



Action on Children's Harmful  
Work in African Agriculture

## Working Paper 6

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# Value chain governance: entrance points for interventions to address children's harmful work in agriculture

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January 2021



## About ACHA:

The research informing this Working Paper as well as its publication was made possible thanks to the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)-funded research on **Action on Children's Harmful Work in African Agriculture (ACHA)**. The aim of the programme is to build evidence on:

- the forms, drivers, and experiences of children's harmful work in African agriculture; and
- interventions that are effective in preventing harm that arises in the course of children's work.

It is currently assumed that the majority of children's work in Africa is within the agricultural sector. However, the evidence base is very poor in regard to: the prevalence of children's harmful work in African agriculture; the distribution of children's harmful work across different agricultural value chains, farming systems and agro-ecologies; the effects of different types of value chains and models of value chain coordination on the prevalence of harmful children's work; and the efficacy of different

interventions to address harmful children's work. These are the areas that ACHA will address.

ACHA is a collaborative programme led by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Brighton, UK. Partners include:

- University of Ghana, Legon
- University of Development Studies, Tamale
- African Rights Initiative International (ARII)
- University of Sussex
- University of Bath
- University of Bristol
- Fairtrade Foundation
- ISEAL Alliance
- Rainforest Alliance
- Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab, University at Buffalo
- International Cocoa Initiative (ICI)
- Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH).

ACHA is directed by **Professor Rachel Sabates-Wheeler** ([r.sabates-wheeler@ids.ac.uk](mailto:r.sabates-wheeler@ids.ac.uk)) and **Dr James Sumberg**.

## About this report:

This paper presents different types of governance mechanisms that can be present in a specific value chain and explores how these can be used or need to be modified in view of intentions to reduce CHW. We primarily look at the way that the unobservable process-related quality attributes of a product are currently governed and discussed. We identify interactions/ coordination processes that we feel are relevant for ACHA and likely entrance points for interventions.

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# 1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to operationalise the concept of agricultural value chain and value chain governance in order to identify entrance points for the Action on Children's Harmful Work in African Agriculture (ACHA) programme. Interventions are intended social processes that aim to affect the lives of individuals and groups, and to enable and constrain their social strategies (Long and van der Ploeg 1989). Many of these interventions are implemented by the private sector actors that are involved in African value chains. The analytical framework presented in this paper, based on a rough typology of institutional arrangements as archetypical social sub-systems, helps to unpack some of the coordination and governance mechanisms that commonly exist between producers, traders, processors, retailers, consumers, and other intermediation agents in the agricultural sector. Unpacking this can help delimit the social systems in agriculture where entrance points for actions to address the issue of children's harmful work (CHW) are most likely to be found or can be developed. We provide no fixed theoretical perspective to analyse the relations within these social systems (and their relations to higher-level social systems) but have limited ourselves to the description of the main elements of each social sub-system. Political economy, feminist, behavioural, technographic, institutional, emancipatory and other analytical perspectives are all needed in tandem to explore and understand the power and social relations within and between them, how they are connected and overlapping, and the room for change to support children's wellbeing.

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## 1.1 Value chains

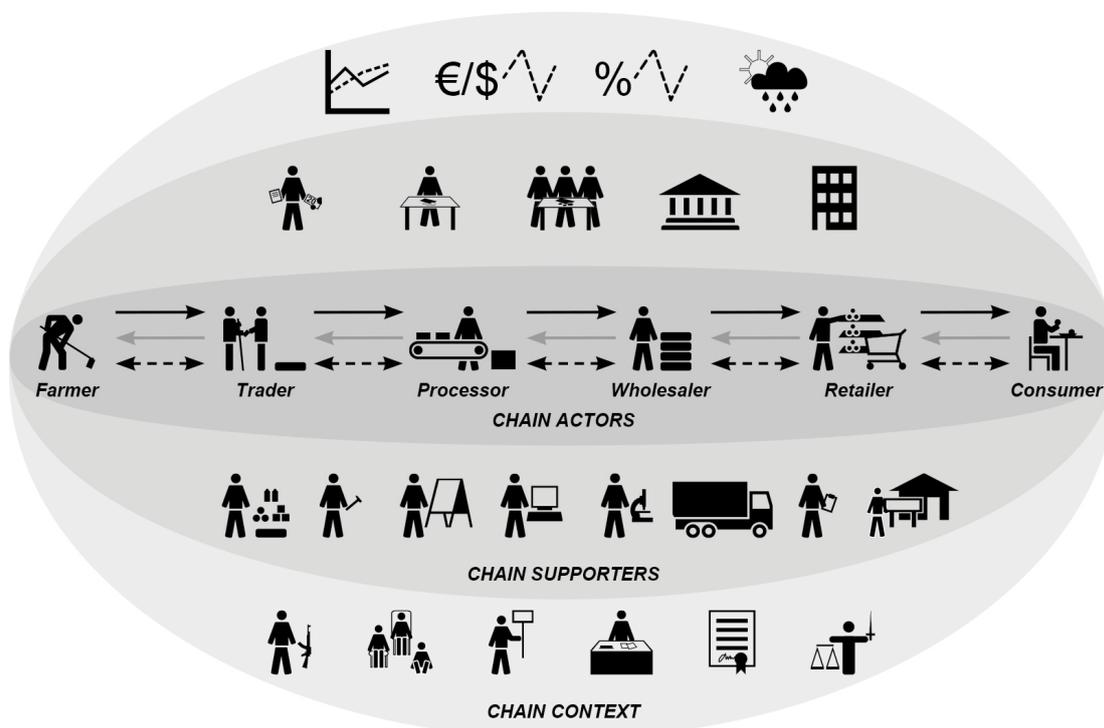
The term 'value chains' is used in the professional, developmental value chain development (VCD) literature (Bolwig et al. 2010; Donovan et al. 2015; Helmsing and Vellema 2011; Kaplinsky and Morris 2001; M4P 2008; Mitchell, Keane and Coles 2009; Riisgaard et al. 2010; Roduner and Gerrits 2006) as a generic term to refer to agricultural sectors and includes production, trade, processing and distribution. In the academic, non-developmental literature, the concept of global or international value chains (GVCs) is more common. This GVC literature is especially interested in the governance of these supply chains (Gereffi, Humphrey and Sturgeon 2005; Lee, Gereffi and Beauvais 2012) – that is, who exercises power in the value chain to influence the distribution of risks and rewards? GVC analyses are more common in the manufacturing sector (garments, cars, etc.) but less so in local

smallholder-dominated agricultural value chains. Another school of academics prefer to use the term 'global production and distribution networks' (Yeung and Coe 2015), which extends the analysis beyond vertical value chain linkages to consider also horizontal links across the sequence of production processes influenced by political, social and historical contexts. Recently, the term 'food chain' is becoming more en vogue (FAO 2014; Lentink 2016), which covers production, distribution and consumption within the 'food system', with more emphasis on nutrition and health than earlier work on agricultural value chains had. Feyaerts, Van den Broeck and Maertens (2020) review the evidence on competition and spillover effects between global and local food value chains.

In this paper, we follow the more generic definition of value chain used in the developmental literature – agricultural sectors in which actors are linked in production, trade, processing and distribution, and coordinate issues related with the quantity, quality, and the terms of the transactions. We will analyse these value chains (our unit of analysis) with a focus on power relations and exclusion/inclusion dynamics. We consider value chains as nested systems of production and distribution that can be analysed at varying scales and levels, from the local, subnational and national to the global. A value chain has the vertical dimension of the flow of the product from upstream to downstream following the chain of intermediating actors. It also has the horizontal element of aggregation and coordination between similar value chain actors (farmers, traders, processors, etc.) at each link in the chain. Figure 1 provides a taxonomy of stakeholders involved in the value chain; it differentiates between 'chain actors', who are involved in transactions, and 'chain supporters', who influence the room for manoeuvre of these chain actors in their transactions and sharing of risks and rewards, and who, in turn, are constrained by the socioeconomic and legal realities of the 'chain context'. There are multiple ties, interdependencies and power relations between these different actors, which create emergence/synergies, uncertainties/surprises and other system dynamics. The power relations can manifest as collaboration, collusion, conflict, competition, co-optation, capture or coercion (Ayele et al. 2016).

When we use the term 'value chains', we are placing a (porous) boundary around the system that we propose to analyse, through focusing on the power and power relations of these groups of actors, which is a feature in the GVC literature. This power is expressed not only directly (the buying company is imposing specific terms of trade on a product) but also indirectly (the ways in which these actors influence, shape and/or defend their

**Figure 1. Schematic picture of the different actors involved in the value chain**



Source: © Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) and International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) (2010).

power by strategic use of the chain context, chain supporters, policies and related institutions). These power relations are sometimes entrenched in social norms that structure gender, race and/or other social relations in the value chain. Both these instrumental and structural forms of power and control (Fuchs, Kalfagianni and Arentsen 2009), being hidden or visible (Gaventa 2006), affect the distribution of risks and rewards between transacting parties.

The value chain is embedded in the local context where the chain actors are located, which may or may not overlap. In this research, we are primarily interested in the production areas and local markets, where children’s work is most relevant, but also in the context in which consumers make their decisions around food (for example, in urban areas in Africa or in the Northern importing countries). The latter is especially important for those value chains where certification schemes are relevant. The local social context in production areas includes other employment activities that emerge around agricultural value chains, such as in transport services, restaurants, building works, etc. As these non-agricultural sectors are often important to understand decision making in the agricultural value chain – for example, when these sectors influence prices, costs, negotiating power, etc. – they will be included as part of the value chain analysis. Of course, a value chain analysis needs to make

decisions about the boundary of the social system and the level of detail that is useful and meaningful to include. This implies that the boundaries and elements chosen to be included or highlighted can always be contested by people with other analytical or normative lenses.

