



# NEWSLETTER December 2024

Dear members, dear readers,

For food systems transformation to become climate neutral, equitable, and ecologically sustainable is not optional-it is a necessity. The December 2024 issue of the ValueLinks Newsletter highlights the **challenges of translating the abstract global goal into actionable solutions**. The value chain perspective helps to achieve that. We should point out that it remains the most practical unit of analysis and action. However, the first **ValueLinks for Agrifood Systems (VL4AFS) seminar in October 2024** has shown two things: First, we must align better the value chain perspective with the other perspectives on food systems, notably landscapes, ecosystems, local communities, and nutrition. The task is to connect the different entry points for transformative interventions. The second lesson is pragmatism: Transformation is the result of a myriad of “transformative actions”—micro-level interventions at different points of the food system. ValueLinks strives to respond to the immediate challenges of the players in the value chains. The key is “win-win”: Tangible benefits for enterprises combined with public ecological and social benefits. Technical solutions and business models that point in the right direction deserve our support.

After all, the future of food systems is a shared responsibility—and the **time for transformative action is now**. We hope that you find this issue of the newsletter useful for your professional activities. And always remember: Any contribution to this newsletter is very welcome. Send us your ideas and information on your activities and experiences!

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## 1. ValueLinks experience and strategic trends

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### The concept of “transformative action” in ValueLinks

The term “transformative action” is new to the ValueLinks methodology. Two considerations are behind this concept. For one, the goal of the new method “ValueLinks for agrifood systems” reaches far beyond *development* in a conventional sense. It targets the *transformation* of the agrifood sector. Second, the utilization of the results of analyses and strategic considerations is not limited to implementing development projects. Public policy is an equally important, if not more important, addressee of ValueLinks. After all, transformative measures are required from all stakeholders.

### Vision for a sustainable agrifood system

There is a consensus that a sustainable agrifood system must first and foremost respect planetary boundaries. These include, amongst others, a stable climate, sustainable management of water and soil fertility and the protection of biodiversity. UN agencies and the development community agree that this will only be possible if both social justice and economic resilience are ensured.

To achieve these comprehensive goals, a fundamental change of the agrifood system is considered essential and inevitable. However, the scale of the transformation is overwhelming, and the goals of the desired transformation are rather abstract. We all want a better world. The question remains as to what it would look like in everyday practice and how a just transformation can be achieved. This is where “transformative action” comes into play.

### The transformation of agrifood systems cannot be planned

Any attempt to promote the necessary transformation of an agrifood system is confronted with the fact that its dimensions are impossible to grasp. The transformation of an agrifood system is not a one-off transition from the unsustainable status quo to a sustainable steady state. Rather, it is a continuous dynamic process, driven by powerful global forces such as climate change, demographics, urbanization, technology, digitization, the demise of biodiversity and others.

Two characteristics of transformation processes are important: One is the complexity of food systems, which consist of countless interconnected players. The structures of value chains as well as the patterns of land and water use emerge from external drivers and from the interactions within the food system rather than from a central political entity taking control. Moving from small, local systems to national agrifood systems, the complexity increases disproportionately.

Another characteristic is that the results of transformation are inherently unpredictable due to their non-linear nature. The disruption of a value chain at one point (as experienced during the pandemic) can lead to a cascade of events affecting other chains or regions. Similarly, technical or social innovations in one part of the system entail economic, social, and political consequences elsewhere triggering unexpected feedback loops. Thus, transformation policy for food systems cannot be compared to fixing



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a mechanism that is temporarily out of balance. We encounter a high level of uncertainty making it extremely hard to plan projects and policies.

## **Influencing the direction of change by “transformative action”**

The concept of “transformative action” responds to this basic problem. The idea is to rely on small, actionable innovations that address the immediate challenges that enterprises and consumers are facing, such as irregular rainfall patterns, rising production costs or insufficient supply of healthy food. Small to medium-scale private and collective investments are just about manageable, their direct effects are within reach. They are undertaken by social networks, enterprises and agencies which are capable of collective action. Nevertheless, the contribution of such transformative initiatives to the wider transformation agenda remains outside of control. Ideally, incremental progress at micro level should cumulatively drive the long-term transition towards a sustainable agrifood system.

For transformative action to have this effect, it must fulfill several criteria:

- It should be explicitly oriented towards and aligned with the overarching vision for climate-neutral, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems,
- There must be a strong sense of ownership of any solution offered by change agents and collaborative initiatives,
- Green business models should generate social and ecological benefits while ensuring profitability at the same time. They should be able to be replicated under given market and resource conditions, and customizable according to practical experience,
- All transformative measures must avoid “maladaptation”, i.e. solutions should not cause additional greenhouse gas emissions, exacerbate vulnerabilities or increase inequality.

## **Role of government and public agencies**

Governments and public institutions, including agricultural development programs, should reinforce the positive trends in society and the agricultural sector that are already leading in the desired direction. Their task is to follow the momentum and get promising transformative initiatives off the ground.

Policy instruments include, among others, subsidies to encourage change agents and start-up entrepreneurs, legal regulation of resource use, investment in rural infrastructure, such as resilient roads, or funding research into technologies that are climate-resilient, mitigate emissions and protect land, water, and biodiversity.

Both policy makers and development agencies should follow a “principled approach” rather than a planning approach, i.e. following principles rather than plans. The most important principle is to encourage the collaboration of stakeholders in the agrifood system helping partnerships along food chains and within regions to co-create solutions. To be successful, governments must follow the principle of generating a sound legitimacy for their interventions.

