

Bulletin 390

This bulletin is written for people who want to learn more about the challenges and opportunities of 'farmers as shareholders', that is, including small-scale farmers' groups and associations in the ownership of companies that add value and market their produce.

Following the general overview of the issues and prospects presented in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 provides four detailed cases which examine the 'state of the art' in this complex area. The cases look at farmers' organizations who produce cocoa, coffee, tea and organic cotton, in two African countries (Ghana and Rwanda) and Peru, in South America. The emphasis is on how they became shareholders in companies that market their product in the North, the challenges faced and benefits gained for the different parties involved. To round out the picture, brief examples of another marketing initiative in India known as Zameen, and additional background on the work of TWIN Trading are provided.

In Chapter 3, the authors provide a synthesis of experience and offer insights into the different motives for promoting shareholding by producers/farmers. After presenting the perceptions of different stakeholders – the companies, the donors and the farmers' organizations – as described in the cases, a section is devoted to the all-important issue of sustainability (for shareholding by farmer organizations).

At the end, there are annexes that provide answers to several common questions on farmers as shareholders, and a list of selected websites where the reader may go to get current news on the many organizations and fair trade companies discussed in the book.



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Farmers as shareholders

A close look at recent experience

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