other hand, the evaluation shows that women's participation in leadership roles increased **(Impact and sustainability)**.

Standardize the delivery format of the log-frame annexes to include baseline and monitoring information about individual beneficiaries or generate another mechanism to collect this information on a regular basis. The monitoring platform for Phase II is a great success and has taken a step in the right direction for this.

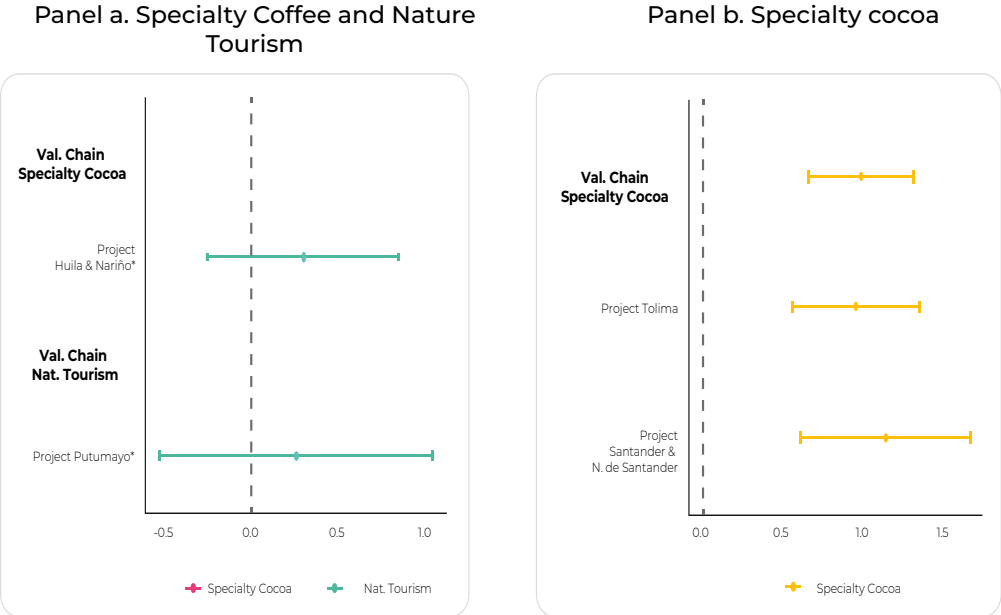
Figure 11 . C+C Competitive Fund: Evaluation of project impact on total jobs



Note. The impact achieved is presented as a percentage of the baseline of the beneficiary group and is represented as a dot on the graph. The magnitude of the impact can be read on the horizontal axis. When the horizontal lines to the left and right of the point representing the impact do not include the dotted line, the impact can be said to be statistically significant. Impact estimation at the project level was carried out using the ordinary DiD estimator with cluster errors at the department level. The estimation of impacts at the value chain level was carried out using the Doubly Robust estimator (Sant'Anna & Zhao, 2020) with departments as controls. Total jobs do not include day laborers due to the difficulty to measure them. *Generated from a stratified survey with 20% measurement error.

Source: Own elaboration with data from Swisscontact, the survey of implementers and DANE's Microbusiness Survey (EMICRON).

Figure 12 . C+C Competitive Fund: Sales impact assessment of projects



Note. Impact estimation at the project level was carried out using the ordinary DiD estimator with cluster errors at the department level. The estimation of impacts at the value chain level was carried out using the doubly robust estimator (Sant'Anna & Zhao, 2020). (Sant'Anna & Zhao, 2020) with departments as controls.

Source: Own elaboration with data from Swisscontact, the Fedesarrollo implementers' survey and EMICRON from DANE.

Finding

Recommendation

4.4

Some actors perceive that there are deficiencies in the articulation of the Competitive Fund among project leaders and with external agents, such as local governments, other initiatives of the funder (SECO) or other cooperations present in the territory, and even a lack of knowledge of regional sectoral policies. This causes attrition in the beneficiaries of the C+C Programme, and represents an opportunity cost for the formation of synergies and the transfer of knowledge (**relevance and coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and management**).

Generate spaces for interaction with other initiatives of the funder, local governments, other donors, which allow for appropriate coordination with other efforts being made in the regions or in the value chains; explore the possibility that institutions at the regional level can propose projects coordinated with previous efforts; and implement regular meetings between executors of the Competitive Fund during the implementation of the project to promote the generation of synergies.

4.5

Geographical coverage is perceived to have been adequate, and the inclusion of PDET regions has allowed for social impacts highlighted by beneficiaries. However, the regional distribution has not been a feature of the C+C programme design but a fortuitous consequence of the location of the value chains and projects selected in the Competitive Fund (**Relevance and coherence**).

Deliberately target the geographical coverage of the C+C Programme at the micro level in order to maximise the effectiveness of its interventions.

4.6

A key factor for the sustainability of results is the profile of the implementer and his or her approach to marketing and exporting. The general perception is that the sustainability of the results after the end of the project depends on the profile of the implementer in terms of his/her relationship with all actors in the value chain, including a connection with companies that pull the beneficiaries from the demand side (**Impact and sustainability**).

Involve SMEs and large companies in the projects and look for profiles of executors with good capacity for the articulation of actors, and with export potential.