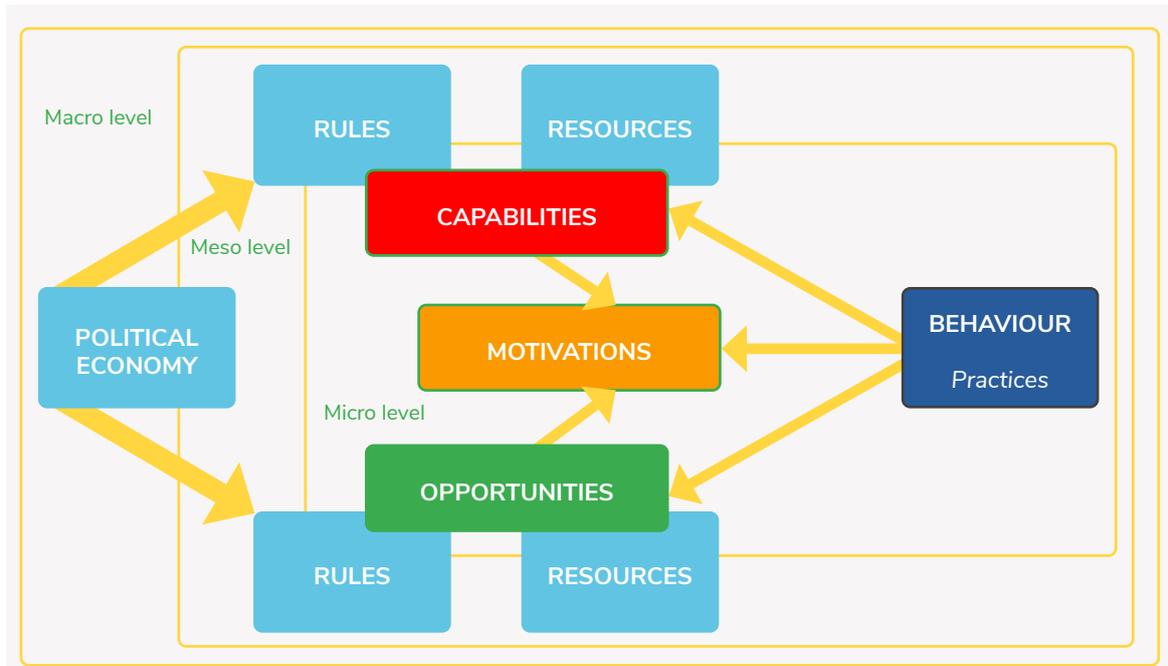
## 1.2 Value chain governance

To find entrance points for interventions to reduce children’s harmful work, we focus on the value chain governance dynamics – that is, on the quality of the communications, negotiations and transactions between different actors involved in agricultural production, both vertical (from farm to fork) and horizontally (between groups of similar actors such as farmer or trader associations, professional unions, service providers, etc.). These value chain governance dynamics determine the institutional arrangements around the value chain operations and the resulting distribution of risk and rewards between the actors involved. The nature and quality of value chain coordination is heavily influenced by the distribution of risks and rewards in these transactions (Handayati, Simatupang and Perdana 2015), as well as by the flow of knowledge and information in the chain.

Each value chain has a context-specific way in which stakeholders interact with each other. Our focus on power relations implies that we look at

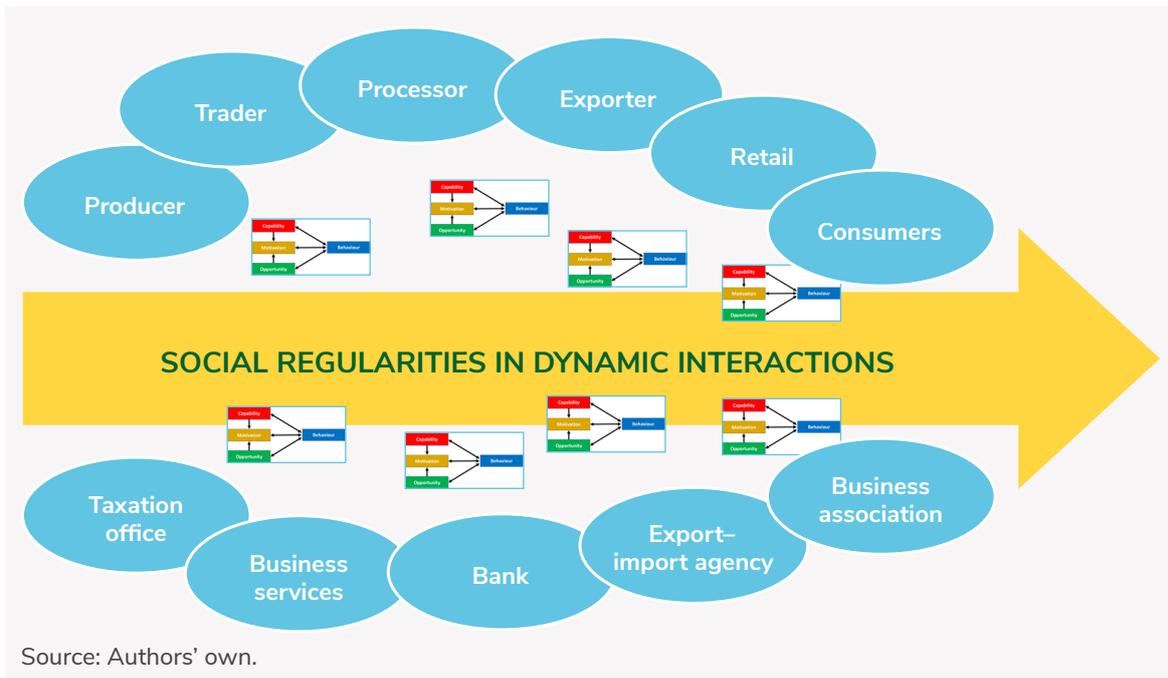
the rules and resources that underpin each actor's capabilities, opportunities and motivations (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Stakeholder behaviour at the micro and meso levels, conditioned by access to rules and resources**



Source: Authors' own, based on Michie, van Stralen and West (2011).

**Figure 3. Focus on the social regularities in stakeholder interactions in the value chain**



Source: Authors' own.

## 1.3 Value chain governance mechanisms

We want to understand these value chain governance dynamics by identifying various 'typical' social regularities (Figure 3). These types constitute different configurations of institutional arrangements and incentives that tend to have similar kinds of dynamics and coordination challenges. For some value chains, these 'social regularities in dynamics' are related to the transactions in the value chain; for others, they are associated with the type of institutional environment and service delivery in the value chain. In this paper, we call all of them 'value chain governance mechanisms'. Each mechanism represents a particular type of interaction between agency and structure in the value chain (Giddens 1979). Value chain mechanisms are structuring properties: they constrain agency but at the same time can be modified by human agency. Many of these institutional arrangements and incentives that are captured by value chain governance mechanisms are a combination of (sometimes conflicting) formal and informal rules and regulations, but which tend to be more or less stable in time (social regularity). Especially in

smallholder agriculture, informal, unwritten rules and regulations are critical in structuring market access and shaping livelihood strategies.

We focus our attention on those links in the value chain where, under conditions of interdependency, smallholders, local agents, farmer groups and traders are exchanging agricultural products or related services, and are interacting about the quality attributes, risks and rewards in these transactions. We also focus on interactions characterised by having more than only the price as relevant information to decide on a transaction. We are particularly interested in the roles that agribusiness – both large multinational agribusinesses and small and medium-sized enterprises – plays in these arrangements. Understanding the role of agribusiness in value chain governance is critical because it provides a way to assess entry points for intervention. Moreover, under the United Nations (UN) Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, businesses have a duty to assess and address human rights abuses. Under national (and now also regional) human rights due diligence legislation, this duty is increasingly becoming a legal obligation for firms headquartered in the signatory countries (e.g. France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom).

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## 2 A typology of value chain governance mechanisms

In this paper, we present different types of value chain governance mechanisms, highlighting the most relevant institutional arrangements that characterise them. These differences provide different entrance points for research and action to address and mitigate the risks of hazardous work by children. The value chain governance mechanisms that we present in this paper are present across African agriculture, but some mechanisms may have more relevance in some contexts and cropping systems than in others. These mechanisms are present in very 'traditional' and very 'modern' value chains. For example, contract farming and certification mechanisms are also present in the informal patronage within villages, where poor farmers depend on 'big men' or 'big women' as a risk mitigation strategy to help them cope with health emergencies, which goes in the direction of becoming an (informal, unwritten) contract farming mechanism, and is not necessarily benign.

In this section, we set out a typology of six types of value chain governance mechanisms, and delineate sub-types for each, linking these sub-types with different potential entry points for interventions on CHW. We start the typology with a description of the spot market mechanism, characterised by 'price only'. In real-world value chains, ideal-typical spot market transactions are rare; there are almost always other mechanisms than price in transactions between value chain actors more upstream or downstream. We mention these according to increasing complexity. We start with spot markets and in-company coordination. Then we move to contract farming and collective marketing. We end with certification and multistakeholder platforms as the most complex but least common mechanism. While the typology reflects different types of value chain governance mechanisms, the dynamics in any single value chain may involve multiple governance mechanisms influencing how the chain functions, and vary at different links in the value chain.

## 2.1 Spot market mediation

Often, buyers and sellers of a product do not know each other, or the personal relationship is delinked from the way the price is defined. The main coordination mechanism is the price. We call this a spot market transaction. Often, spot markets involve a place (village market, commodity exchange, auction, etc.) where multiple sellers and multiple buyers are negotiating the terms of trade of agricultural commodities. Price plays a role in setting incentives and providing information related to quality, quantity and timing, as well as allocating risk.

In these arrangements, buyers and sellers are relatively autonomous, as product specifications are simple, and products can be supplied with little direct input from buyers (Gereffi et al. 2005). Where these sellers and buyers are numerous, there is a higher likelihood that the price reflects real scarcity of the product, which is considered by most economists as the best price discovery mechanism, as competition is high and the cost of each party switching to new partners is low. However, where these markets are dominated by a few parties (e.g. traders), then information asymmetries or the ability of some parties to store stocks or to offer better services will enable them to extract rents and benefit disproportionately (Jayne et al. 2014). Government policies can affect these dynamics, through instruments such as competition policy, or government support for transport, information and market infrastructure (Vorley, Cotula and Chan 2012). These measures influence price transparency and market information, which affect farmers' access to markets and influence power and competition in the market.