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## ValueLinks for Agrifood Systems (VL4AFS): The key innovations

17 experts on value chain promotion participated in the first seminar introducing ValueLinks for Agrifood Systems (VL4AFS) as a new method that aims to bring together the narratives of value chain development, food systems transformation, global warming and nutrition. It took place in Oestrich-Winkel, located in the Rheingau region, an important wine growing area in Germany, from October 21 to 25, 2024. The seminar facilitators were Alfons Eiligmann, Andreas Springer-Heinze and Annemarie Matthes. The discussions were supplemented by an excursion to the University of Geisenheim, the municipality of Eltville and the highly innovative winery Engelmann-Schlepper.

The new training concept “ValueLinks for Agrifood Systems (VL4AFS)” differs substantially from the classic ValueLinks 2.0 methodology. Lively discussions during the seminar produced additional insights and recommendations on how to consolidate the procedure and contents to be included in future seminars. In the following we present the key innovations. They are almost equivalent to a new version of ValueLinks.



**Focus on agrifood systems:** The methodology is geared towards agrifood systems, of which value chains are just one part. Food systems are defined by regional boundaries, the largest entity being an entire country. However, subnational regions or large cities and their surroundings are more useful units of analysis and action. While agro-based value chains form an essential part of the food system, crosscutting social and ecological issues are of similarly great importance.

**Nutrition perspective:** A key difference to the classic value chain approach is the extension of the chain to include consumer groups/households. The types of food consumed, their nutritional value and degree of processing determine the “food baskets” of different groups. Food baskets link the different consumer groups to the respective food value chains.



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**Multichain perspective:** Food value chains are interconnected, because they often share the same operators in the production, processing, and trade stages of the chain. This means that important types of food enterprises deserve particular attention such as industrial food processing companies, supermarkets or fast-food outlets. Another aspect is the competition between different chains for the same natural resources, labor and capital.

**Spatial perspectives:** Both production and consumption take place at specific locations that are characterized by their ecological foundation, especially water availability, ecosystem services and biodiversity, the conditions of infrastructure and the types of settlement. The spatial perspective and landscape approach cuts across value chains and thus needs its own analytical tools.

**Transformation as an ongoing process:** The process of agrifood systems transformation is in full swing, driven by global warming, technological and economic change, by policies, population growth and urbanization. The change in the food system is determined by external factors like mentioned above leading to organizational and technical changes in the agrifood system and its specific food chains.

**Strategic considerations:** Strategic considerations refer to the AFS in the first place. The starting point are the key drivers of AFS transformation in general and their implications for value chains and landscapes in particular. Both are subjects of AFS analyses.

**Change agents:** Innovators engaging in transformative initiatives are the champions in transformation processes. These can be individual enterprises, initiatives at specific locations or collective activities within value chains as well as government agencies, especially public research institutes. Development agencies and policymakers should support existing transformative initiatives. They can also help to create new ones provided they can build on explicit interests and are often part of transformative initiatives.

**Transformative action:** Initiatives and actions are “transformative” if they contribute to sustainability transformation in one way or another. Actors who drive such activities forward are the decisive change agents. However, it is important to differentiate positive and negative types of innovation: Contributions are only desirable if they provide societal and ecological improvements while being economically viable at the same time. Activities that generate additional negative external effects constitute a “maladaptation” to the consequences of global warming and resource scarcity. This needs to be avoided at all costs.

After the first very positive VL4AFS seminar in 2024, two projects consider already holding further seminars on the subject in 2025. The second VL4AFS expert seminar will be held in Oestrich-Winkel in the week of June 2-6, 2025, organized by IDC Consult (see [www.idc-aachen.de](http://www.idc-aachen.de)). Like the first seminar, the next one will also be organized based on participation fees.







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Interested people should register early on. Participation fees are reduced for ValueLinks Association members. Contacts: Alfons Eiligmann ([eiligmann@idc-aachen.de](mailto:eiligmann@idc-aachen.de)) Andreas Springer-Heinze ([andreas.springer-heinze@mailbox.org](mailto:andreas.springer-heinze@mailbox.org)), Annemarie Matthess ([a.matthess@gmx.net](mailto:a.matthess@gmx.net))

## Safeguards and gender analysis (S+G) following a supply chain approach

From September 2022 to October 2023 ECO-Consult conducted an array of **Safeguards and Gender (S+G) analyses** for the GIZ *Global Programme Sustainability and Value Added in Agricultural Supply Chains* (GP AgriChains). AgriChains operates in 11 countries (Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Uzbekistan) and 8 global supply chains (banana, cotton, coffee, cocoa, rubber, palm oil, soy, and tea&spices). The standard S+G analyses are set up on a per country and project activities base. However, AgriChains required an analysis that focused on the respective global agricultural supply chain. This article will show to what extent this was possible and which experiences and lessons-learned were made. We'll briefly start explaining the background of safeguards and gender analyses, then move to major findings with respect to the three types of Safeguards and Gender instruments. We shall conclude with an appraisal of the methodology and recommendations.

Safeguards and Gender analyses are imbedded in the GIZ Safeguards + Gender Management System which was introduced in GIZ in 2016 as a mandatory company-wide minimum assessment standard for all commissioning parties, clients and all business sectors to **avoid unintended impacts and risks a project may be exposed to or trigger** despite all good intentions. It consists of a two-stage appraisal procedure and assesses systematically three areas of concern: **i) human rights, conflict and context sensitivity (iPCA) ii) gender (GA) and iii) environment and climate (ECA)**. For BMZ measures, as is the case of the GP AgriChains, the potentials to pro-actively plan activities to avoid unintended impacts and risks beyond the "do no harm" principle are also assessed. The first stage consists of an internal screening procedure which identifies areas of concern that require a deeper appraisal usually done externally by consultants. Both processes are supported and controlled by the GIZ Safeguards + Gender Desk. General and specific guides as well as formats are available for iPCAs, GAs and ECAs. The S+G Desk had guided the project and consultants that iPCAs had to be done on a per country base, while GAs and ECAs could be tried to be performed on a supply chain/commodity base over several countries.

