SPACE FOR DELIBERATION
IN GHANA'S COCOA SECTOR

Exploring how smallholder cocoa farmers pursue their aspirations by navigating their networks, built around locally embedded value-chain collaborations with and without involvement of certification programmes

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to gain a better understanding of on-the-ground networks around smallholder cocoa farmers and cocoa purchasing clerks (PCs) in Ghana’s Tepa and Hwidiem cocoa districts, and how these networks translate into “space for deliberation” for the farmers when involved in certified trade and when not involved in certified trade.

This objective followed from value-chain collaboration literature, which increasingly pays attention to the territorial embedding of value-chains, combined with the knowledge gap identified by various experts with regard to the cocoa value chain with regard to a lack of insight in on-the-ground structures that involve the various value-chain actors. There is a clear social relevance, as a better understanding of these on-the-ground structures could contribute to increased well-being of smallholder cocoa farmers, by facilitating an environment that promotes “space for deliberation” which effectively increases the farmers’ capacity to actively pursue their aspirations.

The research was of an exploratory nature, and therefore concentrated on an analysis of qualitative data, supported with minor quantitative information. Data was collected through focus groups and individual interviews. The focus groups concentrated on an interactive mapping exercise, where respondents outlined the network in which they operated with regard to cocoa and their general goals. The individual interviews served as triangulation for the group sessions, and contained both open ended and closed questions. Together, the methods yielded an insight into the local networks in which smallholder farmers and PCs are involved.

The bottom line findings from the research primarily relate to the importance of reciprocity and structural local presence as important factors in creating space for deliberation. The certified VCC in this study was associated with more space for deliberation for the involved farmers, compared to farmers who were not involved in such a VCC, and exhibited strong elements of reciprocity and was firmly engrained in the local context. Furthermore, the PC’s role appears as a broker between farmers, licensed buying companies and other actors. This is due to an apparent preference of farmers for working with actors who are structurally present in the local context, which leads farmers to address the PC through reciprocal dealings attached to the trading of cocoa, in order to mobilize the supply of agricultural inputs, financial support, and knowledge transfer to smallholder farmers. This does not structurally alter the space for deliberation of the farmers, since the farmers appear to be limited in their interactions with only those actors that are present in their direct surrounding.
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Furthermore, I wish to thank Nana Kwasi Oppong, who was my beacon of calmness while in the field, always sure that things would work out (and they did).

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<tr>
<td>AGL</td>
<td>Armajaro Ghana Limited</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHED</td>
<td>Cocoa Health and Extension Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COCOBOD</td>
<td>Ghana Cocoa Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRIG</td>
<td>Cocoa Research Institute Ghana</td>
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<tr>
<td>DM</td>
<td>District Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEDCO</td>
<td>Federated Commodities Limited</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLO</td>
<td>Fairtrade Labeling Organization</td>
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<td>ICCO</td>
<td>International Cocoa Organization</td>
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<td>IDS</td>
<td>International Development Studies</td>
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<td>KCL</td>
<td>Kumankoma Company Limited</td>
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<td>KKL</td>
<td>Kuapa Kokoo Limited</td>
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<tr>
<td>KNUST</td>
<td>Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>LBC</td>
<td>Licensed buying company</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoFA</td>
<td>Ministry of Food and Agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>NWO</td>
<td>Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research</td>
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<td>RA</td>
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<td>PC</td>
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Chapter 1 – Introduction

In this introductory chapter, I first explain my interest in the topic of value-chain collaboration (VCC) and address the practical and theoretical rationale behind this research. Subsequently, I present the research questions that guide the analysis in this thesis and introduce the study area where I carried out the study. Finally, I provide the thesis outline.

1.1 Background to the research

Having worked for a short time as a volunteer with Max Havelaar, the Dutch branch of Fairtrade Labeling Organization (FLO), I was introduced to the concept of certified trade. Ever since, I became increasingly convinced that such certification programmes present a viable route to achieve improved well-being of farmers in developing countries. To be better able to appreciate the certification approach within today’s developmental concerns and theories, I registered for the International Development Studies (IDS) Master’s programme at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). During the lectures of this programme a core issue in international development kept coming back: the unequal balance of power in decision-making, in its widest possible interpretation. Value-chain analysis particularly captures this issue.

Value-chain analysis originally concentrated on trade relations in agricultural value chains, where large stakeholders close to the point of consumption have considerably higher leverage than individual smallholder farmers (Bolwig et al., 2010). As phrased by Trienekens (2011, p. 52), “developing country producers that want to enter these chains are confronted with asymmetric power relationships (e.g. because of increasing global power of Western retailers and industries) that again impact on the distribution of costs and benefits over the chain participants, keeping value-adding activities in Western countries”. The asymmetric power relations for developing country producers who want to enter value chains also apply to developing country producers who are already included in the chain (Trienekens, 2011). Zooming in on smallholder farmers, such power imbalances potentially lead these farmers into upscaling, favouring mono-cropping, as the processing firms generally prefer to work with relatively fewer, larger, and modern suppliers due to lower transaction costs and reduced investment constraints (Swinnen and Maertens, 2007). This may ultimately further increase farmers’ dependency on the more powerful value-chain stakeholders, and lead to a higher risk exposure, as a higher share of their income becomes dependent on a limited number of value-chain actors. Overall this may generate outcomes that do not enable smallholder farmers to capture sufficient benefits from the value chain and makes them struggle to realize an income that is sufficient to support their livelihoods, whereas the
multinationals increase their profits by dictating the terms of negotiation.

Fortunately, certification programmes such as UTZ and Fairtrade provide an opportunity to address these adverse effects of power imbalances in global trade, by assuring consumers that if they buy certified produce, a specific share of the price paid will go to the farmers rather than to the multinationals. More importantly, these programmes attempt to increase the prospects of farmers by improving their farming and business skills (UTZ, 2015), and contain elements that promote their environmentally and socially responsible behaviour (Raynolds, 2000; UTZ, 2015; Fairtrade International, 2015).

Indeed, a critical assessment of several cocoa certification programmes by KPMG (2012), one of the four major worldwide consultancy organizations, concludes that farmers may benefit from participation in certification programmes. However, KPMG identified various gaps in their analysis: most of their recommendations for further research relate to getting better knowledge of on-the-ground structures and processes that determine the distribution of costs and benefits of certification, specifically at the level of the farmer (ibid.). Moreover, certification impact studies by KPMG (ibid.) and by global sustainability consultancy firm BSD Consulting, in cooperation with Ibi Été Consultoria, (2015) indicate that non-monetary aspects, such as gender equality, more related to the social impact of certification, are not sufficiently measured. Interestingly, BSD Consulting and Ibi Été Consultoria (2015) point specifically to the importance of a closer relationship between the farmer and the buyer. This aligns with the findings by Deans (2015), who underlined the importance of the role played by cocoa-buying organizations; approaches that promoted advanced collaboration, and which aimed at achieving mutual benefits, were able to achieve higher improvements in human capital and created more opportunities for farmers to increase their social capital than less integrated approaches.

Following up on Deans' (2015) findings, this thesis examines the relations that exist between cocoa purchasing clerks (PCs) and smallholder farmers as value-chain actors. A better understanding of these relationships could contribute to more effective approaches, including certification-driven approaches, to improve these relationships.

However, the scope of this research goes beyond that, recognizing that the livelihoods of farmers are embedded in local structures outside the value chain (Neves and Du Toit, 2013). This can include non-farming activities as well as less clearly delimited concepts such as reciprocity (ibid.). Bolwig et al (2010, p. 178) define horizontal links of the value chain as “the ways in which the impact and nature of integration into globalised systems are locally mediated”. Signalling these
horizontal realities, the Fairtrade Foundation (2011, p, 10) indicates in their cocoa commodity briefing that “younger generations who see no future in cocoa are switching to more profitable rubber production or heading for the cities in the hope of finding a more dependable livelihood”. In analysing how cocoa PCs interact with farmers, it would therefore also be valuable to examine how interactions with other actors, within and beyond the cocoa value chain, affect those between farmers and cocoa PCs.

This aligns to a great extent with the NWO/WOTRO-funded 'Inclusive value chain collaboration' research programme, coordinated by the University of Amsterdam. This programme aims to examine whether and how value chain collaboration (VCC) involving tree-crop farmers in Ghana and South Africa could be made more equitable and inclusive, with the objective of contributing knowledge that helps achieve more equitable terms of engagement in VCC, greater autonomy in food production and marketing, and sustainable landscapes\(^1\). This study builds on the contacts available through this research programme and on the shared knowledge acquired through this programme.

In short, following my personal interest in certification programmes and the subsequent introduction to value-chain analysis during the IDS programme, I felt a strong desire to further explore how the value chain for an agricultural product such as cocoa plays out for smallholder farmers.

1.2 Research objectives and questions

Building on the considerations presented in the previous section, the central focus of this research is on investigating the relationships between cocoa smallholder farmers and PCs, with attention for the relationships these value-chain actors have with other actors operating both within and beyond the value chain. Particularly, I aimed to investigate how these networks of relationships constitute a “space” for smallholder farmers to effectively exercise an influence on the achievement of their respective goals and aspirations, with specific attention for the potential of certification programmes to influence this “space”. Hence, the central research question for this thesis was:

- How do certified and non-certified territorially embedded VCCs differ in their capacity to create a space for deliberation for smallholder-cocoa farmers to achieve their aspirations?

In order to effectively address this central research question, I organized my research around

1 As stated on the programme's website https://inclusivevcc.wordpress.com/ (February, 2016).
the following sub-questions:

1. How does the space of interaction involving smallholder-cocoa farmers and PCs differ, when linked to certified and non-certified territorially embedded VCCs?

2. How do motivations and aspirations to engage in VCC differ between farmers in certified and non-certified territorially embedded VCCs?

3. How do smallholder-cocoa farmers use the space of interaction in VCC as a space for deliberation to negotiate the desired outcomes?

Together, these sub-questions address the reality of local VCC, the aspirations of farmers, as well as the degree to which they are able to actively pursue these aspirations and the potential role of certification in this respect. It is important to note that the first sub-question addresses “space of interaction”, which is not synonymous to “space for deliberation”. Space of interaction refers to the physical network of relationships, whereas the space for deliberation refers to the less tangible qualitative aspects of the separate links included in the network. This will be further explained in Chapter 2.

1.3 Study area

This section explains why Ghana featured as the designated research area for this study.

With an estimated 20% of the world’s cocoa production, Ghana was the world’s second largest producer of cocoa in 2013, with the lion's share coming from smallholder farmers (COCOBOD, 2013). In 2013, over a million people were employed in Ghana's cocoa sector, which implied that the livelihood of about 6 million people in Ghana depended on cocoa (ibid.). Furthermore, the Ghanaian cocoa market is regulated by the government through the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), which does not engage in certification, but does allow licensed purchasing organizations to do so (Deans, 2015). Previous research (Swinnen and Martens, 2007) found that the prevalence of exploitative power imbalances in the value chain, at the expense of smallholder farmers, specifically occurs in government-controlled monopolized systems, where there is a lack of competition between processing firms. Hence, the importance of the cocoa sector for the Ghanaian population, and particularly smallholder farmers, underlines the relevance of Ghana as the location for this thesis research. Moreover, the central role played by the Ghanaian government suggests that Ghana's cocoa sector could be particularly vulnerable to imbalanced relationships between value-chain actors, which is a key issue addressed in this research.

Another reason to focus on Ghana lies in the role assumed by the Netherlands vis-a-vis the
Ghanaian cocoa sector. As an important cocoa-processing country, the Netherlands is actively engaged in activities to support sustainability throughout the cocoa value chain, and specifically focuses its financial support on Ghana (ICCO, 2014). As a Dutch citizen and student, I may in that respect be ideally positioned to convey any findings of this thesis research to any Dutch institutions involved in these efforts, hopefully contributing positively to the position of Ghanaian smallholder farmers.

In summary, as an important cocoa-producing country with a highly government-controlled cocoa-sector, Ghana qualified perfectly as a study area for addressing the main objective of this study, namely to investigate how certified and non-certified VCCs differ in their capacity to create a space for deliberation for smallholder-cocoa farmers to achieve their aspirations. The strong ties between Ghana's cocoa sector and the Netherlands further added to my motivation, as this meant I could be well set to convey any findings to relevant institutions.

1.4 Thesis outline

To conclude this introductory chapter, I briefly outline the further structure of this thesis and explain the rationale behind it.

After discussing the theoretical and practical relevance of the research, and presenting the research questions and the study area, the next chapter clarifies the theoretical framework and conceptual scheme that guides the analysis in this thesis. It helps to better understand the concepts of value-chain collaboration and space for deliberation, and will make it easier to follow the reasoning in the remainder of the thesis.

Chapter 3 continues from the conceptual scheme to transparently discuss the research methodology built around it, and highlights strengths and potential weaknesses of the research that one needs to be aware of when interpreting the findings.

Before presenting the actual findings, I will elaborate on the Ghanaian context in which the research took place. This is done in Chapter 4.

Subsequently, the presentation of the research findings is split into three chapters, in line with the research methodology. As the research is following a comparative case study set-up, Chapter 5 and 6 discuss the space of interaction for actors in non-certified and certified VCCs respectively. Within each of these two categories, both smallholder farmers and purchasing clerks are included. Both chapters are organized in line with the three research sub-questions, respectively addressing the space of interaction available to the two categories of respondents; their aspirations and motivations to engage in VCC; and the relational strategies they employ.
Next, Chapter 7 brings together the findings for non-certified and certified smallholder farmers and purchasing clerks, to clarify how the researched certified and non-certified VCCs differ in their capacity to create a space for deliberation for smallholder-cocoa farmers to achieve their aspirations, which is the central research question of this thesis.

The thesis will finalize with a wrap-up of the research findings, and a theoretical and practical evaluation of these findings, in the form of a theoretical reflection and recommendations for further research, policy and practice.
Chapter 2 – Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the theoretical background that guided the research. I first analyse how collaboration between chain actors evolved from supply chain management to value chain collaboration (VCC) including actors ‘beyond the chain’. Second, I illustrate how social network analysis ties into VCC theory. Third, I address the literature on space for deliberation. Subsequently, I argue that certification could potentially play a central role in these theories. Finally, I merge these elements into a conceptual scheme, as a basis for addressing the central research question of how certified and non-certified VCCs differ in their capacity to create a space for deliberation for smallholder-cocoa farmers to achieve their aspirations.

2.1 From supply chain management to value-chain collaboration

Within the context of international development, much has been written about value-chain upgrading, defined as possible strategies for value-chain actors to improve their economic position in the value chain (Gereffi, 1999; Kaplinsky and Morris, 2001; Humphrey and Schmitz, 2002; Ponte and Ewert, 2009; Bolwig et al., 2010; Gereffi and Fernandez-Stark, 2011; Trienekens, 2011). The concept of value-chain upgrading concentrates primarily on increasing the economic benefits for the actors concerned, assuming that this would ultimately translate into increased well-being. More recently there has been increasing explicit attention for the social effects associated with economic upgrading. Both Barrientos et al. (2011) and Gereffi and Fernandez-Stark (2011) addressed the social upgrading of workers within firms that achieve economic upgrading. In these analyses, social upgrading concerns the labour standards of workers in firms that move up in the economic sense. These first attempts at a more encompassing understanding of the effects of changing positions and relationships within the value chain suggest that social benefits of workers do not automatically follow from improved economic benefits (Barrientos et al., 2011; Gereffi and Fernandez-Stark, 2011).

Value-chain analysis originated in supply-chain management. Initially the focus was on strategies that involved actors upstream and downstream in the value-chain, labelled as vertical coordination (Swinnen and Maertens, 2007). In this characterization of value-chain upgrading, the possible arrangements range from spot market exchanges (physical deals ‘on the spot’ with immediate delivery or delivery within a month) as one extreme, to full ownership integration (a fully integrated value chain) as the extreme on the other end of the spectrum (ibid.). Between these two extremes are marketing contracts and production contracts, where the former refers to
agreements between a farmer and a buyer concerning prices and volumes based on forecasts, and
the latter concerns more extensive agreements that include trainings, credit and other inputs
supplied by the buyer to the farmer (ibid.). Since de-colonisation, vertical coordination in
developing countries (as well as in transition countries) was predominantly government-controlled,
but throughout the 1980s and 1990s these state-led vertical coordination agreements dissolved
because of a worldwide move towards liberalization and privatization (ibid.). This resulted in a
sharp decrease in available credit and agricultural inputs to farmers in developing countries, as well
as reduced access to extension services and a loss of price support (ibid.). In the gap that followed,
farmers experienced financial constraints, as well as difficulties in accessing input markets and a
lack of technical and managerial capacity (ibid.). Combined with a lack of functional institutions
and infrastructure, which implied that buyers were not assured of consistent quality and predictable
supply through spot market arrangements, this increasingly motivated forms of private vertical
coordination, where ‘private traders, retailers, agribusinesses and food-processing companies
increasingly contracted with farms and rural households to whom they provide inputs and services
in return for guaranteed and quality supplies’ (ibid., p. 92). These vertical coordination initiatives to
some extent have yielded benefits to farmers, in terms of ‘output, productivity, and product
quality—and ultimately on incomes—through better access to inputs, timely payments, and
improved productivity with new investments’ (ibid., p. 95). However, adverse effects of these
vertical coordination processes have also been documented, replicating the original inequalities,
with processing firms realizing disproportionate gains at the expense of the farmer by setting the
terms of the contracts. There is a risk of exclusion of smallholder farmers, motivated by concerns
for high transaction costs, a lack of these farmers’ investment capacity, and higher assistance
requirements per unit of output overall (ibid.); potential for over-dependence on the contract firm
resulting in exploitative relationships (Bijman, 2008); possible loss of autonomy over farmers’ land
and their crop choice resulting in decreasing food production (ibid.; Ros-Tonen et al., 2015); and
concerns of increased gender inequality (Bijman, 2008; Ros-Tonen et al., 2015); declining dietary
diversity (Ros-Tonen et al., 2015); and biodiversity loss because of monoculture development and
production intensification (ibid.).

These risks related to the distribution of risks and benefits in vertical collaborations are also
recognized by Matopoulos et al. (2007), and are central in their analysis of supply chain
collaborations. Dependency of one actor on the other reflects power positions (ibid.), often seen as a
deterrent to trust (Vangen and Huxham, 2003). The creation of trust seems to be difficult in such a
situation, and merits further thinking. Although Matopoulos et al. (2007) mention horizontal
coordination, they do not elaborate on this, and limit the horizontal scope of their analysis of the agri-food supply chain to the horizontal interactions with other actors that are directly included in the value chain, such as suppliers of fertilizers and agricultural research institutes that develop new crop varieties.

Building further on these approaches that focus primarily on the vertical component of value-chain upgrading, the horizontal component of value-chain upgrading is increasingly recognized as a key element, also in terms of interactions with actors outside the supply or value chain. Both Bolwig et al. (2010) and Trienekens (2011) present more extensive frameworks for value-chain analysis that includes both vertical and horizontal collaboration (rather than coordination), notably also horizontal collaboration with actors outside or beyond the value chain. These actors are referred to as non-chain actors, and include NGOs, government institutions, financial institutions, advisers, and standard-setting bodies (Bolwig et al., 2010). Trienekens (2011) distinguishes three modes of value-chain upgrading, including the upgrading of value added production, the upgrading of value-chain network, and the upgrading of governance structures. Within all three modes of upgrading, Trienekens (2011) assigns high importance to both vertical and horizontal collaboration.

As Trienekens (2011) concludes, research into the role of non-chain actors involved in these collaborations that go beyond economic upgrading is still in its infancy and requires follow-up. Ros-Tonen et al. (2015) present a potential approach to do so, by focusing on learning platforms in which actors from both inside and outside the value chain participate. Moreover, Ros-Tonen et al. (2015) point out that farmers usually follow various livelihood trajectories, which is in line with Yaro (2006) and Neves and Du Toit (2013). Effectively, it is likely that farmers are involved in more than one single value chain and swap chains when conditions in one chain are more favourable than in others.

Based on the frameworks presented by Bolwig et al. (2010), Trienekens (2011), Ros-Tonen et al. (2015), combined with the recognition that local livelihoods are most likely connected to several value chains (Yaro, 2006; Neves and Du Toit, 2013), it makes sense to extend the scope of analysis even beyond horizontal interactions between chain actors and non-chain actors, to include actors from other value-chains. This could provide insight into local networks in both the horizontal and vertical direction, to explore possible relations between actors in multiple value chains and non-chain actors.
2.2 Social network analysis: connecting actors within and beyond the value chain

Complementary to the value-chain approach, social network analysis is concerned with the identification and evaluation of the linkages between actors embedded in social structures. Streeter and Gillespie (1993, p. 2) define a social network as ‘any bounded set of connected social units’. This definition entails that networks have boundaries (i.e. there is a criterion that determines membership in the network); that members have (or could have) direct or indirect links to at least one other member of the network; and that network analysis can be applied to different social units, including individuals, social institutions, or nations in the global economy (*ibid.*). Illustrative of the ‘stretch’ in defining social networks, Serrat (2009, p. 1) defines social networks as:

‘nodes of individuals, groups, organizations, and related systems that tie in one or more types of interdependencies: these include shared values, visions, and ideas; social contacts; kinship; conflict; financial exchanges; trade; joint membership in organizations; and group participation in events, among numerous other aspects of human relationships’

In this sense, both the cocoa value chain and their local territorial embeddedness represent social networks, in which the individual cocoa smallholder farmer or PC is included. These, in turn, are embedded in wider networks.

Network analysis is concerned with the identification of structures and patterns of relationships, containing relational and structural properties, and attempts to clarify their causes and effects (Streeter and Gillespie, 1993). Moreover, social network analysis is particularly interested in what facilitates or hampers these flows (Serrat, 2009). Relational properties concentrate on transaction content, defined as what resources, information, influence, and social support flow through the network, and on the nature of the relationship (Streeter and Gillespie, 1993). Structural properties concern the characteristics of networks on three levels of analysis: individual members, subgroups, and total networks. On an individual level the differences between individual network members, in terms of their connections to other members, can be used to distinguish between different roles these members have (*ibid.*). Typical network roles include stars, liaisons, bridges, gatekeepers, cosmopolites and isolates (Tichy et al., 1979; Harris and Nelson, 2008).

Tichy et al. (1979) explain these roles as follows. Stars are the social units with the highest number of nominated connections. Liaisons are not a member of a cluster (i.e. an area where there is a higher concentration of linkages between members than others within a wider network) but link two or more clusters. Bridges are social units who are a member of multiple clusters in the network,
effectively linking these clusters. A gatekeeper is a star who also links the social unit with external domains. Isolates are those actors that are indeed in an isolated position within the network. As noted by Harris and Nelson (2008), isolates are often the last to know about policy changes. Furthermore, they add cosmopolites as boundary spanners (ibid.). In the context of the territorially embedded value chain, cosmopolites could be interpreted as those actors that engage both with non-chain actors in their direct territorial environment, but also with actors in other territorial environments. When the analysis concentrates on the structural characteristics of subgroups, it is concerned with the position of clusters in the total network (Tichy et al., 1979).

Social network analyses usually aim to build sociograms that contain three elements: (i) nodes that represent the social units being studied; (ii) ties that represent the relationships among the nodes; and (iii) attributes that characterize the differences between the social units being studied (Serrat, 2009). Figure 2.1 presents a simple example of a sociogram.

![Figure 2.1 Example of a sociogram](source: Prell (2012))

Important aspects in social network analysis are the network’s centrality and density (Scott, 1988; Streeter and Gillespie, 1993; Serrat, 2009). Centrality at the level of an individual refers to the number of linkages a member has relative to other members, and overall to the degree to which connections are directed through one or a few central units in the network (ibid.). Density is the ratio of actual to potential connections (Scott, 1988; Streeter and Gillespie, 1993). Members of a social network are considered as structurally equivalent (i.e. their distance is zero) when their
patterns of linkages are comparable with those of other members within the network, even if they do not maintain relations with one another (Streeter and Gillespie, 1993).

To conclude, both the relational and structural properties identified in social network analysis apply directly to the objective of this research, which is contributing to a better understanding of the connections between cocoa smallholder farmers and PCs, as well as their positioning in the territorial and value-chain network. Social network theory provides a frame of reasoning to address the vertical and horizontal linkages of smallholder farmers and cocoa PCs in Ghana’s cocoa value chain, both between each other and with other actors in their territorial surroundings. This can be done by investigating the relational and structural properties of value-chain and territorial networks, with specific attention to the density, centrality, hierarchy and distance between members.