Though farmers can sell directly to traders either at the farm gate or local markets and still have only the price as the relevant coordination mechanism, most spot market mediation takes place at rural market centres, where individual farmers come together to sell to competing traders. This overcomes the farmers' problem of lack of competition while offering traders the chance to buy produce in bulk (Wiggins and Compton 2016). Despite the potential transitory nature of these relationships between buyer and seller in such markets, repeated transactions and longer-term relationships over time can generate trust and a type of market-based value chain governance (for example, between farmer and trader). However, despite the development of this relationship, switching costs remain low, as suppliers use generic assets rather than investing in those specific to a particular transaction or buyer (Gereffi et al. 2005).

While entry points for addressing CHW in spot market arrangements are limited (for the reasons discussed below), this is nevertheless a relevant governance type, since it is the one which reaches

most small-scale producers. These producers are not formally organised or trading with large companies in highly organised value chains, but rather operate in much more informal and trader-driven arrangements, which are primarily influenced by overall market conditions.

The nature of the interaction between farmer and trader varies in relation to the type of product, frequency of interactions (e.g. yearly, weekly, daily) and location (such as open food markets, auctions, commodity exchanges, hedging contracts, etc.). Each of these instances with spot market mechanisms will have specific thresholds and processes – for example, minimum volumes or computerised financial management. Despite these contextual specificities, we identify two broad sub-types, each with somewhat different implications for entry points to address CHW.

### 2.1.1 Anonymous spot market transactions

The first sub-type involves true spot markets, including those mediated by commodity exchanges or marketing boards, in which trading is anonymous (van der Mheen-Sluijer 2010). Anonymity means that no long-term trading happens, and transactions in food products are solely defined by the price of the product. The relations between buyer and sellers are depersonalised and once purchased from producers, the source of the product becomes untraceable. The only coordination mechanism is the price.

Price acts as a coordination mechanism because it influences the decisions that private actors (farmer, households, companies) make. These decisions affect quality and production levels, and they can also influence the drivers for or against child labour. For example, Ravetti (2020) shows that the evidence about the causal relation between prices and CHW is inconclusive. An important takeaway from this literature review is that under certain circumstances, income increases are associated with a risk of increased child labour. Child labour is driven not only by poverty but also by earning opportunities, supported by the finding that in some situations, child labour increases with income (*ibid.*).

Moreover, cocoa in Ghana is a special case because the price setting is, to a large extent, state-controlled, with annual reference prices. Bargaining for higher cocoa purchase prices (as a percentage of the international price) takes place at the national level in the Ghana Cocoa Board, COCOBOD, not between farmers and traders (Vellema et al. 2016). For most other crops, however, the price is negotiated at the farm level and influenced by price fluctuations due to market dynamics, without a yearly reference price. The discussion above

suggests that potential entry points for addressing CHW in spot markets would revolve around addressing structural factors that depress the prices flowing to farm households. Entry points could include the following.

- Measures that increase the bargaining power of farmers, such as increasing access to market information or access to a greater diversity of markets. Access to financial services could give farmers more room to store and wait for improved post-harvest prices.
- More resilient households are also likely to be more able to negotiate with traders. And this resilience could be improved with the provision/improvement of basic services in these remote rural areas, including education, health and water (domestic and irrigation). Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) often work on these basic services and could provide entrance points for discussions about the drivers of CHW.
- The role of the chain context (Figure 1) is another entry point for ACHA-relevant interventions – for example, measures that reduce the bargaining power of buyers, such as stricter competition policy or floor prices for commodities.

### 2.1.2 Spot market with repeated personal interactions

The second sub-type also involves market-mediated exchanges in which price is the primary coordination mechanism, but repeat transaction and longer-term relationships between buyer and seller develop (Webster 1992), although without requiring explicit governance mechanisms such as contracts or other types of pre-harvest arrangements. These conditions make possible a degree of negotiation, cooperation and traceability with respect to CHW. They can support a learning process between buyer and seller, and a lower risk of opportunistic behaviour, at lower transaction costs than usual (Cadilhon et al. 2007; Goldbach, Seuring and Back 2003; Williamson 1975).

Potential entry points for addressing CHW in these other market-mediated exchanges would imply increasing prices to farm households, as described above. Also, this potential for traceability may provide an entry point for coordination around CHW issues through the following.

- Measures that reward producers via improved market access and higher prices (e.g. for providing them with products that are produced without using CHW). Regular transactions could result in traceability, and intermediaries (traders) could pay higher prices to farms which

produce to these higher standards, and transit to certification-like governance.

- Buyers that want to pay a fair price for products that have higher social qualities need to trust the quality delivered to them. The use of better labour standards during production does not result in different observable product characteristics. This unobservability makes it easier for transacting partners to 'cheat'. Without an independent verification system, the reliability of traceability by personal reference only is low. This challenge is similar to the intermediation of organic products through agent-trader networks.

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## 2.2 In-company governance

Business coordination intends to integrate activities to ensure that resources are used most efficiently to achieve a set goal in an organisation. The management should bring together different individuals, groups and ideas within the business. The management seeks to achieve coordination through its basic functions of planning, organising, staffing, directing and controlling for a common goal (Shinde 2018). That is why coordination is not a separate function of management because achieving harmony between individual efforts towards achievement of group goals is key to the success of business management. Coordination is the essence of management and is implicit and inherent in all functions of management. In-company coordination requires transactions and coordination between different units of the same firm or holding, where the price is not negotiated like in a spot market. These different types refer to the relationship between the ownership of the firm and the management of the firm. This is relevant because although in theory management is there to achieve the goals of the company owners, in practice, management has its own set of incentives, which mean that behaviour and decisions may not always align with the goals/interests of owners. Thinking about entry points for research on drivers of child labour requires an understanding of the interests and incentives of owners and managers, of how these influence behaviours that are related to CHW, and how these incentives can be influenced. We present three sub-types.

### 2.2.1 In-company governance in stock-listed firms

Stock-listed firms have shares owned by individuals or institutions that are legally separated from the firm itself. Shareholders influence management by asking for transparency, mainly

in financial reporting, but, increasingly, in asking for a non-financial report covering broader environmental, socioeconomic and/or governance dimensions of business performance. These reporting requirements provide incentives for companies such as Unilever to develop corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes where they piloted approaches to showcase their social commitment. CSR is the voluntary behaviour of companies to go beyond the legal requirements of the country in which they operate, given their long-term interests for integrating economic, social and environmental impacts to their operations (Jamali and Mirshak 2007). In time, the initially philanthropy-motivated CSR policies have been mainstreamed and translated in in-company requirements to monitor social conditions in production. The interests of shareholders are, however, primarily based on financial returns, and minority shareholders (for example, organised in hedge funds) can effectively pressure companies to focus on short-term strategies to maximise shareholder profits.

- *Stock-listed firms have incentives to limit reputational damage. This makes them active stakeholders in the debate around children's work. Their conceptions of child labour may be analysed and challenged in ACHA, and their search for workable interventions to address a perceived problem makes them attractive partners for collaborative, action-oriented research.*
- *Although direct involvement of these firms in agricultural production is rare, several stock-listed firms (such as those in tea, sugar or biofuel crops) do not only have estates or large farms that are active in direct production but are also involved in outgrower schemes (contract farming) or delegate production to certified preferred suppliers. Directly operated plantations are concentrated in the production of biofuel crops (sugar, oilseeds) or cereals (wheat, soy). In Africa, due to land tenure regulations, direct foreign investments in primary agricultural production are less evident than in Latin America but on the rise in some countries (e.g. land grabbing).*

### 2.2.2 In-company governance in family-owned firms

The incentives of shareholders are markedly different in companies that are family-owned, which transfer the equity to future generations within the same family. They can have more long-term visions of growth. The lack of shareholders means that privately held companies are less subject to external pressure than listed companies. If they have values that mean they support social causes (or have

brands to protect) they can take a long-term view. However, family-owned firms can also be more secretive and ruthless than listed companies in their operations. Many of the large African companies are family owned, often intertwined with the political system in place.

- *Family-owned firms that source agricultural products may have distinctive brands to sell to consumers. Reputational damage to the brand's image may affect sales and provides an incentive to discuss children's hazardous work in primary production. However, their reporting requirements are less than public-listed companies, resulting in less transparency of operations.*
- *Often, firms need a 'licence to operate' in the villages where they are active. Therefore, they might want to engage in activities that are motivated by social concerns (Ton, Vellema and Danse 2009), and develop CSR-like policies. These can be in the form of an inclusive business model, where these concerns influence their core economic processes and transactions, or in a way that does not affect their logistics and transactions in the value chain but has a philanthropic or political motivation.*
- *The close relations between large family-owned firms that are directly active in agriculture and the political system in a country can work twofold. On the one hand, these firms may be influenced by the national policy debate and be more proactive in implementing interventions. On the other hand, they are also in a better position to work reactively and hinder the implementation or effectiveness of interventions to improve sustainability and address CHW because these regulations threaten their economic interests.*

### 2.2.3 In-company governance in parastatal firms

The picture changes again when ownership of the company is not private but partly or entirely public. Especially when the parastatal firms function in the domestic market, the close link between state and business provides opportunities for these enterprises to influence public policies but also to be influenced by policies and politics. They are more likely to become part of public-private coordination processes. Public-led formal legislation abounds in all countries; most labour laws, children's rights and human rights conventions have been ratified by African governments. Implementation of these policies may be easier when the government is also in control of the companies that need to conform to them. Marketing boards, like COCOCOB in Ghana, present a good example of these parastatal companies, where internal coordination and control

of the value chain is easier than in value chains where transactions are less regulated, and where the influence of political and ethical concerns is less important than economic rent. However, it is important to note that this is not straightforward. For example, COCOBOD often publicly denies the existence of CHW in spite of the formal Ghanaian government policies.

- *The public ownership of a company makes it easier to discuss and translate national government policy priorities for the company's business practices. The influence of trade unions is often more significant, and eventual negative media coverage may affect political careers. This creates a better context to discuss the social relations of production (labour rights, social benefits) and CHW issues.*

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## 2.3 Collective marketing

An important mechanism for smallholder farmers to gain bargaining power in transactions is collective marketing. Collective marketing implies coordination and communication about the quantity and quality of the product being sold (or purchased), and often implies a division of tasks and responsibilities in negotiations about these attributes with buyers. It is a governance mechanism for horizontal coordination. It is often used by small-scale farmers to compete more effectively in the market, and it may require additional storage, processing or packaging of the crop, with the costs shared by the collective. These associated costs of collective action often imply that the poorest farmers are excluded from these collective marketing models.