All in all, 31 analyses were performed by a team of four ECO-Consult experts:

- 8 Environment and Climate Analyses (ECA) along supply chains
- 8 Gender Analyses (GA) along supply chains as mentioned before,
- 7 iPCAs for those countries that had been identified as countries with increased or acute escalation potential (Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Ethiopia); and
- 8 Summary Documents ("2-pagers") for GAs and ECAs.



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**Environment and Climate Change Analyses (ECAs):** In the area of **environment** the main challenges concern **deforestation**, **reduced biodiversity**, and the **ill-use of agro-chemicals** (fertilizer and pesticides). Five of the eight commodities supported by AgriChains are explicitly mentioned by the European Union (EU) as causing severe imported deforestation into EU. Within the EU ranking these are 1. palm oil at 34%, 2. soya 32,8%, 4. cocoa 7.5%, 5. coffee 7% and 6. natural rubber 3.4%. Due to very high agro-chemical use cotton and banana have even been coined the globally “dirtiest industry” and “dirtiest fruit”, respectively. AgriChains has been addressing these challenges appropriately by various interventions most notably supporting sustainable agriculture through concrete capacity building activities in connection with multi-stakeholder initiatives towards good agricultural practices along renown sustainability standards, organic farming and integrated pest management. Some commodities can also be supported in order to reverse the situation on deforested and degraded lands. This is especially valid for oil palm and natural rubber, which can be cultivated on fairly poor land, a fact that has not yet been highlighted and sufficiently exploited by AgriChains. These crops can also be used in multi-cropping and agro-forestry systems near to natural systems (e.g., “jungle rubber” in Indonesia).

**Climate change** with **rising temperatures**, **change of rainfall** and **rainfall pattern** as well as an increased occurrence of **extreme weather events** is also heavily affecting the commodities supported by AgriChains. Coffee (especially highland Arabica coffee), cocoa, and tea are already or will be significantly affected up to 2050. This is less so the case for soya, banana, cotton, oil palms and natural rubber, where, however, effects may be more severely visible during the second half of this century. While climate resilience is emphasized in project documents, there is room for enhancing the implementation by incorporating concrete strategies and actions, akin to the FAO’s climate-smart agricultural approach. Furthermore, and on a general note, weather insurances should be more explored and supported in order to strengthen climate change adaptation.

**Gender Analyses (GAs):** Among 146 countries listed in the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) of 2022 the countries supported by AgriChains rank as follows (the lower the figure the better the gender equality): Ecuador on rank 41, Ethiopia 74, Columbia 75, Indonesia 92, Brazil 94, Cameroon 97, Ghana 108, Burkina Faso 115, Côte d’Ivoire 133 and India 135 (Uzbekistan not listed) [for comparison: Germany 10]. Thus, only Ecuador belongs to the top third of all listed countries, four countries are in the second and another four in the worst third. While it appears that there are big differences between countries according to the GGGI, the general gender situation is rather similar between countries and within supply chains. In all supply chains there is a strong **male-domination**, **patriarchy** or – as in Ecuador and Colombia called – “**machismo culture**”. Women may work either as wives within a smallholder farming family and assist their husbands or are employed in plantations as labourers. They usually perform the **lighter but more tedious work** operations. Their work is sometimes more appreciated than that of men, because women are known to be more patient and diligent e.g., in tending tree nurseries. As farm workers, they are more often in **informal** instead of formal **employment** and get **lesser paid**. They are generally in more **precarious conditions** compared to men. As plantation workers they are often deprived of **reproductive rights** like menstruation leave, maternity leave, and routine checkups are not granted and proper toilets, lactation and childcare facilities are not available. They may also suffer from pressure to provide



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for **sexual favors**, and are often exposed to inappropriate jokes, insinuations and comments, and unwanted physical contact that can amount to an assault. Women as smallholder farmers in the supported supply chains usually have **less access to land, finance and advisory services**. They are also **less represented** in **cooperatives** and other **agricultural membership organizations**. One of the problems almost all women working in agricultural supply chains suffer is the **double or triple workload** being responsible, besides the farmwork, of the household chores, supporting children and elder family members, and sometimes even community work.

AgriChains is addressing gender inequalities, and a number of country gender studies were undertaken (Indonesia, Colombia, Ecuador). In all instances a **gender focal person** has been appointed within AgriChains country teams. **Staff are gender balanced** or not far from it. Most partner organizations in the countries, however, lack proactive gender activities. There are few specific gender related activities. Within the project set-up gender is mainly confined to recording the number of female and male participants in trainings, workshops, and other events. While this is sufficient for a *gender sensitive approach* and for being awarded a gender marker 1 in the project design as required by BMZ (gender is an important secondary project objective), it is not enough towards a more ambitious approach that is *gender responsive* or even *transformative*. However, there is leeway to go in that direction and, for that purpose, staff and partners should be prepared through capacity building.