### 2.3 Space for deliberation

An implicit interest in value-chain and social network analysis is the extent to which actors have the room and ability to manoeuvre within the network, without the achievement of their goals being impeded by other actors. This aligns closely with a conceptualization of power as ‘the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will even against resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests’ (Weber, 1922, p.53, quoted in Schiffer, 2007). This room for manoeuvring, closely linked to the conceptualization of power, is often labelled as ‘space’ (Gaventa, 2006; De Vos and Bush, 2011; Van der Ploeg, 2014) (see also Section 3.2.2).

From a critical agrarian studies perspective, Van der Ploeg (2014) stresses the importance of ‘space’ available for peasant-driven agricultural growth, to effectively achieve shifts in the power balances within the food value-chain.

Gaventa (2006, p. 26) signifies this ‘space’ as ‘opportunities, moments and channels where citizens can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships that affect their lives and interests’. These ‘spaces’ are themselves shaped by power relations, which implies it is important to distinguish between three different types of space: closed spaces, invited spaces, and claimed or created spaces. Closed spaces are characterized by decision-making behind closed doors, by a set of actors that have no intention of broadening the boundaries for inclusion. Invited spaces refer to situations where actors are invited to participate by various kinds of authorities, such as the government, supranational agencies or non-governmental organisations. Created spaces are those that follow from collective transitory action, such as protests or land occupations (ibid.).
In line with the invited spaces as presented by Gaventa (2006), De Vos and Bush (2011) build a case for market-based tools, such as certification, as a potential facilitator of space between actors who traditionally do not engage with each other in cooperative efforts. Trust created through these ‘spaces for deliberation’, represents a key positive outcome on both a horizontal and a vertical scale (ibid.).

In order to achieve social change, in the form of shifts in power, social actors at least need to link the demands for opening previously closed spaces with people’s action in their own spaces, and need to span across local and global action (Gaventa, 2006). Thus, in relation to the goal of this thesis – to shed light on the relationships between cocoa smallholder farmers, PCs and other actors in the ‘horizontal’ and ‘vertical’ social networks of which they are part, in order to contribute to a better understanding of farmers’ impediments and options in improving their personal goals – the interplay between power and space, both in the horizontal and vertical direction, is of high importance.

2.4 The importance of trust

Trust is an important element in the analysis of spaces for deliberation, as it plays a key role in the analysis of the dynamics between the various actors in the framework. For effective and successful collaboration, and the associated increase of bargaining power (Trienekens, 2011), trust is a key requirement (Matopoulos et al., 2007; Trienekens, 2011). According to Pappila (2013), certification could potentially be a driver of trust. Moreover, the CSR-related extrinsic product characteristics presented in Figure 2.2 are often managed through certification programmes. Linked to trust, the intentions of the relevant actors will need to be addressed, as these are expected to be of specific importance for distributional outcomes (Raynolds, 2009).

Effectively, building on the implied importance of ‘spaces for deliberation’ in creating trust and altering power dynamics, combined with the recognition that cocoa PCs and smallholder farmers operate in the territorially embedded cocoa value chain, as well as in other value chains, any research into the local dynamics around the cocoa value chain should look beyond the cocoa value chain itself to include any relevant non-chain actors as well as chain actors from other value chains in which smallholder cocoa farmers operate.

2.5 The potential role of certification

With regard to value-chain upgrading, Trienekens (2011) points to the opportunity that extrinsic product characteristics offer for value-chain upgrading. Extrinsic product characteristics
refer to characteristics that cannot be measured on the product (e.g. product origin), in contrast with intrinsic characteristics that can be immediately experienced from the product itself, such as taste and colour. The heightened consumer awareness and increased Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Creating Shared Value (CSV)\(^2\) principles adopted by industries in the global North provide a large set of potential ‘extrinsic’ characteristics through which farmers may increase their value added (ibid.; Porter and Kramer, 2011), as well as directly upgrade their well-being, for example in terms of labour conditions. Figure 2.2, replicated from Trienekens (2011), presents a number of these CSR-related extrinsic characteristics.

Figure 2.2: Dimensions of CSR in the food chain as extrinsic product characteristics


Although Swinnen and Maertens (2007) point out that it is not certain that farmers will reap the lion’s share of this increased added value, the CSR principles in Figure 2.2 represent

\(^2\) CSV refers to entrepreneurship that goes beyond compliance with laws and ethical standards, and mitigation of negative externalities, and rather seeks to create economic value *through* societal value (Porter and Kramer, 2011).
opportunities for shared goal setting in vertical and horizontal collaboration, which address both economic upgrading opportunities and overall well-being upgrading. This could potentially help to overcome the power deterrent for building trust, and actually build trust and gradually alter the relationships between farmers, PCs and other actors in the local, territorially embedded, cocoa value chain.

Many of the extrinsic characteristics in Figure 2.2 are addressed by certification schemes. According to Raynolds (2000), environmental and socio-economic concerns are increasingly merged into standards set by certification bodies, and especially the socio-economic elements in these standards work to encourage the participation of disadvantaged farmers.

In line with the distinction between chain and non-chain actors (Trienekens, 2011; Ros-Tonen et al., 2015), Taylor (2005) signals how difficult it is to position such certification bodies as actors engaging with the mainstream market. Rather, he argues there is a constant tension within these bodies, which act as combatants of the vested powers in the mainstream market, and at the same time engage with powerful actors in these mainstream market in order to not lose the connection to that mainstream market (ibid.). Indeed, it is important to keep in mind that the effects of such certification schemes are highly dependent on the local context. In line with the characterization of a territorially embedded value chain (Ros-Tonen et al., 2015), Getz and Schreck (2006) found that operationalizing environmental and socio-economic goals through certification is a complicated process. In the cases they studied, they found that both environmental and socio-economic elements of certification failed to create a situation where farmers could do business on their own terms. As they argue, this was mainly due to the complexity of operating on the ground, where there may be a disconnect with the actual intentions of the certification organization (ibid.). As such, they concluded that “a more robust analysis of how certification intersects with and affects local spaces, cultures and communities at the point of production” would be required to prevent a mismatch between the intentions and on-the-ground outcomes of certification (ibid., p. 490).

In summary, extrinsic product characteristics translated into certification standards provide opportunities for farmers to influence their position in a territorially embedded value chain. It is however ambiguous if and how certification schemes actually produce the desired outcomes, as the local context is different for each case, and this local context plays a key role in the on-the-ground roll-out of the certification programme. Effectively, it would be interesting to consider how certification schemes translate into spaces for deliberation.
2.5 Synthesis: conceptual scheme

The goal of this research is to explore how certified and non-certified VCCs differ in their capacity to create a space for deliberation for smallholder-cocoa farmers to achieve their aspirations. In the previous sections I discussed theoretical elements of VCC, social network analysis, space for deliberation and the issue of trust. I also discussed the potential importance of certification in relation to these concepts.

The conceptual scheme presented in Figure 2.3 summarizes how I envisioned the interrelations between these theoretical elements, before going into the practical stages of this research. It takes the stylised value chain mapping indicating horizontal and vertical elements by Bolwig et al. (2010) as a starting point, making the production and primary trading nodes specific and combining it with the concepts of spaces for deliberation, trust and certification.

Figure 2.3 Space for deliberation in the territorially embedded value chain

Source: Extended from Bolwig et al. (2010)

The right side of the scheme clarifies the overlap between value-chain analysis and social network analysis. The coloured ellipses represent the territorial embeddedness of the different nodes in the (cocoa) value chain. At the centre of each ellipse is another value-chain node, linked to the other value-chain nodes upstream and downstream.
As depicted in this scheme by the bold lines ending in black dots, the value-chain nodes are also connected to other actors that are not necessarily part of the value chain, but represent social networks in the territorial embeddedness. There may exist direct connections between such actors, in the different territorial ellipses, that do not pass through the connections between the value-chain nodes. The fact that the ellipses overlap, signifies that it is likely that the territorial embeddedness of each value-chain node includes (non-chain) actors that are also included in the territorial embeddedness of other up- or downstream value-chain nodes.

Within these networks, the triangular area signifies how the relationships between value-chain nodes and other actors represent spaces for deliberation. Zooming in on these spaces for deliberation on the left side of the scheme shows how they incorporate both structural (interaction opportunities and the forging of new relationships) and relational elements (meaningful deliberation).

Finally, the pink bar above the value chain signifies the potential influence of certification on VCCs and the associated spaces for deliberation.

This conceptual scheme offers a starting point for investigating horizontal and vertical interactions, representing ‘spaces for deliberation’ that may extend interactions aimed at improved well-being for smallholder farmers throughout the territorially embedded cocoa value chain.
Chapter 3 – Methodology

The research objectives and the conceptual scheme presented in the previous chapters form the basis of the research design and methodology presented in this chapter. I first present the ontological and epistemological stance of this research, after which I present the operationalization that follows from the conceptual scheme. Next, I discuss the general set-up of the research in terms of design, units of analysis and observation, sampling, and data collection methods and analysis. Subsequently, I will highlight the quality assessment criteria and the ethical issues that I took into consideration during the research. To conclude this chapter, I reflect on the limitations of this research that anyone who reads this thesis should be aware of, to be able to put the presented findings and recommendations into the right perspective.

3.1 Ontological and epistemological stance

In this section I discuss the attitude towards ‘truth’ and how one can learn about ‘truth’. With the conceptualization of ‘space for deliberation’ in mind (Sections 2.3 and 3.2.2), it would be very difficult to assign a universally valid magnitude of space for deliberation by approaching it through a pre-defined set of measurements. Perceptions of the space for deliberation were expected to vary depending on the relative position of actors in a social network, due to their personal views on the matter. In line with this rejection of a universal representation of space for deliberation, I adopted a critical realist ontological stance (McEvoy and Richards, 2006; Bryman, 2012) throughout this research; investigating the actors in the cocoa value chain, their linkages and the nature of these linkages need to be discovered through empirical research that is reflected upon in relation to the existing theories and the specific social environment in which the observations are made (McEvoy and Richards, 2006). This approach is also known as ‘retroduction’, and attaches importance to both quantitative and qualitative methods (ibid.). I combined this approach with a constructivist research attitude, which assumes ‘multiple, apprehendable, and sometimes conflicting social realities that are the products of human intellects, but that may change as their constructors become more informed and sophisticated’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 111). Although a constructivist approach seems to align better with the subjective elements in assessing space for deliberation, it does not do justice to the structural properties in social network analysis, which may be very real but not perceived by the individual actors.
3.2 Operationalization

In this section, I discuss and operationalize the key concepts included in the conceptual scheme as presented in Chapter 2. First, I present the working definitions employed with regard to certified and non-certified VCCs, and present their operationalization as applied in the research. Subsequently, I conceptualize and operationalize the notion of ‘space for deliberation’ as the central concept in this research, containing strong elements of social network theory.

3.2.1 Certified and non-certified VCCs

The value-chain concept refers to explicit coherent linkages between input supply, production, trade and consumption or disposal of a certain product (Bolwig et al., 2010). In their conceptualization, the points where the product is exchanged between actors, produced or processed, are characterized as nodes. The area between two nodes is labelled as a value-chain segment. This conceptualization concentrates on ‘vertical’ relationships between buyers and suppliers and the flow of products from producers to consumers and suggests that value-chain analysis primarily addresses the flows of material resources, finance, knowledge and information between buyers and suppliers. For this thesis research, I was particularly interested in the cocoa value-chain nodes of primary production and initial trade, hence the segment that is at the origin of the value chain (i.e. upstream, or the farthest away from consumption).

Extending the value-chain concept, as highlighted in the theoretical framework presented in the previous chapter, the value chain is horizontally embedded in local systems and relationships, defined by Ros-Tonen et al. (2015) as ‘territorial embeddedness’. The horizontal or territorial dimension is concerned with the collaboration with non-chain actors, defined by Bolwig et al. (2010) as external actors. These are the social units that do not directly engage in the flow of the economic goods or services through the value chain, but that do provide services and expertise, and exert influence. These include NGOs, financial institutions, advisers, standard-setting bodies, government agencies, and worker’s unions. Moreover, the territorial embeddedness includes expelled actors (former chain actors who were forced out of the value chain) and non-participants (actors who chose not to participate in the value chain, or could not participate due to a lack of capabilities) around each value-chain node, as well as the different ecosystems that are managed and impacted on in each node. Since this research aims to address primarily the social aspects of territorial embeddedness, the ecosystems dimension has not specifically been addressed in the operationalization. Although this bears the risk that certain actors would not be identified, it was not expected to be feasible to explore the ecosystems in which farmers engage others, within the time
available for MSc research.

Nevertheless, it was not unthinkable that aspects of environmental concerns would come up in the findings, as territorial embeddedness links directly to certification and value chain upgrading. Extrinsic product characteristics such as fair trade, environmental sustainability, and human and labour rights represent opportunities for value chain upgrading (Trienekens, 2011). Typically, these characteristics are not the primary focus of the downstream value chain actors, and are rather nurtured through certification programmes managed by non-chain actors. It was reasonable to assume that this encourages greater “territorial embeddedness”, as the interest in value-chain collaboration in that case is clearly extended beyond the (intrinsic) product which is usually the focus of the value chain actors.

Concluding, the conceptualization of the value-chain segment and the territorial embeddedness around each value-chain node overlaps with the notion of clusters as described previously in relation to social network analysis (see Section 2.2). Within these clusters, there might be different roles for the various actors identified in the social network, with certification programmes potentially establishing a more territorially embedded VCC with increased space for deliberation as experienced by smallholder cocoa farmers. Certified VCCs are those VCCs that actively pursue value-chain upgrading through the certification-driven management of in- and extrinsic product characteristics, whereas a lack thereof is considered as non-certified VCC. Table 3.1 (see next page) represents the operationalization of the territorially embedded value chain, as relevant to this research.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vertical collaboration</td>
<td>Degree of vertical integration</td>
<td>Downstream and/or upstream collaboration type (spot market exchange / marketing contract / production contract / full ownership integration)</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal collaboration</td>
<td>Degree of territorial embeddedness</td>
<td>Amount and types of non-chain actors (NGOs, financial institutions, advisers, standard-setting bodies, government agencies, worker’s unions and other) from whom the PC/farmer receives services and expertise, or who otherwise exert influence on the PC/farmer.</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews &amp; focus groups with participatory diagramming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation of farmers &amp; PC</td>
<td>Degree of focus of farmer &amp; PC on intrinsic or extrinsic product characteristics</td>
<td>Relative importance of intrinsic and extrinsic product characteristics in trade criteria (e.g. intrinsic characteristics such as cocoa bean size, extrinsic characteristics such as organic farming methods).</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in certification programmes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reason for relative importance attached by farmer &amp; PC to the intrinsic and/or extrinsic product characteristics in trade criteria (i.e. providing access to certified trade, or other).</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews &amp; focus groups with participatory diagramming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| VCC objective              |                                               | • Capacity building of farming communities, e.g. training on good agricultural practices (GAP) to increase yields and income;  
 • Support the establishment and strengthening of farmers’ associations/groups;  
 • Support services for rehabilitation, intensification and diversification;  
 • Credit schemes to farmers;  
 • Payment for environmental services, enhancement of carbon stocks and reduction of emissions from forest degradation (REDD+);  
 • Promotion of (cocoa) certification and climate-smart production. | Semi-structured interviews & focus groups with participatory diagramming |

**Source:** Author, based on Swinnen and Maertens (2007), Bolwig et al. (2010), Trienekens (2011), Ros-Tonen et al. (2015) and Laven and Jaskiewicz (2015)
3.2.2 Space for deliberation

The combined vertical and horizontal (territorially embedded) dimensions of VCC represent a space of interaction that potentially produces “space for deliberation”. Although closely linked, the concept of ‘space of interaction’ is different from ‘space for deliberation’. In the context of achieving agricultural growth, Van der Ploeg (2014, p. 1006) refers to ‘space’ at the farm level as ‘the politico-economic room needed to successfully develop production and translate the results back into an effective improvement of one’s own livelihood’. Building further on this, space can be conceptualized ‘as being composed of the reigning social relations of (and in) production’ (ibid., p. 1007).

In line with this, De Vos and Bush (2011, p. 287) provide a more specific conceptualization in their analysis of the Dutch fishery sector, presenting ‘spaces of interaction’ as a relational concept, ‘made up of moments, events or sites where constellations of networked (often spatially non-contiguous) actors forge new relationships that allow meaningful deliberation over consumption and production practices in fish chains’, effectively creating ‘sites of deliberation between actors related to but not dependent on the fish chain’.

Extending these value-chain oriented notions of space for deliberation to more general (social) networks, Gaventa (2006, p. 26) signifies ‘space’ as ‘opportunities, moments and channels where citizens can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships that affect their lives and interests’. There is a distinction between closed space (absence of space), invited space (where actors are invited to participate by those holding power), and created space (where less powerful actors demand and obtain space through popular mobilisation) (ibid.).

Thus, whereas ‘space of interaction’ merely captures the physical network or the available infrastructure for interaction, ‘space for deliberation’ incorporates the quality of this infrastructure with regard to its potential of forging new relationships and the degree to which it supports meaningful deliberation regarding each actor’s aspirations. This resembles the distinction between structural and relational properties in social network analysis, as described in Section 2.2. Table 3.2 shows how space for deliberation has been operationalized.
Table 3.2: Space for deliberation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Space of interactions (structural network properties)</td>
<td>Moments</td>
<td>Encounters that are part of the regular routine of the farmer, with other actors that are relevant for their personal goals.</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews &amp; focus groups with participatory diagramming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of actors per actor category (to be defined based on findings; distinguishing between different actor groups beyond and within the farmer value chain segment), encountered in these moments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of organized events where the farmer can engage with other actors that are relevant for their personal goals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of participants in each event, per actor category</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Who took the initiative to organize the event? (invited vs. created space)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sites</td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of sites known to the farmer, where s/he can engage with other actors that are relevant for the actor’s personal goals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other actors (including categories) that the farmer knows to frequent these sites.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channels</td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of contacts / organizations to which the farmer is connected, per actor category that is relevant in light of their personal goals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What actor / organization first initiated the contact? (Invited versus created space).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forging of new relationships (structural &amp; relational network properties)</td>
<td>Invited forging of new relationships (invited space)</td>
<td>Number of new relationships initiated by the PC/farmer in the past X days / weeks / months / year with actors, per actor category that is relevant in achieving the personal goals of the PC/farmer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Created forging of new relationships (created space)</td>
<td>Number of new relationships initiated by the other actor in the past X days / weeks / months / year with actors, per actor category that is relevant in achieving the personal goals of the farmer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful deliberation (relational network properties)</td>
<td>Discussion of each actor's personal goals</td>
<td>For each connected actor, has the farmer informed the other of his/her goals?</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews &amp; focus groups with participatory diagramming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has the other actor expressed an interest to receive input regarding the farmer’s goals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has the farmer solicited information regarding the other actors' goals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has the actor received input regarding the other actors’ goals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimension</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meaningful deliberation, continued (relational network properties)</td>
<td>Discussion of challenges to each actor's personal goals.</td>
<td>For each connected actor, has the farmer informed the other actor of his/her challenges in achieving his/her goals?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has the other actor expressed an interest to receive input regarding the farmer’s challenges?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has the farmer asked the other actor about that actor's challenges in achieving his/her goals?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has the farmer received input regarding the other actors’ challenges?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion of each actors' possible contribution to achieving others’ goals.</td>
<td>For each connected actor, has the farmer informed the other actor of his/her possible contribution to achieving that actor's goals?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has the other actor expressed an interest to receive input regarding the farmer’s possible contribution to achieving that actor's goals?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has the farmer asked the other actor about that actor’s possible contribution in achieving the farmer's goals?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has the farmer received input regarding that actor’s possible contribution in achieving the farmer's goals?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion of each actor’s limitations in helping the other actors achieve their goals.</td>
<td>For each connected actor, has the farmer informed the other actor of his/her limitations to help achieve that actor’s goals?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has the other actor expressed an interest to receive input regarding the farmer’s limitations in achieving that actor’s goals?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has the farmer asked the other actor about that actor’s limitations in achieving the farmer’s goals?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has the farmer received input regarding that actor’s limitations in achieving the farmer’s goals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint decision-making</td>
<td>Have decisions been made following the discussion of goals, challenges, possibilities and limitations?</td>
<td>Have these decisions been made in joint agreement?</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews &amp; focus groups with participatory diagramming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Are the decisions regarded by the farmer as favourable to the farmer’s goals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative (invited vs. created space)</td>
<td>For each separate actor, who initiated the discussion, if any?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Author, based on Gaventa (2006), De Vos and Bush (2011), and Van der Ploeg (2014).*
3.3 Research design and selection of study sites

Given the critical realist and constructivist approach (Section 3.1), the research was set up as an exploratory multiple-case study (Baxter and Jack, 2008) with an embedded design (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). The two cases included in the study are differentiated primarily on the basis of their involvement with certification programmes, and both qualitative and quantitative data are gathered simultaneously.

For the selection of the study sites (Figure 3.1) this implied that the primary determinant I applied was whether in the selected sites a licensed buying company (LBC) was operating with or without involvement in a cocoa certification programme. This resulted in the selection of Ghana’s Tepa and Hwidiem cocoa areas as the primary study sites, with respectively Produce Buying Company Limited (PBC) operating as a non-certified LBC in the Tepa area and Kumankoma Company Limited (KCL) operating in the Hwidiem area as an UTZ and Rainforest Alliance certified LBC.

![Figure 3.1 Research locations](Source: Google Maps)
Tepa is the largest community in the Ahafo Ano North district, the leading cocoa producer in the Ashanti Region, and has an estimated 44% of its population involved in farming (MoFA, n.d. a). The Hwidiem community is located only 24 kilometres away, but lies in the Asutifi District of the Brong Ahafo Region. Like Tepa, Hwidiem is one of the largest settlements in its district, in which crop farming constitutes the major source of income, accounting for about 50% of all incomes, with cocoa as a major crop. In terms of climate and soils both communities are similar, with double rainfall maxima in June and October and soils that support a variety of crops including both cash crops such as cocoa and oil palm, and food crops such as cassava, plantain, and other vegetables (MoFA, n.d. b).

The selection of these two sites was also a result of the contacts I had with the University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR) in Sunyani, and the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) in Amsterdam. Both institutions are partner organizations involved in the NWO-WOTRO programme ‘Inclusive VCC’. UENR linked me up with contacts from Armajaro, an LBC in the area around Tepa, who acted as my Ghanaian ambassadors in the area. The KIT put me into contact with the certification manager of Cocoa Abrabopa, the farmers' association that is linked to KCL.

### 3.4 Units of analysis and observation

The objective of this research was to uncover the space for deliberation available to cocoa smallholder farmers and purchasing clerks, and gain an understanding of how certification programmes may influence this space.

As such, I considered the Ghanaian cocoa value-chain segment surrounding the PC and the smallholder cocoa farmer, territorially embedded in the local environment, as the unit of analysis for this research.

The units of observation are the individual actors operating in the context of the territorially embedded value chain. Since the focus of the research is on cocoa farmers and PCs, aside from two interviews with non-chain actors, the respondents included in the research consisted of smallholder cocoa farmers and cocoa PCs, both certified and non-certified. The respondents included both male and female farmers, with the males representing the majority. Most of the respondents were working on farm plots they either owned or tended based on share cropping arrangements.

Although from a network analysis perspective it would have been beneficial to include more network actors with other roles, I think this would have lengthened the research to an extent that would not have been feasible within the available time-frame. As such, the findings presented in the
subsequent chapters should be merely considered as an exploratory step for further research that
could go into more detail with specific actors identified by the respondents as important in their
network.