4.7

Tensions are evident between the fulfillment of market goals and cross-cutting themes, in addition to the fact that considerable workload is perceived to be placed on cross-cutting approaches despite the level of development of value chains. In addition, the actors recognise that the fulfillment of cross-cutting goals depends on factors that transcend the scope of the implementer, such as cultural aspects rooted in the beneficiaries (**relevance and coherence, effectiveness**).

Articulate the scope of market goals (export and marketing, etc.) and cross-cutting approaches with the timeframe for project implementation, regional capacities, maturity level of initiatives and beneficiaries.

Technical and Operational Findings

4.8

Finding

Some stakeholders perceive that the evaluation criteria of the Competitive Fund are not effectively communicated from the beginning of the process and given the great heterogeneity of proponents (maturity levels, export experience, beneficiaries in PDET areas) the evaluation results do not always weigh the profile of the proponent. There is a lack of adequate feedback to implementers who presented non-compliance of activities and to initiatives that were not selected (**relevance and coherence, efficiency and management**).

Recommendation

Define evaluation rubrics for each stage of the process from the beginning of the call for proposals, which are communicated in detail and in a timely manner to unsuccessful applicants and projects. It is recommended to segment the evaluation criteria according to the capacities of the proponents in each value chain, and to consider in the terms of the calls for proposals the level of development and characteristics of the beneficiary chains and territories.

4.9

The extension of the project selection process from the expression of interest to the award of resources reduces implementation time and, according to the perception of the implementers, negatively impacts the achievement of objectives (**Efficiency and management**).

**

Make the processes prior to the awarding of resources more efficient, maintaining good quality standards and control over results and impacts, in order to allow more time for the execution of projects and the fulfillment of objective goals. On-site meetings are recommended in the joint structuring stage.

4.10

The implementation of Competitive Fund calls for proposals that are not open to the public, which aim to execute balances of resources and call for a group of previously unselected proponents, are perceived as lacking in transparency. Given that this type of mechanism implies the reduction of financial resources and shorter execution times compared to other calls for proposals, proposers must make adjustments to the scope and objectives of the projects originally submitted, which are detrimental to the effectiveness of the proposals (**efficiency and management**).

**

Implement abbreviated mechanisms that allow the execution of resource balances between value chains, without reducing the transparency of the call for proposals and impacting the scope and objectives of the initiatives.

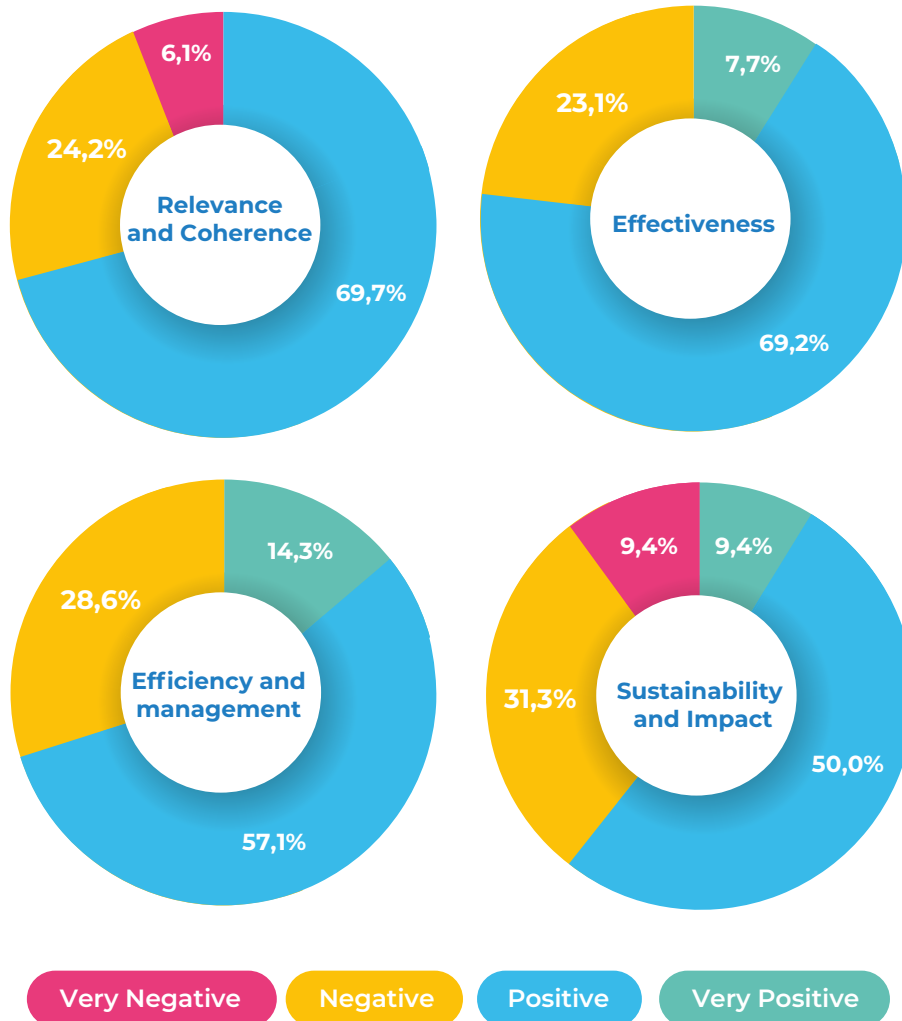
4.11

The existence of cultural factors means that the work of the implementers to comply with the cross-cutting approaches requires a great deal of dedication in terms of resources and time. According to the survey of implementers, they perceive that the greatest progress is evident in the adoption of sustainable practices, such as the proper disposal of waste and the circular economy, while in gender equity, results are highlighted in terms of employability and female leadership. On the other hand, there are no significant results in the area of financial inclusion. However, it is premature to assess the perception of the results of the cross-cutting approaches, particularly financial inclusion, given that they were included in a rigorous manner from Phase II (**Effectiveness, impact and sustainability**).²