Entering new markets for the first time is a significant challenge for many smallholder farmers in developing countries. It demands new skills and knowledge – for example, about standards and requirements, marketing channels and consumer tastes. Neven (2012) contends that cooperation among smallholders to serve these markets jointly requires: (1) a strong business rationale and relationships with the private sector, in terms of costs versus benefits, which should show that there is a profit in it; (2) that the demands placed on farmer groups do not exceed their current group management skills and financial capacities, suggesting that delegation to an audited management body may be needed; (3) the right internal cohesion and group dynamics (small size, homogeneity, face-to-face contact, accountability among members), which takes time; and (4) a supportive legal environment (legal status of the farmer organisation). Based on a series of case studies, Neven (2012) supported the assertion by Stringfellow et al. (1997) that farmer

cooperation should not be viewed as a panacea for development. Groups have a role to play but do not provide an easy institutional response to the pressures facing smallholders in a liberalised economy.

Collective marketing groups include cooperative-like economic farmer organisations as well as not-for-profit associations and farmer-led commercial enterprises (Ton 2010). Farmer-led enterprises are formally registered companies with farmers as co-owners. Collective marketing groups are often involved in and created or supported by other governance mechanisms, such as contract farming arrangements, certification schemes and spot market mediation. We make a distinction in three (overlapping) sub-types that differ in the way that membership is defined, and the intensity of social interaction that it implies.

### 2.3.1 Small groups that develop value-adding activities

Collective marketing of agricultural products often starts with sharing costs of storage or transport. Other groups are organised around processing or post-harvest value-adding activities and decide to sell their products collectively. Women's groups may take up the milling of rice or maize and sell the flour or sell honey or marmalade. When groups are small, ownership of the product that is aggregated for the collective marketing remains individual (and traceable), and responsibility for the quality (e.g. humidity content for storage) may still be individual, but the price negotiation is collective. The added value (e.g. by processing, packaging or aggregation) results in better prices than when the farmer would have had to negotiate the price individually. In larger groups, generally, the product is transferred to the group, with associated risks related to ownership of a (perishable) crop. This requires stronger organisational capacities and creates the need for consultation and coordination. Often, this leads to a board with representatives of the members, and a specific legal form (be it cooperative, enterprise or association). Most of these groups ask only a small contribution from members, especially for travel costs, but do not retribute the time spent by the board in this work. Therefore, often, the better-off farmers are elected to these leadership positions. Sometimes it is hard to define whether a group's governance is based on patronage or democratic deliberation.

- *For ACHA, these groups may provide a channel of communication, especially when they are supported by NGOs that can function as a bridge. However, most of these groups are only active for a short period of time, around the harvest of the product that is being marketed, and they cease to function in the rest of the year.*

- The founding history of these cooperatives is important for their internal trust and organisational strength (Ton, Opeero and Vellema 2010); often they emerge from pre-existing, looser networks, such as fellow believers, choir groups or extension groups (farmer field groups).
- Because of their crop orientation, these groups are very knowledgeable about the exact work tasks associated with the specific crop or value chain. They will have an informed perception of hazard and children's work that can inform the research.

### 2.3.2 Larger multi-purpose membership groups

Some farmer groups are engaged in economic activities for most of the year; we call these 'multi-purpose membership groups'. They often take the legal form of a cooperative, but can also be found in quasi-cooperatives or informal groups. Cooperative procurement of inputs such as seed and agrochemicals, hiring of vehicles and determining output price is well known among cassava (into gari and dough), fish (smoked), and meat (cuts) processors in southern Ghana. Due to the multiplicity of tasks, these groups have interpersonal interactions and transactions during most of the year, which makes them important forms of social capital in the region. They often market their products directly to traders, processors or retailers in urban areas, not in the local spot market or to local collectors. Because they tend to be larger, and membership relations less personalised, the opportunities for side-selling are inherent to the functioning of these groups. Transactions made on behalf of the group can collapse due to this. However, strong groups have found a way to contain these side-selling tensions in a way that the group functions are maintained/reproduced (Ton 2010). These groups may offer entrance points for research and the development of interventions to address CHW.

- The economic farmer organisations that exist in a country are pivotal for many other value chain governance mechanisms discussed in this paper because they provide a clear communication channel. In various cases, multinational companies support the collective marketing dynamics of these more professional multi-purpose farmer organisations. For example, they are part of the efforts by chocolate and coffee companies to tackle child labour on farms (Nestlé Cocoa Plan and ICI 2017). They are prime recipients of information and training, and this capacity-building agenda addresses work issues that threaten to deprive children of

education, health care and development (Tulane University 2015).

- Even when multi-purpose membership groups are not directly involved in sourcing or producing a specific commodity, they can be partners for action around children's hazardous work. The multi-purpose aspect of these groups makes it easier to include additional activities that are not directly related to their value chain role.

### 2.3.3 All-inclusive village groups

Family and clan ties bind communities together in many countries, and these ties give certain duties and rights to each group member. Such relations of trust and familiarity can form the basis of farmers' marketing associations (Robbins et al. 2004). Village groups tend to have an automatic membership based on geographical residence. Even though villages and communities differ considerably between regions and countries, they tend to include as members everyone that meets certain criteria, without the need to ask for membership or to pay a membership fee. These criteria may be (for instance) having land in the village, or being a family member, or being born in the area. Sometimes membership may be related to perceptions of a person's good behaviour.

- Village groups are generally recognised as administrative units. They are therefore the logical entrance points for ACHA work in agricultural value chains that involve governmental partners or development NGOs.
- Because the village often includes households engaged in multiple activities rather than just one specific crop or sector, the leaders are not necessarily the most knowledgeable about the work and organisation of specific value chains (e.g. fisheries or high-value horticultural crops).
- Village authorities often have an important role in conflict mediation and will be informed about intra-household conflicts related to children's work or abuse. Being arbiters or counsellors, they might be specifically knowledgeable about perceptions of what is fair, abusive or harmful. However, they may also be conservative and mainly concerned with protecting the status quo and objecting to changes in social norms.
- In Ghana, in some communities, child protection committees already exist; these are voluntary structures with a specific mandate to raise awareness, identify and support children affected by abuse or harmful work. The Ghana Children's Act 1998 established the legal basis around the creation, membership and functioning of such groups, and related child panels.

## 2.4 Contract farming

Contract farming is a commercial relationship between a firm and a group of farmers. It is an agreement in which farm production is bought in advance by a firm in exchange for specific services and other benefits (Ton et al. 2018). Although principally a commercial initiative, contract farming may be considered as an institutional arrangement within an inclusive business partnership, as a way to overcome the challenges that smallholder farmers face when linking to remunerative markets or accessing inputs of services for agricultural production or post-harvest processing. During the past decade, there has been a rapid increase in studies that assess the effects of contract farming (Barrett et al. 2012; Meemken and Bellemare 2019; Minot and Ronchi 2015; Otsuka, Nakano and Takahashi 2016; Oya 2012; Prowse 2012; Ton et al. 2018; Vroegindewey and Hodbod 2018). The contextual diversity of the contractual arrangements involved, however, make it difficult to draw generalisable conclusions about their effectiveness. The definition of contract farming differs between these studies. For example, Meemken and Bellemare (2019) include under the term 'contract farming' all pre-harvest sales contracts, while Ton et al. (2018) focus only on pre-harvest sales contracts with some sort of embedded service provisioning. They define contract farming as:

a contractual arrangement for a fixed term between a farmer and a firm, agreed verbally or in writing before production begins, that provides material or financial resources to the farmer and specifies one or more product or process requirements, for agricultural production on land owned or controlled by the farmer, which gives the firm legal title to (most of) the crop or livestock. (Ton et al. 2018: 48)

Several authors (Bijman 2008; FAO 2008; Jia and Bijman 2013; Prowse 2012) are more inclusive in their definition and make a distinction between market-specification contracts, production-management contracts and resource-providing contracts.

A **market-specification (or marketing) contract** is a pre-harvest agreement between producers and contractors on the conditions governing the sale of the crop/animal. Besides time and location of sales, these conditions include the quality of the product, thus affecting a few of the production decisions of the farmer... The **production-management contract** gives more control to the contractor than the market specification contract, as the contractor will inspect production processes and specify input usage... Under the **resource-providing contract**, the contractor not only provides a market outlet for the product, but he also provides key inputs. (Bijman 2008: 5)

But even within these types of contract farming, the contexts differ markedly, because the crop differs, the quality attributes differ, type of service provided differs, or the package of services provided differs, as do the conditions under which these services are provided. The 'adoption' of contract farming is a complex system in which propositions, encounters and dispositions lead to responses (Glover et al. 2019). Moreover, the response of contracting and re-contracting involves (self-selective subgroups of) the farmer, the farmer organisation and the contracting firm. Each of these subgroups has its specific constraints related with opportunities, capabilities and motivation for behaviour – COM-B (Michie et al. 2011), and these are partly the result of the particularities of the contract attributes proposed (Abebe et al. 2013; Bellemare and Lim 2018; Sartorius and Kirsten 2007).

The systematic review of contract farming by Ton et al. (2018) identifies three other entrance points for sub-types of contract farming arrangements – especially given the coordination modalities involved. One dimension (criterion of difference) is the possibility (or not) to refrain from re-contracting ('room to opt out'). In most value chains related to annual production, this is possible. In horticultural production, the choice of a crop and a market is often defined based on pre-harvest agreements with future buyers (e.g. intermediary traders), although the exact price is often defined at the moment of sales. However, in contract farming in irrigated sugarcane or tea (Wendimu, Henningsen and Gibbon 2016), for example, this opting out is often impossible because of the location of the plot (in a larger area, grouped with other smallholder farmers) or because the investments made are considered as credit and need many years to be paid off. Outgrowers, who deliver to a central processing unit, can be 'locked in' by indebtedness or irrigation, land tenure regulations or resettlement schemes. Another crucial difference is the involvement (or not) of one or more farmer groups that mediate between the contracting firm and the individual farmer. Particularly when the contract farming is done at scale, with many farmers under contract, there is a need for coordination through representatives via some sort of farmer group. Many new contract farming ventures learn to adapt to the context and develop ways to use existing social capital (groups with high internal cohesion or trust) and customary legal institutions to reduce the chances of opportunistic behaviour (Ton and van der Mheen-Sluijer 2009). The third dimension relates to the product being perennial or annual agriculture or derived from animal husbandry (particularly intensive meat production systems).