3.5 Sampling

Following the defined units of observation, I adopted a purposive sampling strategy, where
the criteria for selecting the units of observation are based on their relevance for the research
questions (Bryman, 2012). The first condition related to the participants’ involvement in the cocoa
value chain; they had to be involved as either a (smallholder) farmer or as a PC. A second
consideration in selecting participants related to their involvement in certification programmes.
Since I intended to compare actors from certified value chains with those from non-certified value
chains, I included both participants who were involved in such certification programmes and
participants who were not. As a basis for differentiation, I looked for respondents based on their
association with one of two LBCs, as mentioned earlier: PBC as a non-certified LBC, and KCL as a
certified LBC. I intended to include participants from both groups, who were as similar as possible
(and thus comparable) in other respects. This is also known as most-similar case selection (Gerring,
2007). Although in practice I did not apply any stringent criteria for allowing respondents to
participate, other than the primary conditions being a farmer or PC associated with either PBC or
KCL, the respondents of both the non-certified and certified groups were comparable in terms of
age, education level, and other characteristics. However, the spread within both groups was quite
wide in terms of these characteristics, which makes it difficult to comment on any differences
within both groups. This was however not the purpose of this research, and I therefore do not
consider it a problem for the analysis.

Sampling was mostly done through a snowball principle, where key contacts introduced
participants that met the purposive sampling criteria (Bryman, 2012). Snowball sampling was
employed mainly for feasibility purposes and because I intended to map the social networks in
which the participants are embedded. This type of sampling is especially useful in analyses that
resemble social network analysis, as it immediately reveals the connectedness of individuals in
networks and provides a way to capitalize on these relationships (ibid.).

Concerning the sample size, since the ‘right’ sample size for this thesis research depended
on the point where theoretical saturation is achieved (Bryman, 2012), I did not have a particular
target in mind. However, with relatively homogeneous samples, it was expected that theoretical
saturation could already be achieved with limited sample sizes, from as many as 12 qualitative interviews. While in the field, I felt I reached saturation after conducting 4 focus group exercises that included a total of 34 respondents, and individual interviews with 17 PCs and 20 farmers.

Table 3.3 Overview of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Number of respondents from non-certified value chains</th>
<th>Number of respondents from certified value chains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus groups / space mapping</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fieldwork

3.6 Data collection methods

As indicated in the previous section, I collected information from the identified units of observation through focus groups, organized around a participatory diagramming approach that I labelled as ‘space mapping’, and semi-structured face-to-face interviews. In the following sections I further discuss these two methods as well as the role of field notes. However, first it is important to consider my research assistant, as he formed an integral part of the data-collection process.

3.6.1 The research assistant

Although English is an official language in Ghana, the local language in the Ashanti region is predominantly Twi. As such, I depended on a research assistant who was well versed in Twi to carry out the data collection properly. I managed to find an assistant who had experience with doing research at an academic level, as he had just carried out a research for his bachelor’s thesis. Moreover, he was raised in Sunyani which implied he was fluent in Twi. Prior to going into the field, we spent several days together to go through the theoretical framework of the research and to discuss the data collection methods, to assure a good understanding of what was intended. During the data collection, at all times both of us were present.

As at some occasions this may have played a role, it is important to note that my research assistant was a 24-year old male, who is an active member of the Methodist church in his community. During church services he takes care of the children who are present, and he also represented his community in a regional bible knowledge quiz competition organized by the Methodist church.
3.6.2 Space mapping

As a key tool for data collection I used an adapted version of the ‘power mapping’ approach as proposed by Schiffer (2007). This participatory diagramming approach combines both quantitative and qualitative elements, where the quantitative findings can uncover relations that may otherwise be overlooked, and the qualitative findings serve to extend the scope of the research beyond predefined categories or standardised quantitative measures (McEvoy and Richards, 2006). The original power mapping tool represents an easy way for participants to visually express what actors are relevant in the territorially embedded cocoa value chain, in what way they are influential, and the degree to which they perceive them to be powerful. The method uses different ‘avatars’ to represent the different actors and mounts them on stacks of objects, with the height of the stack representing the relative power position of each specific actor vis-a-vis the other actors (Schiffer, 2007). By adding symbols for the different ways in which each ‘avatar’ is influential, a complete image arises that can be captured by taking a photo. These images can be quantified and standardized, to allow for some rudimentary comparisons within the local context. A key element of the method is the qualitative discussion with participants, regarding the reasons why participants chose to position the various actors in the way they did. The comments from these discussions are listed in a matrix and form the basis for further analysis. The matrix also includes the ‘legend’ concerning which avatar represents which actor, and what characteristics are associated with that actor, and should incorporate clarifications regarding the linkages between the different actors (ibid.). I practised this method in the setting of a university workshop lecture, and it proved to be a fun exercise that stimulated participation.

Since this research addresses ‘space for deliberation’ rather than the concept of power, I further refer to the method as ‘space mapping’ and in my research I changed the meaning attached to the height of the stacks to represent the degree of ‘meaningful deliberation’. Also, I included labels to clarify who took the initiative to engage into a discussion (if applicable), and to understand what issues were discussed (goals, challenges, possibilities to help). Figure 3.2 is an example of one of the resulting visualisations of this method.
In the field, I first demonstrated the method to my research assistant and the local experts who acted as my ambassadors towards the targeted LBCs. All were very enthusiastic about the method, and encouraged to apply it in the field, as they felt it would stimulate the participants to participate and speak up, diminishing the reluctance some might feel when speaking in front of a group.

In line with the advantages described by Schiffer (2007), the mapping tool proved specifically useful for research in the area, as there were respondents included who could not read or write. Moreover, it could cope with the restricted technical infrastructure available in the data collection sites, as it did not require computers or electricity. Furthermore, because of the intuitive nature of the mapping process it proved relatively easy for my research assistant to convey the exercise.

### 3.6.3 Semi-structured face-to-face interviews

In addition to the mapping tool, I employed semi-structured face-to-face interviews with participants who did not participate in the group exercise. An advantage of this method is that it allows for inclusion of non-literates and blind people (Bernard, 2006) both of whom were among the actual respondents. Another advantage of this method is that the interviewer can provide additional explanation in case a question is not clear, and probe for answers if there is a sense that
the answer is not complete (ibid.). Since I included both closed and open-ended questions, this was of extra importance. The open-ended questions focused specifically on the respondents’ explanation of the relative importance they assigned to the network actors whom they listed and the argumentation behind the experienced space for deliberation. Respondents should have a similar understanding of the context to which the questions applied, so that I would be able compare the answers with the outcomes of the focus group exercises as a means of triangulation.

Although the possibility to help the respondent place the questions in the right context represented an advantage, it also incorporated a risk; the face-to-face interview involves an interaction with the interviewer, hence the responses from the participants are by default influenced by how the questions are asked.

3.6.4 Field notes

In addition to the space mapping group exercise and semi-structured interviews, I took advantage of my ‘bystander’ role during these events, to take notes of the setting in which these took place, as well as the body language and other specifics that struck me as important. In the presentation of the findings I use this information to provide thick rich descriptions of the qualitative data, which in qualitative research “provides others with...a database for making judgements about the possible transferability of findings to other milieux” (Bryman, 2012; p. 392).

3.6.4 Data-collection sequence

As outlined in the previous sections, I combined space mapping with semi-structured interviews. The mapping method is in line with an approach that includes elements of social network analysis, and is a form of embedded design (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011) which implies that quantitative and qualitative data are gathered concurrently. As the semi-structured interviews were carried out face-to-face, they also enabled to collect both qualitative and quantitative data.

I first carried out the mapping exercises in group settings. In these group exercises the diverse participants identified a set of actors and through the discussions among each other added important information on these actors’ relative positions. This provided a useful basis of understanding, and allowed for a better framing of the questions during the individual interviews. Additionally, doing the focus groups first allowed for an easier subsequent snowballing effect in finding further respondents to participate in the semi-structured interviews.
3.7 Data analysis

In analysing the data, I focused on clarifying the actors relevant to PCs and smallholder farmers in their efforts to achieve their personal goals, and how these actors link to each other. This reflects the structural properties in social network analysis (Streeter and Gillespie, 1993). The subsequent exploration of the nature of these linkages aimed to capture the relational properties in social network analysis and concentrated on transaction content, defined as what resources, information, influence, and social support flow through the network (ibid.).

Throughout the data collection process, I started the qualitative analysis using an open and axial coding process (Corbin and Strauss 1990), using the qualitative data processing software Atlas.ti version 7.5.10. I attached initial conceptual labels concerning the motivations for farmers and purchasing clerks to interact with each other, and the reasons for attaching importance to specific actors in their network, based on the transcribed focus group discussion texts and matrix notes, and the data from the open questions in the semi-structured interviews. Interdependencies between these open codes formed axial codes, and upon return from the field I went through the final stage of selective coding (ibid.).

Concerning the quantitative data, I limited the analysis to descriptive statistics using the quantitative data analysis software package IBM SPSS Statistics 23, upon return. As the sample sizes of both data collection methods were rather limited, no sound statistical inferences can be made based on a regression analysis. Also, the quantitative data collected in the focus groups was set up differently from the quantitative data collected in the individual interviews, which makes it difficult to aggregate data from the two methods. Rather, I focused on the quantitative data as a means to visualise some of the key findings I got out of the qualitative data.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Considering the ethical considerations in carrying out this research, I followed the principles outlined in a personal declaration of responsibility that I signed with the UvA, as included in Annex 1.

First, this entailed that all interview and group exercise participants were clearly informed that they were being researched, and received a short explanation of the research rationale. Consent for participation was obtained verbally, taking into account that a share of the respondents was not able to read or write. Also, I stressed the fact that in case the respondents did not want to answer a specific question, they could choose not to do so, or even opt out of the research at any time.

Furthermore, following from my dependence on the research assistant, given the language
barrier, it was extremely important that the assistant was well versed in the local language and the participants trusted both him and myself, so I could obtain true informed consent (Alaei et al., 2013). Therefore, to gain the trust of the participants, when I conducted the surveys and focus groups, I first introduced myself as being a student from the UvA and explained the aim of the research. Then, I introduced my research assistant as a neutral researcher, affiliated to the University of Energy and Natural Resources in Sunyani, to clarify that he was not in any way tied to the government or any of the LBCs that were included in the research. To assure that this was clearly conveyed, my research assistant always translated this introduction into Twi, before kicking off the actual focus group or interview, which further took place primarily in Twi.

Having the trust of the participants was of extra importance as the research involved evaluations of the relations that PCs and smallholder farmers had with other actors. At times this yielded sensitive information, for example related to government regulations concerning the supply of agricultural chemicals. As the participants could trust us to anonymize their responses so that they cannot be traced in any way to the person disclosing the information, they felt sufficiently comfortable to share such information.

Further to these considerations of informed consent, voluntary participation and confidentiality, I tried to take into account as much as possible the daily schedules of the respondents, by planning the focus groups and interviews with farmers at times that normally no farming activities are carried out. As for the purchasing clerks, I managed to plan the focus groups with them at times that they all had to gather in one place for other purposes, so that I did not burden them with extensive travel times.

Finally, during the data collection phase, at times I was struggling with safety concerns. The transportation to my first meeting with respondents took place on a motor bike with a driver, myself and my research assistant on one bike, the three of us, not wearing helmets. After this first trip, where I experienced the bad road conditions with holes in the tarmac, and other vehicles on the road with unpredictable movements, I realized that this was a potentially dangerous way of transportation. I felt responsible for the safety of my research assistant, and did not feel comfortable myself either. Therefore, afterwards I tried to move to specific locations mainly by using taxis, and if this was not feasible at least insisted that we got helmets. Also, I always asked the research assistant if he was comfortable with our transportation (although he seemed less bothered with the safety than myself, even asking for motor driving lessons from our driver).
3.9 Quality assessment and limitations of the research

In this section I reflect on the limitations that I feel apply to my ontological and epistemological stance, the sampling and data collection methods I applied, the sequence in which I collected my data, and the data analysis. In discussing these methodological issues, I will particularly reflect on how the backgrounds of those involved in carrying out the research and analysing the data, may have had an effect on the reliability and validity of the research.

While planning my research, I adopted a critical realist ontological stance (McEvoy and Richards, 2006; Bryman, 2012). This assumes that I can only discover the linkages between actors in the cocoa value chain, and the nature of these linkages, through empirical research that is reflected upon in relation to the existing theories and the specific social environment in which the observations are made (McEvoy and Richards, 2006). This stance is in line with my conceptual framework that addresses the notion of ‘space for deliberation’, by mapping the social networks of which the respondents are part. The value-chain collaborations (VCCs) between actors are included in these networks, and in this sense the research is of an exploratory nature. However, going into the practical phase, gathering data from respondents, I experienced that the theory concerning VCC was far too specific when compared to the actual situation ‘on the ground’. Rather than a wide variety of neatly defined forms of value-chain collaborations with different actors within or beyond the value chain, often the respondents engaged in interactions that were very loosely interpretable, with elements of various kinds of VCC, with only a limited number of actors and rather sporadically. For instance, question 22 in my semi-structured interview questionnaire (Annex 3) addresses the seven most commonly found VCCs as mentioned in a previous survey in Ghana, and many respondents marked either none, or a large share of the seven options. This makes it difficult to associate the findings with specific value chain collaborations in terms of the goals they strive to achieve.

For the selection of respondents I initially relied on the available contacts through the NWO-WOTRO project with Armajaro, an LBC in the Tepa area. As I would not be researching farmers or PCs working with Armajaro, this did not provide an issue in terms of biased selection of respondents. They managed to bring me into contact with a group of farmers associated with KCL, as well as with a group of farmers associated with PBC. Unfortunately, after I did a focus group with these two groups of farmers, I could not use the snowball sampling as I planned, as the farmer respondents indicated they would need the consent of the PCs they worked with, and the PCs indicated that they would need consent from their District Managers (DMs). As such, I first had to introduce myself to the DMs of the LBCs that I included in my research, and gain their approval to approach the farmers and PCs with whom they worked. Still, I believe there was no bias in the
selection of farmer respondents, since after I gained approval I mostly set up meetings with farmers myself, without the interference of the DM or PC. For the KCL group I included all PCs in the Hwidiem area in the respondent group, so there was no bias in that sense. Another issue in sampling was that KCL operated with only a small number of PCs in the area, which implied I effectively had to extend the data collection for KCL’s PCs to include respondents from the neighbouring Goaso / Kwapon area.

Regarding data collection, I mentioned earlier that I worked with a 24-year old male research assistant, raised in Sunyani. He was well versed in Twi, the local language, and held a bachelor’s degree from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi. Prior to going into the field, we extensively discussed the research aim, practised the focus group approach, and went through the questionnaire to clarify ambiguous questions. As I was present at all focus groups and interviews, any questions that remained could be addressed on the spot. However, the majority of respondents was in their late 30s up to even 70s, and I got the impression that at times this caused my research assistant to be a bit hesitant in asking questions to delve deeper into what people were saying, especially in the case of more sensitive questions. One such sensible question concerned one that tried to establish whether farmers sell to multiple licensed buying companies. Also, at times I had the feeling that my interviewer was (unwittingly) having an influence on how the respondent answered. For example, when respondents put high importance on church matters in their responses, they received a positive affirmation from my research assistant, whereas respondents who were more critical, during the focus group saying that “the pastor prays for you and takes your money to boot” (focus group 1, 12 February 2016), were initially ignored.

Concerning the data collection methods and sequence, we started with the focus groups, and followed this up with the interviews, in both phases collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. As in both phases the same concepts were addressed in a similar manner, this allowed for triangulation. In fact, the data from the focus groups and the interviews seem to align quite well, in terms of the structural network properties unveiled. In both phases, the networks consisted mainly of family, friends, people working for the licensed buying companies (LBCs), and people related to the respondent’s church. The differences between the ‘space for deliberation’ experienced by the non-certified and the certified groups were consistent between farmers and purchasing clerks (PCs) in the focus group phase, but appear less pronounced in the interview phase. This is possibly a result of ambiguity concerning what constitutes a ‘meaningful discussion’. During the test phase of the mapping exercise, a short discussion arose with the local experts, as to what distinguishes having a meaningful discussion with another actor from the potential of that actor to provide
tangible resources. There was no clear agreement on this at that time, and based on the discussions taking place during the mapping exercise when conducting the actual focus groups, it appeared that often people were placing chips on actors based on whether they thought these actors could or did provide help to them in achieving their goals or overcoming their challenges. As such, having a meaningful discussion at times seemed synonymous with “being able to reap tangible benefits” from the interaction with a specific actor. Respondents from the focus groups and from the individual interviews may have had slightly different understandings of what constitutes a meaningful discussion. This implies that any quantitative data from the focus groups and the individual interviews need to be considered with care, and placed into context with the more qualitative data from the respondents to avoid questionable validity.

In terms of reliability, all focus groups and interviews were carried out by the same researchers (myself together with my research assistant). However, in some focus groups there were people present who may have impacted the responses. In two farmer focus groups, there was also a PC present, and in one PC focus group a District Manager (DM) of the associated LBC also participated. The individual questionnaires were administered among peers, and therefore might be considered to have produced more authentic responses. Nevertheless, from the discussion that took place during the focus groups, it did not appear that the participants felt inhabited by the presence of the PC or DM. Suggestions made by the PC were challenged repeatedly by the farmers, as was the case for the DM and the PCs.

Overall, I feel the research was done in such a way that the concepts were reliably measured. All respondents were asked the same questions by the same researcher. Also, the study can easily be replicated. Triangulation between the focus groups and the interviews provides additional credibility to the findings. Finally, it is important to recognise that the findings are specific to the local situation and are not considered universally transferable. Thick rich descriptions will serve to paint the context in which the findings were rooted, to allow the reader to form an opinion of the transferability of the findings to similar settings.
Chapter 4 – Ghana’s Cocoa Sector

Ghana’s cocoa sector encompasses a complex network of actors and plays an important role in the lives of millions of Ghanaians. In this chapter, I highlight the main challenges Ghana’s cocoa sector is facing, present a preliminary mapping of the actors involved in Ghana’s cocoa sector, and address the value-chain collaborations that are known.

4.1 History & Challenges

According to COCOBOD (2013), cocoa was first introduced in Ghana in 1879. Tetteh Quarshie, the name of the trader who brought cocoa to Ghana at that time (Edwin and Masters, 2005), is still used by Ghanaian cocoa farmers to designate the particular cocoa species that is seen as ‘original’ Ghana cocoa from newly introduced ‘hybrid’ species. Since its introduction, cocoa has become an increasingly important crop for Ghana’s and the world’s economy, producing around 20% of the global cocoa tonnage (Glin et al., 2015). Representing between 10 and 15% of the nation’s Gross Domestic Product at the start of the current decade, and accounting for as much as 40% of the foreign currency inflow (COCOBOD, 2013) – signifying a rise from 25% in the first ten years of the millennium (Glin et al., 2015) – cocoa supports the livelihoods of over 6 million people in Ghana (COCOBOD, 2013; Glin et al., 2015). Included in these 6 million people are around 720,000 smallholder farmers (Glin et al. (2015), who are the dominating producers of cocoa (COCOBOD, 2013). They mostly apply traditional farming methods using a hoe and cutlass (Mohammed et al., 2011). Production mainly takes place in 7 ‘cocoa regions’: the Eastern, Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo, Central, Volta, Western North and Western South Regions (Glin et al., 2015).

These smallholder farmers and other people who depend on cocoa for their livelihoods face several challenges. Although cocoa from Ghana currently sets the global standard for measuring cocoa quality, the European Union puts increasing importance on food safety, which translates into more stringent requirements, for example related to the minimum levels of pesticide residue (COCOBOD, 2013). Furthermore, Ghana’s cocoa sector faces accusations of using child labour (Glin et al., 2015) and experiences a low productivity of around 400 kg/ha (Glin et al., 2015; Wessel and Quist-Wessel, 2015). The latter is mainly due to the old age of trees on cocoa farms, inadequate application of fertilizer and pesticides, and inadequate cocoa farm maintenance (Wessel and Quist-Wessel, 2015). This in turn is rooted in low income from cocoa, due to low farm gate prices, high input prices, a lack of access to credit, and small farm size, as summarized in Figure 4.1 (ibid.). Combined with the current farming practices, the immediate result is that cultivated areas
expand, leading to deforestation (Wessel and Quist-Wessel, 2015) and putting pressure on biodiversity (Glin et al., 2015).

![Diagram: Causes of low yield in farmers’ cocoa in West-Africa](source)

**Figure 4.1 Causes of low yield in farmers’ cocoa in West-Africa**

*Source: Wessel and Quist-Wessel (2015)*

ICCO’s April 2016 monthly review of the cocoa market added prolonged drought in the West African region as a major reason for a fall in mid-crop yield compared to the previous year, which raises a serious concern with regard to the sustainability of the sector (ICCO, 2016).

The central role played by Ghana’s government in addressing these issues and its overall involvement in the cocoa sector are important characteristics of Ghana’s cocoa sector. Although a gradual privatization process was started in the 1990s, which liberalized domestic cocoa purchasing, privatized input distribution, reformed the extension services, and reorganized the processing activities, the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) still controls many aspects of these activities (Glin et al., 2015). In the next section, I discuss the main actors in Ghana’s cocoa sector, including the government bodies involved.

### 4.2 Actors in the territorially embedded cocoa value chain

As discussed, Ghana’s government is heavily involved in its cocoa sector, both as an unavoidable trading value-chain node through which cocoa passes before processing, and in the form of supportive bodies providing a mix of services to smallholder farmers and other actors in the cocoa value chain. Figure 4.2 represents a visualisation by Glin et al. (2015) of the position of the five COCOBOD subsidiaries in Ghana’s cocoa sector, updated with their most recent names.
Figure 4.2 A schematic overview of the conventional cocoa network in Ghana

Source: Glin et al. (2015)
Although Glin et al. (2015) characterize many of the COCOBOD subsidiaries as support organizations, COCOBOD is exerting strict influence on the cocoa value-chain actors in Ghana, with the Quality Control Company (QCC) checking the quality grade of the cocoa, effectively rejecting sub-standard cocoa for purchase by the Cocoa Marketing Company (CMC) from the buyers licensed by COCOBOD to engage in the cocoa trade and hence labelled ‘licensed buying
companies’ (LBCs).

The CMC, as their only buyer, exerts important influence on the LBCs, with COCOBOD dictating the cocoa price the purchasing clerk (PC) has to pay to the farmer, as well as the buyer margins allowed for the PC and the LBC (COCOBOD, 2015). For the 2015/2016 cocoa season, COCOBOD set the farm gate price to GH¢425 (approximately EUR 106) per bag of 64 kg gross weight, equal to 74% of the net Free On Board (FOB) price, which is the price received at point of export from Ghana (ibid.).

As this research looks at the extended cocoa value chain, and addresses particularly its local embeddedness, the ‘conventional’ cocoa network presented by Glin et al. (2015) omits various actors that are relevant to this study. Mohammed et al. (2011) provide a more encompassing map of Ghana’s cocoa value-chain in Figure 4.3, including a variety of non-COCOBOD organizations involved in or impacting on the cocoa value-chain activities within Ghana, such as bank and credit facilitators, domestic and international shipping entities, NGOs, certification labels, and intergovernmental organizations such as the Alliance of Cocoa Producing Countries (COPAL) and the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO).

In this study, the focus is on the network around the smallholder farmer and the PC, and their actual links to the various actors identified in Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3.

4.3 VCC in Ghana’s cocoa sector

Various VCCs in Ghana’s cocoa sector either directly or indirectly address the challenges faced by the sector. Jaskiewicz and Laven (2015) summarized a number of often-mentioned VCC objectives. These include capacity building of farming communities, support for the establishment and strengthening of farmers’ associations, support services for rehabilitation, intensification and diversification of cocoa farms, credit schemes to farmers, payment for environmental services, and the promotion of certification and climate smart production. Although these include both VCCs between actors ‘within’ the cocoa value chain, and VCCs that involve actors from ‘beyond’ the chain, they signal a trend of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) where international downstream value-chain actors increasingly appear to focus on a collaboration with one or two LBCs or farmer associations, with extension service delivery and certification as their primary objectives, and NGOs or other third parties involved as trainers or auditors (ibid.). Due to the focus of these PPPs on smallholders, Thorpe and Maestre (2015) refer to them as Public-Private-Producer-Partnerships (PPPPs), which aligns with the concept of VCC employed in Ros-Tonen et al. (2015).
This integrated approach towards VCC aligns with the overview of collaborations that focus on the overall sustainability of the sector, as presented in Table 4.1 (Tropenbos International, 2014; Glin et al., 2015), in Annex 1. Many of these programmes specifically address the issue of child labour, in line with the ratification of the Harkin-Engel Protocol by most governments and cocoa industry members, which confirms their commitment to the eradication of the worst forms of child labour (ibid.).