**Integrated Human Rights, Conflict and Context Analyses (iPCAs)**: The Fragile State Index of 2023 is quite a good indicator for the context and conflict situation in a country. The AgriChains countries rank as follows within a list of 179 countries whereby the lower the figure the higher the fragility (countries highlighted in bold font are those where iPCAs had to be conducted because these were assessed as having an acute or high escalation potential): **Ethiopia on rank 11, Burkina Faso 21, Cameroon 21, Côte d'Ivoire 36, Colombia 59, Brazil 71**, India 73, **Ecuador 87**, Uzbekistan 95, Indonesia 98, and Ghana 107 [for comparison: Germany 166]. Within the analysis a particular emphasis was placed on identifying unintended negative impacts (UNIs) caused by a project. While these may be country and project area specific, some commonalities could be observed across the seven analysed countries as follows:

- **exposure of partners and project staff to insecurity** (robbery, assaults by terrorists/para-military groups),
- **instrumentalization of project for political or economic interests**,
- **corruption** related to the provision of project funds,
- **unequal economic gains** through a flawed farmer/beneficiary selection
- **limited participation** because of **discrimination** of certain groups (women, indigenous people, immigrants, internally displaced people)
- **infringement of labour rights (child labour, occupational health and safety)**.

During interviews it became clear that in comparison to ECA and GA, project staff were least familiar with iPCA as a safeguard and gender instrument. Unintended negative impacts did not yet play a





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significant role in project planning and implementation and UNIs did not yet or only weakly feature in the routine monitoring systems. Risks and UNIs tended in some instances to be downplayed by project staff. Therefore, training of project staff appears necessary. This will help raise awareness and sensitivity towards risks and unintended negative impacts that might be caused by the project.

**Methodological learnings:** Following a **supply chain approach** (instead of a per country approach as usually done in S+G analyses) during the analysis was best possible for ECAs because commonalities between countries were quite large. In case there are significant differences between countries or groups of countries these can be accommodated in the ECA format. For instance, for the case of cocoa which AgriChains supports in six countries we grouped them into three clusters: i) West Africa with Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, ii) Latin America with Colombia and Ecuador, and iii) Indonesia. Within a cluster agro-ecological conditions, farming systems and socio-economic conditions were quite similar. For the gender analyses (GAs) it was more tedious to follow a supply chain analysis since the report set-up explicitly requires a break-down of information by country. This led to quite a lot of duplication and in the case of several countries per supply chain to long documents. For instance, for the case of cocoa with six countries the GA report amounts to 167 pages. With respect to iPCAs which were done on a per country base right from the beginning, we can confirm that there is no alternative to this approach. Human rights, conflicts and context are mostly governed by politics, laws, customs and traditions which are very country specific. So, also according to our judgement, in the case of iPCAs an analysis along a supply chain approach does not appear feasible.

In general, the **analyses got quite (too) long** (we produced a total of 1,092 pages over all analyses!). In this respect we suggest that the S+G Desk sets rules for formats and formatting such as length, font and font size. We recommend that overall, the length should not surpass 20 pages for a standard case.

One also notices that the **formats for the three analyses are quite different**. Harmonization would be most desirable. Especially the new iPCA-4 matrix which was formerly one column, and which now consists of 7 columns appears overdone. A format of a **matrix of three columns** as used in the ECA with i) situation analysis (risks, unintended negative impacts and potentials), ii) action options and iii) options adopted by the project/deviations from action options seems more straight forward and could also be applied to GA and iPCA formats. According to our view, this would greatly improve readability and make analysis easier to prepare in the first place.

Most of the analyses were based on secondary information, i.e., project documents that are provided by the project and internet research. However, a minimum commitment to project staff in the countries is necessary. We think that at least **two interviews** are required in order to get a proper idea of which risks, unintended negative impacts and potentials are relevant.

Finally, the S+G Desk should advise projects on a realistic **time requirement** for a standard ECA, GA and iPCA. According to our experience this should be about 8 days (we needed 9, but this included some trial and error with the formats in the beginning) per analysis.



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**Sharing analyses:** Our experience and analyses may be useful to interested ValueLinks members. Therefore -and with permission of GIZ GP AgriChains- we are happy to share our work. ECAs, GAs, iPCAs and summary documents can be found on the ValueLinks website in the ValueLinks member section under > 04-Member Upload > 05 Other VC promotion documents > Safeguards and Gender Analyses.

**Final thanks:** We are grateful to GIZ colleagues from GP AgriChains and the S+G Desk for the opportunity to work on Safeguards and Gender. We especially enjoyed the constructive and friendly interaction on the subject matter and the methodology. We hope that our work is used to contribute to good project implementation and is not collecting (too much 12) dust on the shelf.

By Dr. Eberhard Krain, Irma Jurrius and Martin Schweter (ECO-Consult). For more information contact [eberhard.krain@eco-consult.de](mailto:eberhard.krain@eco-consult.de)

### New e-learning course: “Value Chains in a nutshell”

The Agri-Business Facility for Africa (ABF) is excited to announce that the “[Value Chains in a Nutshell](#)” online course is now available in English as part of the [Agribusiness e-Academy](#) on atingi.

Building on the ValueLinks approach, this free self-paced and self-tutored course is designed to empower extension officers, teachers, trainers, ministry staff, and agripreneurs with essential knowledge and skills to enhance the value chains they are working in. The course can serve as a refresher and add on after previous ValueLinks in-presence trainings.



The course features the following elements:

**Understanding Business Linkages:** Gain insights into how your agribusiness connects with various markets through a network of enterprises, service providers, buyers, and consumers.

**Enhancing Product Value:** Learn about strategies to add value to agricultural products at every stage - from production to processing, transport, packaging, and reaching the end market.

**Identifying Opportunities:** Discover critical business opportunities, (climate smart) value chain upgrading options and effective strategies to strengthen business relationships and boost your profits in a sustainable way.

The French version of the course will be launched very soon as well, making this content accessible to even more stakeholders in the agricultural ecosystem. All French courses can be found on the dedicated [Agribusiness e-Academy page](#). Interested learners can enroll in the “[Value Chains in a Nutshell](#)” course at any time!