Seek mechanisms for permanent support to implementers for the fulfillment of goals in cross-cutting approaches, with personnel specialized in gender equity, financial inclusion and sustainable landscapes, which will allow concrete results to be achieved. Efforts should be focused on overcoming beneficiaries' perceptions of the risks of the financial system to encourage access to financial products and encourage the inclusion of women in the labor market, strengthen issues associated with gender equality and the LGBTI community, as well as generational change (inclusion of young people) for the long-term sustainability of value chains.

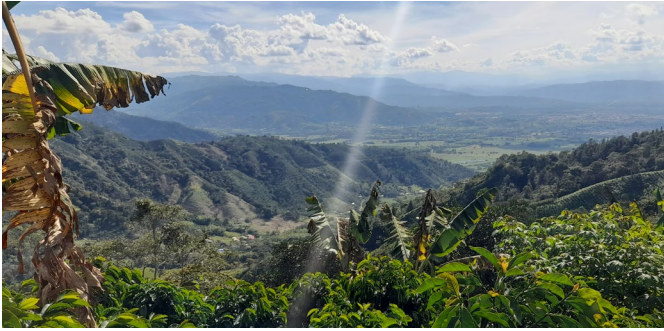
² The results of the survey of implementers are presented in detail in Annex 3.

Figure 13. Sentiment analysis of the text of the micro-level interview conversations in the framework of the C+C Programme evaluation



Source: Own elaboration based on interview inputs (NVIVO processing).

4.5. Evaluation of the Swiss Expert Network (SEN)



The SEN has not been able to consolidate its main objective of connecting Swiss and Colombian institutions in a sustainable way, with a few exceptions. The connection between Colombian and Swiss institutions is not systematized and lacks leadership, while actors do not see guides, directories of experts or joint spaces that seek interaction in a deliberate, rather than demand-driven way. It is necessary to strengthen the administration of the SEN and create a strategy to increase demand in strategic topics for the C+C Programme and generate long-term synergies.



Rating scale: Highly satisfactory (1); Satisfactory (2); Unsatisfactory (3); and Highly unsatisfactory (4).

Strategic Findings

Finding

5.1

The experience of using the mechanism shows that, with a few exceptions indicated in Table 1, long-term collaboration between Swiss and Colombian institutions has not been generated. However, Colombian entities at all levels are interested in working with Swiss experts (**Impact and sustainability**).

Recommendation

Mapping of actors, strategic issues to work on, funding schemes, communication strategies and facilitating the process of accessing the SEN mechanism to ensure greater use of it.

5.2

The management of the SEN in the C+C Programme needs to be strengthened. Although there is an allocation of time and tasks distributed among the facilitating entity's officials in Switzerland and Colombia, progress is slow (**Efficiency and management**).

Design and implement a strategy to increase demand on strategic issues for the C+C Programme and generate synergies in the long term. For the definition of the strategy, the following should be reviewed in the light of the objectives of the C+C Programme: the budgetary allocation of the mechanism, and of a full time employed person for the management of issues related to the SEN.

Technical and Operational Findings

Finding

Recommendation

5.3

The actors that have accessed the SEN recognise that the mechanism responds satisfactorily to the demands of the beneficiaries, however, the interaction of the programme beneficiaries with the SEN is low, and has been motivated by previous experiences of the interested actors with Swiss entities or by autonomous research of the interested parties for entities/consultants that can carry out the consultancies **(Relevance and coherence)**.

Identify from the formulation of initiatives at the different levels of the C+C Programme the categories of needs that are shared by several chains and that can be accompanied by the SEN.

5.4

: Although the potential of the SEN in skills development, innovation and technology transfer, strengthening of value chains, marketing, technical and regulatory requirements of the European market, among others, is recognised, its utilization is currently hindered due to the lack of definition of a standardized route for access to the SEN **(Relevance and coherence)**.

Create a platform or catalog for the identification of experts and services to facilitate the use of the SEN, initially for the strategic and most recurrent themes in which the Programme's beneficiaries have requested support.

5.5

The few assistance projects that have been carried out are perceived by their beneficiaries as successful. In Phase I of the C+C Programme, cooperation was focused on the fulfillment of specific demands for technical advice, while in Phase II the mechanism included previously unaddressed topics such as digitalisation (Table 3). Given the lack of follow-up on the results of the initiatives, it is not possible to evaluate their impact **(Effectiveness)**.

Mapping the most frequent demands at the different levels and the offer of Swiss institutions to enable the strategic initiatives for the C+C Programme to be articulated more effectively.