For ACHA, we think that the following two sub-types are the most relevant because they provide different entrance points to discuss issues related to children's work.

### 2.4.1 Informal resource-providing agreements

When the price is not the only coordination mechanism, but additional services and expectations play a role, a transaction will move towards a 'pre-harvest agreement'. This relationship is common in cash-crop production, where the buyer may give cash in advance of the harvest to pay seasonal workers to pick the crop or provide packaging material. Often, the buyer of cash crops prefers certain varieties and provides seeds in advance, sometimes on subsidised terms or credit. In the African savannah area, tractor services are commonly used to prepare fields for planting. Sometimes this service is also part of a 'package' of services that make trust and risk-sharing additional attributes of a potential pre-harvest sales transaction and considered by the farmer in his or her decision making.

These interpersonal relations can be heavily power-laden, sometimes forced upon the farmer due to indebtedness. Often, the person with whom the farmer has the agreement plays an essential role in the social network needed for households to cope with shocks. For example, relations of patronage can force farmers to sell to the 'big men/women' in the village, or to the (future) family-in-law to resolve the bride price or similar obligations.

These dense interpersonal relations and (mutual) dependencies have implications for how CHW can be addressed, as follows.

- Even more than the repeated interactions in spot markets, these informal resource-providing agreements make it possible to 'trace' the product to upstream producing households. In principle, this allows downstream communication about the (un)desirability of certain types of labour and the withholding of the offer of the resource-providing agreement by the buyer.
- The 'big men/women' are key nodes in the social network in the village and, even when they have an exploitative role in economic transactions, they might have the moral authority that can be mobilised to reach the households that are in his/her 'web' with information.
- The provisioning of child labour can be an essential component of this patronage or bondage that farmer households face. Use of the interpersonal relations to market products of a poor farmer's plot might become, in exceptional cases, a driver of the provisioning of child labour – for example, to help during harvest time on the big men or women's plot; patronage can thus lead to forms of modern slavery.

### 2.4.2 Formal resource-providing contracts

This type of contract farming is increasing, principally because the urban population is growing fast. Moreover, the urban food market is the majority food market because urban areas have higher incomes than rural areas (Reardon et al. 2019; Tschirley et al. 2015). In Africa, processed foods have penetrated both rural and urban markets. In Tschirley et al.'s (2015) study, 56 per cent of urban households' and 29 per cent of rural households' food expenditures (in value terms) went to processed foods.

Processing firms tend to prefer purchasing agricultural products with a more uniform quality than is usual in rural and urban open food markets. Often, they prefer more stable prices for their inputs to better plan processing and marketing of the processed products to consumers. This gives them an incentive to find preferred suppliers and to look for ways to shorten the chain of intermediation. Often, supermarkets or processors tend to work with the medium/large producer, even when they start initially with smallholders as suppliers (Dolan and Humphrey 2000). When they work with smallholders at scale, this almost always includes the combination of two governance mechanisms: contract farming and collective marketing by organised farmer groups (Ton et al. 2010).

Processing firms face more public scrutiny than informal village-based agents. They also tend to have more influence on local and national governments. Both aspects mean they provide different entrance points for interventions on CHW, as follows.

- The formal, written agreements codify the mutual rights and obligations and reflect the underlying power relationship. To prevent negative publicity, and to comply with the demands of international buyers and get an export licence, in Kenya the horticultural sector – through the Horticultural Crops Development Authority (HCDA) – invested in the development of a 'model contract' that clearly specified the risks and rewards, and conflict resolution mechanisms in the contractual relationship. A company is required by the 1995 export order to use formal contracts and to adhere to certain practices that are presented as contract terms by the HCDA Code of Conduct (Waarts and Meijerink 2010).
- Often, processing firms manage a 'brand' in their country and may be susceptible to negative media coverage by consumers or retailers deprioritising purchases in response to this. Though child labour – rightly or wrongly – is still far less prominent in consumers' minds, it could be an entrance point for action. ACHA research could inform this debate and prevent unintended negative effects of well-intended media coverage.

## 2.5 Certification schemes

Certification is the formal attestation or confirmation of certain characteristics of an object, person or organisation, often provided by some form of external review, assessment or audit. Accreditation is a specific organisation's process of certification. Certification programmes emerged in the 1980s in response to consumer demands for sustainability and fairness. They were developed in the context of a willingness to pay for sustainably produced food items. The first certification programmes concerned organic production, especially in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. Later, in the 1990s, fair trade emerged in response to calls for greater fairness in value chain relations between smallholder producers in developing countries. At the same time, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) was launched to protect forests and regulate the timber trade, and the Rainforest Alliance developed a certification scheme aimed to reduce biodiversity loss. In Europe, the retail sector started operating certification schemes around food safety and good agricultural practices, which resulted in EurepGAP and later GlobalGAP. Many companies have specific standards, which are often modifications of international standards tuned to their requirements. Despite this diversity, certification schemes have some common characteristics – not least as a result of the global platform the ISEAL Alliance, which represents those voluntary standards that comply with certain credibility requirements.

Certification schemes are mainly focused on tropical export crops, especially banana, cocoa, coffee, sugar and palm oil. In some sectors, the share of certified production is rapidly increasing. A significant proportion of the total output of cocoa produced in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire is currently under one or more certification schemes – according to 2016 data, 35 per cent and 44 per cent respectively (ISEAL Alliance 2019). Certification schemes for tropical commodity exports of perennial crops (e.g. Rainforest Alliance, Fairtrade) are covered by more process-related product quality attributes, while organic (e.g. Soil Association, Skal in the Netherlands, etc.) or good agricultural practices (e.g. GlobalGAP, many in-company schemes) are more important in annual production, where control is more geared to measurable product quality attributes, especially of pesticides. The European Food Law Regulation gave an immense impulse to certifications because it made distributing companies and retailers legally responsible for the products they sell and required a system of traceability to be in place.

One of the most relevant pilot interventions that emerged in the certification community – though not restricted to certification systems – are Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems

(CLMRS). These multistakeholder, area-based approaches are seen as one of the more promising interventions to address the issue of hazardous child labour (International Cocoa Initiative 2011; International Labour Organization (ILO) 2018). Remediation activities are at the heart of the efforts of CLMRS and are directed to different drivers: access to education, health services, awareness of laws, etc. Remediation is about supporting children, their families and communities to remove children from a situation of risk. The purpose is twofold: to try and prevent children from doing hazardous work in the first place, and to help children who are engaged in hazardous work to stop doing so. The majority of remediation activities to date have focused on education, activities to improve family income, and assistance with farm-related work (Nestlé Cocoa Plan 2019). The requirement to have a CLMRS (or similar system to assess and address) is a fairly recent one for the Rainforest Alliance/UTZ, limited to certain contexts, and still not a requirement for Fairtrade certified coops.

The incidence of organic and GAP certification is more dominant in contract farming that involves medium/large producers, and far less in smallholder production. ISEAL Alliance's accredited certification systems tend to be managed internationally in OECD countries and use third-party verification to control that the requirements are met. There are, however, some certification systems without third-party verification, but with participatory processes of social control. They have a system that certifies that the producer or farm household uses certain practices (e.g. organic or low-input agriculture). These so-called participatory guarantee systems are still small and primarily piloted at scale in Latin America, with limited experiences in African agriculture (Cannon, Thorpe and Emili 2019).

The main distinction in types of certification is related to direct certification of production on an estate/plot, and group certification where the control is indirectly through an internal control system (ICS).

### 2.5.1 Smallholder group certification

Almost by definition, smallholder production is organised through group certification. The ICS that needs to be in place can be managed by a private firm (e.g. a trader or processor) or by a farmer group. Most certification schemes have different auditing modalities and critical control points that take this distinction into account (Ton, van der Mheen-Sluijer and Castillo 2012). In smallholder production, the audit will primarily look at the credibility of the ICS (the way that internal control is organised and registered). The ICS required for smallholder certification opens a window for ACHA to work on an improved

and contextualised definition of CHW. The auditors apply a list of control points, where some questions/control points are related to children's work. These lists may differ between certification programmes and have changed over time. ACHA could help ISEAL Alliance members to develop procedures and requirements that are appropriate and commensurate with smallholder livelihood strategies. This could be through supporting the design of risk-based monitoring procedures that respect the heterogeneity of context and aspirations among smallholders. Some other entrance points are as follows.

- *The control points in the audit were, at first, based on ILO definitions of child work and child labour, and followed an 'abolitionist approach' (van Daalen and Hanson 2019). However, this has led to unintended effects for and opportunistic behaviour of farmers and auditors. Instead of helping to address the issue of hazardous child work, it inhibited a view of daily reality in production areas. Therefore, instead of checking compliance and using the de-certification threat, many standard systems and leading processors changed their approach and now emphasise the need for monitoring and remediation.*
- *Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems (CLMRS) use local systems of social control and vigilance. Sometimes a social worker, paid by the buying company, is responsible for visiting these households and finding out what happened. The local facilitators are well-suited to document illustrative cases – for example, because children are not attending school or are registered in the health post or hospital with work-related injuries. They raise awareness in these households about the tasks that children of that age are considered to be able to do or not do.*
- *These CLMRS provide promising sites for ACHA research, both because they collect large data on household livelihoods (for example, the International Cocoa Initiative estimates that it collects panel data on 150,000 households) and because they represent cases of interventions for the evaluation of impact of value chain intervention related to CHW.*

## 2.5.2 Medium/large producer certification

While for smallholder farmers a large part of the ICS for certification requirements is decentralised, with an external auditor checking the credibility and administration of this ICS, for medium/large producers there is a stronger focus on core criteria, directly monitored by the third-party verification

body. Auditors consider, among other issues, social issues related to workers and families that live on-site, as well as certain environmental topics (Rainforest Alliance 2018). Instead of smallholders, rural workers become the central focus. Because medium and large producers have high or complete control of the land and the production process, the power of the firm to comply rigidly with the requirements of the certification body is far greater than in smallholder group certification, and therefore the external scrutiny of their social practices is stronger. This also implies a more direct influence of the ILO and its abolitionist approach, with their associated intended and unintended effects. The threat of effective de-certification based on child labour-related criteria in these medium/large producer certification schemes is higher than in smallholder schemes.