4.4 Conclusion

Ghana’s cocoa sector continues to face serious challenges in attaining a technically, socially and economically sustainable status. These include obsolete farming practices, the use of child labour, and issues with the flow of agricultural inputs and relevant knowledge. The negative impact on cocoa yields is further exacerbated by the effects of climate change.

The Ghana cocoa sector is a complex network of local, national and international actors, both from ‘within’ and ‘beyond’ the cocoa value chain. The Ghana government plays a major role in the sector, mainly through COCOBOD and its subsidiaries, which sets prices, offers supportive services, and functions as a link in the value chain, controlling the export of cocoa beans.

Increasingly, VCCs in the sector include PPPs and PPPPs in which internationally operating downstream value-chain actors team up with one or two local LBCs and NGOs, to establish extension service delivery and certification. In the following chapters, this research addresses the on-the-ground network, from the point of view of the smallholder farmer and the cocoa PC.
Chapter 5 – Exploring the space for deliberation in a non-certified VCC setting

This chapter looks at the capacity to create a space for deliberation for smallholder-cocoa farmers of a non-certified territorially embedded VCC. It first analyses the space of interaction as experienced by smallholder farmers (sub-question 1; Section 5.1). Next, it looks at their motivations and expectations (sub-question 2; Section 5.2). The relational strategies, i.e. how smallholder-cocoa farmers use the space of interaction in VCC as a space for deliberation to negotiate the desired outcomes (sub-question 3) are addressed in Section 5.3. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the space for deliberation available to the non-certified farmers, based on their space for interaction, their motivations and aspirations, and their relational strategies. The next chapter will do the same for certified VCCs, after which a comparison will be made in Chapter 7.

5.1 Farmers’ space of interaction in a non-certified VCC setting

Following De Vos and Bush (2011, p. 287), space for interaction in the context of value-chain collaboration was operationalized as the “moments, events or sites where constellations of networked (often spatially non-contiguous) actors forge new relationships that allow meaningful deliberation over consumption and production practices” (Chapter 3). Accordingly, this section presents the space of interaction for smallholder farmers in terms of “the constellations of networked actors”, based on the input from the focus group and interview respondents.

Figure 5.1 visualizes the structural network as sketched in a focus group by 11 farmers from PBC, who were not engaged in VCCs that entail certification. The participants listed various actors that are captured as “codes”, using Atlas.ti software, and grouped in seven clusters (code families) based on their shared background. These clusters include family members, local community members, faith entities, farmer groups, licensed buying company actors, government actors, and a group of actors associated with the nearest marketplace. Note that some clusters overlap (e.g. faith actors are almost entirely part of the local community) and some individual actors are part of multiple clusters (e.g. the PC is part of the local community, is most often a farmer him- or herself, but also belongs to the licensed buying company actors). The colour code assigned to each actor is based on their primary association, according to the respondents. The depicted distance between actors is not an absolute representation of the closeness to the farmer respondents, but it is an indicator of the regularity of interaction; the higher the frequency of interaction, the closer the actor
is positioned to the PBC farmer. Thus, actors with whom the PBC farmers report to interact on a daily basis, such as their spouse and children, as well as the PC, are placed closest to the PBC farmer. Actors with whom the farmer interacts only weekly, such as the pastor, or monthly, such as the Kenyan Akuafoku Farmers’ Association, are placed farther away from the PBC farmer. The same logic applies to figures 5.2 and 5.3.

Figure 5.1 Space of interaction based on a focus group with eleven non-certified farmer participants

Source: Fieldwork
Figure 5.2, which is based on the individual interview responses from 10 other PBC farmers who were not engaged in certification, closely resembles Figure 5.1. This provides a good triangulation of the focus group and interview data.

Source: Fieldwork
However, the networks based on the individual interviews are more limited: although NGOs are added as a network actor, the local marketplace cluster is missing in Figure 5.2, and the number of actors in each cluster, except the family cluster, is less than the number of actors identified in the same cluster in the focus group (Figure 5.1). This could be an effect of the group interaction during the focus group exercise, where participants stimulated each other to contribute to the list of actors. Furthermore, the results from the individual interviews illustrate the important position of the family, ranging from household members to more distant relatives.

Figure 5.3 combines the data from the focus group and the individual interviews, to provide the full network view for non-certified farmers. The network that emerges from the data illustrates the PC’s central role in the network of the non-certified farmer respondent. The PC is a member of various clusters; part of the community, often also a farmer him- or herself, and associated with a particular LBC.

As the non-certified farmer respondents were selected based on their affiliation with PBC, obviously PBC emerged as the primary LBC in the respondents’ network. Farmers tend to see PBC as a government organization – which is understandable considering that PBC was the first cocoa buying company, affiliated to COCOBOD, until the partial liberalization of the domestic cocoa market in 1992 (Glin et al., 2015). Several farmers doing business with PBC explicitly mentioned that they deal with them because they regard them as government representatives. One farmer literally stated:

“One reason I sell my cocoa to PBC is that it is a government agency, so they cannot cheat farmers” (interview 29, 29 February 2016).
Figure 5.3 Non-certified farmers’ space of interaction based on a focus group with eleven non-certified farmers and interviews with ten non-certified farmers

Source: Fieldwork
To complement the network view in Figure 5.3, Figure 5.4 lists the non-certified farmer respondents’ overall quotation frequencies related to the individual actors identified. In similar fashion, Figure 5.5 presents the frequencies for the various actor clusters, illustrating each cluster’s “importance”.

![Figure 5.4 Non-certified PBC farmers’ overall quotation frequencies for individual actors](image)

*Source:* Fieldwork
Figure 5.5 Non-certified PBC farmers’ overall quotation frequencies for actor clusters

*Source:* Fieldwork

Table 5.1 nuances the ranking of the actor groups based on simply the quotation frequencies, by listing the top 5 actor categories spontaneously cited as “most important” by non-certified PBC farmer interview respondents, and highlighting the top actor within the cluster.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor cluster</th>
<th>Spontaneous citations</th>
<th>Within cluster top actor(s)</th>
<th>Spontaneous citations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family members</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community member</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBC actor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith actor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>God</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government actor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Agric officer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Fieldwork
The data presented in Figures 5.4 and 5.5, and Table 5.1 underline the importance of the PC, not only as an actor that is connected to multiple clusters, but also as an actor with high scores in terms of quotations that relate to it, and as an actor that is the third most often spontaneously cited actor of importance. In short, the PC structurally holds a central position in the interviewed PBC farmers’ network, and this position is of importance to the interviewees. This conclusion is further strengthened as PBC, the respondents’ preferred LBC, is also mentioned as an actor in the network (rank 1 in Figure 5.4), and the PC operates on behalf of this LBC.

As illustrated in Figure 5.4, both the PC and the LBC (as an actor) score higher in terms of related quote frequencies than family members “spouse” and “children”. Table 5.2 shows that the combined frequency of quotations related to the PC and the LBC even surpasses the frequency for family members. Still, the non-certified PBC farmer respondents clearly perceive individual family members as the highly important actors, based on the frequency scores in Table 5.1, for the top actor clusters cited as “most important” during the individual interviews. However, other than the PC, family members are not explicitly linked to other clusters.

Also worth noting is that the “agric officer”, an actor who provides extension services on behalf of the government, is in the top 5 individual actors listed in Figure 5.5, based on the overall quotation frequencies. Although many respondents associate this actor with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), a representative from COCOBOD’s Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED) explains that the MOFA used to provide extension services to cocoa farmers in the past, but this is now exclusively reserved for CHED extension officers (Interview 44, 21 March 2016). The lack of connections to other clusters in the network view, combined with its high scores in terms of individual quotation frequencies, suggests that the agric officer mostly operates in relative isolation, yet is a significant actor in the farmers’ network.

As a final observation from the presented network views and actor rankings, it appears that the non-certified PBC farmer respondent’s network also includes a “friend” as an important actor. Although not explicitly linked to actors from other clusters, just like family members, the friend particularly ranks high in Table 5.1, with the second highest score in terms of spontaneously cited actors being “important” to non-certified farmers in achieving their goals.

Categorizing the network actor groups into actors within (LBC actors, government actors, farmers and farmer groups) and beyond (family members, local community members, NGOs and faith actors) the value chain actors, the on the ground involvement with non-certified farmers of private parties from within the value chain is limited to LBC actors. Other than that, only the government is a cocoa value-chain actor of importance on the ground level, although there is some
interaction with farmer groups. This also explains the high rankings in Figure 5.5 of the LBC and government actors. The non-certified farmers simply do not have other value-chain actors to turn to. The actor groups from beyond the value-chain are limited to the direct social circle of the respondents, with family members and local community members responsible for the lion’s share of the quotations that are unrelated to the LBC and government actors. This suggests that the non-certified farmer respondents lack mobility in terms of reaching actors that are farther away from their home.

Sections 5.2 and 5.3 further clarify the relative importance of the actors identified, by addressing the respondents’ aspirations and motivations to engage with these actors, and assessing the associated relational strategies.

### 5.2 Farmers’ aspirations and motivations in a non-certified VCC setting

The subsequent Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 respectively address the non-certified respondents’ general aspirations and their motivations to engage with specific other actors.

#### 5.2.1 Non-certified farmers’ aspirations

Table 5.2 summarizes the non-certified farmers’ aspirations, captured as codes that are grouped in code families. The four main types of farmers’ aspirations include taking care of the family, growing the current business, assuring a stable income, and starting new business initiatives. Maslow (1970, cited in Bull et al., 2010) proposed in his Theory of Human Motivation that needs are ordered hierarchically: first physiological needs must be met, then safety needs become more important, and subsequently love, belonging, esteem and self-actualisation. Research suggests that in collectivist cultures such as Ghana the hierarchical order of these needs’ priorities change (Hofstede, 1984; Schimmack et al., 2002, Gambrel and Cianci, 2003), and the need to belong shifts to the same basic needs level as physiological needs. Ghana also qualifies as a country where the preference leans towards uncertainty avoidance, which places more importance on seeking security (Hofstede, 1984). Matching farmers’ aspirations accordingly, taking care of the family links to the basic needs, both in terms of assuring that the physiological needs are met and that a sense of belonging is fulfilled. Assuring a stable income, and growing the current business can be seen as seeking security, which is also a basic need in the Ghanaian context. Starting new business initiatives can be seen as an aspiration that is closer to esteem and self-actualization needs.
Table 5.2 Non-certified farmers’ aspirations (n = 21)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspiration type</th>
<th>Aspiration</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take care of family</td>
<td>Children's education</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Build/get a house</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children's employment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cater for family</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leave properties in good state for children</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Take care of family Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grow current business</td>
<td>Get trainings</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extend cocoa farm</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase cocoa farm yield</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase income from farming</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintain farm well</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extend store</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continue to sell cooked food</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grow current business Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure stable income</td>
<td>Prepare for future events</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduce dependency on cocoa (diversification)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secure stable income Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start new business</td>
<td>Own commercial car</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Start growing other crops</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Start a store</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Start new business Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>78</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Fieldwork*

![Bar chart showing non-certified farmers' aspirations](chart.png)

Figure 5.6 Non-certified farmers’ aspirations, ranked on overall frequencies of associated quotations in ten individual interviews and one focus group with eleven participants

*Source: Fieldwork*
Figure 5.6 complements the overview of farmers’ aspirations, to show the weight of the various types of aspirations. It also illustrates that all aspiration groups came to the fore both in the focus group and in the interviews with the non-certified (PBC) farmers, which adds to the credibility of the findings.

Furthermore, Figure 5.6 visualises the major focus of the farmers on taking care of their family, in terms of their aspirations. This is in line with the findings as presented in Section 5.1 with regard to the non-certified farmers’ space of interaction, which featured family members as very close network members. Another observation is that in realising an income, farmers are more focused on their current activities, than they are on new business ventures. In terms of Maslow’s needs, it appears that farmers’ aspirations mainly focus on the physiological and safety needs, i.e. taking care of the family and assuring a stable income by growing the current business. Ambitions that go beyond that, i.e. starting new business initiatives, do not feature prominently among the respondents. In this sense it does not seem like they are chasing a dream they may have, rather they concentrate on getting by.

Further to the relative weights of the aspiration types, Figure 5.7 shows to which kind of activities the non-certified farmers’ aspirations are linked: farm or non-farm activities.

**Figure 5.7 Farm and non-farm income activity aspirations of non-certified farmers, based on overall quotation frequencies from ten interviews and one focus group with eleven participants**

*Source: Fieldwork*

Both in the focus group and the interviews, the farmers tend to aspire more to farm activities, than they do to non-farm activities. This is in line with Figure 5.6, which showed that farmers’ aspirations lean more towards maintaining their current activities (which logically lean heavily on farming) than to venturing into new activities.
5.2.2 Non-certified farmers’ motivations

Further to the farmer’s aspirations, this section presents their motivations to engage with the various actors identified in the non-certified farmers’ space of interaction (further referred to as “motivations”). What do the farmers hope to get from the various actors in their network?

Figure 5.8 presents the motivations, grouped into nine categories: make joint decisions; get financial support; get trainings; get advice; get agro-inputs; get labour support; convert products into income; get emotional support; and get eldercare.

![Motivations Chart]

Figure 5.8 Non-certified farmers’ motivations ranked on importance and split in actor groups, based on associated actor quotations from ten interviews and one focus group with eleven participants

Source: Fieldwork

It appears that getting financial support is one of the main drivers for the respondents to engage with others, second only to the wish to make joint decisions. This suggests that financial support is difficult to get for the respondents, and therefore requires relatively high attention compared to fulfilling other needs. The strong wish to make joint decisions points to a close cooperation with certain actors in the respondents’ networks. This suggestion is given further weight by the high score for “getting advice”, synonymous to soliciting input from others, which
again points to a high degree of collaborative decision making. In line with this open attitude with regard to other actors’ input, “getting trainings” scores equally high as “getting advice”. Thus, in addition to their focus on getting financial support, non-certified farmer respondents appear eager to learn from others and share decision making power with other actors.

This raises the question whether the respondents look for financial support and solicit for advice and trainings, and with whom they share decision-making power. To address this question, Figure 5.8 also illustrates the relative importance of the various actor groups within each of the farmers’ motivation groups.

Like family and community members, the LBC actors are important for seeking advice. However, farmers are far less inclined to involve them in their decision-making, which is a privilege that is mainly reserved for family members. This suggests that LBC actors have little say in the non-certified farmers’ actual decision-making process, despite their importance to farmers in getting financial support.

Furthermore, the chart shows that NGOs are practically invisible to the non-certified farmers. Interestingly, faith actors also score low in term of farmers’ motivations to engage with others, which suggests that their actual importance in the non-certified farmers’ network is less than one would perhaps expect in the highly religious Ghanaian culture, or that this importance relates to farmers’ spiritual life rather than their daily livelihoods. Also farmer groups and local marketplace actors appear to be underrepresented in farmers’ motivations to engage with others. In the case of the marketplace actors, this might be explained by a mismatch with the farmers’ main motivations. The marketplace actors may not be knowledgeable of the lessons and advice farmers are seeking, and unable to provide financial support (which are the main motivations for farmers to engage with others). Remarkably, the farmer groups did not receive more weight in the non-certified farmers’ motivations to engage with others, whereas one would expect that they pool value farming knowledge. It could be that, like NGOs, these farmer groups are simply too scarcely available and therefore do not feature in respondents’ motivations to engage with others.

To further clarify the roles that the individual actors play within the farmers’ network, Figure 5.9 zooms in on the individual actor level. In line with Section 5.1, the figure illustrates the PC’s key position in the non-certified farmers’ network, in terms of what the farmers hope to get from another actor. The main motivations for engaging with the PC include getting financial support (36%) and getting advice (27%). Although one would perhaps expect “convert products into income” as the most important motivation associated with the PC, this is in fact a relatively minor motivation (14%). This suggests that the farmers are not experiencing trouble in finding a PC that is
willing to buy their produce, and therefore can focus on other needs in their interactions with PCs, such as getting financial support.

Figure 5.9 Non-certified farmers’ network actors ranked on importance by frequency of associated motivation quotations, based on ten interviews and one focus group with eleven participants

*Source: Fieldwork*
Figure 5.9 also illustrates the high importance of the Agric Officer as an actor with whom non-certified farmers engage to get trainings. As the interaction with the agric officer, a few times per year, is less frequent than the more regular meetings with other “training” actors, i.e. farmer peers, farmer groups and LBC actors including the PC, this raises concerns with regard to farmers’ access to trainings.

Furthermore, the spouse and children, as the main family actors, are important partners in decision-making. Interestingly, the “friend” is also very important in decision-making, scoring higher than the children, as well as scoring higher overall than most of the other more distant family members. This suggests that certain friends take a role in the non-certified farmers’ networks that is comparable to that of family members.

Given the aspirations and motivations of non-certified farmers, Section 5.3 addresses their relational strategies in terms of how the non-certified farmers attempt to meet their expectations in dealing with the actors in their network. This concentrates specifically on farmers’ relations with the PC, as the most important individual actor in their network.

**5.3 Farmers’ relational strategies in a non-certified VCC setting**

Analysing how non-certified smallholder farmers use the space of interaction in VCC as a space for deliberation to negotiate the desired outcomes, this section specifically explores the farmers’ strategies in dealing with the PC and addresses the assumption made in Section 3.2.1 that non-certified respondents would be more preoccupied with intrinsic rather than extrinsic product features.

As illustrated above, the PC-LBC unit can be considered as the most important non-family member network actor in the non-certified farmers’ network. Other than the buyer-seller relationship, farmers see the PC or LBC as a potential source of financial support, agricultural inputs, trainings and advice. In order to capitalise on this potential, farmers usually work with a specific buyer. Table 5.3 shows their considerations in selecting a specific PC or LBC to work with.
Table 5.3 Non-certified farmers’ relational strategies for PCs and LBCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main reasons to choose a PC/LBC</th>
<th>Frequencies in absolute numbers and percentages (n = 21)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate payment terms</td>
<td>2 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close proximity</td>
<td>3 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buyer’s relevant experience</td>
<td>3 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal relationship to buyer</td>
<td>6 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buyer’s trustworthiness (honesty / loyalty)</td>
<td>6 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets buyers’ intrinsic product characteristics requirements</td>
<td>8 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sells to buyer for reasons of reciprocity:</td>
<td>12 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sell to buyer who provides advice</td>
<td>2 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sell to buyer who provides agro-inputs</td>
<td>2 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sell to buyer because buyer lends financial support</td>
<td>4 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sell to buyer for other secondary benefits (e.g. work assignments)</td>
<td>4 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>40 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fieldwork

The strategies presented in Table 5.3 obviously overlap to a large extent with the respondents’ motivations to engage with a specific PC or LBC, but also reveals that the needs of the other actor (meeting buyer’s intrinsic product requirements) plays a role. This confirms to some extent the expectation that in non-certified VCCs the balance between intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics tends more towards intrinsic products characteristics (i.e. colour, dryness, cleanliness).

However, the feedback from the respondents indicates that in particular personal relationships and trust (30%) and reciprocity (30%) are key considerations in farmers’ relational strategies. With regard to trust, one farmer stated that they work with a specific PC because he is “nokre di” (interview 25, 26 February 2016), which is translated as a mix of loyalty, honesty and truthfulness. With regard to reciprocity, another farmer clarified that by selling his cocoa to the PC, he expects the PC to return him a favour:

“I sell to a specific PC to get him as a customer, so he helps in finances when in need” (interview 8, 22 February 2016).

Specifically the financial support, agro-inputs and advice elements of reciprocity can be considered as community support, which is one of the extrinsic product characteristic groups presented in Figure 2.2. Hence, in contrast to expectations, extrinsic product characteristics play an important role in the non-certified farmers’ relational strategies. This could be due to the Ghanaian government’s strict regulation of the local cocoa market, setting the farm gate prices that buyers
have to pay to farmers, the price paid for produce bought is a given. This implies that the only possibility for buyers to increase their income is to increase the volume of the produce bought, making sure that the produce they buy will not be rejected by the COCOBOD’s quality department, and reduce their operational costs in general. With LBCs competing for the available cocoa, farmers are in a position to demand secondary benefits from the buyers if they supply good quality cocoa. Other than reciprocal benefits, these demands also touch upon the payment behaviour of the LBC. Although not a major driver of selecting a PC or LBC to work with, prompt payment is important at the moment of transaction. As one farmer stated:

“PBC pays upon supply, most of the times, but we will go to another LBC if they fail to have the cash available” (interview 7, 22 February 2016).

The research did not harvest any major feedback on the relational strategies applied to other actors in the non-certified farmers’ space of interaction. This is mainly due to a focus on the farmer-PC relationship in the data collection phase, but also because there simply did not seem to be any strategies for dealing with the other identified actors. The family members are a given, with the extent of interaction going as far as a single decision-making unit. Other actors appear to be included simply because they are the actors who are available within the close proximity of the respondent and do not require complicated strategies to maintain. With regard to the labourers for example, one respondent indicated:

“Labourers are no issue, they are plenty around” (interview 24, 26 February 2016).

Also for the market traders, for focus group respondents the fact that these traders travel to the farm is a reason that they are given more weight in the network. Commenting on the outcome of a participatory mapping exercise, where participants placed poker chips on identified actors to signify whether the respondents felt they had meaningful discussions with that actor, a participant explained:

“The stacks for sellers (on the market) were also high, because they really go to the farm” (focus group 2, 15 February 2016)

There did not seem to be any active strategies for reaching out to other actors beyond the immediate local embedding of the respondents, such as farmer groups, NGOs and the government.
As a result there are gaps in the non-certified farmers’ network, in terms of actors who can provide the support they need. During the research, the non-certified farmers who took part in the focus group addressed me personally to ask support for some of their concerns:

“When the government gives us one bottle of Confidor, it is shared amongst six farmers, and this is very little for the size of farms we have. Confidor is very good, but considering we all have at least 10 acres of land, than one bottle sharing amongst six farmers, is something which shouldn't be done. This chemical is not sold in the stores, for farmers to purchase it with their own money. This is one of the reasons that we have at times a low yield of crops, since some farmers would just buy any available chemical that he or she can get to protect their crops against diseases and pests, but those chemicals may be harmful to the crops. So, our plea is that, if you write your research report, that you include in it that the government should at least make Confidor available in the stores, so that farmers can buy it at the moment they need it” (focus group 2, 15 February 2016).

Another request related to the farmers difficulties in dealing with the lack of rain:

“…we, the cocoa farmers, who solely depend on rain, and should there be no rain, as we have now, we find it difficult working on the farm, so we would appreciate any help from you students, if there is any alternative to get water, other than rain, that you could help us” (focus group 2, 15 February 2016).

These requests illustrate the importance of local presence for NGOs, government actors, farmer groups and other actors that could, and are willing to, address farmers’ concerns. It appears that the non-certified farmers do not, or are not able to, go outside their local community to forge new relationships with other actors.

The lack of clear signs of relational strategies with other actors than the PC or LBC is in line with the respondents’ evaluation of the meaningfulness of their interactions with other network members. To visualise the farmers’ perception of the quality of the interactions with actors in their network, Table 5.4 presents the output of the focus group mapping exercise during which respondents were asked to place stacks of poker chips on the actors they identified. The higher the stack, the more meaningful they considered the interaction with that specific actor. Figure 5.10 is a snapshot of the overview that the non-certified farmers built.
This output translates into the average actor stack heights for the various actor groups as presented in Table 5.4, showing to what degree the respondents’ discussions with that actor group are perceived as meaningful.

### Table 5.4 Average actor stack heights per actor group, signifying the degree of having a meaningful discussion based on a participatory diagramming exercise in a focus group with eleven non-certified farmers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor group</th>
<th>Average actor stack height</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family members</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBC actors</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local community members</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearest marketplace actors</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer groups</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Fieldwork*

The table conveys that the family members and LBC actors, both seen as important in getting financial support and soliciting advice, are also the actors with whom the farmers have the most meaningful discussions. Other than that, faith actors and local community members are good discussion partners. In line with the lack of findings with regard to relational strategies for actors outside the respondents’ direct vicinity, it seems that the farther away the actor, the less meaningful
discussions take place with that actor.

5.4 Conclusion

Overall, the non-certified farmer respondents’ space of interaction consists of LBC actors, family members, local community members, government actors, farmer groups, actors associated with the nearest marketplace, faith actors and NGOs.