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The GIZ project Agri-Business Facility for Africa (ABF), which together with GIZ, MOVE-ComCashew, is implementing the Joint Action 'Business Support Facility for Resilient Agricultural Value Chains,' is an initiative jointly co-financed by the European Union under the Samoa agreement with OACPS and by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ. Feedback and questions can be addressed to [abf-eacademy@giz.de](mailto:abf-eacademy@giz.de).

### Kribi: un pilier émergent des chaînes de valeur en Afrique Centrale

Face à la compétition intense entre les infrastructures portuaires d'Afrique de l'Ouest, le Cameroun mise sur le port de Kribi pour se différencier. Situé à un carrefour économique stratégique, le port de Kribi répond aux ambitions nationales du Cameroun et aux besoins des pays voisins enclavés, comme le Tchad et la République centrafricaine. Cependant, cette ambition dépasse largement le développement portuaire : la **Zone Industrielle Intégrée du Port de Kribi (ZIIPK) entend devenir un centre de transformation** pour des secteurs clés comme le cacao, le bois, le coton, le sucre, les produits laitiers, le poisson, la viande, et les matériaux de construction.

Selon une récente étude socio-économique<sup>1</sup>, la ZIIPK pourrait **générer jusqu'à 50 000 emplois d'ici 2040**, positionnant Kribi comme un centre régional de production, de transit et d'exportation. Pour maximiser son impact, il est crucial de structurer et de renforcer les chaînes de valeur dans chaque secteur, en favorisant la transformation locale des matières premières, l'augmentation des exportations, et la diversification de l'économie camerounaise.

Pour que la ZIIPK atteigne son plein potentiel en tant que **modèle de développement durable**, il est proposé de développer les chaînes de valeur de manière intégrée. Cela impliquerait des partenariats public-privé, de la formation continue professionnelle, et une concertation active avec les communautés locales. En intégrant également une **dimension environnementale**, cette approche pourrait encourager des pratiques industrielles durables qui limiteraient l'empreinte écologique, avec des initiatives telles que la gestion raisonnée des ressources naturelles, la réduction des émissions, et la valorisation des déchets. Un consensus avec les parties prenantes locales favoriserait ainsi une croissance inclusive et respectueuse de l'environnement.

Cette orientation s'inscrirait pleinement dans le cadre méthodologique de ValueLinks, qui promeut des chaînes de valeur socialement équitables et écologiquement responsables. En renforçant la collaboration internationale, **ValueLinks pourrait apporter des outils et un soutien structuré pour aider la ZIIPK à atteindre ces objectifs**, en optimisant la compétitivité, en renforçant les capacités locales, et en établissant des pratiques commerciales durables. Cette approche permettrait au port de Kribi de devenir un véritable modèle de développement durable pour l'Afrique centrale. Affaire à suivre.

Pour plus d'information, veuillez contacter l'auteur : [cedric.levitre@ipemed.coop](mailto:cedric.levitre@ipemed.coop)

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<sup>1</sup> Analyse socioéconomique menée par Cédric Levitre pour le compte de TANGER MED Engineering.



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### La chaîne de valeur du safran dans la Province de Boulemane : Une dynamique de développement par Targa-AIDE



Dans le cadre de ses initiatives de développement local, Targa-AIDE, une association engagée pour le développement rural, s'investit depuis plusieurs années dans la province de Boulemane pour **promouvoir la chaîne de valeur (CdV) du safran**. Grâce à un partenariat structurant avec le CPDH (Conseil Provincial de Développement Humain), Targa-AIDE vise à développer le safran en tant que ressource économique durable, tout en

valorisant le savoir-faire traditionnel des coopératives rurales. L'engagement et le suivi technique apportés par l'équipe de Targa-AIDE, et notamment par son conseiller technique, Abdesselam Elmouket<sup>2</sup>, ont permis d'initier des actions innovantes favorisant l'autonomisation des femmes rurales et le développement économique durable.

**Détection et sélection du safran comme Chaîne de Valeur prioritaire.** La première étape du projet a consisté à identifier le safran comme une chaîne de valeur prioritaire pour Boulemane. Ce choix s'est appuyé sur une analyse de potentiel, qui a mis en évidence l'intérêt de promouvoir le safran en raison de sa valeur ajoutée économique et de son importance culturelle. Ce processus de sélection a permis de structurer l'intervention de Targa-AIDE autour d'un produit local à fort impact potentiel, capable de créer des opportunités économiques pour les familles rurales, et notamment pour les coopératives féminines.

**Promotion médiatique du savoir-faire local.** Pour sensibiliser et valoriser le travail des coopératives, Targa-AIDE a soutenu la réalisation d'un reportage vidéo avec la coopérative Safran Almiss, l'une des coopératives de Boulemane financée dans le cadre de l'appel à projets Axe ESS 2021. Ce [reportage](#), met en lumière les étapes de la culture du safran et le travail minutieux des femmes rurales, tout en sensibilisant un public plus large à la richesse de ce produit du terroir. Ce type de valorisation médiatique est essentiel pour accroître la visibilité des coopératives et pour attirer de nouveaux partenaires, tout en sensibilisant les consommateurs aux produits locaux.