- *The abolitionist approach is questioned by ACHA (Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler 2020). This higher prominence of the ILO definitions in the certification requirements for medium/large producers, and the more vulnerable position of workers compared to (diversified) smallholders, provides a logical entrance point for ACHA work. ACHA can help to 'change the narrative' on CHW versus child labour, with ISEAL as the logical platform to do so.*
- *The CLMRS might also be relevant interventions in these sectors, monitoring the situation in households that live near or on these plantations. The data and networks which are inherent to these CLMRS may be used in ACHA research.*
- *The monitoring at landscape level also implies that this type of certification links ACHA to other audiences than the 'rural', such as the worker unions in a country. Organisations that cross urban and rural settings will need to balance the appropriateness of certification requirements for each. It is not straightforward that governments, worker unions and certification schemes can find workable regulations that are so highly context-specific that they prevent all unintended negative effects on household livelihood strategies.*

## 2.5.3 Landscape-level certification

Value chain actors operate in large social systems. Particularly when ecological outcomes are key, certification schemes need to work with other stakeholders, not only the direct certified farms or farmers. Moreover, the value chain supporters (see Figure 1) are influenced by many other factors than the certification scheme. Therefore, the discussion on certification and sustainable development has moved gradually to 'Beyond certification' and systemic effects (Ruben 2019; Termeer et al. 2019). CLMRS are an example of this trend. Increasingly,

certification schemes look for landscape-level effects and jurisdictional approaches that involve not only the direct producers of the product that is being certified but also the wider village or region. International climate funds may trigger the emergence of these more 'systemic' forms of certification – for example, by requiring forest management plans that involve other users, or irrigation and water management plans that involve or need consent from upstream and downstream users. This provides different entrance points to work on CHW, as follows.

- *The wider social system that is considered in these landscape-level approaches makes it conducive to multi-stakeholder processes. This implies that, next to value chain actors, interest groups and government agencies such as those related to health and education, biodiversity conservation and water management may participate in discussions and governance around the required social attributes of a product or crop.*
- *The enhanced scope in landscape-level certification requires behavioural incentives for stakeholders (including farmers and other habitants of that landscape) that create change at scale; small pilots do not suffice. This may shift the audience of ACHA research from the (predominantly) Northern headquarters of certification schemes and industry partners to the change-makers in these countries, including local and national governments.*

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## 2.6 Multi-stakeholder partnerships

Multi-stakeholder partnerships or multi-stakeholder platforms (both terms are used, abbreviated as MSP) are institutionalised but voluntary collaborations between multiple private, public and/or civil society stakeholders that seek sustainable solutions to complex and systemic challenges, which the participants believe cannot be achieved by acting alone. Multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs), multi-stakeholder global action networks (GANs), (agribusiness) policy networks, or social impact networks are other formulations. First popularised at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002, MSPs exist in sectors ranging from water and energy to health, food and agriculture.

Drawing from examples relevant to the agri-food sector, MSPs can be defined as:

a process of interactive learning, empowerment and participatory governance that enables

stakeholders with interconnected problems and ambitions, but often differing interests, to be collectively innovative and resilient when faced with the emerging risks, crises and opportunities of a complex and changing environment. (Brouwer et al. 2016: 14)

MSPs have also been defined as:

any collaborative arrangement among stakeholders from two or more different spheres of society (public sector, private sector and/or civil society), pooling their resources together, sharing risks and responsibilities in order to solve a common issue, to handle a conflict, to elaborate a shared vision, to realise a common objective, to manage a common resource and/or to ensure the protection, production or delivery of an outcome of collective and/or public interest. (HLPE 2018: 15)

MSPs respond to governance failings that result in collective action problems (Olson 1965), especially in complex and multi-level contexts, in which conflicting short-term interests discourage cooperation that could leave all participants better off in the long term. They are a form of networked governance (Jessop 2000; Rhodes 1997, Thorpe et al. forthcoming) which involves dialogue, collaboration, and the experience of working together to build trust and mutual respect between otherwise often antagonistic stakeholders, promoting problem-solving (rather than bargaining based on interests) as the key decision-making style (Bache 2008). Outcomes cannot be explained exclusively based on individual actor power and interests, but require understanding these dynamics and how they result in a power balance in which members all see themselves as benefiting, although without suggesting that this balance is in any way 'equal' (Bache 2008; Rhodes 2006).

In general terms, MSPs are intended to achieve transformational change through convening multiple stakeholders and facilitating exchange between them, fostering an enabling environment for collaboration, and stimulating new investments, innovations, policies and activities aligned with intended change; with successes identified and scaled. Existing studies have tended to classify MSPs based on either the structure and arrangements of the MSP or the domain or purpose of MSP activities.

Sub-type classifications of the structure and arrangements of an MSP often focus on geography or scale of operation (local, national, regional, global). While categories are seemingly straightforward, difficulties arise where the same MSP operates at multiple scales or geographies (HLPE 2018; Treichel et al. 2017). Others focus on the size or problem scope of the MSP. Some MSPs, for example, involve only a handful of partners directly engaged in addressing defined problems

in a set period. At the other extreme, MSPs involve many and multiple stakeholders, including many that are involved only through representation (e.g. in global roundtables), dealing with systemic problems over the long term (Beisheim and Simon 2016; Hazlewood 2015). However, these different scopes represent more of a spectrum than a clear set of sub-types. Other studies focus on the composition of the MSP, based on the characteristics of its members, particularly which sector of society they come from (public, private or civil society) (HLPE 2018).

Sub-types based on domain or purpose may focus on MSP genesis; in other words, the history and reasons behind the creation of the MSP, and how it emerged. They may also focus on the MSP target groups or the group(s) within society who are intended to benefit from activities. However, the most common and relevant sub-typology is based on the intervention or activity that is the primary function of the MSP (Beisheim and Simon 2016; Buckup 2012; HLPE 2018; Muoio and Rimland Flower 2016; Treichel et al. 2017; Witte, Benner and Streck 2005). By focusing on the primary purpose of the MSP, rather than its structure and arrangements, we are able to generate analytical sub-types based on groups of activities and then make inferences relating these activities to entry points for addressing CHW. In addition, they may all have a temporal variable representing MSP evolution over time. This temporal variable could be framed in terms of stages in MSP evolution: initiation, implementation and impact (Brouwer et al. 2016; Rockefeller Foundation 2017).

We suggest three sub-types. Although they are not mutually exclusive, and there are likely to be elements of knowledge transfer, agreeing standards and action across most MSPs, they are delineated based on their primary activities and objectives.

### 2.6.1 Industry norm and standard-setting MSPs

Industry norm and standard-setting MSPs are primarily designed to develop, strengthen and enforce global or national norms and standards in a particular industry, sector or crop (Beisheim and Simon 2016; Buckup 2012). They are generally voluntary industry-based efforts, developed in response to perceived public sector failures to promote appropriate social and/or environmental practices. Typically, industry leaders and/or civil society dominate. The public sector is often either absent or present in a secondary role (Fransen and Kolk 2007). As a result, questions of legitimacy (who participates in governance), accountability (who is accountable to whom) and power are frequent critiques (Witte et al. 2005).

There is considerable variation among these MSPs in terms of how formalised they are and how strong their verification and compliance procedures are (Beisheim and Simon 2016; Buckup 2012). At one end of the spectrum, there may be no formal commitment while at the other end, formalised standards and certification processes enforce obligations. There are parallels and overlaps of this sub-type with certification schemes, since both have a focus on setting common production standards. However, not all of these MSPs involve certification and labelling. With the certification schemes discussed before, they are included in the wider group of voluntary standard systems. The large and more renowned ones have ISEAL as their global discussion platform.

The food and agriculture sectors have examples of industry norm and standard-setting MSPs. Some of these MSPs are using product certification as a value chain governance mechanism. But even those tend to have a far broader portfolio of activities to improve sustainability in the sector. They include the International Cocoa Initiative, the Forest Stewardship Council, the Marine Stewardship Council, the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil, the Roundtable for Responsible Soy, Bonsucro, the World Banana Forum, the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, the Better Cotton Initiative, the World Cocoa Foundation, the Ethical Trading Initiative, the Global Coffee Platform, and 4C. Considerations for interventions that work on the issue of CHW include the following.

- *Lead firms in value chains are key participants in these MSPs. Through lead firm power and influence, MSPs are also able to reach and enforce standards among intermediaries and farmers that supply the lead firms. Through this same pathway, requirements related to CHW could be introduced.*
- *With notable exceptions (e.g. the Ethical Trading Initiative), these MSPs have tended to be crop-specific and to focus only on high-value crops sold through global value chains, including palm oil, soy, sugar, cocoa, coffee and horticulture. That said, these MSPs can engage with chain supporters (e.g. government extension providers or other information providers) to also work for domestic markets for these same crops.*
- *Specific entry points may include:*
  - *adding specific principles, commitments and/or reporting requirements on CHW, or identifying areas relevant to CHW within existing standards and principles*
  - *training and awareness for members and certifiers on CHW*

- raising awareness among industry actors regarding the degree to which standards address or mitigate the risk of CHW, to raise demand for products that do meet necessary standards
- involving civil society groups or representatives of working children in the membership and governance of these MSPs.

## 2.6.2 Action and service-oriented MSPs

Action and service-oriented MSPs are primarily designed to deliver goods and services or implement policies, programmes and projects (HLPE 2018) towards a defined goal such as transforming the agricultural sector or making specific food market crops more efficient, resilient and profitable. While they may be involved to some degree in standard-setting, knowledge co-generation and capacity building, they are more directly outcomes- and impact-focused (Buckup 2012). MSP membership is typically based on actors' interests and ability to contribute resources towards the overarching MSP goal (Witte et al. 2005), and may include governments, the private sector, donors, UN agencies and farmers' groups, among others.

Action and service-oriented MSPs emphasise facilitating joint action, innovation and pooling of resources (Buckup 2012) to deliver 'positive externalities' that are undersupplied when the market is left to operate on its own, while improving the allocation of scarce resources to avoid duplication of efforts (Witte et al. 2005). These positive externalities may include policy change, better natural resource management, value chain development, innovation, resource mobilisation, or some combination thereof (HLPE 2018; Muoio and Rimland Flower 2016; Pattberg and Widerberg 2014; Witte et al. 2005).