**

5.6

Insufficient external communication about the potential of the SEN to address competitiveness and innovation needs, e.g. actors outside the C+C Programme do not know that the SEN can be accessed through mechanisms other than projects implemented at different levels. In addition, given that the SEN has responded to the specific demands of initiatives within the framework of the C+C Programme, there has not been a broad socialization of C+C with entities in Switzerland **(Efficiency and management)**.

Mapping the most frequent demands at the different levels and the offer of Swiss institutions to enable the strategic initiatives for the C+C Programme to be articulated more effectively.

**

Table 3. C+C Programme: Technical assistance provided by the SEN

Component		Project	Objective technical assistance SEN
Competitiveness Policy Reforms		Tele-migration and digitally enabled services to export (2021)	Telemigration opportunities for Colombia and some barriers to telemigration
Sectoral Reforms	Special Cocoa	Specialty cocoa from Antioquia and Cesar: technological capacities and services to increase competitiveness CAESCA (2018)	Review of production systems in Antioquia and Cesar and the construction of market strategy for associated projects.
		Cadmium removal in cocoa - nanotechnology solution (2020)	Development of bio-nanotechnological strategies for the reduction of cadmium in Colombian fine flavor cocoa beans.
	Specialty Coffees	Construction of the commercial agenda for the World Coffee Fair 2023	
	Sustainable Construction	Sustainable construction and circular economy to boost Santander's construction value chain (2018)	Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) and design testing, sustainable building laboratory
	Sustainable Tourism	Destinations + Competitive + Sustainable (2019)	Placemaking, demand-driven product development and destination management knowledge exchange

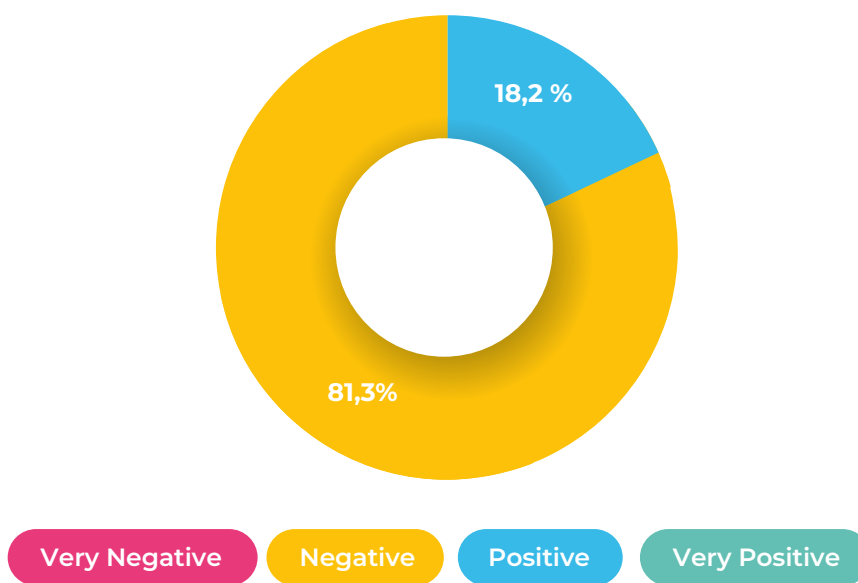
Technical assistance

Capacity building

Logistical support

Source: Own elaboration based on information from the C+C Programme.

Figure 14. Sentiment analysis of the text of conversations from all interviews regarding knowledge of the SEN



Source: Own elaboration based on interview inputs (NVIVO processing).



Adjustment recommendations for the C+C Programme

5. Adjustment recommendations for the C+C Programme

A. Top level

Generate instances of interaction between the levels of the C+C Programme. SECO and Swisscontact can form working groups that involve actors from the three levels to achieve greater synchrony in the initiatives that are presented to the Policy Reform Mechanism and the Strategic Committees of the value chains, as well as the calls for proposals of the Sub-national Competitive Fund. These working groups could, for example, design objectives around cross-cutting themes that have implications at two or three levels, and serve as a kind of initial governance of those themes that are strategic for SECO.

Take the first steps to build a regional approach to the C+C Programme in an intentional way. One of the joint working groups between levels could be tasked with nominating the departments and subregions of Colombia that can simultaneously achieve the objectives of attaining results in exports and private sector development under the Swissness/Trade approach, while also being pertinent to other Swiss cooperation programs, such as those focused on human rights. However, it should be noted that this regional approach exercise runs the risk of creating a trade-off between progress in competitiveness and progress in the social sphere.

Focus C+C Programme initiatives for the remaining time of Phase II. The challenges of alignment and progress resulting from the change of government mean that the choice of initiatives to be implemented in 2024 must be strategic. Some suggestions on how to do this are included in the Macro and Meso Level sections (see below).

Invest in building the knowledge necessary for an effective design of the eventual Phase III. It is suggested look forward to generating a knowledge creation strategy that has at least two elements:

- ◆ To advance an independent study that identifies in detail the elements that explain the success of the macro-level products that achieved a greater impact on public policies. First hypotheses suggest that the success of the Policy Reform Mechanism is explained by the fact that products such as the OECD Peer Review, the input to the ArCO Methodology and the CRCI Capacity Building were integrated into ongoing efforts, and were not intended to create a new front of work. However, this should be the subject of the above-mentioned study.³

- ◆ Organize the documentation of the initiatives financed by the C+C Programme in a bibliographic repository, allowing all stakeholders to access the knowledge generated (including intermediate and final deliverables).
- ◆ Use the databases provided with this evaluation and the indicators of the Phase II monitoring platform to carry out an impact evaluation of the Sub-national Competitive Fund in an agile and timely manner. It is suggested to use the difference-in-differences methodology so that its results are comparable with those obtained in this document.