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<sup>2</sup> Conseiller technique de l'association Targa-AIDE au niveau de la province de Boulemane et auteur de l'article





## NEWSLETTER December 2024

**Visite d'échange à Taliouine – Terre du Safran.** Du 19 au 23 février 2024, une visite d'échange a été organisée à Taliouine, une région emblématique de la culture du safran, pour permettre aux femmes de la coopérative Safran Almiss d'échanger avec des acteurs locaux. Durant ce séjour, les participantes ont visité la FIMASAFRAN, le Groupement d'Intérêt Economique (GIE) Dar Azaafaran, ainsi que les coopératives Soukaina et Souktana. Cet échange a permis de partager des connaissances et des expériences, contribuant ainsi à renforcer les capacités techniques, organisationnelles et commerciales des coopératives. Ce type d'apprentissage par les pairs est un pilier central de la stratégie de Targa-AIDE pour construire une communauté de pratiques autour du safran.

**Participation au Festival IRZAFRANE-SERGHINA.** Dans le cadre de la promotion des produits du safran et de l'artisanat local, Targa-AIDE a mobilisé les coopératives de la région pour participer à la 3ème édition du Festival IRZAFRANE-SERGHINA, organisée du 25 au 27 octobre 2024 sous le thème « La Route du Safran, moteur pour le développement de l'Eco-Tourisme Responsable ». Cette manifestation a offert une plateforme de visibilité aux coopératives, leur permettant de renforcer leurs capacités en matière de marketing et de vente, tout en exposant leurs produits à un large public. Ce festival a également été l'occasion de présenter pour la première fois l'initiative de la « Route du Safran », un parcours touristique et culturel reliant Serghina (Boulemane) à Taliouine (Taroudant), destiné à promouvoir le tourisme et l'économie locale autour du safran. Cette initiative, soutenue par Targa-AIDE et d'autres partenaires régionaux, ambitionne de transformer la culture du safran en moteur de développement éco-touristique.

**Participation au Festival International du Safran à Taliouine.** Dans la continuité des activités de promotion, Targa-AIDE a été invitée au **Festival International du Safran de Taliouine**, qui se tiendra du 7 au 10 novembre 2024. Ce festival rassemble des acteurs clés de la filière safran à l'échelle nationale, offrant un espace d'échange autour des enjeux et des défis du secteur. Cet événement permettra de consolider les acquis du projet et de renforcer les liens entre les coopératives de Boulemane et celles de Taliouine, tout en préparant les étapes futures de la « Route du Safran ».

**Conclusion : Un modèle de développement durable et inclusif.** À travers ces initiatives, Targa-AIDE contribue au développement durable de la région de Boulemane, en mettant en place un modèle de chaîne de valeur centré sur la valorisation du patrimoine local et le renforcement des capacités des coopératives. En favorisant l'autonomisation des femmes rurales et en encourageant des pratiques d'apprentissage collaboratif, Targa-AIDE démontre comment une chaîne de valeur innovante, basée sur un produit traditionnel tel que le safran, peut dynamiser l'économie locale et promouvoir une économie inclusive et durable.

La dynamique autour du safran dans la province de Boulemane ouvre de nouvelles perspectives pour l'économie rurale et positionne le safran comme un vecteur d'innovation et de prospérité locale.

[Reportage](#) sur la culture du safran (Coopérative Safran Almiss) : [Reportage](#) sur le Festival IRZAFRANE-SERGHINA. Pour avoir plus d'information contacter [a.elmouket@targa-aide.org](mailto:a.elmouket@targa-aide.org)





# NEWSLETTER December 2024

## Value chain resilience: inter-organizational collaborations and digital maturity

In the last few years, the world has experienced a disruption in the supply of several products and experienced several shortages. During the COVID pandemic, we noted that several **value chains lacking resilience including agri-food value chains**. Food and agricultural production faces major global challenges. In the future, it will be necessary to provide a growing global population with healthy foods in the context of climate change which often has negative consequences on agriculture. From this perspective, some research argues that digitalization could be considered a promising way to improve current agricultural and agri-food systems and strengthen their sustainability and efficiency.

Academic and professional literature recognizes the role of several factors on organizational resilience. The objective of this study is, on the one hand, to **better understand the impact of inter-company collaborations within the value chain on organizational resilience**. And on the other hand, determine the nature of the **relationship between the digitalization of the company and resilience**. The study is carried out on a **sample composed of 88 Tunisian SMEs** belonging to the olive oil value chain, thus including companies involved in production, processing and/or export activities.

Our survey showed that three-quarters of entrepreneurs do not actively use internet communication tools (e-mail, chat, social networks, etc.) and that their **digital skills are often basic**. Less than 20% of them provide the necessary resources for the digital transformation of their organization. The digitalization of the company does not seem to be a priority for most companies in our sample. However, our figures show that exporting companies which are located at an advanced link in the olive oil value chain, are leading the use of communication tools and social networks although their presence in e-commerce remains weak. We also noticed that export companies generally offer better quality products and services; collaborate more with other companies in the value chain; show superior sales growth; and more flexible and more resilient than non-exporting ones.

The results show that **collaborations between companies in the value chain in terms of sharing information and risks tend to encourage companies to adopt forecasting and monitoring practices**. These companies are thus better equipped to anticipate and prepare for future events, which would strengthen their organizational flexibility. On the other hand, our research shows that the digital skills of the entrepreneur are a determining factor in the digital maturity of the company. The more solid the digital skills of the entrepreneur, the more advanced the digitalization of the company would be. Finally, we found that **organizational flexibility and digitalization** of the company determine the level of robustness of the company which refers to its ability to remain stable under uncertainties and to resist disruptions.

Authors: Moujib Bahri (Canada), Lassaad Ghachem (Tunisia) and Ouafa Sakka (Canada). For more information please contact: [lassaad@gmail.com](mailto:lassaad@gmail.com)



# NEWSLETTER December 2024

## First SASI-training adapted for Brazil: A pilot initiative on sustainable agricultural supply chains

In November, an innovative training session on “Sustainable Agricultural Supply Chains” took place in Brazil. The event was funded by two GIZ projects – SAFE and AgriChains – and brought together GIZ staff from various projects in Brazil to deepen their understanding of pressing challenges and developments in the field of sustainable supply chains.