These action and service-oriented MSPs are common in the food and agriculture sector. Examples include: Grow Africa, the global Food Security Cluster, the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock, Kudumbashree, the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa, the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, Malawi Tea 2020, and the Farm to Market Alliance. Considerations for interventions that work on the issue of CHW include the following.

- Action and service-oriented MSPs tend to focus on particular social or environmental issues (which may include CHW), geographies or value chains (for example, cocoa).
- Unlike most industry norm and standard-setting MSPs, they often cover both high-value export crops and domestic food staples.

- Although there are global MSPs in this group, implementation is often tied to particular geographies (national and sub-national). For example, although the Farm to Market Alliance is a global initiative, implementation takes place through specific value chains at country level.
- They are intended to work by bringing together different value chain or sector stakeholders to define the necessary behavioural changes, capacities and resources to achieve the goal, along with a joint action plan.
- Specific entry points may include:
  - providing technical know-how and support – for example, on measures to address and mitigate risk related to CHW, or on improving value chain productivity and competitiveness (as a means to enable higher adult wages)
  - providing financial support or access to finance for investment and innovation
  - facilitating knowledge exchange between stakeholders (for example, on already tested innovations)
  - supporting pilot projects (for example, by risk sharing).

## 2.6.3 MSPs for knowledge sharing and learning

MSPs for knowledge sharing and learning tend to start from the perspective that solutions to challenges already exist, but a lack of knowledge and information sharing means that these solutions are not replicated, and scale is not reached (Loveridge and Wilson 2017). The focus, therefore, is on raising awareness of known problems and potential solutions via convenings, reports, conferences and digital media. They may also involve an element of building trust and respect between participants from different stakeholder groups.

In some cases, knowledge sharing and learning MSPs also focus on knowledge co-generation and capacity building (HLPE 2018), by bringing together different stakeholders with relevant information and experiences, which can offer more effective and inclusive solutions than relying on 'technical experts' alone. This is seen to be especially important in the context of complexity, where transdisciplinary and participatory approaches are important to develop viable solutions (*ibid.*).

Food and agriculture sector examples of MSPs for knowledge sharing and learning include: the Pan-Africa Bean Research Alliance (PABRA), the

African Orphan Crops Consortium (AOCC), the Southern Africa Food Lab (SAFL), and the Voice for Change Partnership (V4CP) Programme. Considerations for interventions that work on the issue of CHW include the following.

- This type of MSP could create opportunities for enabling the voices of typically marginalised stakeholders (poor households, children, children with disabilities) to be heard and respected.
- Another opportunity would be to introduce knowledge and solutions related to CHW within

existing knowledge-sharing MSPs in agriculture (for example, in the SAFL).

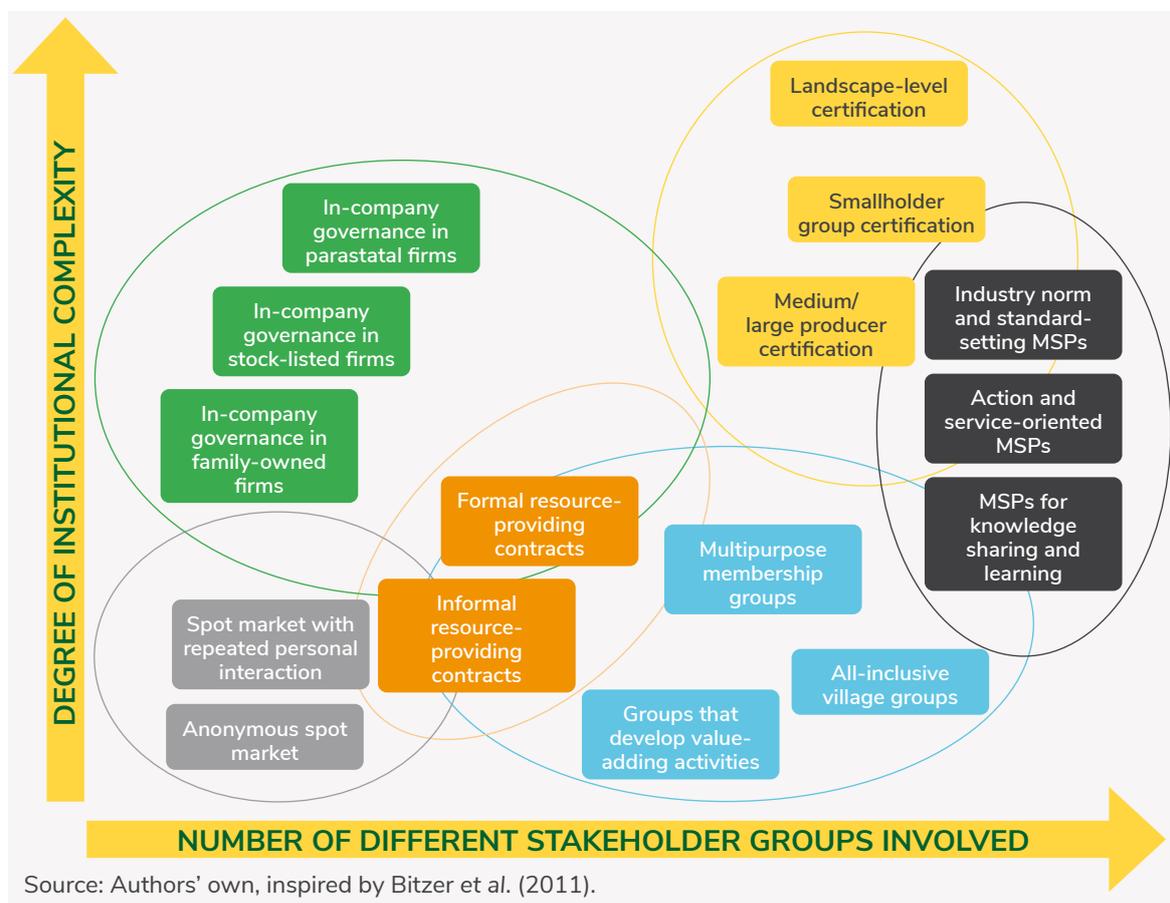
- Alternatively, there is potential for regional and local MSPs, grouping various local stakeholders, directed explicitly towards knowledge exchange with regards to CHW in their area and value chain, which may also be focused on a particular region or crop. The MSP would provide a decentralised platform, complementing the global roundtables, and facilitate dialogue and knowledge-sharing to develop or disseminate solutions.

### 3 What's next?

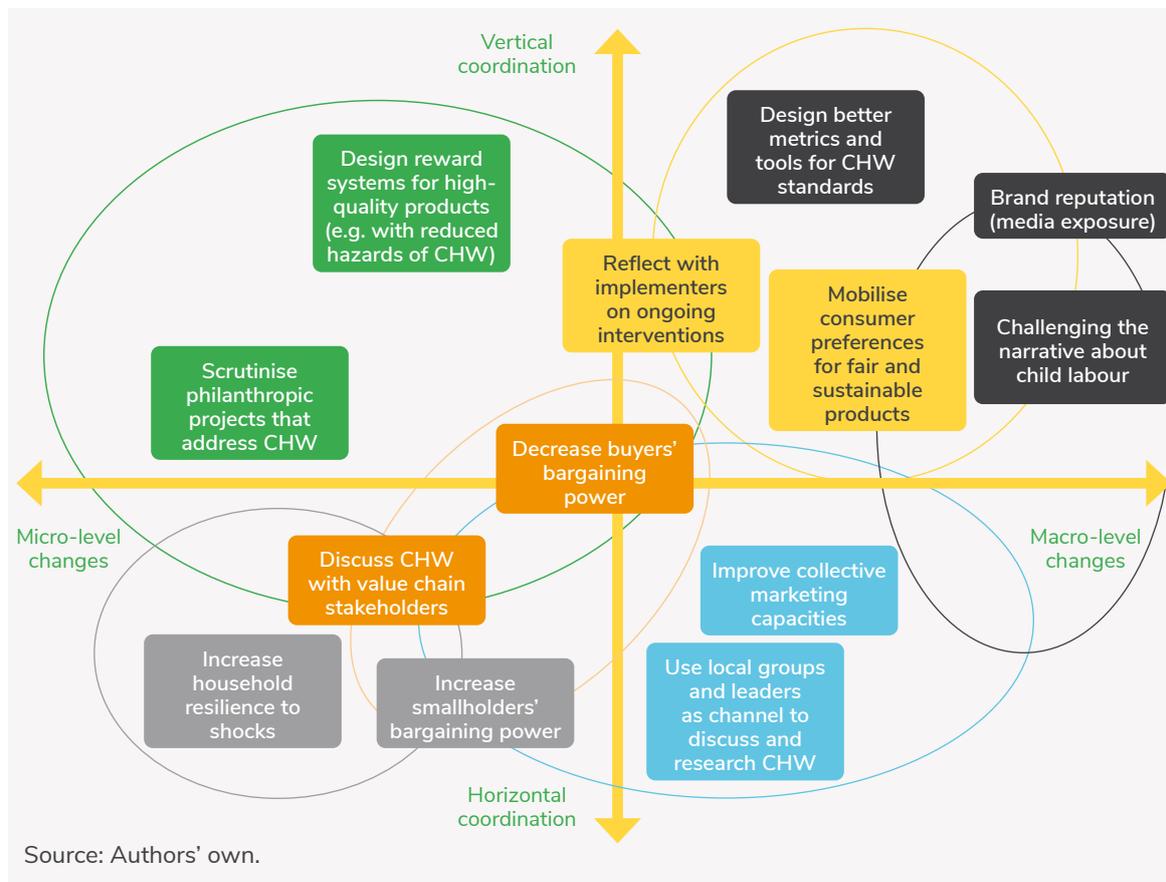
This paper has explored the different types of governance mechanisms that can be present in a specific value chain, and how these can be utilised

or modified in view of intentions to reduce CHW. We primarily looked at how the unobservable process-related quality attributes of a product

**Figure 4. Value chain governance mechanisms according to the number of stakeholders involved and degree of institutional complexity**



**Figure 5. Entrance points for ACHA research and CHW interventions in agricultural value chains**



are being governed and discussed. We identified interactions/coordination processes that we feel are relevant for ACHA and likely entrance points for interventions (which we can evaluate at a later stage). We do not claim that our typology is sufficiently comprehensive or analytically robust, but it may help to illustrate that entrance points for value chain interventions can be identified, dynamics assessed and impacts evaluated according to different governance arrangements.