The LBC actors and family members represent the most important groups, with respectively the PC and the spouse and children as the most important individual actors. On the ground involvement with non-certified farmers with private parties within the value chain is limited to LBC actors. Other than those, only the government is an actor of importance on the ground level, although there is some interaction with farmer groups. The fact that non-certified farmers simply do not have other value-chain actors to turn to, partly explains the high ranking of the LBC actors. Actor groups from beyond the value-chain are limited to the direct social circle of the respondents. An important finding relates to the position of the PC: as a network member with links to several actor groups in the non-certified farmers’ network, the PC is of extra importance. This is also reflected in the motivations of non-certified farmers to engage with actors in their network. These concentrate mainly on joint decision-making (23%), getting financial support (21%), and getting trainings (16%) and advice (11%). Whereas the main motivations to engage with the PC include getting advice and financial support, the focus on joint decision-making is reserved primarily for the family members and a particular close friend. The friend regularly appears in respondents’ quotations, with references that signify that they work in unison with the respondent, to a degree that is comparable to that of a spouse. Another interesting actor is the Agric Officer, who appears to operate in isolation from the other actors in the farmers’ space of interaction, yet is of considerable importance as a source of trainings and agro-inputs. The low frequency of interaction with the Agric Officer, compared to other actors in non-certified farmers’ space of interaction, suggests it is difficult for farmers to find knowledgeable trainers. LBCs and the PC fill this gap to some extent.

Non-certified farmers’ motivations to engage with other actors are rooted in their aspirations. In terms of Maslow’s pyramid of needs, adapted for a collectivist culture with a preference to avoid uncertainty, it appears that the farmers’ aspirations mainly focus on the basic needs, i.e. taking care of the family and assuring a stable income by growing the current business. Ambitions that go beyond that, i.e. starting new business initiatives, do not feature prominently among the respondents. Moreover, in line with their focus on current (usually farming) activities, the non-certified farmers tend to aspire to engage more in farm activities than they aspire to engage in non-farm activities.
Building further on the farmers’ motivations to engage with other actors, their relational strategies that follow are based on six pillars. These include reciprocity (30%), personal relationships and trust (30%), compliance to expectations that concern intrinsic product characteristics (20%), other actors’ relevant experience (8%), proximity (8%) and negotiable payment terms (5%). The relative importance of reciprocity and intrinsic product characteristics may be explained by the tight regulation of the Ghanaian cocoa sector. With farm gate prices fixed by the government, and LBCs competing for available cocoa, the farmers are in a position to demand secondary benefits in dealing with the PC, as long as they supply cocoa that meets the government’s criteria. This may also explain the versatility assigned to the PC, in terms of the non-certified farmers’ motivations to engage with the PC, and suggests that the PC is pushed to search for solutions to fulfil farmers’ needs that the farmer is not able to meet him- or herself. This is in line with a further (apparent) lack of non-certified farmers’ strategies to engage with other actors in the network.

To conclude, the space of interaction as analysed based on the focus group and interviews with non-certified farmer respondents includes actors from both within and beyond the value chain, but appears to be limited to those actors that are available in the farmers’ direct proximity. The farmers convert this limited space of interaction into a space for deliberation, mainly through interactions with the PC based on reciprocity linked to selling cocoa to the PC. As they do not manage to reach outside their existing network to address gaps in their needs fulfilment, the non-certified farmers effectively appear to rely on the PC as an agent to do so on their behalf.
Chapter 6 – Exploring the space for deliberation in a certified VCC setting

In contrast to Chapter 5, the analysis in this chapter concerns farmers that are UTZ and/or Rainforest Alliance certified. These farmers receive a premium of GH¢ 20 per bag of cocoa, equal to 4.62 euros. All farmers included in this chapter’s analysis are working with Cocoa Abrabopa, which is a farmers’ association that works together with these certification bodies. Cocoa Abrabopa works with Kumankoma Company Ltd. (KCL) as their designated LBC. These farmers are organized into local Cocoa Abrabopa groups that elect peers for chairman, secretary and “collector” roles. The collector acts as the purchasing clerk for KCL. Farmers need to register with Cocoa Abrabopa with a valid identification document, and sign an agreement that also entitles them to a supply of agro-inputs on credit basis, to be paid back in the form of cocoa. Throughout the focus group and interviews, the names of Cocoa Abrabopa and KCL are often used interchangeably, as KCL is regarded as being part of Cocoa Abrabopa. Therefore, in the analysis they are merged into one unit.

Thus, this chapter addresses the question of what smallholder-cocoa farmers’ capacity is to create a space for deliberation within a certified territorially embedded VCC. Sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 will respectively address the certified farmers’ space of interaction, their aspirations and motivations to engage with others in their network, and the relational strategies they use. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the space for deliberation available to the non-certified farmers, based on their space for interaction, their motivations and aspirations, and their relational strategies. Chapter 7 will follow up with a comparison between the findings related to the non-certified and the certified farmers.

6.1 Farmers’ space of interaction in a certified VCC setting

The certified farmers’ space for interaction that emerged from a participatory mapping exercise in a focus group with nine certified farmer participants, contains seven actor groups. These are family members, LBC actors, local community members including faith actors, farmers groups, LBC actors, government actors, and actors associated with the nearest market place. In Figure 6.1, the actor group members are placed closer or farther away from the KCL farmer, to indicate the frequency of interaction between that actor and the farmer: interaction with family members takes place daily; with faith actors, local marketplace actors and LBC actors weekly or monthly; with all other actors only a few times per year.
Figure 6.1 Certified farmers’ space of interaction, based on a focus group with nine certified farmers

Source: Fieldwork

By way of triangulation, Figure 6.2 shows the space of interaction that took shape based on an analysis of the responses from ten interview respondents. There are only two differences in comparison to the data from the focus groups; marketplace actors do not feature in the interview responses, whereas NGOs are new in comparison to the focus group data.
Figure 6.2 Certified farmers’ space of interaction, based on interviews with ten certified farmer respondents

Source: Fieldwork
Figure 6.3 Certified farmers’ space of interaction based on a focus group with nine certified farmers and interviews with ten certified farmers

Source: Fieldwork
As the same difference occurred between the non-certified focus group and interview data, it appears that the set-up of the focus group and interviews may have had an impact in this respect. In the focus groups, participants were asked to think of the places where they meet with other people to achieve their goals, and indicate for each place who are these people. In the interviews, respondents were asked to think of the people who are important for achieving their goals. Thus, in the focus group the thinking process started from places, whereas in the interviews the process started with actors. Possibly, it was easier for the respondents to come up with market-related actors when thinking of places they go to, than when they were simply asked to list the people they could think of.

Effectively, in terms of actor groups, the overall space of interaction for the certified farmers as presented in Figure 6.3 looks very similar to the non-certified farmers’ space of interaction as presented in Figure 5.3, encompassing the same eight actor clusters. However, zooming in on the individual actors within the actor clusters, there are some differences, which will be addressed in Chapter 7. This section focuses on certified network actors.

In Figure 6.3 family members are close to the respondent, to signify their daily interaction. Note that the landlord is considered family, as a household member. Interaction with other actors is mostly on a weekly or monthly basis, and accordingly their distances to the respondent are comparable. It is noticeable that interaction with Cocoa Abrabopa / KCL actors is not primarily reserved to the PC. In fact, there is a considerable overlap between actors and clusters. In explaining the joint decisions he made with another actor, one of the interview respondents illustrates this overlap:

“With the secretary of my Cocoa Abrabopa group, who is also the collector, and my friend who is also a member of our group, we discuss the spraying of the farm” (Interview 12, 24 February 2016).

This illustrates how the certified farmer is interlinked with various clusters, through interconnectedness of the local community members, Cocoa Abrabopa members and KCL actors. A closer look at the individual actors’ scores in terms of quotation frequencies throughout the focus group and interviews, shows that the Cocoa Abrabopa / KCL entity as an LBC unit is by far the most quoted actor. This could be a result of the interconnectedness of Cocoa Abrabopa with other actor clusters, effectively engraining the Cocoa Abrabopa organization in the local context.
Figure 6.4 Certified farmers’ overall quotation frequencies for individual network actors, from a focus group with nine participants and ten individual interviews

Source: Fieldwork
The local KCL District Manager gave further weight to this assumption, by expressing his feelings about the farmers with whom he works:

“They are like a family to me (Interview 42, 23 February 2006)”

Another observation from the ranking in Figure 6.4 is that the pastor and the Agric Officer both score high in terms of quotations. This requires some nuancing, as most of the quotations for both actors came from the focus group (marked in blue). One of the participants in the focus group was a pastor himself, and this stirred a discussion about the position of the pastor and the church in the certified farmers’ network. One participant joked:

“These pastors they pray for us and take our moneys on top” (focus group 1, 12 February 2016).

Because of the ongoing discussion that followed, faith actors possibly received more attention in the network than they would have had otherwise.

Although the Agric Officer scored a relatively high frequency of quotations in the focus group and there is a high interconnectedness in the network, the Agric Officer is not included in this interconnectedness. Thus, it appears the Agric Officer operates independently within certified farmers’ space of interaction.

![Figure 6.5 Certified KCL farmers’ overall quotation frequencies for actor clusters, from a focus group with nine participants and ten individual interviews](image-url)

*Source: Fieldwork*
This could explain the low overall government group scores as presented in Figure 6.5, which ranks the farmer group cluster and the LBC cluster highest (Cocoa Abrabopa is associated with both groups).

Table 6.1 Aggregated scores for top five actor clusters cited by certified KCL farmers as “most important in achieving their goals” (n = 10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor cluster</th>
<th>Spontaneous citations</th>
<th>Within cluster top actor(s)</th>
<th>Spontaneous citations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family members</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Children, Spouse</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community member</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer group</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cocoa Abrabopa Secretary</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith actor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBC actor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fieldwork

To complete the analysis of the certified farmers’ space of interaction, Table 6.1 presents the spontaneously cited actors when interviewees were asked to list the actors they consider as being the most important in achieving their goals. This nuances the relative importance of the family, compared to the LBC and the farmer groups. Whereas in the overall quotation frequencies (Figure 6.5) the LBC and farmer groups both surpass the family members, Table 6.1 shows that the family members are in fact the most important. Furthermore the “friend”, as a local community member, scores higher than the LBC and farmer group actors, and the Agric Officer completely disappears from the overview.

In terms of within the value chain (LBC actors, government actors and farmer groups) and beyond (family members, local community members, NGOs and faith actors), the involvement of parties from within the value chain is limited to LBC actors, government actors and farmer groups. Of these three, LBC actors and farmer groups are by far the most often quoted. This suggests that, other than setting the rules of the game through COCOBOD, the government plays only a marginal role as a value chain actor in the certified farmers’ network.

The actor groups from beyond the value chain include mostly actors from within the direct social circle of the respondents, notably family members and close friends.

Importantly, there is a high degree of interconnectedness between within and beyond the
value chain actor groups: local community members as well as the PC also feature as farmer group actors. This strong local embeddedness could explain the high ranking of the actor cluster “farmer groups”. Moreover, the high degree of interconnectedness explains why the network members from these clusters mostly consider each other as peers, at times even as family.

Sections 6.2 and 6.3 further assess the respondents’ aspirations and motivations to engage with other actors, as well as the relational strategies they employ, in order to understand how the certified farmers convert the space of interaction into a space for deliberation.

6.2 Farmers’ aspirations and motivations in a certified VCC setting

This section is split into two sub-sections which respectively address the certified farmer respondents’ general aspirations, and their specific motivations to engage with the various actors in their space of interaction.

6.2.1 Certified farmers’ aspirations

Figure 6.6 presents the ranking of certified farmers’ aspirations, grouped in six aspiration types. These include taking care of the family, growing the current business, securing a stable income, changing profession, starting a new business and other personal goals.

![Chart: Certified farmers’ aspirations](chart.png)

**Figure 6.6 Certified farmers’ aspirations, ranked on overall frequencies of associated quotations in ten individual interviews and one focus group with nine participants**

Source: Fieldwork

In line with the high weight of family members in the certified farmers’ space of interaction,
the highest ranked aspiration is “taking care of the family”. Thus, the family is not just an important network member of the certified farmers, but also the focus of the farmers’ aspirations. As this signifies a joint interest, it is likely that this translates into a high degree of joint decision-making.

An interesting observation from Figure 6.6 relates to the inclusion of aspirations that relate to “other personal goals”. As Table 6.2 shows, these include such aspirations as gaining status and owning additional private properties. Moreover, aspirations related to a secure and stable income are mentioned less often than the wish to start a new business.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspiration type</th>
<th>Aspiration</th>
<th>Total*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take care of family</td>
<td>Build/get a house</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cater for family</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children's education</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Take care of family Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grow current business</td>
<td>Extend cocoa farm</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase cocoa farm yield</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase income from farming</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grow current business Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other personal goals</td>
<td>Be a prominent community member</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Build a 2nd house</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Own a private motorcycle</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Own private car</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other personal goals Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start new business</td>
<td>Own commercial car</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Start a fish farm (pond)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Start a store</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Start new business Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure stable income</td>
<td>Have peace of mind</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secure a stable income through farming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secure stable income Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change profession</td>
<td>Become a professional football player</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change profession Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* More than one answer possible.

Table 6.2 Certified farmers’ aspirations (n = 19)

Source: Fieldwork

In terms of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, adapted for a collectivist culture with a preference for avoiding uncertainty (see Section 5.2.1), the inclusion of such goals as owning a private car, in combination with the relatively low score for motivations associated with a secure stable income, may be a sign that the certified farmers carefully reach beyond the basic needs of belonging and physiological fulfilment. Still, these basic needs are the by far the most important, as reflected in the high scores for taking care of the family and growing the current business in Table 6.2 and Figure
6.6. Note that these findings seem to be consistent in the focus group and the interviews, as illustrated by the blue and orange shares of the bars in Figure 6.6.

As a final observation from Figure 6.6 and Table 6.2, “growing the current business” accounts for 31% of the aspirations, whereas “starting a new business” only makes up 5% of the aspirations. Thus, the certified farmers appear to be happy to continue making a living primarily from cocoa farming. Figure 6.7 aptly illustrates this: from all income-related aspirations 87% concerned farming-related income aspirations, with only 13% left for the non-farming income aspirations.

![Figure 6.7 Farm and non-farm income activity aspirations of certified farmers, based on overall quotation frequencies from ten interviews and one focus group with nine participants](image)

**Source:** Fieldwork

### 6.2.2 Certified farmers’ motivations

With these aspirations in mind, this section analyses the effective motivations of certified farmers to engage with other actors in their network (hereafter “motivations”).

Figure 6.8 presents the motivations, grouped into eleven categories: make joint decisions; get financial support; get agro-inputs; get trainings; get advice; get emotional support; convert products into income; get labour support; prepare for the future / care for the next generation; get help to increase yield; and gain access to farm land.
As a first observation, in line with the high weight of family members in the certified farmers’ space of interaction and the farmers’ primary aspiration to take care of the family, which suggests a shared interest between these network actors, the most important motivation to engage with other actors is “joint decision-making”. This holds specifically for family member actors, but also applies to local community members and, to a lesser extent, LBC actors.

Second, the aspirations of certified farmers to grow the current cocoa farming business, align with the high ranking of motivations that relate to getting agro-inputs, trainings and advice. Moreover, since the respondents all signed an agreement with Cocoa Abrabopa / KCL that gives them access to trainings and inputs on a credit basis, it is not a surprise to see that LBC actors are by
far the most quoted actor group, in terms of motivations related to getting agro-inputs and trainings. It is surprising to see that the government score relatively low in these motivation categories, as the provision of inputs and trainings is the main responsibility of the Agric Officer, the primary representative of the government actor cluster.

Although getting financial support primarily concentrates on support for school fees and catering for the family (taking care of the family), it is associated with various aspirations, including getting a car (other personal aspirations). Moreover, joint decision-making is a more important motivation for certified farmers than getting financial support. This suggests that joint decision-making addresses the fulfilment of belonging (as a basic need), or that financial support is in fact less urgent (as a physiological, basic need) because it is already fulfilled to a higher degree.

As the certified farmers’ agreements with Cocoa Abrabopa oblige them to repay the value of the inputs they received, one would expect that motivations related to selling cocoa are fully absent in the ranking. However, these motivations are still frequently quoted. As one farmer explains, this could be due to farmers’ preference for getting quick payment upon selling the cocoa, which is at times a challenge to KCL:

“A consideration that is important in selling my cocoa, is whether the purchaser will not delay in paying. Because of this, I at times sell to Olam instead of KCL” (interview 14, 24 February 2016).

Finally, an interesting motivation category, although scoring relatively low, relates to preparing for the future, in terms of assuring that cocoa thrives and the next generation will enjoy a good life. This is in line with the finding that certified farmers’ aspirations appear somewhat less basic needs oriented.

Figure 6.9 provides a ranking of the individual actors in the certified farmers’ space of interaction, and shows for each actor what the main associated motivations are.
Figure 6.9 Certified farmers’ network actors ranked on importance and split by motivation group, based on associated quotation frequencies from ten interviews and one focus group with nine participants

Source: Fieldwork
The rankings in Figure 6.9 are generally in line with the ranking as presented in Figure 6.4. This signifies that those actors that are often mentioned are usually also the actors with whom the certified farmers’ are motivated to engage with. However, as already suggested by the government actors’ low shares of the agro-input and training motivation categories presented in Figure 6.8, the Agric Officer drops a few places in Figure 6.4 compared to the ranking in Figure 6.5, whereas friends and the KCL PC rank somewhat higher. The higher ranking of the friend and the KCL PC is in line with the ranking in Table 6.1, which already showed that certified farmers see them as more important in achieving their goals than the Agric Officer. Furthermore, this drop in the Agric Officer’s ranking could be an indication that farmers are more motivated to interact with actors who are locally present. Indeed, in explaining the low score assigned to the Agric Officer in terms of having a meaningful discussion, a focus group participant remarked:

“They don't come here to give us any trainings or teachings (focus group 1, 12 February 2016)”.

Section 6.3 further explores the above assumption and analyses the relational strategies that certified farmers employ to convert the space of interaction into a space for deliberation.

**6.3 Farmers’ relational strategies in a certified VCC setting**

This section addresses the considerations that certified farmers applied in their choice to work with KCL as an LBC, as well as in interacting with other PCs and LBCs, if applicable. These considerations reflect the strategies these certified farmers employ in navigating their space of interaction. The analysis concentrates on the farmer-PC relationship, although some of the observations spill over to other actors in the certified farmers’ network. In the analysis, the relative importance of intrinsic and extrinsic product characteristics is of interest, as it was expected that certification translates into an increased importance of extrinsic product characteristics in the relational strategies in the network, which could help value-chain actors embedded in the local context to jointly work on a shared goal.

Table 6.3 ranks the relational strategies, in terms of the frequency in which they are mentioned by the certified farmers in explaining their choices.
Table 6.3 Certified farmers’ relational strategies for PCs and LBCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main reasons to choose a PC/LBC</th>
<th>Frequencies in absolute numbers and percentages (n = 19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal relationship</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate transaction conditions (prompt payment)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work as a group</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity (physical distance)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet buyer’s and/or seller’s extrinsic product characteristics requirements</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buyer’s trustworthiness (honesty / loyalty)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet buyer’s intrinsic product characteristics requirements</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sell to buyer for reasons of reciprocity</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sell to buyer who provided other secondary benefits</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sell to buyer who provides advice</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sell to buyer who helps increase income</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sell to buyer who provides trainings</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sell to buyer who provides financial support</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sell to buyer who supplied agro-inputs</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fieldwork

The certified farmers report both intrinsic and extrinsic product characteristics as determinants in their dealings with the LBC or PC. Although the intrinsic product characteristics (mainly cocoa dryness, fermentation, colour, and cleanliness) account for 16% of the quotations, the certified farmers also specifically report extrinsic product characteristics (9%) in their relational strategies. Moreover, the importance of these intrinsic characteristics is very low compared to the share of extrinsic product characteristics related relational strategy components, in the form of reciprocity (54%). For example, one farmer states:

“I sell to KCL because they supply me with good chemicals that are not harmful to the cocoa…” (interview 15, 24 February 2016).

The reciprocal strategies that farmers follow, are in line with the certified farmers’ motivations to engage with the PC and/or LBC, which mainly related to getting inputs and trainings. However, the reciprocal strategies that certified farmers’ employ go beyond that, as they consider also the goal of increased income, mainly through increased yield. This appears to be a joint goal and seems to be associated particularly with the certification programmes that are included in the Cocoa Abrabopa VCC, as illustrated by a respondent who clarifies the importance
he attaches to the UTZ and Rainforest Alliance certification programmes:

“…they make me see how important cocoa is, and help me achieve improvement in the farming, through their trainings” (interview 30, 1 March 2016).

Another relational strategy component that is associated with the certification partners, relates to trust:

“The certification is very important, because it involves teachings regarding standards that concern pollution. Because of this, I place more trust in KCL to be honest in trading” (interview 12, 24 February 2016).

It is worth noting that trust mainly features in the certified farmers’ vocabulary as a tangible concept in the form of “free scales”. As a KCL employee explains, the term signifies that the LBC or PC is working with weighing scales that are not adjusted to compensate for any operational costs the LBC or PC has to make. Since Cocoa Abrabopa boasts a strict policy on scale maintenance, with access to the scale settings restricted to scale mechanics who operate independently from the PCs, the certified farmers can be assured of the transparency of the weighing process (interview 42, 23 February 2016). Trust also is important in the interactions with other network actors. For example, concerning the pastor’s position in his network, a focus group participant states:

“If you go and confide in them about your needs, very soon you would hear everybody talking about it” (focus group 1, 12 February 2016).

Interestingly, proximity is also associated with trust, which could be an explanation for the apparent lack of relational strategies for engaging with actors beyond the local embedding of the VCC. This is illustrated in a comment from a Cocoa Abrabopa member, explaining his choice in electing a PC:

“The KCL collector is elected from the local group of Cocoa Abrabopa farmers, by the members of the group. In my group we elected someone who has a farm in the area, so that he cannot run away with our money” (interview 12, 24 February 2016).
Furthermore, with regard to their interactions with the PC as well as with other actors in their network, the certified farmers reflect some preference for operating in groups, rather than addressing issues individually. This is perhaps not surprising, as the farmers are already members of the Cocoa Abrabopa farmers’ association, but in this sense the certified farmers may actively engage with their selected peers towards other network actors, and potentially give more weight to the shared objectives in the interactions that follow. This might partially explain the low amount of motivation quotations that concern the interaction between the Agric Officer and the certified farmers, although the fact that the Cocoa Abrabopa organization takes care of the inputs and trainings also renders the Agric Officer of less importance to the certified farmers.

To get a further sense of the farmers’ interactional quality with the different actors in the certified farmers’ space of interaction, Table 6.4 translates the output of a mapping exercise that was done in a focus group with nine certified farmers, as pictured in Figure 6.10.

![Certified farmers focus group snapshot](image)

**Figure 6.10 Certified farmers focus group snapshot**

Source: Fieldwork

The respondents were asked to place stacks of poker chips on the network actors they identified, to indicate how meaningful they considered their discussions with that specific actor. The higher the stack, the more meaningful the discussion.
Table 6.4 Average actor stack heights per actor group, signifying the degree of having a meaningful discussion based on a participatory diagramming exercise in a focus group with eleven non-certified farmers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor group</th>
<th>Average actor stack height</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LBC actors</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local community members</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearest marketplace actors</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Fieldwork*

A close look at Figure 6.10 shows that one stack is extremely high compared to the other stacks on the table. This stack is connected to Cocoa Abrabopa / KCL. Since the other LBC actors received zero chips in their stacks, the average score for LBC actors in Table 6.4 is “only” 24, but still the highest average. This underlines that the certified farmers experience their discussions with Cocoa Abrabopa actors as highly meaningful, and suggests that the interconnectedness in the certified farmers’ networks that follows from their involvement in the VCC with Cocoa Abrabopa, KCL, UTZ and Rainforest Alliance, is associated with a high sense of space for deliberation.

Furthermore, although the farmers employ strategies related to trust and operating in groups in relation to the non-LBC actors in their network, these strategies do not actively seek to expand the existing network. Effectively, there is an apparent lack of relational strategies for addressing gaps in certified farmers’ needs fulfilment. Since the Cocoa Abrabopa VCC addresses the supply of inputs and provision of trainings, the most pressing need to address relates to financial assistance, which the farmers attempt to broker through their reciprocal dealings with the LBC and PC.

