Enhancing supply chain stability, resilience and sustainability through improved sub-supplier management – chocolate and cotton apparel case studies

The majority of Swiss agri-food companies source from global supply chains. Yet, only occasionally supply chain initiatives achieve the desired improvements in sustainability performance. In close collaboration with six companies of two important sectors of the Swiss economy – chocolate and textile – this project will identify and analyse various supply chain management options in order to support science-based decision making with respect to global supplier management.

Research questions

1. How can the sustainability performance of cocoa & cotton apparel supply chains be assessed comprehensively against the objectives defined in the FAO SAFA Guidelines?
2. How do different cocoa & cotton supply chains perform with respect to the 58 sustainability themes?
3. How do supplier management approaches perform with respect to improvements in sustainability and in terms of acceptance by operators along the supply chains?
4. Which trade-offs and synergies exist for optimising different sustainability themes?

Project objectives

2. Comprehensive sustainability assessments of selected supply chains.
3. Participatory development of practical interventions for influencing critical sub-suppliers.
4. Assessment of sustainability impacts and the acceptability of interventions for influencing critical sub-suppliers.
5. Application and evaluation of methods and processes for sub-supplier management.
6. Development of target group-specific recommendations and dissemination of the results beyond the boundaries of the project consortiums and its partners.

Implementation & knowledge transfer

Participative research and implementation with six companies

Collaboration with the Swiss and international research community

Dissemination of findings to other companies and stakeholders (Project website; Advisory board; Workshops & events with industry associations & business consultants)

Collaboration with key partners (among others):
- Agri-food industry
- Business associations (amfori, ITC, Öbu)
- Federal administration (FOEN)
- Non-governmental organisations

Contributions to NRP 73

1. Improving long-term competitiveness of Swiss companies: showcased in the chocolate & cotton sector.
2. Providing practical approaches and tools for assessing the stability, resilience and sustainability of Swiss companies’ supply chains, including sub-tier levels.
3. Providing Swiss companies effective and efficient approaches and methods for a systematic management of critical sub-suppliers.

References