This pilot training covered a broad range of topics, including:

- **EUDR** (EU Deforestation-Free Regulation) and **CSDDD** (EU Due Diligence Directive),
- **Human rights, child labor, and gender equality** in agricultural value chains,
- **Forest conservation** and the role of digitalization,
- **Financial solutions** and systemic approaches to fostering sustainability.

The GIZ-“Sustainable Agricultural Supply Chains Initiative” (SASI), which developed the original training, oversaw the adaptation of the training materials. For the first time, the training was tailored to specifically meet the unique conditions and needs of Brazil.

By incorporating local perspectives and challenges, the training provided practical and context-specific solutions to foster sustainable agricultural practices. A particular highlight was its interactive methodology, which combines expert presentations with group exercises. This approach encourages participants to apply the concepts in their projects and exchange insights. Projects such as **AgriChains**, **SAFE**, **ProTS**, **FIP Paisagens Rurais**, **EcoAdvance**, **DeveloPPP Mondelez**, **DeveloPPP Symrise**, **FiBraS**, **Cooperação Trilateral**, **Agenda 2030**, **Parcerias para Inovação**, and **Agência/PDU** were directly involved, enriching discussions with diverse perspectives and practical case studies.

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive. Attendees appreciated the combination of in-depth content and interactive formats, which made the session both engaging and informative. Beyond knowledge-building, the training fostered valuable discussions about applying these principles within their respective projects.

Given the success of this pilot, the initiative holds promise for future upscaling, with potential adaptations to other countries and regions. It underscores the importance of locally tailored approaches in addressing global sustainability challenges.

The training was made possible thanks to the knowledge-sharing efforts of the implementation team, including colleagues from **ECO Consult** (Fernando Camargo) and **KS Passos Auditoria e Consultoria**.

For more information, feel free to reach out to **André Machado** at [andre.machado@giz.de](mailto:andre.machado@giz.de) and to Andrea Bruestle [andrea.bruestle@giz.de](mailto:andrea.bruestle@giz.de) (for general information on SASI Training).



# NEWSLETTER December 2024

## 2. ValueLinks studies, trainings, seminars

### Review of studies July – November 2024

Date & Place	Activity	Author
September 2-3 <b>ValueLinks Seminar in Cotonou, Benin</b>	ECLOSIO, the NGO of Liège University, Belgium, is promoting the corn value-chain in Benin. The action is part of ENABEL implementation of the “Delta Mono” Program which operates in the transboundary biosphere reserve of the Mono Delta. The ValueLinks methodology was introduced to ECLOSIO’ partners in charge of strategic development of actions or project management, a total of 16 persons which included ECLOSIO, Hubi and Vincianne Foundation, ANAF-Bénin, and APEFE.	Christophe Goossens
September 24-28 <b>ValueLinks Seminar in Wa, Ghana</b>	The Market-Oriented Agriculture Programme in North-West Ghana (MOAP NW), a component of the Sustainable Employment through Agribusiness (AgriBiz) programme, conducted a seminar with 30 participants from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the private sector. Particular feedback from private sector participants mentioned the seminar to be very inspiring for developing business ideas for establishing processing facilities.	Issah Nadjo, Alfons Eiligmann
October 3-7 <b>ValueLinks seminar in Hadhramaut, Yemen</b>	The UNDP Local Economic Development project in Hadhramaut and Mareb governorates organised a ValueLinks seminar with 18 participants working in the sesame value chain. The seminar was facilitated by the long-term ValueLinks Association member Fekri Al-Muafa	Fekri Al-Muafa
October 21-25 <b>VL4AFS Seminar in Oestrich-Winkel, Germany</b>	17 participants, all experts in value chain promotion, nutrition and food policy, contributed to our first ValueLinks for Agrifood Systems (VL4AFS) training seminar in Oestrich-Winkel, Germany, organised by IDC with support from ValueLinks Association members. We introduced a new concept and tools to support change agents in agrifood systems.	Andreas Springer-Heinze, Annemarie Matthes, Alfons Eiligmann
November 5-6 <b>ValueLinks Seminar in Phnom Penh, Cambodia</b>	The ValueLinks training specifically seeks to capacitate the 12 members of Uni4Coop (ECLOSIO and Louvain-Cooperation) and its partners (ECOLAND, DPA, CIRD, Banteay Srey, TrUAC and BUAC) on the roles of facilitators in each stage of the value chain and the different intervention strategies to improve efficiency of the Union of Agricultural Cooperatives’ value chains.	Sothet Chhay
November 18-22 <b>ValueLinks Seminar in Jacqueline, Côte d’Ivoire</b>	IDC and PROMAK Afric conducted a seminar with 21 participants from ten different GIZ projects in Jacqueline, close to Abidjan. The seminar was part of a series of more or less annual seminars in French conducted by PROMAK Afric and IDC since 2012.	Magès Nanguï, Alfons Eiligmann
November 25-29 <b>ValueLinks seminar in Jimma, Ethiopia</b>	IDC and Green Agro Solutions/Lersha conducted a ValueLinks seminar with 26 participants in Jimma, Ethiopia. The seminar was co-facilitated by Dr. Fikadu Mitiku, Associate Professor of Agricultural and Development Economics at Jimma University, President of Arsi University and ValueLinks trainer since 2023.	Dr. Fikadu Mitiku, Alfons Eiligmann