**6.4 Conclusions**

The space of interaction derived from a qualitative analysis based on the input of nineteen certified farmers from around Hwidiem in Ghana’s Asutifi district (Brong Ahafo Region), consists of eight actor groups. These include LBC actors, family members, local community members including faith actors, farmers groups, government actors, NGOs, and actors associated with the nearest marketplace. Within these groups, the individual actors of importance are the spouse and children, close friend and the PC, who in the Cocoa Abrabopa VCC by default is also a member of their local Cocoa Abrabopa group, at times also functioning as the local Cocoa Abrabopa group’s secretary.

Although family members emerge at the top in terms of spontaneously cited actors of
importance to the respondents, in the overall network ranking (based on quotation frequencies that relate to the various actors) their position is inferior to LBC actors and farmer groups. Involvement of chain actors in certified farmers’ network is limited to LBC actors, government actors and farmer groups, with only a marginal role for the government. Non-chain actor groups include mostly actors from within the direct social circle of the respondents, and consist primarily of family members and close friends.

There is a high degree of interconnectedness between chain and non-chain actor groups: local community members, as well as the PC, also feature as farmer group actors. This interconnectedness effectively engrains the Cocoa Abrabopa organization in the local context and could explain the prominent position held by the farmer groups actor cluster in the respondents’ network. Moreover, the high degree of interconnectedness explains why the network members from these clusters mostly consider each other as peers, at times even as family.

The importance of this high interconnectedness is given extra weight by the farmers’ aspirations. These appear to be somewhat less concerned with meeting basic needs. Although taking care of the family and getting financial support rank highest as aspirations, there are also indications that point towards a successful fulfilment of these basic level needs, with farmers reaching for such goals as gaining status and owning additional private properties.

This is in line with the certified farmers’ motivations to engage with others in their network. As getting financial support is reported as less of a motivation than joint decision-making, there seems to be less urgency to address the physiological needs associated with financial support. Moreover, the certified farmers’ motivations to engage with others include assuring that the next generation enjoys a good life, which further strengthens the impression that current basic needs are covered to a certain extent.

Motivation for interaction with the Agric Officer is low, although there is a high motivation to get trainings and agricultural inputs. As the LBC actors score particularly high on motivations related to getting trainings and inputs, this suggests that the certified farmers prefer to work with actors that are structurally present in their local embedding.

Looking at the relational strategies the certified farmers apply, this appears to be related to trust issues. The closer a network actor is in terms of that actor’s structural embeddedness in the farmer’s direct surroundings, the more trust the farmers assign to the actor. Trust is in itself an important factor in certified farmers’ relational strategies, and is one of the reasons why they deal with Cocoa Abrabopa / KCL. Their free scale policy provides tangible trust. Furthermore, certified farmers explicitly report both intrinsic (16%) and extrinsic (9%) product characteristics in their
relational strategies. The degree of reciprocity in the farmers’ relational strategies is of such high importance that farmers engage with other network actors to address shared goals, mainly with regard to increasing the income from farming. This further underlines the importance of extrinsic product characteristics and is associated specifically with the involvement of UTZ and Rainforest Alliance as VCC members.

To conclude, the space for deliberation as experienced by certified farmers is high, in the sense that they rate their interactions with LBC actors as very meaningful. Thus, interconnectedness in the certified farmers’ networks that follows from their involvement in the VCC with Cocoa Abrabopa, KCL, UTZ and Rainforest Alliance, is associated with a high sense of space for deliberation. Nevertheless, despite this perception of farmers, there appears to be a lack of relational strategies that address gaps in the certified farmers’ needs fulfilment. This is illustrated by the certified farmers’ attempts to broker financial assistance through their reciprocal dealings with the LBC and PC, and suggests that the space for deliberation could be further increased.
Chapter 7 – Comparing the space for deliberation of farmers in a non-certified and a certified VCC setting

After analysing the space for deliberation of farmers in a non-certified and in a certified VCC environment in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively, this chapter evaluates the differences and similarities between the two and highlights the challenges.

7.1 Comparing the space of interaction

Comparing Figures 5.3 and 6.3, reveals similarity in the space of interaction of non-certified and certified farmers. Yet, there are some important differences.

First, it seems that the space of interaction of both is made up of the same eight clusters: family members; local community members, including faith actors; farmer groups; LBC actors, government actors, NGOs, and actors associated with the nearest marketplace. Moreover, these clusters contain the same individual actors, and the relative weight of these actors is generally comparable. The central actors in both the certified and non-certified farmers’ networks include the farmers’ primary LBC of choice and associated PC, their spouse and children, and close friends. Of particular interest is the position of the PC, who is interlinked with various clusters in both the certified and non-certified farmers’ space of interaction. Also worth noting is the particular position of the friend who is almost of equal importance as the spouse and children.

Second, an actor who is relatively important in the non-certified farmers’ space of interaction, but far less so in that of the certified farmers, is the Agric Officer from COCOBOD’s Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED). This is illustrated by a comparison of the Agric Officer’s ranking in Figures 5.5 and 6.5, as well as by comparing the Tables 5.1 and 6.1. Certified farmers consistently rank government actors lower than non-certified farmers. Related to this observation, it was found that several non-certified farmers regard PBC – their primary LBC of choice – as a government organization. This may point to a difference between non-certified and certified farmers in appreciation of government representatives in general.

Third, another important difference lies in the interconnectedness between actors in the networks of non-certified and certified farmers. Although the LBC and associated PC are central actors in both the non-certified and certified farmers’ networks, the position of the LBC unit is considerably more pronounced in the certified farmers’ space of interaction. Moreover, in the non-certified farmers’ network, the PC is a key actor who connects several clusters, whereas in the
certified farmers’ network this interconnectedness is not limited to the PC. Rather, the certified farmers in this research are all members of the Cocoa Abrabopa farmers' association and as such are included in a VCC with Cocoa Abrabopa, UTZ, Rainforest Alliance and KCL, which addresses sustainability in the cocoa trade and organizes the supply of inputs on a credit basis. As a result, the actor clusters in the certified farmers’ space of interaction overlap to a greater extent than the actor clusters in the non-certified farmers’ network, specifically with regard to community members, friends, farmer groups and LBC actors. This effectively shows the firm embeddedness of the Cocoa Abrabopa organization in the local context, and explains the central position of the Cocoa Abrabopa – KCL/LBC unit in the certified farmers’ space of interaction.

Fourth, both the non-certified and certified farmers do not work exclusively with one single LBC, although the position of the LBCs that are not their primary choice is marginal.

Fifth, differentiating between chain actors (LBC actors, government actors, farmer groups) and non-chain actors (family members, local community members, NGOs, faith actors and marketplace actors unrelated to the cocoa chain) the value chain, shows that LBC actors are the most important and often only private partners both in the non-certified and certified farmers’ space of interaction. Farmer groups are included in both networks, but these are especially important in the certified farmers’ space of interaction. This is not surprising, since this was a selection criterion for selecting certified respondents. However, the impact this has on the network structure is of interest. Furthermore, the government (in the Ghanaian context a value chain actor) features in both the non-certified and certified farmers’ network, but is of less significance in the certified farmers’ space of interaction.

Fifth, non-chain actor groups, both in the non-certified and certified farmers’ network, are limited to the direct social circle of the respondents. This suggest that farmer respondents generally lack mobility in terms of reaching actors that are farther away from their home.

In summary, farmers’ space of interaction in a non-certified and a certified VCC setting does not differ greatly in terms of the actors present, but their relative position in the network is different. An important difference is the strong local embeddedness of farmer groups and their associated LBC. Overall, the involvement of private chain actors is limited to the locally present LBCs, whereas the government as a non-private chain actor with a more central position in the non-certified farmers network than in that of the certified farmers. Finally, non-chain actors are limited to the direct social environment of the farmers, both in a non-certified and a certified VCC setting, which suggests that farmers either do not or cannot reach beyond their current network.
7.2 Comparing aspirations and motivations

This section compares the aspirations and motivations of non-certified farmers (Section 7.2.1) and certified farmers (Section 7.2.2) respectively, with a view to grasping their relational strategies and how these translate into spaces for deliberation.

7.2.1 Comparing aspirations

For both non-certified and certified farmers, taking care of the family and developing the current business are farmers’ two most important aspirations (Figures 5.6 and 6.6). Other than that, there are some interesting differences. First, the non-certified farmers indicate a secure income as an important aspiration (rank 3), which ranks lower (rank 5) in the certified farmers’ aspirations. Effectively, certified farmers rank starting a new business higher than securing a stable income, which is not the case for non-certified farmers. Second, the certified farmers’ aspirations feature “other personal goals”, which is related to such aspirations as owning a private car.

Considering Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, adapted for a collectivist culture with a preference for avoiding uncertainty (see Section 5.2.1), the aspirations related to taking care of the family, securing a stable income, and to a lesser extent further developing the current business, are in this research considered as basic needs, whereas the realization of private property and starting new businesses are associated with secondary needs. In this light, although aspirations related to the basic needs are the most often quoted ones for both the non-certified and certified farmers, it seems that these aspirations are of less importance to the latter. This suggests that the fulfilment of basic needs is less of an issue to the certified farmers, whereas the non-certified farmers are more specifically concerned with making ends meet.

7.2.2 Comparing motivations

The motivations to engage with other actors in the network are mostly similar between non-certified and certified farmers (Figures 5.8 and 6.8), but the ranking of these motivations differs on some important points. Certified farmers also mention some motivations that do not feature among non-certified farmers, and vice versa.

The following eight motivation categories feature both among non-certified and certified farmers: making joint decisions; getting financial support, agro-inputs, trainings, advice and emotional support; converting products into income, and getting labour support. Joint decision-making and getting financial support are the two most important motivations
among both non-certified and certified farmers, but in reversed order. Moreover, a motivation that
does not feature among non-certified farmers, and is mentioned by certified farmers, relates to a
willingness to assure that cocoa thrives and the next generation will enjoy a good life. This gives
further credibility to the finding that certified farmers’ aspirations appear to be somewhat less
concerned with meeting basic needs.

The strong wish to make joint decisions points to a close cooperation with certain actors in
the respondents’ networks, primarily family members and close friends. LBC actors are also
included in making joint decisions, but seem to have only limited say compared to family
members and close friends. Interestingly, in a certified VCC setting, the LBC actors account for
14% of the total actors associated with making joint decisions, whereas this is only 3% among non-
certified farmers. This suggests that there is tighter cooperation in the certified VCC setting. This
gives further weight to the motivation “getting help to increase income”, mostly by increasing
yields, which suggests that certified network actors have shared goals.

Together, getting agro-inputs, trainings and advice form the second important group of
motivations to engage with others. This is in line with a strong focus on further developing the
current business, in the farmers’ aspirations, both in a certified and a non-certified VCC setting, and
suggests that farmers are generally eager to learn from others.

With regard to individual actors, the motivations to engage with the Agric Officer are
considerably lower among certified farmers than among non-certified farmers. This is probably an
effect of Cocoa Abrabopa supplying agro-inputs and providing trainings to the certified farmers,
which reduces the importance of the Agric Officer as a trainer and supplier of inputs. However, it
also suggests a preference among farmers for working with actors who are structurally present in
the local setting, rather than those who visit only occasionally.

7.3 Comparing relational strategies

The analysis of the relational strategies that farmers apply to convert their space of interaction
into a space for deliberation concentrates on the farmers’ relationship with the PC, as a
representative of the LBC. This is mainly because that is the key focus of this research, but also
because both the non-certified and certified farmers exhibited virtually no concrete strategies for
engaging with other actors in or beyond their space of interaction. In general, other than the buyer-
seller relationship, farmers see the PC or LBC as a potential source of financial support, agricultural
inputs, trainings and advice.

In a certified VCC setting, 54% of the strategic considerations were related to reciprocity and
13% to trust and personal relationships. In a non-certified VCC setting, this is 30% and 30% respectively. This suggests that the interconnectedness in the certified farmers’ networks that follows from their involvement in the VCC with Cocoa Abrabopa, KCL, UTZ and Rainforest Alliance, translates into a high degree of reciprocity in their interactions, which effectively appears to render trust of lesser importance. However, the joint importance of trust and reciprocity is striking in both non-certified and certified farmers’ relational strategies. Moreover, a key quotation from one of the respondents reflects that reciprocity and trust are likely interchangeable terms in the context of this research, and also shows the important role of certification in creating a sense of trust and reciprocity:

“Certification is very important, because it involves teachings regarding standards that concern pollution. Because of this, I place more trust in KCL to be honest in trading” (interview 12, 24 February 2016).

The reciprocal elements in negotiations with the PC can be interpreted as extrinsic product characteristics, in terms of educational support (securing scholarships) and economic development (loans for agro-inputs). In this sense, the importance of extrinsic product characteristics is considerable in both the non-certified and certified farmers’ relational strategies. This could be due to the fixed farm gate prices, following the government’s tight control of the market. The price paid for produce bought is a given. This implies that the only possibility for buyers to increase their income is to increase the volume of the produce bought and reduce their operational costs in general. With LBCs competing for the available cocoa, farmers are in a position to demand secondary benefits from the buyers if they supply good quality cocoa. Other than reciprocal benefits, these demands also touch upon the payment behaviour of the LBC.

That said, the relative importance of extrinsic compared to intrinsic product characteristics is higher among certified farmers than among non-certified farmers. Whereas the reciprocal/trust components among certified farmers amount to 67%, and the considerations that are explicitly cited as related to extrinsic product characteristics (e.g. adherence to certification standards and a wish to prevent pollution) to 9%, trust and reciprocity account for 60% of the non-certified farmers’ strategic considerations, and they do not mention any explicit product characteristics in their strategies. Moreover, explicit intrinsic product characteristics feature in 16% of the certified farmers’ strategy references, against 20% among non-certified farmers.

Further to this observation, an evaluation of how non-certified and certified farmers
experience their interaction with their network members, shows that the certified farmers have a much higher appreciation for the LBC actors than do non-certified farmers. The average appreciation for network members is comparable between non-certified farmers (Table 5.4) and certified farmers (Table 6.4), but the LBC actors rank first among certified farmers, whereas they rank second among non-certified farmers, after family members. Moreover, the gap between the individual score for the primary LBC and other actors is extremely high in a certified VCC setting, compared to the relative score of the primary LBC in a non-certified VCC setting. This suggests that the interconnectedness in certified farmers’ networks that follows from their involvement in the VCC with Cocoa Abrabopa, KCL, UTZ and Rainforest Alliance, is associated with a high sense of space for deliberation.

Proximity, although a minor strategy component (7% among certified farmers, 8% among non-certified farmers), conveys that farmers generally have a preference for working with actors that are located close their home. This may partially explain why farmers in both a non-certified VCC and certified VCC environment do not reflect an active stance in forging new relationships beyond their existing spaces of interaction.

Thus, there appears to be a difference between the relational strategies of non-certified and certified farmers. The latter reflect a higher degree of reciprocity and more attention for extrinsic product characteristics, which is associated with a strong local embeddedness of the certified VCC and translates into a higher sense of space for deliberation. However, both the certified and non-certified farmers appear to be limited to interactions with actors in their direct social surrounding. In effect, both non-certified and certified farmers concentrate on the PC to provide financial support, agricultural inputs, and share their farming and business knowledge, by means of reciprocity attached to the sale of cocoa. This suggests that instead of reaching outside their existing network to address gaps in their needs fulfilment, the non-certified farmers effectively appear to rely on the PC as an agent to do so on their behalf.

7.4 Challenges in negotiating space for deliberation

The PC is of central importance as an actor on which both non-certified and certified farmers rely to address gaps in their needs fulfilment. This follows from the lack of relational strategies among farmers to reach beyond their existing network and is exacerbated by their preference for interacting with actors in their direct proximity. This suggests that certain actors or resources need to be structurally available at the local level. The effect of the credit-based input scheme –
facilitated through the local presence of Cocoa Abrabopa and KCL – on the relative importance of the Agric Officer’s irregular visits and the degree of reciprocity in farmers’ interactions with the PC, is illustrative of the need for local presence to effectively increase the space of deliberation.

As such, in order to further improve the space for deliberation of both non-certified and certified farmers around Hwidiem and Tepa, it is important to identify those actors that could add specifically required knowledge or resources to the local context.

7.4.1 Missing links in the Tepa and Hwidiem cocoa district networks

As a first observation, although the credit-based input scheme offered by Cocoa Abrabopa addresses an important need that applies to all the farmers in this research, many farmers are not involved in this programme. This could be due to a tie-in with their preferred LBC that results from earlier reciprocal dealings, or because of the importance of personal relationships in dealing with a specific PC. This implies that the structural availability of a “neutral” party such as the Agric Officer, for getting trainings and agricultural inputs has the potential to give a considerable boost to the local space for deliberation.

Another issue that surfaced during the research was raised during the focus group exercise with non-certified farmers:

“…we, the cocoa farmers, solely depend on rain, and should there be no rain, as we have now, we find it difficult working on the farm, so we would appreciate any help from you students, if there is any alternative to get water, other than rain, that you could help us” (focus group 2, 15 February 2016).

This is an issue also for the farmers engaged in the certified VCC that involves Rainforest Alliance, UTZ, Cocoa Abrabopa and KCL, since the lack of water constitutes a different, more immediate problem, compared to the trainings that are included in the programme. As illustrated in Figure 7.1, these trainings address good agricultural practices, good environmental practices (mostly related to deforestation and the prevention of pollution), responsible handling of chemicals and fertilizer, human rights and working conditions, occupational health and safety, community sanitation and waste management, and issues related to business management. Irrigation is not included.
Throughout the research, the lack of rainfall also featured prominently in the challenges farmers report as a threat in achieving their goals. Thus, there is a need for a local actor, who specifically addresses the issue of water management to help farmers cope with the immediate lack of water.
7.4.2 Regulatory issues

Another issue, also related to the local presence of an actor, relates to the availability of government approved agro-chemicals, such as the insecticide Confidor. Although the farmers in the non-certified focus group indicated that they are willing to buy these chemicals from their own money, they explain that they cannot do so, simply because these chemicals are not sufficiently available in the agro-input stores. In effect, farmers at times apply low quality chemicals that are harmful to their cocoa, which leads to low yields.

Whereas the farmers believe that it is the government that limits the availability of such approved chemicals, this is in fact not the case. Rather, the problem lies in a lack of enforcement of regulations that prohibit the sale of unapproved chemicals (UN, 2009; Northern Presbyterian Agricultural Services, 2012).

The concerns raised by the farmers in this research suggest that these issues are still not under control, which merits further attention on the national level with regard to checking the import and production of chemicals.

7.3 Conclusions

Overall, farmers operating in a certified VCC setting around the Hwidiem cocoa district seem to experience more space for deliberation than non-certified farmers in the neighbouring Tepa cocoa district. This appears to be an effect of the structural presence of Cocoa Abrabopa and KCL as representatives of the locally embedded certified VCC, which is associated with an increased degree of reciprocity and trust in the dealings between farmers and PCs.

Nevertheless, both the certified and non-certified farmers appear to be limited to interactions with actors in their direct surroundings. In effect, both non-certified and certified farmers rely on the PC for reaching outside their existing network to address gaps in their needs fulfilment.

It is expected that the space for deliberation available to both groups of farmers included in this research could be boosted by a more structural local presence of COCOBOD’s Cocoa Health and Extension Division, to provide a neutral alternative for input supply and training, and expertise on water management.
Chapter 8 – Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the findings and reflects on the theoretical implications of the findings by revisiting the original conceptual schema as presented in Section 2.5. It concludes with suggestions for further research and recommendations for policy and practice.

8.1 Synthesis of the findings

The objective of this research was to explore how certified and non-certified VCCs, territorially embedded in a cocoa production area dominated by the state, differ in their capacity to create a space for deliberation for smallholder-cocoa farmers to achieve their aspirations. As this study is of an exploratory nature, and based primarily on a qualitative analysis, it is important to keep in mind that the observations of this study apply to the Tepa and Hwidiem cocoa districts in the Ashanti and Brong Ahafo Regions in Ghana only, and cannot be assumed to be valid per se in other settings. Rather, the observations are intended as a basis for further research into the role of the purchasing clerk in relation to the cocoa smallholder farmer. To address the central research question, the research addressed three sub-questions. These looked at the differences between the farmers’ space of interaction, their aspirations and motivations to engage with other actors, and the relational strategies they employ that effectively convert their space of interaction into a space for deliberation.

With regard to the space of interaction, the research did not yield important differences between certified and non-certified farmers in terms of the actor groups included in their respective space of interaction. However, the relative position of actor groups and individual actors in the network does differ. An important difference is the strong interconnectedness of farmer groups and their associated LBC and PC in a certified VCC setting, compared to those in the non-certified setting. In effect, although the PC is a central actor in both settings, this is more pronounced in the non-certified farmers’ space of interaction, where the interconnectedness of the PC with various actor clusters is of more importance to the farmer. Furthermore, both the non-certified and certified farmers’ space of interaction features the spouse and children, as well as a particular close friend who is almost of equal importance as the spouse and children. An actor who is relatively important in the non-certified farmers’ space of interaction, but far less so in the certified farmers’, is the Agric Officer affiliated to COCOBOD’s Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED). This is also reflected in the low involvement of government actors, in the certified cocoa value chain setting. Involvement of private chain actors is limited to LBC actors for both the certified and non-certified
farmers. With regard to non-private parties, farmer groups are included in both networks, but these are especially of importance in the certified farmers’ space of interaction. As membership of the Cocoa Abrabopa farmers association was a criteria for selecting certified respondents, this is not surprising. However, the associated interconnectedness between actors within the certified farmers’ space of interaction is of interest. Both in the certified and non-certified farmers’ network, involvement of non-chain actors is limited to the direct social circle of the respondents. This suggests that generally farmer respondents lack mobility in terms of reaching actors that are farther away from their homes.

The differences between certified and non-certified farmers’ aspirations and motivation to engage with other actors are subtle. Both groups exhibit aspirations that concentrate on taking care of the family and further developing the current (farming) business. However, non-certified farmers appear to attach more importance to a secure stable income, while certified farmers are slightly more inclined to venture into new business activities and exhibit aspirations that relate to personal properties, such as owning a private car. In terms of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, adapted for a collectivist culture with a preference for avoiding uncertainty (see Section 5.2.1), this suggests that aspirations related to basic needs are relatively more important for non-certified farmers than for certified farmers and that non-certified farmers seem to be more specifically concerned with making ends meet.

Related to these aspirations, farmers’ motivations to engage with other actors also differ slightly. Joint decision-making and getting financial support are the two most important motivations among both certified and non-certified farmers, but non-certified farmers place getting financial support above making joint decisions, whereas the reverse holds for certified farmers. Moreover, a motivation that does not feature among non-certified farmers, but is mentioned by certified farmers, relates to a willingness to assure that cocoa thrives and the next generation will enjoy a good life. This lends further support to the assumption that certified farmers’ are relatively better off and somewhat less concerned with meeting basic needs. Furthermore, the high relative weight of motivations that relate to joint decision-making among both certified and non-certified farmers points to a close cooperation with certain actors in the respondents’ networks, primarily the family members and close friends. Although compared to family members and friends the involvement of PBCs is still limited, they appear to be more involved in decision-making in a certified than in a non-certified VCC setting. Since, certified farmers also mention motivations related to the achievement of shared goals (increasing yield), this suggests that farmers in a certified VCC setting cooperate more closely with LBC actors. This is reflected in the relative importance of the LBC in
certified farmers’ motivations compared to non-certified farmers’ motivations. In line with the strong focus in all farmers’ aspirations on developing the current business, getting agricultural inputs, trainings and advice are important motivations to engage with other actors. This suggests that farmers generally have an open attitude and are willing to learn from others. Since certified farmers are engaged in the Cocoa Abrabopa credit-based input scheme and associated trainings, the Agric Officer as a trainer and supplier of inputs is less important for certified farmers. However, it also suggests a preference among farmers for working with actors who are structurally present in the local setting, rather than those who visit only occasionally.