Implement rapid deployment tools (online surveys, satisfaction studies) focused on measuring the degree of satisfaction of actors interacting with the C+C Programme at different levels. This type of tool can help to detect adjustments to be made in a timely manner and to receive actionable recommendations.

Carry out an external positioning and comprehensive communication strategy for C+C. In line with the recent efforts that SECO and Swisscontact have begun to make, it is proposed to design a communication strategy that has mechanisms for internal and external socialization of progress, results and impacts:

- ◆ This strategy can build on the initiative monitoring effort described in the previous recommendation.
- ◆ The strategy should also seek to improve cross-cutting communication between the levels/components of the Programme.

Design a socialization strategy for the C+C Programme when there are changes in the national government representatives on the Steering Committee. In line with the positioning and communication strategy, it is essential to reiterate outreach efforts to national government actors who can help mobilize initiatives that still have time to be implemented during 2024.

Closely monitor the timelines of the processes to ensure their timely completion, and align expectations on the scope and outcome of each of the instances along the pathway. This can be done with two dialogue spaces where participants can be clear about time expectations, one for the funder and the national facilitator, and one between the facilitator, proponents and evaluators.

³ The information presented in Annex 2 can be used as an input.

B. Macro level “Public policy support”.

Focus the initiatives of the Support Mechanism for Public Policy Reforms for the remaining time of Phase II. It is suggested to concentrate the initiatives of national government actors on projects with cross-cutting themes such as climate change, financial inclusion and gender equity; and to concentrate the initiatives of private actors on projects that give continuity to the National Competitiveness Agenda, that are framed in the Roadmap of the C+C 2020-2024 Programme or that build institutional capacities. This would help to achieve articulation between the C+C Agenda and its competitiveness and innovation objectives with the vision of the new government, while safeguarding the continuity of initiatives in the long term.

Involve as invitees to the Steering Committee or the Strategic Committee of Component 1 the public policy leaders of the cross-cutting themes. This implies inviting the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (environmental sustainability), the Ministry of Finance / Financial Superintendence (financial inclusion) and the Ministry of Equality (gender equity) to participate.

Identify strategic thrusts of the C+C Programme that can be addressed with private actors that are not dependent on changes in government. The identification of these initiatives can be done in conjunction with private sector representatives during 2024 to inform the priorities to be pursued in an eventual Phase III of the Programme.

For example, it is suggested that projects could be submitted by national or even regional actors, with a sponsorship from one of the members of the Committee. In this case, a promising idea is to ask the private sector at the national level (CPC, Confecámaras, ANDI, ACOPI, among others) to attract regional private and non-governmental actors (such as Red Pro members) to submit macro-level proposals.

Define a follow-up mechanism for initiatives with potential for growth or implementation. It is recommended to use the results of this evaluation to hold working sessions with the SNCI Committees in order to track the products of the Reform Support Mechanism and their scalability or implementation.

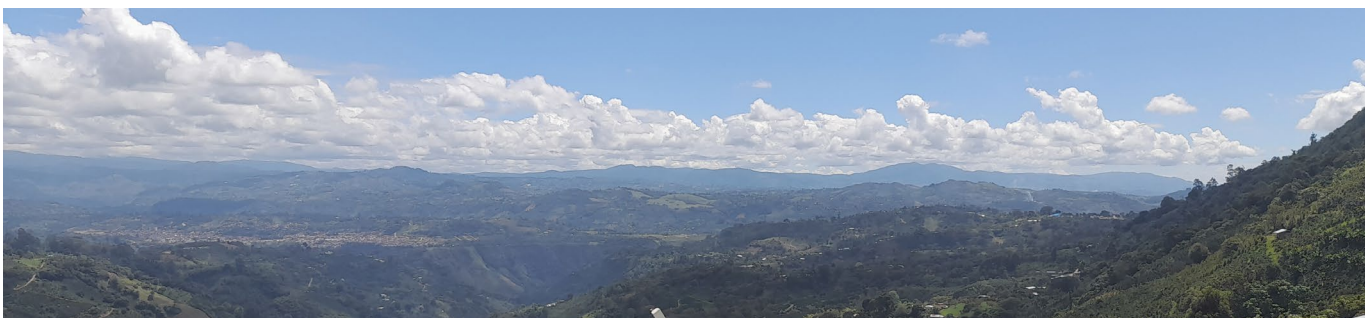
C. Meso level “Sectoral reforms”.

Focus the initiatives of Component 2 for the remaining time of Phase II. To this end, it is suggested to design a monitoring scheme for current projects or work methodologies in order to identify candidates to be scaled up in an eventual Phase III. These candidates can be accompanied by specialized consultancies to increase the effectiveness of their interventions, identify milestones that can be met in the medium term and monitor follow-up indicators.

