

# Identifying farmers' needs and ambitions for successful capacity building

The Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) visited the farmer association and several of its member farmers from August 16 to 18, 2021. The goal was to establish a baseline that would allow to assess the training needs of the farmers and plan for tailored training sessions aimed at strengthening the biodiversity management capacity of OSACOOOP farmers. The association is in one of Costa Rica's most biodiverse and isolated regions, far from services and programs of government institutions and with long transport routes.

## Key findings

- Farmers are committed to eco-conscious agriculture in harmony with the environment
- Female entrepreneurship is encouraged, and the female farmers are leading the diversification of production activities
- Each associate is committed to not conduct environmental crimes such as logging of forests, pollution of rivers or hunting of wild animals

**"We have to give back to nature, because we have done a lot of damage to it."**

**"Monoculture is not for me, it brings me nowhere."**



María Aurora grows and processes cacao in her farm. She recently took a course at OSACOOOP to learn how to make her business profitable.



The picudo beetle, which farmers have learned to trap using a molasses and water mixture with a pheromone bait.

## Training opportunities

- Pesticides and their risks: deepen the training of producers and OSACOOOP staff on the risks of pesticides in use and to inform about less toxic alternatives.
- Multifunctional vegetation zones: Habitat islands as plant sources natural predators of the picudo beetle (oil palm's main plague)
- Restoration of riparian zones: We have identified the opportunity to work with another local NGO to support reforestation efforts with native endangered trees from their forest nurseries
- Crop diversification: A couple of crops have been identified that suits best to diversify the income of producers.



# Highlight

One of the producers we visited, don Paco, produced a novel method to grow vanilla bean plants in his existing oil palm field. He observed that the grooves in the palm's trunk had an appropriate structure to hold the vanilla vines around the tree, and would provide a moist, fertile environment for them to thrive.

Don Paco is currently part of a crop diversification project at OSACOOOP, whose producers are also growing cacao and hope to process it as well in the future.

OSACOOOP promotes the agroforestry systems, forest conservation and minimizing the use of synthetic pesticides. Don Paco is also on board with these best practices at his farm, where he keeps 63 hectares of forest intact, and protects it from loggers and sport hunters.