The relational strategies exhibited by farmers as a way to translate their space of interaction into a space for deliberation show that in addition to the buyer-seller relationship, both certified and non-certified farmers approach the PC or LBC as a potential source of financial support, agricultural inputs, trainings and advice. Both certified and non-certified farmers mainly select their LBC and associated PC based on considerations of reciprocity and trust, although this is particularly the case for certified farmers. The importance of reciprocity as an extrinsic product characteristic could be due to the government’s tight control of the market. Since farm gate prices are fixed, the only possibility for buyers to increase their income is to increase the volume of the produce bought and reduce their operational costs in general. With LBCs competing for available cocoa, farmers are in a position to demand reciprocal benefits from the buyers, provided they supply good quality cocoa. Moreover, since farmers generally seem to have a preference for working with actors who are located close their home, they do not reflect an active stance in forging new relationships. Instead, both certified and non-certified farmers rather rely on the PC to reach out on their behalf, to address gaps in their needs fulfilment. In this respect, the space for deliberation for both certified and non-certified farmers could be increased.

In relation to the central research objective to evaluate farmers’ interactions with other actors in their network as a space for deliberation, the difference between certified and non-certified farmers is considerably in favour of the certified VCC setting. Since the overall weight of reciprocity, trust and explicit extrinsic product characteristics as components of farmers’ relational strategies is somewhat higher among certified farmers than among non-certified farmers, this suggests that certification contributes positively to converting the space of interaction into a space for deliberation, by increasing a sense of trust and reciprocity, and extending the range of product characteristics with more possibilities for pursuing shared goals. This positive effect is also associated with the interconnectedness in the certified farmers’ networks, which follows from their involvement in the VCC with Cocoa Abrabopa, KCL, UTZ and Rainforest Alliance.
In summary, certified farmers reflect a higher degree of reciprocity and more attention for extrinsic product characteristics in their relational strategies than non-certified farmers, which is associated with a strong local embeddedness of the certified VCC and translates into a higher sense of space for deliberation. However, both the certified and non-certified farmers appear to limit their interactions to actors present in their direct surrounding, and effectively rely on the PC to reach out on their behalf to address gaps in their needs related to financial support, agricultural inputs, trainings and advice. In this respect, the possibilities to extend the space for deliberation for both certified and non-certified farmers depends to a large degree on the individual PC.

8.2 Theoretical reflection

The findings as presented in the previous section point to two theoretical issues of importance.

The first relates to the role of trust and reciprocity in altering the space for deliberation, specifically in the context of certification programmes such as those of UTZ and the Rainforest Alliance. Although prior to the research, trust was assumed to be of importance in enlarging the space for deliberation (De Vos and Bush, 2011) available to the farmer, and it was assumed that certification could help build trust between actors (Pappila, 2013), the concept of trust did not feature explicitly in the conceptual framework, because it was not expected to be feasible to address within the available timeframe. Nevertheless, the fieldwork captured how the reciprocal supply of inputs associated with the Cocoa Abrabopa certification VCC, the attention for such extrinsic product characteristics as the prevention of environmental pollution, and the shared goal of increased yield indeed appeared to have acted as drivers of trust in the setting of this research. Hence, reciprocity should be included in a framework that addresses the impact of certification on space for deliberation.

A second theoretical implication of the findings suggests that the role of reciprocity in this process is also tied to a structural on-the-ground presence of the certification VCC. Both the importance of reciprocity and local presence turns out to be in line with earlier research in the Ghanaian context (Lyon, 2000), which identified reciprocity as a key element in farmers’ trust. In working relationships this relates to the mutual guarantee of purchasing in times of surplus, and selling in times of shortage; in customer friendships this concerns adherence to shared concepts of morality and altruism, which includes giving incentives; and in the form of an obligation of other parties to reciprocate in the future, in return for vouching for someone (ibid.). Moreover, the
research illustrated the importance of local presence:

“One of the main requirements before giving credit is to know where the individual lives and works. When visiting them at their house or at their work place, the creditor can criticize them publicly, refuse to go away and hope that this will disgrace the person into repaying the money (ibid., p. 672)”

Based on these considerations, Figure 8.1 presents a revised conceptual scheme that captures the joint importance of reciprocity and local presence in the Ghanaian context, as associated with the certified VCC that featured in this study.

Figure 8.1 Framework for the impact of certification on space for deliberation

*Source: Extended from Bolwig et al. (2010)*
In this framework, certification acts as driver throughout the value chain for creating reciprocal circumstances in the local embeddedness of the VCC, which combined with a structural local presence translates into increased levels of trust and farmers’ space for deliberation.

8.3 Suggestions for further research

Following the analytical focus of this study on the relationship between the PC and the farmers, it was found that regardless of the setting, farmers appear to have a preference for working with local actors and effectively appear to only include actors that are present in their direct surroundings. In combination with the prevalence of reciprocity in dealings with other actors, this implies that in practice farmers rely on the locally present PC to reach out on their behalf, to address gaps in their needs fulfilment related to financial support, agricultural inputs, trainings and advice. Thus, the PC appears to act as a broker for the cocoa farmers.

This suggests that it would be important to understand what actors are typically included in the networks of PCs, but do not feature in the networks of farmers, and who among these actors are of importance in addressing the farmers’ needs. This would allow a better alignment of certification programmes with the local context (i.e. stronger embeddedness), while reciprocity could help to further increase the space for deliberation of both farmers and PCs.

8.4 Recommendations for policy and practice

A key recommendation for practice relates to the preconditions for certification programmes to have a positive impact on cocoa farmers. It is evident that this requires a VCC partner who is structurally present in the local context, and that the set-up of the programme should include elements of reciprocity. Since the PC is in a key position in the farmers’ network as a broker on their behalf, it makes sense to involve both the farmer and the PC in the design phase of such reciprocal programmes, as they would be able to identify the bottlenecks in the current network, in terms of the fulfilment of the farmers’ needs.

Furthermore, particularly for the study area, farmers expressed a need for locally available expertise related to water management, in order to cope with the increasing lack of rainfall they experience. As the lack of rainfall probably affects many other Ghanaian farmers, water management is an important research area that should receive proper attention.

Also, it appears that the Agric Officer generally manages to visit the area a few times per year.
Farmers could benefit from a more structural local availability of the Agric Officer. This holds explicitly for the non-certified farmers in the area. Thus, the Ghana government could potentially boost the cocoa productivity and help farmers increase their income, by installing a CHED office in the area.

Finally, it appears agricultural input traders are operating in the area, who sell chemicals that are “harmful to the cocoa”. This suggests that there is a local lack of enforcement of the regulations related to the trade of agricultural chemicals. This is an important issue that needs to be addressed by the Ghanaian government, as it directly threatens the health of farmers and others in the area.
Bibliography


KMPG (2012). *Cocoa Certification: Study on the costs, advantages and disadvantages of cocoa certification commissioned by The International Cocoa Organization (ICCO).*


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# Annex 1 – Table 4.1 Sustainable cocoa programmes and partnerships in Ghana

## Table 4.1 Sustainable cocoa programmes and partnerships in Ghana

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programmes and partnerships</th>
<th>Stakeholders involved</th>
<th>Areas of Intervention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ILO Cocoa Communities</td>
<td>International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) and International Labour Organization (ILO)</td>
<td>• Public certification on labour conditions&lt;br&gt;• Information provision to partners on best practices on child labour</td>
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<td>Sustainable Tree Crops Programme (STCP)</td>
<td>International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), USAID, World Cocoa Foundation, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and COCOBOD</td>
<td>• Farmer training: Farmer Field School, IPM&lt;br&gt;• Sharing of practice and research-related information&lt;br&gt;• Support replanting of hybrid cocoa varieties in former cocoa-growing areas&lt;br&gt;• Addressing the environmental and social impacts of cocoa production&lt;br&gt;• Facilitation of partnerships between researchers, local communities, donors and companies</td>
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<tr>
<td>World Cocoa Foundation (WCF)</td>
<td>The World Cocoa Foundation is a leader in promoting economic and social development and environmental stewardship in 15 cocoa-producing countries around the world, with nearly 70 member companies from the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa</td>
<td>• Overall interventions include: cocoa sustainability, support to cocoa communities, education, field programmes and scientific research&lt;br&gt;• Specific interventions include:&lt;br&gt;- reinforcement of partnerships, capacities and linkages in the cocoa sector&lt;br&gt;- provision of a forum for stakeholders (industry, civil society and government) to meet and cooperate&lt;br&gt;- facilitating the incorporation of sustainability considerations into the mainstream market&lt;br&gt;- information release to the public and consumers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cocoa Livelihoods Program</td>
<td>World Cocoa Foundation in collaboration with a consortium of five organizations, including Agribusiness Services International (ASI), an ACDI/VOCA affiliate, GTZ, GmbH, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)/Sustainable Tree Crops Programme (STCP), SOCODEVI and TechnoServe</td>
<td>• Farmer training&lt;br&gt;• Improving production and quality at the farm level&lt;br&gt;• Equipping farmers with business skills&lt;br&gt;• Promoting diversification of income&lt;br&gt;• Improving access to inputs and support services</td>
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<td>Cadbury Cocoa Partnership</td>
<td>A public-private partnership involving Cadbury, UNDP Ghana, COCOBOD, two ministries (Ministry of Finance and Planning and the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare) and three international NGOs (World Vision International, Care International and Voluntary Service Overseas).</td>
<td>• Sustainable livelihoods (from cocoa and other means)&lt;br&gt;- increasing productivity, quality and the rehabilitation of farms&lt;br&gt;- strengthening farmer’ organizations&lt;br&gt;- youth engagement in cocoa production&lt;br&gt;- increasing household incomes from alternative livelihoods&lt;br&gt;- increasing household food security&lt;br&gt;• Community-centred development (basic social infrastructure, education, health care and water)&lt;br&gt;• Institutional engagement</td>
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| Roundtable for a Sustainable Cocoa Economy | Implemented by Winrock with sponsorship from USAID | • Strengthening of education policy that mobilizes government ministries  
• Focus on the next generation of cocoa farmers  
• Development of school gardens and demonstration cocoa plots  
• Applied learning training for out-of-school youth  
• Enhancing community participation |
| Mars Partnership for African Cocoa Communities of Tomorrow (iMPACT) | International Cocoa Initiative (Participatory Development Associates), AFRICARE, GIZ, IFESH, Rainforest Alliance and STCP | • Enhancing community participation  
• Promotion of an integrated approach that includes agriculture, environment, education and health, aimed at improving incomes and the welfare of cocoa communities through:  
  - capacity building of cocoa farming communities  
  - reduction of the worst form of child labour  
  - preservation of the environment  
  - awareness raising on health issues (HIV, malaria)  
  - promotion of better agricultural practices |
| Millennium Villages Project | Japanese grant through the UNDP | • Targeting a whole package of improvements in health care, education, infrastructure and agriculture productivity to improve the livelihoods of cocoa farmers |
| Rainforest Alliance Ghana | Agro-Eco Louis Bolk, Rainforest Alliance | • Building knowledge and understanding on the Rainforest Alliance standard for sustainable agriculture  
• Developing local indicators for sustainable cocoa and other crops |
| Kuapa Kokoo cooperative | Kuapa Kokoo Association, TWIN grant support, Comic Relief | • Promotion of fairer trading practice  
• Training in quality control, record keeping and farmer society bookkeeping, gender issues |
| Cocoa Abrabopa Association | Cocoa Abrabopa Association, IFDC, Technoserve, CRIG | • Promotion of a business approach: basic business training to farmers  
• Training on protection of natural resources, management of health/sanitation |
| Armajaro – sourcing traceable cocoa | Armajaro, COCOBOD, Lindt, Cadbury and the Japanese chocolate industry | • Investment in software systems and training to provide traceability |
| UTZ Certified – certification of sustainable cocoa in Ghana | West Africa Fair Fruit Company (WAFF), Solidaridad | • West Africa Fair Fruit Company (WAFF), Solidaridad  
• Development of UTZ Certified Code of Conduct  
• Implementation of a series of pilot projects to test UTZ Certification in Ghana |
| Tradin Cocoa WA (organic cocoa production) | Tradin, Agro Eco Louis Bolk, CRIG and COCOBOD | • Expansion of organic cocoa production in Ghana  
• Training in organic agriculture  
• Farmer mobilization  
• Certification activities |
| Yayra Glover organic cocoa programme | Yayra Glover Ltd, Pakka Trade Ltd and COCOBOD | • Promotion of organic and sustainable cocoa production in Ghana  
• Trading of organic and sustainable cocoa beans  
• Training in organic and sustainable cocoa farming |
| 21st Century Cocoa Sustainability Strategy | Hershey | • Free agricultural and social training to rural cocoa farmers through CocoaLink mobile phone program.  
• Trainings aimed at improved crop yields and quality, through Hershey Learn to Grow farmers and family development center (Assin Fosu). |
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| **33 Forest Capital Cocoa & REDD+ project in Ghana**<br>Stakeholders involved: 33 Forest Capital, Forestry Commission of Ghana, Ghana Cocoa Board, Sarvision, Solidaridad, Touton Ghana, Tree Global, Tropenbos International Ghana, University of Accra, University of Kumasi, Wageningen University, Wetlands International, and Produce Buying Co. | • Increase cocoa production/ha by turning current farming practices into sustainable farming through training of farmers and monitoring of the forests.  
• Expected outputs include REDD carbon credits as well market premiums generated by the sale of sustainable certified cocoa.  
• Alternatives to farmers (additional crops, alternative revenues) | |
• Scaling up of carbon intensive landscape management and restoration through the development of knowledge, capacity and investment partnerships, and the uptake of project approaches and findings. | |
| **AHANSUCOFA Project**<br>Ahafo Ano North and South UTZ Cocoa Farmers Association, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Ferrero, Noble Resources, Solidaridad, Sustainable Trade Initiative, World Cocoa Foundation | • Pilot project; how a farmer association can be a certificate holder of the UTZ Certification code of conduct.  
• Training for improved pest & disease control, business management skills, cocoa quality control, and gender training to increase female participation in cocoa production to promote gender equality and development.  
• Cocoa nursery project; produce cocoa seedlings for replanting and shade trees to promote reforestation. | |
| **Aponoapono Organic Project**<br>Aponoapono Biakoye Organic Cocoa Farmers Association (ABOCFA), Sustainable Empowerment and Development, The Hunger Project, Tony's Chocolonely | • Support the further organizational professionalization of ABOCFA, towards becoming an independent and sustainable farmer organization.  
• Training of ABOCFA farmers on improved agricultural techniques, to increase production volume and cocoa quality  
• Maintenance of standards  
• Provision of farm inputs | |
| **Cargill Cocoa Promise**<br>Akufo Adamfo Licensed (Cocoa buying) Company, CARE International, Cargill Incorporated, Ghana Cocoa Board, Ministry of Food and Agriculture | • Training and financial support to increase yields and produce premium beans.  
• Support cooperatives to help farmers increase earnings while investing in their local communities.  
• Provide assistance for farmers to gain independent certification. | |
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<tr>
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| **CCI Cocoa Carbon Initiative; promoting Climate SMART Cocoa in Ghana** | Climate Smart Cocoa Working Group, Department for International Development, Forest Trends, Katoomba Group, Moore Foundation, Nature Conservation Research Center, NORAD, Rockefeller Foundation, | • Reduce emissions from forest degradation and enhancing above ground and below ground carbon stocks by:  
- planting shade trees  
- enabling natural regeneration in new/young farms.  
- enhancing soil carbon stocks through improved farming practices.  
• Provide benefit to farmers and cocoa farming communities and stakeholders from carbon finance, by reducing their impacts on forests.  
• Improving the overall productivity and ecological resilience of the cocoa farming system through access to associated agronomic and economic resources and improving livelihoods from increased farming income and access to other project benefits.  
• Avoid forest degradation by preventing community members from encroaching into forested areas to establish new farms and encouraging them not to cut down mature forest trees when replanting old cocoa farms. |
| **Climate Cocoa Partnership for REDD+ Preparation** | Rainforest Alliance, Forestry Commission, COCOBOD, USAID, NORAD, Olam International Limited, Tropenbos International Ghana. | • Enable communities to adapt to the changing climate and mitigate the potential adverse changes.  
• Enable farmers to implement climate-friendly farming.  
• Ensure that the climate-friendly farm level practices are escalated and replicated to a landscape and forest management level.  
• Teaching farmers how the carbon stocks of cocoa, shade trees and soil can be improved by developing specific farming practices.  
• The project is built on four pillars:  
- sustainable forest management,  
- REDD+,  
- development of small scale enterprises that complement forest management,  
- climate change education in the local schools as well as cocoa certification and training in the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) Standards. |
| **Climate Smart Cocoa Working Group** | Nature conservation and Research Center (NCRC), COCOBOD, Forestry Commission, National Insurance commission, DFID, Solidaridad, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Armajaro, Olam, Cocoa Abrabopa. | • Aim to understand the cocoa sector’s Business-As-Usual scenario and set a 20 year pathway to achieving a sustainable, climate-smart cocoa production landscape and sector.  
• Engaged in 5 key activities that are critical to a climate-smart approach:  
1. Defining climate-smart cocoa and context for increasing yields  
2. Developing mechanisms to de-risk cocoa farming  
3. Landscape-level planning  
4. Data management and Measuring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) |
| **Cocoa Agroforestry Project** | Conservation Alliance, Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG), Solidaridad, Olam, Conservation Cocoa Association. | • Sustainable Cocoa Production in Kakum Conservation Area (Assin Foso).  
• Project supports agricultural practices and environmentally friendly methods of cocoa cultivation. It provides farmers with training and prepares them towards certification. |
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| Ghana Cocoa Platform        | COCOBOD, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Forestry Commission, Minerals Commission, UNDP, IDH, African Cocoa Initiative (ACI) and all institutions on cocoa, Solidaridad, Agro-Eco, UTZ, Cocosite, Kuapa Kokoo Ltd and all cocoa farmer organisations. | • Aimed at enhancing public-private dialogue and joint action planning to support the scale up of sustainable production in the cocoa sector.  
• Consists of long term facilitated dialogues for stakeholders directly involved with the Ghanaian cocoa supply chain.  
• Addresses main barriers for sustainable cocoa production by generating dialogue between producers, government and buyers.  
• Aims to tackle the root of the problems, such as land tenure system, policy and institutional capacity for national technical support, access to crop inputs, access to finance and markets |
| Cocoa Eco Project           | SNV, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Kuapa Kokoo Farmers’ Union (KKFU) and Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG), Solidaridad, Base Step Consult, SAIDC, Rainforest Alliance | • Training of 45 Kuapa Kokoo extension officers and 120 lead farmers on sustainable cocoa forestry systems  
• Preparation of action plans for setting up of demonstration plots (Good Agricultural Practices, shade trees),  
• Farmer Field Schools and peer-to-peer farmer support  
• Business plans developed for each of the 10 business development centres (BDC) of KK  
• Credit officers and BDC committees trained in financial management  
• Business linkages established with agro-input dealers  
• Cocoa and shade tree nurseries established  
• Knowledge development and dissemination of project results to all of KKFU members  
Learning visit for KK extension officers and farmers to Ivory Coast’s cocoa sector. |
| Cocoa Life                  | CARE International, Mondelez International, MoFA, COCOBOD, Ghana Education Service (GES), Department of Community Development, Department of cooperatives, Social Welfare, District Assemblies, VSO, World Vision, UNDP, CRIG, Farming Cooperatives | • Measuring, Evaluating and reporting on five key areas defining thriving cocoa communities: Farming, Communities, livelihoods, Youth and Environment  
• Supporting cocoa yields, fairtrade certification, business management and entrepreneurship skills training, increasing awareness, child rights programme, empowering women farmers, institutional capacity building and institutional linking |
| Cocoa Organic Farmers Association (COFA) | COFA, Rabobank Foundation, DOEN Foundation, Postcode Lottery, Return to Sender, Agro Eco-Louis Bolk, TCHO | • Boost availability of improved planting materials for the farmers  
• Technical support for rehabilitation and intensification of cocoa intensify production in existing cocoa producing regions  
• Establishment and operation of cocoa rural service centres (RSC) to promote and upscale cocoa production in a sustainable self-financing way by providing training, information, inputs and technical support for improved cocoa production |
<p>| Cocoa Productivity and Quality Program (CPQP) | IDH, Mars Incorporated, Armajaro, Nestlé, ADM, Kraft Foods, Barry Callebaut, Continaf, Petra Foods (Delft), Ferrero, Source Trust, Armajaro Trading, Nestlé, Lindt | • Increasing farmers’ income through certification, training on good agricultural practices and rational use of fertilizer |</p>
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| Ensuring Environmental Security and Livelihoods through an Ecosystem Approach for Community Resources Management Areas (CREMAs) at the Weto Mountain Range in the Volta Region of Ghana | Development Institute, Environmental Protection Agency, District Assemblies, Forestry Commission, Ecosystem Alliance and Fire Service Division, UNDP/GEF Satuyama Small Grants Project, Wetlands International, IUCN (National Committee of the Netherlands), ENDS (Environment and Development Service), Tropenbos Ghana, Solidaridad | • Develop a CREMA (Community Resource Management Area) for community based land use planning, to secure forest cover, water bodies and its ecosystem benefits and improve livelihoods of the dependent communities in a participatory manner.  
• Community land use plans will be aggregated to district land use and biodiversity plans.  
• Development of a certified cocoa value chain is both the major economic incentive and a tool for reforestation/agroforestry.  
• Climate Smart Conservation Cocoa production.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Integrated Community Based Biodiversity Management Project, ECOSYSTEM ALLIANCE PROJECT       | Rural Environmental Care Association (RECA), TBI Ghana, IUCN Ghana, IUCN-NL, DI, NCRC, A Rocha Ghana, CREMA                                                                                                               | • Enhancing Community Based Biodiversity Management on cocoa landscapes through integrated agroforestry and land tenure security.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Engaging local communities in REDD+/Enhancement of carbon stocks ELCIR+                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | • Increase carbon stocks and poverty reduction by engaging communities in land management approaches that generate direct financial and environmental benefits.  
• Restoration of degraded agricultural landscapes  
• Climate smart agriculture  
• Livelihoods improvement and capacity building                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
<p>| Environmental sustainability and Policy for cocoa in Ghana                                  | UNDP Green Commodities Program, COCOBOD, Mondelēz International, Cocoa Life Program NGO partners-CARE,VS0, WVI, Private sector agribusiness operators including input dealers, consultants and cocoa licensed buying companies, Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG), Cocoa Farmer Cooperatives | • Create institutional systems, tools and policies to rehabilitate cocoa landscapes, conserve and expand forests, forest buffer zones and corridors and incentivise cocoa farmers to adopt environmentally friendly best practices.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |</p>
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<th>Programmes and partnerships</th>
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| **Ghana Fine Flavour Cocoa Project (FFC)** | Agro-Eco Louis Bolk Institute, Sustainable Food Lab, Green Mountain Roasters, Rabobank, Hershey, Mars, Guittard Chocolate, TCHO Foundation, ADM, Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG), Sustainable Food Lab (SFL) and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), Offin Fine Flavor Cocoa Farmers Association (OFFCFA). | • Provide superior cocoa varieties and training to Ghanaian small-scale farmers to increase their incomes and expand their livelihood opportunities.  
• Increase the number of participating farmers, to produce commercial quantities of fine flavour cocoa, to establish markets and build farmer organizations’ capacity.  
• Selection of clones from CRIG clonal garden; multiplication, grafting technique, developing recommended practices for growing, fermentation. |
| **iMPACT Asankrangwa Cocoa Project** | iMPACT (The Mars Partnership for African Cocoa Communities of Tomorrow), AFRICARE, GTZ, ICI, IFESH, MARS Inc, Rainforest Alliance, STCP, Agro-Eco, GiZ, Mars Incorporated, Kofi Gyan cooperation, CODESULT Network, | • Develop the capacity of cocoa farming communities to identify and improve their social, economic and environmental situation.  
• Contribute to the development of cocoa farming in Ghana as profitable, socially rewarding and environmentally sustainable livelihood for families and an attractive occupation for the coming generation. |
| **iMPACT Assin Fosu Cocoa Project** | iMPACT (The Mars Partnership for African Cocoa Communities of Tomorrow), AFRICARE, GIZ, ICI, IFESH, MARS Inc, Rainforest Alliance, STCP, Mars Incorporated, OASIS Foundation. | • Develop the capacity of cocoa farming communities to identify and improve their social, economic and environmental situation.  
• Contribute to the development of cocoa farming in Ghana as profitable, socially rewarding and environmentally sustainable livelihood for families and an attractive occupation for the coming generation. |
| **Kuapa Cocoa Project** | PUR projects, Chocolats Halba | • Avoid exhaustion of soils through agroforestry systems.  
• Improve productivity of cocoa trees, improve quality of water and rebuild the biodiversity of sites. |
| **Managing cocoa production landscapes for increases in forest carbon stocks and biodiversity conservation.** | Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG), Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and Forest Investment Program (FIP) of the World Bank | • Promote climate-smart cocoa production.  
• Production of cocoa in a sustainable way and enhancement of carbon stocks. |
| **The Nestlé Cocoa Plan** | Nestlé, UTZ Certified, Fairtrade, Fair Labor Association, Nestlé suppliers, national plant research institutes, and local training agencies and NGOs. | • To improve the lives of cocoa farmers and the quality of their products.  
• Enable farmers to run more profitable farms.  
• Improve social conditions.  
• Source sustainable, good quality cocoa. |
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<td>Ntobroso project (Ntobroso Organic Cocoa project) (now: Ntobroso Organic Cocoa farmers)</td>
<td>Progreso, Agro-Eco Louis Bolk Institute, Ghana Organic Agriculture Network (GOAN)</td>
<td>- Community level training and capacity building of cocoa farmers to improve yields and increase income.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Nyinahini project | Progreso, Agro-Eco Louis Bolk Institute, Ghana Organic Agriculture Network (GOAN) | - Community level training and capacity building of cocoa farmers to improve yields and increase income.  
- Achieve certified organic and other certification programs (Rainforest Alliance and Fair-trade).  
- Train farmers in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and the requirements of organic farming systems.  
- Establish Farmer Based Organization.  
- Study Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) and recommendations given. |
| PES (Payment for Ecosystem Services) in Cocoa Agroforestry | Agro-Eco Louis Bolk Institute, CREM Advisors in Sustainability, Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Dutch private sector, | To pay cocoa farmers for delivering ecosystem services |
| Capacity building for CREMA communities for resilient ecosystem services | Nature Conservation Research Centre (NCRC), Forest Trends’ Communities & Markets Initiative, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), TBI Ghana, IUCN Ghana, Forestry commission,MoFA, IUCN-NL, RECA,DI, A Rocha Ghana, CREMA. |  
- Introduce idea of payments for ecosystem services to stakeholders.  
- Facilitate land use planning effort.  
- Reduce cocoa expansion and encroachment into high carbon landscapes.  
- Resolve tenure and carbon rights questions- farmers have right to manage trees for economic benefits.  
- Receive REDD+/ mitigation benefits.  
- Enhancing productivity and economic return- inputs, extension services and financial products.  
- De-risking cocoa farming activities linked to climate-smart strategies- insurance products and credit access. |
| Integrated Management of Cocoa Pest and Pathogens | Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG), COCOBOD, International Cocoa Organization (ICCO) |  
- Improve cocoa farm productivity by reducing losses to indigenous cocoa pests and diseases through awareness-raising and capacity building on Integrated Pest Management (IPM). |
- Develop best practices for carbon management in agricultural production systems that have the potential to be scaled up as effective means in Ghana’s REDD-readiness process. |
Table 4.1 (Continued)