# NEWSLETTER December 2024

## Upcoming seminars and trainings December 2024 – May 2025

<i><b>Date/Place</b></i>	<i><b>Seminar/Participants</b></i>	<i><b>Contact</b></i>
March 10-14, 2025 <b>ValueLinks seminar in Yaoundé, Cameroun</b>	IDC and EcoTrading Sarl organise a further 4.5 day <i>ValueLinks</i> training in French, mainly targeting participants from West and Central Africa. The seminar is open for enrolment, participation fees are applied. A detailed announcement is published at <a href="http://www.idc-aachen.de">www.idc-aachen.de</a> .	<a href="mailto:training@idc-aachen.de">training@idc-aachen.de</a>
April 7-11, 2025 <b>ValueLinks seminar in Bogota, Colombia</b>	IDC and ECO Consult organise their 4.5 day <i>ValueLinks</i> training in Spanish for the second time in Bogota. The seminar is aiming at participants in Latin America and is open for enrolment. Participation fees are applied. A detailed announcement is published at <a href="http://www.idc-aachen.de">www.idc-aachen.de</a> .	<a href="mailto:training@idc-aachen.de">training@idc-aachen.de</a>
June 2-6, 2025 <b>VL4AFS Seminar in Oestrich-Winkel, Germany</b>	The second 4.5-day <i>ValueLinks for Agrifood Systems (VL4AFS)</i> training seminar in English organised by IDC will take place again in Oestrich-Winkel, Germany (50 km from Frankfurt). The seminar is open for enrolment, seminar places are still available. Participation fees are applied with special discount for ValueLinks Association members. A detailed announcement is published at <a href="http://www.idc-aachen.de">www.idc-aachen.de</a> .	<a href="mailto:training@idc-aachen.de">training@idc-aachen.de</a>



## NEWSLETTER December 2024

### 3. Recommended reading and further information

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#### RCP Policy Brief

"What the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) Says About Contracts" is an RCP Policy Brief that analyzes the content of the newly adopted [EU CSDDD](#) with respect to commercial contracts. On July 5, 2024, the CSDDD was published in the Official Journal of the European Union. It will enter into force on July 25, 2024, and Member States will have to transpose the Directive into national law by July 26, 2026. With the text finalized, the Policy Brief reviews its requirements with respect to commercial contracts—one of the key tools that companies are expected to employ in meeting their human rights and environmental due diligence (HREDD) obligations. For download, go [here](#)

#### Benchmarking Traceability and EUDR Compliance Solutions For Cocoa

Preliminary benchmarking of traceability and EUDR compliance solutions created to critically compare existing solutions. Evaluate them [here](#)

#### ITC Checklist on EUDR Tools

The International Trade Centre (ITC) has published a list of key criteria to support informed decision making among EUDR tools and technological solutions. Find it [here](#)

#### What the EU CSDDD says about contracts

This political brief analyses the content of the newly adopted EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) with respect to commercial contracts. On July 5, 2024, the CSDDD was published in the Official Journal of the EU. It will enter into force on July 25, 2024 and Member States will have to transpose the directive into national law by July 26, 2026. With the text finalized, the policy brief reviews its requirements with respect to commercial contracts – on of the key tools that companies are expected to employ in meeting with their human rights and environmental due diligence obligations. Available for download [here](#)





# NEWSLETTER December 2024

## 4. Membership and networking

### Is your personal profile updated?

Please check whether your personal profile is still up to date. In case, please just send us an updated text to [info@valuelinks.org](mailto:info@valuelinks.org).

### Strengthening the LinkedIn profile of the ValueLinks Association

Since a couple of months, the LinkedIn profile of IVLA is online. Of course, we have great interest in bringing up the number of followers. As a member of LinkedIn, please visit: *International ValueLinks Association e.V.* on LinkedIn and become a follower.

To attract more people, we still need a good background photo, presenting the diversity of members. The idea is to make a collage of pictures showing seminar situations and portraits. Anyone can take part and get represented, if he/she *agrees* to have the own portrait photo included. Obviously, the priority goes to members of the Association. For more information contact [info@valuelinks.org](mailto:info@valuelinks.org)

### Sharing materials and experience

We would also like to invite you to share some own material with the community by uploading it to the respective part of the folder "04-Member upload" in the member area (please ignore a technical mistake message that may pop up. It should work nevertheless). For further information, please contact [info@valuelinks.org](mailto:info@valuelinks.org).

### Your contribution to the next newsletter

A request and an offer to all members of the International *ValueLinks* Association: Please inform us about your activities so that they can be included in the next edition of this newsletter!

### Becoming a member

IVLA is a professional association of experts in the area of market development and value chain promotion. We welcome new members who are professionally active in this field, interested in sharing experience and in contributing to the advancement of the value chain approach to economic development, and the *ValueLinks* methodology in particular. The benefits of membership include privileged access to the latest methodological innovations, a platform for presenting own competences and achievements and contacts to colleagues all over the world. These are the fees for membership:

	Entry fee	Annual fee
<b>Fee for members with an OECD passport</b>	€40	€80
<b>Reduced fee for members with a non-OECD passport</b>	€20	€40

If you are interested in becoming a member, please ask for an application format by writing an email to [info@valuelinks.org](mailto:info@valuelinks.org)

#### Contact/Imprint

International *ValueLinks* Association e.V., c/o Dr. Andreas Springer-Heinze, Charles-de-Gaulle-Str. 9, 65197 Wiesbaden, E-Mail: [info@valuelinks.org](mailto:info@valuelinks.org). Register of associations: Amtsgericht Frankfurt, Vereinsregisternummer: VR14321.