Broaden the participation of key actors and representation of regions with a productive vocation in the Strategic Committees of the chains. For example, linking actors from academia and the private sector, which can trigger articulation with local governments. This could reduce the likelihood that

projects are disconnected from previous or complementary efforts, which may be important to improve the sustainability of results.

Define governance for the implementation of sector reforms, so as to move from knowledge to action. It is recommended to define a target instance to which SECO, Swisscontact and the DNP can advocate - for example, sectoral roundtables of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development for special cocoa or special coffees, or the Higher Council of Tourism for sustainable tourism - so that these spaces open their agenda to C+C to socialize the results obtained in the meso-level products, carry out traceability and follow-up, and promote their incorporation or implementation within the value chains.



D. Micro level “Value Chains”

Engage a consultancy to understand how best to support Competitive Fund applicants in preparing proposals that are financially viable. For example, proponents may require training on structuring “bankable” proposals, or a set of examples of projects with financial closure and private participation may be defined as examples of good practice for proponents.

Segment the evaluation criteria according to the capacities of the proponents in each value chain. This would allow the Sub-national Competitive Fund calls for proposals to be tailored to the different realities of the value chains (for example, broad productive capacities in specialty coffees versus very incipient capacities in natural ingredients).

Schedule regular meetings between Sub-national Competitive Fund implementers during project implementation. This would encourage cross-learning, feedback and attention to bottlenecks in internal processes. In some cases, these meetings could also involve actors from the regional level to join efforts and generate complementary initiatives that provide sustainability.

Monitoring at departmental and sub-regional level of indicators at beneficiary level. This monitoring can be the basis for achieving the targeting of the geographical coverage of the C+C Programme described in the Top Level recommendations.

Adjust export and commercialisation targets to 2024 in a progressive manner in line with the timeframe of the projects and the maturity level of the initiatives. This would allow aligning project expectations according to their capacity to achieve results.

Strengthen the market access knowledge of the C+C Programme. This is one of the great strengths of the Programme. The challenge lies in continuing to invest resources in the best human capital to address the latest phytosanitary requirements for the export of agricultural products and the acquisition of certifications. A possible focus of further expertise could be the

traceability challenge for the European Green Pact.

Accompany the work of the sustainable tourism value chain with more knowledge on the positioning of Colombia. To strengthen results in tourism projects - e.g. sustainable landscapes - C+C could provide consultancy on how to position these new tourism products to international agencies and consumers.

Define or outline more clearly the rules at each stage of the process from the beginning of the call, and communicate them adequately to stakeholders. This may include a mechanism that allows for the execution of resource balances between value chains, without detracting from the transparency of the call and impacting the scope and objectives of the initiatives.

Boost synergies with programmes of other donors in the territory in preparation for Phase III, especially in the dynamics of payments for results. SECO could work during 2024 with other programmes and cooperation offices that have used payment by results to increase local counterparts - such as Cooperation Canada and its agricultural support programmes with payments based on achieving external co-financing targets - in order to identify which elements of the C+C Programme could include the same scheme in an eventual Phase III.

Standardize the format for submitting information from implementers and executors on their beneficiaries in preparation for the Phase II evaluation. This process should include requesting baselines from those Phase II implementers who have not provided them.

Track individual beneficiaries. Implementers should be encouraged to monitor their beneficiaries at a disaggregated level (and not just aggregated at project level), using the C+C platform to collect this information on a regular basis. For example, this would be essential to obtain disaggregated employment indicators at the beneficiary level, for more time periods, thus increasing the accuracy and coverage of the Phase II evaluation.

E. SEN “Swiss Expert Network”

The national facilitator should assign a dedicated person to the issues associated with the SEN. This in-house capacity in the facilitator would allow for a more active and intentional approach to making the SEN dynamic.

The national facilitator could take a first step in creating a platform for the identification of experts and services for the SEN. It is suggested to update the mapping of knowledge supply in Switzerland, and to publish a document or section on the website

highlighting how this supply relates to the current demand and needs in Colombia. It can also identify the Swiss institutions with the greatest potential to provide assistance in the framework of the SEN, and share this mapping with them.

The national facilitator could organize a “technical assistance roundtable” between Switzerland and Colombia in the first quarter of 2024. This event could bring Swiss experts on the themes identified in the mapping study, and convene Colombian national and regional institutions in order to promote connections and socialize opportunities.

F. Cross-cutting themes

Strengthen the C+C Programme facilitator’s team in cross-cutting approaches, and the accompaniment of implementers on these issues. Although the Programme already has expert staff, it should invest in more talent to focus on the enormous challenges faced by the implementers, in particular it is proposed that they focus on:

- ◆ Work closely with Asobancaria, representatives of major banks and associations of financial institutions (including Fintech) to follow up on the new alternative financing mechanisms project, and to encourage banks to propose solutions and products.
- ◆ Overcome existing perceptions among value chain producers about the risks of the financial system in order to encourage access to financial products.
- ◆ Overcome cultural barriers about the role of women in the productive sphere, promote generatio-

nal change, and counteract practices that tend to exclude women and members of the LGBTI community.

Emphasize the importance of climate change as a focus of environmental sustainability work. This implies that the accompaniment of C&C staff and monitoring indicators should concentrate on actions to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, and to a lesser extent on the implementation of good environmental practices. For example, a workshop should be organized to focus the work of SC staff and current implementers.