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</thead>
</table>
| DANIDA Pro-Poor REDD: Towards pro-poor REDD+ (Phase II): Promoting pro-poor REDD+ principles and rights-based approaches to strengthen the conservation, governance and sustainable management of landscapes | IUCN, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, DANIDA, Ghana Forestry Commission, The Royal Danish Embassy, World bank, TBI-Ghana, Civic Response, ICA, A-rocha Ghana, CREMA, REDD Multi stakeholder Platform, District Assemblies, Quarm agroforestry Farms, Essandor Farms. | • Deliver enabling policy and program environments for national climate change mitigation initiatives that incorporate rights-based and pro-poor approaches to reduce deforestation and forest degradation whilst directly contributing to both the improvement of local livelihoods and long-term security of forest carbon stocks in key forest-rich regions.  
• Participation of groups in all decision making processes at all levels, rights and access to information about processes and outcomes of REDD+, access of vulnerable groups to resources, resilience of the poor and integration of customary practices and actions in REDD+. |
| REDD+ Benefits: Facilitating countries and communities in designing pro-poor REDD+ benefit sharing scheme | IUCN, Germany’s Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), Forestry Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, FSD, Netherlands Embassy, World Bank, Forest Watch Ghana, Civil Response, ICA, Forest Research Institute of Ghana, CREMA, REDD Multi stakeholder Platform and District Assemblies. | • Support the development of REDD+ benefit sharing mechanisms and testing its use at both at the National and local level. |
| Development of a database for biodiversity assessment | Biodiversity International, Armajaro, GeoTraceability Ltd., FORIG. | • Provide information about the biodiversity status of cocoa farms in Ghana and allow users to track changes in the biodiversity landscape of cocoa farmers, which can inform policy making, program design and the development of training modules for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.  
• Importance of trees, how to set-up a nursery, proper tree maintenance, the tree ownership laws of Ghana, community resource mapping and landscape diversity |

*Table acronyms on subsequent page

### Acronyms for Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARG</td>
<td>A-Rocha Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABOCFA</td>
<td>Aponoapono Biakoye Organic Cocoa Farmers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACI</td>
<td>African Cocoa Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADF</td>
<td>African Development Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASI</td>
<td>Agribusiness Services International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE-LBI</td>
<td>Agro Eco Louis Bolk Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHANSUCOFA</td>
<td>Ahafo Ano North and South UTZ Cocoa Farmers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADM</td>
<td>Archer Daniels Midland Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCODEVI</td>
<td>Canadian Cooperation Society for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIF</td>
<td>Climate Investment Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSCWG</td>
<td>Climate Smart Cocoa Working Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAA</td>
<td>Cocoa Abrabopa Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COFA</td>
<td>Cocoa Organic Farmers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRIG</td>
<td>Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Conservation Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTINAF</td>
<td>Continentale en Afrikaanse Handelsvereniging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREMA</td>
<td>Community Resource Management Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCD</td>
<td>Ghana's Department of Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSW</td>
<td>Ghana's Department of Social Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIZ</td>
<td>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DI</td>
<td>Development Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>District Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RNE</td>
<td>Dutch Embassy in Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EZ</td>
<td>Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>Ecosystem Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENDS</td>
<td>Environmental and Development Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPA</td>
<td>Environmental Protection Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLA</td>
<td>Fair Labor Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCPF</td>
<td>Forest Carbon Partnership Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIP</td>
<td>Forest Investment Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FWG</td>
<td>Forest Watch Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>Forestry Commission of Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORIG</td>
<td>Forestry Research Institute of Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSD</td>
<td>Forestry Services Divisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMU</td>
<td>German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COCOBOD</td>
<td>Ghana Cocoa Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GES</td>
<td>Ghana Education Service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4.1 Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GNFS</td>
<td>Ghana National Fire Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAN</td>
<td>Ghana Organic Agriculture Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPACT</td>
<td>Initiative ‘Mars Partnership for African Cocoa Communities of Tomorrow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICA</td>
<td>Institute of Cultural Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIAT</td>
<td>International Center for Tropical Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICI</td>
<td>International Cocoa Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCO</td>
<td>International Cocoa Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFDC</td>
<td>International Fertiliser Development Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFC</td>
<td>International Finance Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFESH</td>
<td>International Foundation for Education and Self-Help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IITA</td>
<td>International Institute of Tropical Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUCN</td>
<td>International Union for Conservation of Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Mineral’s Commission of Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINCOM</td>
<td>Mineral’s Commission of Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoFA</td>
<td>Ministry of Food and Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DANIDA</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIC</td>
<td>National Insurance Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCRC</td>
<td>Nature Conservation Research Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNV</td>
<td>Netherlands Development Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORAD</td>
<td>Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFID</td>
<td>Fund for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFFCA</td>
<td>Offin Fine Flavor Cocoa Farmers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWC</td>
<td>Price Waterhouse Coopers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBC</td>
<td>Produce Buying Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>Rainforest Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECA</td>
<td>Rural Environmental Care Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SED</td>
<td>Sustainable Empowerment and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDH</td>
<td>Sustainable Trade Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STCP</td>
<td>Sustainable Tree Crops Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECO</td>
<td>Switzerland's Economic Cooperation and Development Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCHO</td>
<td>Timothy Childs &amp; Karl Bittong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBI</td>
<td>Tropenbos International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEF</td>
<td>UNEP Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UKAID</td>
<td>United Kingdom Department for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UG</td>
<td>University of Legon, Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KNUST</td>
<td>Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.1 Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VSO</td>
<td>Voluntary Services Overseas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WUR</td>
<td>Wageningen University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCF</td>
<td>World Cocoa Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WVI</td>
<td>World Vision International</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annex 2 – Personal declaration of responsibility
PERSONAL DECLARATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

MASTER / RESEARCH MASTER\(^1\) INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES/
RESEARCH MASTER URBAN STUDIES/SOCIAL SCIENCES\(^1\)

UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM (UvA)

The personal declaration should accompany the final research proposal and should be signed by the student and his/her supervisor. Depending on the nature of the project, minor changes may be made to reflect special issues not addressed already. The title should be stated and should be the same as the title mentioned in the research proposal.

Title research project: ...........................................................................................................

Supervisor: Mirjam Ros-Tonen

Name student and student number: Lars Kooijmans (10997342)

1. I declare that I am cognisant of the goals of the AISSR Ethical Review questions\(^2\) that aim to make me think through and make explicit how my research plans will lead to good research, not only in a methodological sense but also in the ethical sense.

2. I subscribe to the principles of:

- voluntary participation in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
- informed consent, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.
- safety in participation, meaning that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e.g. research with young children.
- privacy, meaning that the confidentiality and anonymity of human respondents should be protected at all times.
- trust, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

3. I understand what plagiarism entails and I am aware of the University\'s policy\(^3\) in this regard. I undertake not to make use of another student\'s previous work and to submit it as my own. I also undertake not to allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of using it as their own work.

Place: Utrecht Date 15-01-2016 Student\'s signature

Place: Date: Supervisor\'s Signature

---

\(^1\) Delete what does not apply.

\(^2\) http://aissr.uva.nl/research/ethical-review/ethical-review.html

\(^3\) http://student.uva.nl/en/az/content/plagiarism-and-fraud/plagiarism-and-fraud.html
Annex 3 – Semi-structured interview guide
SPACE FOR DELIBERATION

Understanding how smallholder cocoa farmers and cocoa purchasing clerks use their network in achieving their goals, and how this may be influenced by cocoa certification programmes.

Explanation to respondent:
Good day! My name is ……………………………… I work for / am a student at the UENR / UvA*. We are conducting a study on the space available to cocoa farmers and cocoa purchasing clerks, to discuss in a meaningful way their aspirations with others. I am here to ask you questions about your situation, your aspirations, and the moments, events, sites and channels where you interact with others, and the degree to which you think these represent opportunities where you may influence these aspirations. Your participation is voluntary: you may choose not to answer any question or decide to stop the discussion at any time. We also would like to assure you that your responses will be given maximum confidentiality. Your name will only be noted for future reference, but kept apart from the data. Are you willing to participate in this study?

1) YES
2) NO (stop questionnaire)

Survey on the space for meaningful discussion, available to cocoa farmers/purchasing clerks, for achieving their aspirations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>GPS coordinates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative District</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of respondent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of interviewer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Data processor: insert number, name of respondent and other data of the cover page in a separate document; make sure the interview number is on each of the next pages; then remove this cover page from the rest of the data to guarantee anonymity in data analysis).
Section A. HOUSEHOLD DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Are you the head of the household? □ Yes (if yes, skip question 2) □ No
2. If no, what is your relation to the head of the household? □ Spouse □ Other, please specify: .................................................................

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic demographics household (hh) head and spouse</th>
<th>3. Gender Code: 0= male 1= female</th>
<th>4. Age (years)</th>
<th>5. Highest education level? (specify)</th>
<th>6. Employment Codes (can use more than one code)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0 = cocoa purchasing clerk / collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 = self-employed farmer – part-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = self-employed farmer – full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = contract worker out-grower scheme, smallholder schemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = pensioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = employed as civil servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 = seasonal worker on farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 = permanent worker on farm (all year round)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8 = small and medium business enterprise (specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9 = informal sector (e.g. Vendor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 = unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11 = other (specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Is person born in this village or not? Code: 0 = yes 1 = no

8. Years living in current place of residence? (number of years)

9. How many people are in your household, living together including the head? (Answer all categories: fill in 0 if none)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Male (Pensioner- 60 &amp; above years)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Female (Pensioner- 60 &amp; above)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult male (18 years -59 years)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult female(18 years -59 years)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys (10-17 years)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls (10-17 years)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children (less than 10 years)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section B. LAND ACCESS

10. What is the total amount of land currently used for agricultural purposes by the household (including home gardens)? Specify total amount of hectares [if not in hectares: specify amount in local measurement unit]: ..................................

11. How many farm plot(s) do you own or use? List total amount of farm plots: ..................................

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12. How is land tenure, per plot?</th>
<th>Codes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 = Title deed (owned)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Rented (no payment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Rented (cash payment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Rented (land sharing),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Rented (crop sharing - abuna/abusu),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 = Other (specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All plots (if the same land tenure applies to all plots)
Plot 1
Plot 2
Plot 3
Plot 4
Plot 5
Plot 6
Plot 7
Plot 8
Plot 9
Plot 10
Plot 11
Plot 12
Plot 13
Plot 14
Remaining plots
### Section C. VALUE CHAIN COLLABORATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major crops traded in last 12 months (rank, starting with most important crop)</th>
<th>14. What amount (kg) did you sell in each of the below trade forms?</th>
<th>15. What amount (kg) did you buy in each of the below trade forms?</th>
<th>16. In relation to the crop, how many people did you personally interact with, from each of the below categories?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Spot exchange</td>
<td>a. Spot exchange</td>
<td>a. Government agency</td>
<td>a. Spot exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Marketing contract (agreement to sell in advance)</td>
<td>b. Marketing contract (agreement to sell in advance)</td>
<td>b. Farmers' organization</td>
<td>b. Marketing contract (agreement to sell in advance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Production contract (sales agreement including support, e.g. training, credit, supplies)</td>
<td>c. Production contract (sales agreement including support, e.g. training, credit, supplies)</td>
<td>c. Buyers /traders (local market)</td>
<td>c. Production contract (sales agreement including support, e.g. training, credit, supplies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Other (specify)</td>
<td>d. Other (specify)</td>
<td>e. Bank</td>
<td>e. Bank</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. With regards to the most important crop, what considerations do you feel were important in coming to an agreement with the buyer? *(rank, starting with the most important criteria)*

1)..........................................................................................................
2)..........................................................................................................
3)..........................................................................................................
4)..........................................................................................................
5)..........................................................................................................
6)..........................................................................................................
7)..........................................................................................................
8)..........................................................................................................
9)..........................................................................................................
10)............................................................................................................
11).........................................................................................................
12)........................................................................................................
13).......................................................................................................
14).......................................................................................................
15).......................................................................................................
16).......................................................................................................
17).......................................................................................................
Section C. VALUE CHAIN COLLABORATION

18. With regards to the most important crop, what considerations do you feel were important in coming to an agreement with the seller? (rank, starting with the most important criteria)

1) ................................................................. 2) ................................................................................

3) ..................................................................................... 4) ................................................................................

5) ..................................................................................... 6) ................................................................................

7) ..................................................................................... 8) ................................................................................

19. What certification label(s) are you working with? (More than one answer possible. If 'none', go to question 26)

☐ None ☐ UTZ Certified ☐ Rainforest Alliance ☐ Fairtrade ☐ EU Organic

☐ Other (specify) .................................................................

20 a. On a scale of 1 (not important at all) to 10 (very important), how important do you consider certification to be, compared to other considerations in coming to an agreement with buyers?

(not important at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (very important)

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

20 b. Why do you feel that certification is of this level of (un)importance in coming to an agreement with buyers?

..........................................................................................................................................................
Section C. VALUE CHAIN COLLABORATION

21 a. On a scale of 1 (not important at all) to 7 (very important), how important do you consider certification to be, compared to other considerations in coming to an agreement with sellers?

(not important at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (very important)

21 b. Why do you feel that certification is of this level of (un)importance in coming to an agreement with sellers?

........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................

22. Are you involved in collaborations with other people that address any of the below objectives? Please check the appropriate boxes and indicate since when you participate in this specific collaboration.

Since (number of months/years):

☐ Training of Good Agricultural Practices or business skills to increase yields & income

.................................................................................

☐ Support of establishment and strengthening of farmers’ associations/groups

.................................................................................

☐ Support services for rehabilitation, intensification and diversification

.................................................................................

☐ Credit schemes to farmers

.................................................................................

☐ Payment for environmental services, enhancement of carbon stocks and reduction of emissions from forest degradation (REDD+)

.................................................................................

☐ Promotion of (cocoa) certification and ClimateSMART production.

.................................................................................

☐ Other (specify) ...........................................................................................................................................

.................................................................................

☐ None

.................................................................................
Section D. ASPIRATIONS & CHALLENGES

23. What goals would you like to achieve within the next 10 years?

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

24. How do you expect to achieve these goals?

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

24 a. What role does cocoa play in this?

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

25. What would you say are the most important challenges in achieving these goals?

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
### Section E. SPACE FOR DELIBERATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview number:</th>
<th>26. Rank the people you personally interact with, who play a role in achieving the goals that you specified, starting with the person you consider as most important.</th>
<th>27. Indicate that person's role.</th>
<th>28. Indicate category this person belongs to Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Government agency (specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Farmers' organization (specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Buyers /traders (specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Non-bank private sector company (specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Bank (specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. License buying company (specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Non-governmental organization (specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. Other (specify)</td>
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<tr>
<td>09.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29. on a scale of 1 (not meaningful at all) to 7 (very meaningful), to what extent do you feel you can discuss in a meaningful way with this person, in terms of achieving your goals?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all Meaningful</th>
<th>Very meaningful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

139
### Section E. SPACE FOR DELIBERATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview number:</th>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>30. At what occasions do you interact with these people? Specify occasion &amp; note its frequency. Codes: 1 = Yearly 2 = Several times p/year</th>
<th>31. At what site(s)? Please indicate for each site the estimated travel time it usually takes the respondent to reach this location.</th>
<th>Have you discussed with this person about your and the other's:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32. Goals</td>
<td>33. Challenges</td>
<td>34. Possibilities to help? (specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>02.</td>
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<td>03.</td>
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<td>04.</td>
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<td>05.</td>
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<td>06.</td>
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<td>07.</td>
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<td>09.</td>
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<td>10.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
38. Out of the people we discussed, could you indicate for each of the three most important people why you consider them as important in achieving your goals?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 3</th>
<th>Why important?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Out of the people we discussed, who of them are 'new' in your network (came in contact with you within the last year)? Code: write the corresponding rank number as in Q26</td>
<td>0 = S/he contacted me directly 1 = S/he contacted me through a 3rd party (specify) 2 = I contacted him/her through a 3rd party (specify) 3 = I contacted him/her directly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. How did you come into contact with him/her?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. On a scale of 1 (no effect) to 7 (large effect), to what extent do you feel your interactions with this person have had an effect on your relations with other people that we discussed? Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing no effect at all, and 7 a large effect.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Could you briefly explain this effect?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Thank respondent for her/his time and cooperation!
Annex 3 – Focus group guide
Good day! Our names are Nana Kwasi Oppong and Lars Kooijmans. We work for / are a student at the UENR / University of Amsterdam (UvA). We are conducting a study on the 'space for deliberation' available to cocoa farmers and cocoa purchasing clerks, in achieving their aspirations. I am here to ask you questions about your situation, your aspirations, and the moments, events, sites and channels where you interact with others, and the degree to which you think these represent opportunities where the interaction may increase the possibility to achieve your aspirations. Your participation is voluntary: you may choose not to answer any question or decide to stop the discussion at any time. We also would like to assure you that your responses will be given maximum confidentiality. You name will only be noted for future reference, but kept apart from the data. The discussion will be recorded and transcribed (written out). The transcription will not include your names. As such, your names will not be. After the transcription, the recordings will be deleted.

Are you willing to participate in this study?

YES / NO (if no, thank candidate participant and clarify that s/he is excused from the focus group)

This focus group session will consist of three parts:

I Discuss your position and goals, how you hope to achieve these goals, and the challenges you see in achieving these goals.

II Mapping the 'space for deliberation' (network, and the nature of the relations with other people in this network).

III Discuss the output of the mapping.

Note that the mapping tool is used in academic settings, to allow visual representation of discussion output, encourage participation, and facilitate a deeper understanding of the discussion topic.
PART I – Position, goals, plans and challenges.

1) Introduction round: ask everybody to briefly (1-2 minutes) describe his/her position as a farmer/purchasing clerk (facilitator to note down), according to:
   a. employment?
   b. land tenure?
   c. total estimated size of land / amount of farm plots?
   d. number of, and names of associated LBCs?
   e. involvement in collaboration programs (specify whether it involves certification)?

2) Discuss goals (10 years from now, what do you hope to achieve), how participants expect to achieve these goals and what could be challenges (facilitator to note down these goals).
   max. 20 minutes total

PART II – Mapping of “space for deliberation”

3) Ask participants to think of moments, events, and sites, where the farmer/PC has the opportunity to meet with other actors that may be relevant in achieving their goals
   max. 20 minutes total for question 3
   - **Moments**: Encounters that are part of the regular routine of the PC/farmer, with other actors that are relevant for their personal goals.
   - **Events**: Special events where the PC/farmer can engage with other actors that are relevant for their personal goals.
   - **Sites**: Physical locations known to the PC/farmer, where s/he can engage with other actors that are relevant for the actor's personal goals.

   a. Participants are asked to draw on a large sheet of paper the different moments, events and sites, as circles.
   b. The facilitator should list all moments, events, and sites in a table.

4) For each of the moments, events and sites, ask participants to think of the people they (could) meet there, who are relevant in achieving their goals. Max. 20 minutes for question 4
   a. Ask participants to indicate which organization these people represent (if any) and/or role they play.
   b. For each person, participants are asked to choose a toy figure to represent that person, and place that figure in the appropriate circle(s) representing a moment, event or site where that actor could be interacted with.
   c. The facilitator should extend the table of moments, events and sites, to list for each of them an overview of the people that the PC/farmer associates with it, and that person's organization and/or role.

5) Using poker chips, the participants are requested to indicate to what extent they feel there is a possibility to discuss with each of the identified persons/actors in a meaningful way (discussion of each other's goals, challenges and possible ways in which both actors can help each other). The higher the stack of poker chips on which a toy figure is placed, the larger the extent of meaningful deliberation.
   a. Facilitator should add in the table for each actor the height of the stack of poker chips, by counting the number of chips.
   Max. 20 minutes for question 5
6) As an additional illustration of the actual space for deliberation, participants may indicate for each person what issues (if any) have been discussed. 
Max. 10 minutes for question 6

Indicate using below symbol whether goals were discussed

Indicate using below symbol whether challenges were discussed

Indicate using below symbol whether possible ways of helping each other achieve their goals / overcome their challenges were discussed

To understand the direction of the effective 'space for deliberation', ask participants to indicate whether the interaction and/or discussion with the other actor was initiated by the farmer/PC his/herself, or by the other actor.

No discussion / no interaction → draw cross 'X'
Discussion / interaction initiated by the other actor → draw circle 'O'
Discussion / interaction initiated by the farmer/PC his/herself → draw check '✔'

Facilitator to add in the overview table the specifications regarding issues discussed and the initiative for the discussion.

TAKE PICTURES OF THE RESULTING OUTPUT OF THE MAPPING.
PART III – Discussion of mapping output

Have a group discussion, to explain the height of the stacks of poker chips (representing the degree of meaningful discussion) and how the relative stacks relate to each other. Facilitator to guide the discussion and make notes.
Max. 30 minutes.

Probe questions:
Why is that stack higher than the other stacks?
What makes that the discussion with one person is more meaningful than with another, in your opinion?
For the actors that are now identified, are there specific actors that are 'new' in the network?
How did they become part of the network?
How did the entry of 'new' actors impact the relations with other actors (e.g. the PC or the farmer) in the network?
How does your relation with the PC (as a farmer) or with the farmer (as a PC) relate to this?
If over the past years, new opportunities (people, moments, events, sites) to discuss with others about your goals have been added to your network, do you feel your relation with the PC/farmer has changed?
In what way?

After wrap-up of discussion, thank participants for their lively discussion and their rich input. Offer participants a small token of appreciation for their time (present, meal)

Total estimated time for focus group ≈ 130 minutes (2 hours and 10 minutes).
Plan for 150 minutes (2 and a half hour).