In the case of gender equity, refine the indicators to capture the changing role of women within the productive units or enterprises. Due to the type of productive units that are beneficiaries of the projects, the director or manager of the productive unit is often the head of the household, so the owner’s sex indicator fails to capture changes in gender dynamics.





Conclusions

6. Conclusions



The C+C programme has had three major strengths that have marked it as a milestone in international economic development cooperation.

The first is that it has sought to be systemic, incorporating actions at public policy levels, sectoral reforms and micro interventions for the chains. The second is that it has been demand-driven, specifically demand-driven by the needs of national government and value chain actors, which has led to greater flexibility and adaptation to changes in the needs of beneficiaries than other development cooperation initiatives. The third is that it has been guided by an ultimate objective, which is the internationalization of value chains and Colombian companies, as part of a strategy of bilateral relations between Colombia and Switzerland.

Among the findings of the evaluation, it is worth noting that the C+C Programme:

- ◆ The macro level proves to be particularly valuable for its focus on the demand for SNCI priorities and for the systemic impact of products such as the OECD Peer Review, the input for the ARCO Methodology or the Strengthening of CRCI capacities. However, this level faces incipient challenges derived from the change of government and the need to empower entities that guarantee its sustainability over time.
- ◆ At the meso level, different degrees of articulation are observed between governance and sectoral policies shared vision of each value chain. In some cases, there are opportunities for improvement in

moving from knowledge and roadmaps to action, although implementation decisions usually do not depend on the Programme's governance.

- ◆ In the micro interventions, carried out within the framework of the Subnational Competitiveness Fund, the evidence shows a positive impact on the variables of exports (especially in Specialty Cocoa), employment (especially in Specialty Cocoa and Sustainable Tourism) and women's participation (in a cross-cutting manner). However, challenges are evident in terms of achieving a better segmentation by level of development of the chains and maturity of the executors in the cross-cutting themes.
- ◆ The SEN has a high potential and is valued by the actors who have used it, who report having achieved clear results from collaboration with Swiss experts. Yet, the sustainability of these relationships over time is uncertain and the functioning of the scheme needs to be reformed to increase awareness among actors, improve the way it is allocated and promote an active search for bilateral collaborations.

Looking ahead to the future, the C+C Programme can implement a series of strategic and operational adjustments (such as those described in this evaluation) that will allow it to close its implementation successfully and build local capacities in the public and private sectors, while maintaining the sustainability of the results obtained over time.

References

- Baldwin, R., Cárdenas, J., & Fernández, C. (2021). Telemigration and digitally enabled service exports. Opportunities for Colombia. Retrieved from <https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Telemigration-and-digitally-enabled-service-exports.pdf>
- Camacol Colombian Chamber of Construction (2020). Catalogue of qualifications for the construction sector. Camacol.
- More Competitive Colombia (2018). Specialty cocoa from Antioquia and Cesar Caesca. Retrieved from <https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Destino-Putuma-yo-1.pdf>
- More Competitive Colombia (2018). Sustainable construction and circular economy to boost Santander's construction value chain. Retrieved from <https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/CONSTRUCCION-8IN-ECONOMIA-CIRCULAR.pdf>
- More Competitive Colombia (2018). Definition of roles and responsibilities of government entities in TCT, innovation and entrepreneurship. Retrieved from <https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Roles-y-responsabilidades-en-tecnologia-innovacion-y-emprendimiento.pdf>
- More Competitive Colombia (2018). Definition of roles and responsibilities of the entities of the National Government in transfer of knowledge, technology, innovation [Factsheet]. Retrieved from <https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Roles-y-responsabilidades-en-tecnologia-innovacion-y-emprendimiento.pdf>
- More Competitive Colombia (2018). Capacity building of CRCIs [Factsheet]. Retrieved from <https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Fortalecimiento-de-capacidades-de-las-CRCI.pdf>
- More Competitive Colombia (17 November 2019). Destinations + Competitive + Sustainable Destinations Initiative [Factsheet]. Retrieved from Colombia más Competitiva: <https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/iniciativa-destinos-competitivos-sostenibles-2/>
- More Competitive Colombia (2019). Unification of business censuses [Factsheet]. Retrieved from <https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Unificacion-de-censos.pdf>
- Colombia más Competitiva (2020). Analysis of obstacles to private investment in R&D. Retrieved from <https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Analisis-de-obstaculos.pdf>
- More Competitive Colombia (2020). Closing regional competitiveness gaps [Factsheet]. Retrieved from <https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Cierre-de-brechas-de-competitividad-regional-1.pdf>
- More Competitive Colombia (2020). Strengthening business information - Economic Census. Retrieved from <https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Censo-Economico.pdf>
- More Competitive Colombia (2020). Functionality of the Portal [innovamos.gov.co](https://www.innovamos.gov.co). Retrieved from https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/innovamos.gov.co_.pdf
- More Competitive Colombia (2020). Governance National Qualifications Framework [Factsheet]. Retrieved from <https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Marco-Cualificaciones.pdf>
- More Competitive Colombia (2020). Entrepreneurship measurement instruments [Factsheet]. Retrieved from <https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Medicion-8In-emprendimiento.pdf>
- More Competitive Colombia (2020). Executive summary: construction of the Action Plan for closing competitiveness gaps in the chain of natural ingredients for cosmetic use. Retrieved from <https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Baja-Resumen-Ejecutivo-2020.pdf>
- More Competitive Colombia (2020). Simplification of Instances of Competitiveness in Innovation [Factsheet]. Retrieved from <https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Simplificacion-de-instancias.pdf>
- More Competitive Colombia (2021a). Closing Report Phase I 2017-2020.
- More Competitive Colombia (2021b). Concept note on a financing mechanism for sectorial policy reforms. 2.2.
- More Competitive Colombia (2021c). Concept note of the Financing mechanism for Sectoral policy reforms 2.2. Sustainable Construction.

- More Competitive Colombia (2021d). Concept Note of the Financing Mechanism for Sectoral Policy Reforms 2.2. More Competitive and Sustainable Tourism Destinations Initiative.
- More Competitive Colombia (2023). Concept Note on Financing Mechanisms for Sector Policy Reforms 2.2. [C2.2_004_INGREDEINTES_2023].
- More Competitive Colombia (n.d.). Concept note of the financing mechanism for sectoral policy reforms 2.2. Tools for sustainable cocoa growth.
- Colombia más Competitiva and Swisscontact (2019). Manage your destination. The D+C+S initiative How to implement a destination management process. Retrieved from https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/SC_Publ-1_La-iniciativa-DCS-DIGITAL.pdf
- National Planning Department - DNP. (2019). Bases del Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2018-2022. Pact for equity, pact for Colombia. Bogotá, Colombia: DNP.
- National Planning Department - DNP. (2020). Política Nacional de Empendimiento [Documento CONPES 4011]. Retrieved from <https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Conpes/Econ%C3%B3micos/4011.pdf>
- National Planning Department - DNP. (2021). Methodological guide. For the application of foresight to the formulation of public policies in Colombia. Retrieved from <https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/SC-Guia-metodologica-prospectiva-LIBRO-DIGITAL-110121.pdf>
- National Planning Department - DNP. (2021). Articulation Methodology for Competitiveness, ArCo. Retrieved from DNP: <https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Desarrollo%20Empresarial/Metodologia-de-Articulacion-para-la-Competitividad-ArCo.pdf>
- National Planning Department - DNP. (2021). Política Nacional de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación 2022-2031 [Documento CONPES 4069]. Retrieved from DNP: <https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Conpes/Econ%C3%B3micos/4069.pdf>
- Fedesarrollo, Colombia más Competitiva, Consejo Privado de Competitividad (2020). A Roadmap for Increasing Colombia's Agricultural Productivity: Challenges and Opportunities. Retrieved from https://www.colombiamascompetitiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/prod_agro_RES_UMEN_EJECUTIVO-1.pdf
- Civil Service (25 November 2021). Decree 1517 of 2021. Retrieved from *Suprime un sistema administrativo y se modifican y suprime* unas comisiones intersectoriales en materia de competitividad e innovación, y se dictan otras disposiciones.: <https://www.funcionpublica.gov.co/eva/gestornormativo/norma.php?i=173786#:~:text=Suprime un%20sistema%20administrativo%20y,y%20se%20dictan%20otras%20disposiciones.>
- Civil Service (1 September 2019). Decree 1651 of 2019.
- Civil Service (25 October 2019). Decree 1949 of 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.funcionpublica.gov.co/eva/gestornormativo/norma.php?i=101212>
- Gómez, J. (2017). Characterisation and analysis of the competitiveness of the natural ingredients chain for the cosmetics and natural cosmetics sector. Bogotá: Fundación Swisscontact Colombia.
- Jimenez, N. (2017). Characterisation and analysis of the competitiveness of the nature tourism sector in Colombia. Bogotá: Fundación Swisscontact Colombia.
- OECD/UN/UNITED NATIONS (2019). Production Transformation Policy Review of Colombia. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264312289-en>.
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development - OECD (2021). Better criteria for better assessment. Revised definitions of assessment criteria and principles for their use. Retrieved from <https://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/Criterios-evaluacion-ES.pdf>
- Orjuela, N. (2017). Mapping and analysis of the competitiveness of the Colombian sustainable construction sector value chain. Bogotá: Swisscontact Colombia Foundation.
- Osma, J. F., Flórez, S., Rodríguez, C. M., & Olarte, H. H. (2019). Development of bio-nanotechnological strategies for the decrease of cadmium in Colombian fine aroma cocoa beans. Casa Luker.
- Ríos, F., Ruiz, A., Lecaro, J., & C., R. (2017). Country strategies for the supply of specialty cocoa - Successful policies and private initiatives in Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and the Dominican Republic. Bogotá: Fundación Swisscontact Colombia.
- Sant'Anna, P. H., & Zhao, J. (2020). Doubly robust difference-in-differences estimators. *Journal of Econometrics*, 101-122.
- Van de Rakt, H., & Niño, J. (2019). Value Chain Analysis Final Sector Results - Specialty Coffees in Colombia. Bogotá: FAO.
- Velásquez, D. (2020). Characterization of the speciality coffee export market in Colombia: segmentation, size and elasticity. [Doctoral dissertation, Universidad EAFIT].



Prepared by:

David Forero
Sandra Oviedo
Rafael Puyana
Sandra Zuluaga

Consultants and project assistants:

José Julián Parra
Mariana Villabona