Figure 4 gives a graphical representation of the location of these value chain governance mechanisms on two dimensions: the number of stakeholders involved and the degree of institutional complexity. It is also clear that many of these governance mechanisms overlap and may be present alongside each other in different positions in the value chain (and related production and distribution networks). In the Annexe, we present some examples of real-world cases from Ghana that illustrate the configurations of different mechanisms. In any agricultural sector, there will be several of these configurations that compete in the same markets. For example, there can be spot market governance in transactions between farmers and traders, but contract farming arrangements

with these traders and the processing plant. And the processing plant can integrate several steps in the value chain and use in-company governance mechanisms to guide the terms of the transactions between sub-units. Most sectors have different configurations of governance mechanisms: for example, in onion production, there can be both an integrated firm, a collective marketing experience and a firm that does contract farming. Heterogeneity is evident everywhere.

The value chain governance mechanisms indicate where existing discussions and decision making around quality, risks and rewards take place, and where CHW issues are (or can be) discussed. This provides entrance points to analyse and discuss the narratives, parameters and indicators that are being used. Each configuration, and its competition or collaboration with other configurations, provides a different 'arena' in which ACHA research can be situated.

Figure 5 summarises the different entrance points for ACHA research identified in this paper. It presents them on two axes that are similar but slightly different. The vertical axis indicates the need for different types of coordination. Vertical

coordination takes place between chain actors that are working at different levels in the value chains, from farm (upstream) to fork (downstream). Horizontal coordination takes place between chain actors at the same link in the chain. The horizontal axis indicates the scope and scale of the change process involved. It differentiates actions and social change that are closer to the farmer household (micro level) versus those that require coordination at a larger scale (the macro level). The colours in Figure 4 and Figure 5 show which entrance points are linked to which type of value chain governance mechanism. The figure shows that there are many governance spaces where value chain interventions do and can take place and where CHW may be one motivating factor.

A note of caution: these are only archetypical representations, and the reality 'on the ground' will show that these entrance points are not set in stone, just as the value chain governance mechanisms may be more hybrid and configurational in real life than as presented above (see Annexe for some examples).

These value chain governance mechanisms can be used to assess the prevalence of what is considered to be children's hazardous work. In more institutional complex governance mechanisms, some information about the quantity and quality of the product and the production systems may be aggregated and synthesised. For example, a great deal of data is collected through the CLMRS and

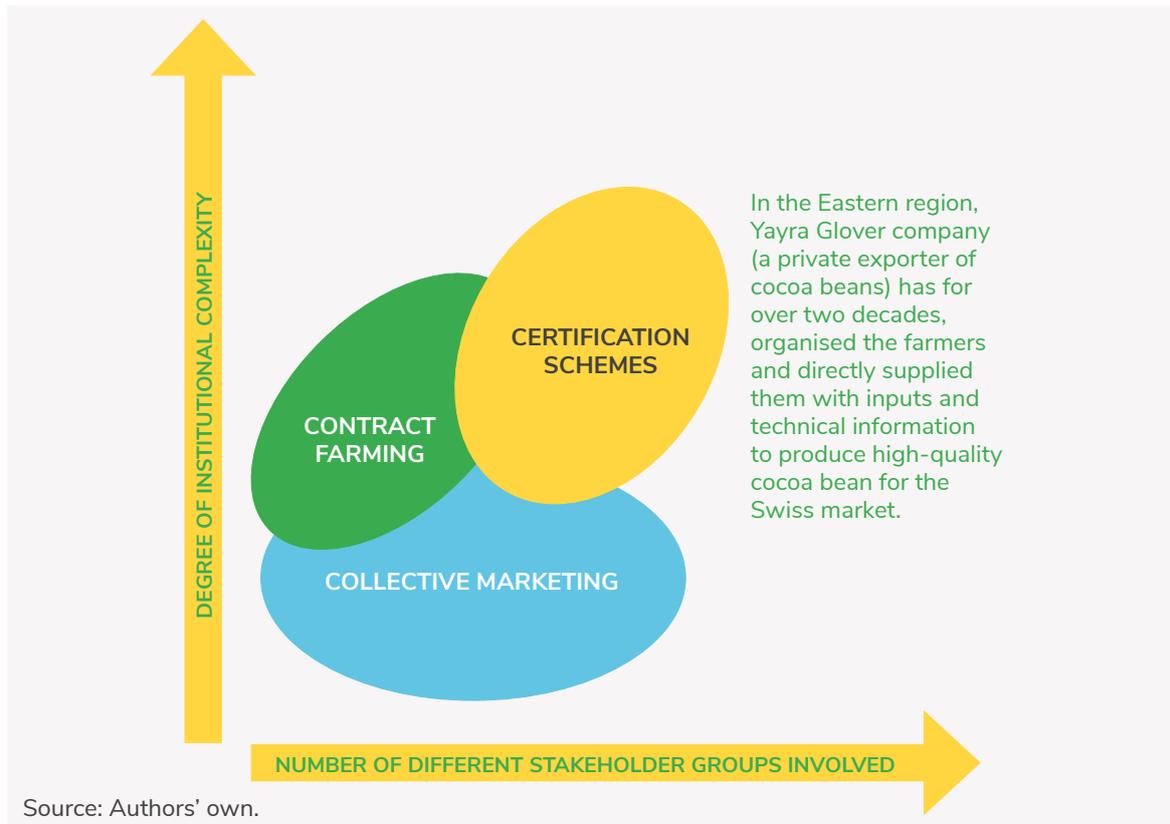
the audit of certification systems (see Roelen et al. 2020). This data, stored somewhere among the stakeholders involved in each mechanism, may help to reflect on the 'real' prevalence of CHW.

However, the typology that we present is specially designed to set the stage for analytical research to detect the drivers of CHW, especially the economic drivers and the nature and distribution of power in transactions; we think that the typology helps to understand and anticipate the coordination that is needed within value chains to address the issue of CHW, as well as provide entrance points for strategies to influence these dynamics towards positive outcomes. We also hope that the paper illustrates some of the interventions that are taking place in value chains, particularly where CHW is one of the motivations for doing so. These interventions are often well-intended but not always well-designed, well-implemented or effective. And they often have unintended effects that are overlooked or undervalued. ACHA has the ambition to help the implementers of such interventions to reflect on the assumptions that guide their work and give them practical tools to refine their intervention strategies (or change course altogether). We argue that scanning for specific value chain governance mechanisms is a good way for ACHA to find new interventions ('actions') that help to upgrade the quality of governance in value chains in ways that help to reduce CHW in agriculture.

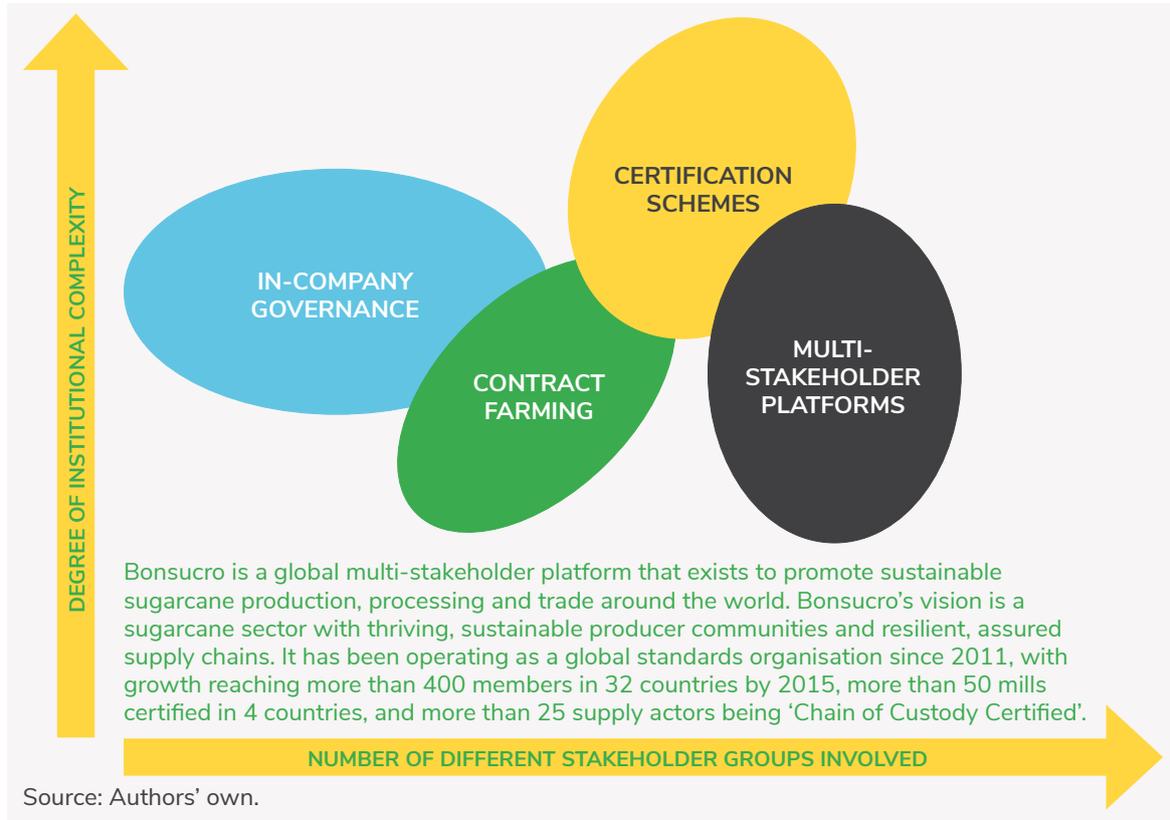
# Annexe: Examples of value chain governance mechanisms in action in Ghana

All empirical situations will exhibit a specific governance system combining different governance mechanisms.

**Figure A1. Example 1 – Yayra Glover**



**Figure A2. Example 2 – Bonsucro**



**Figure A3. Example 3 – COCOBOD**



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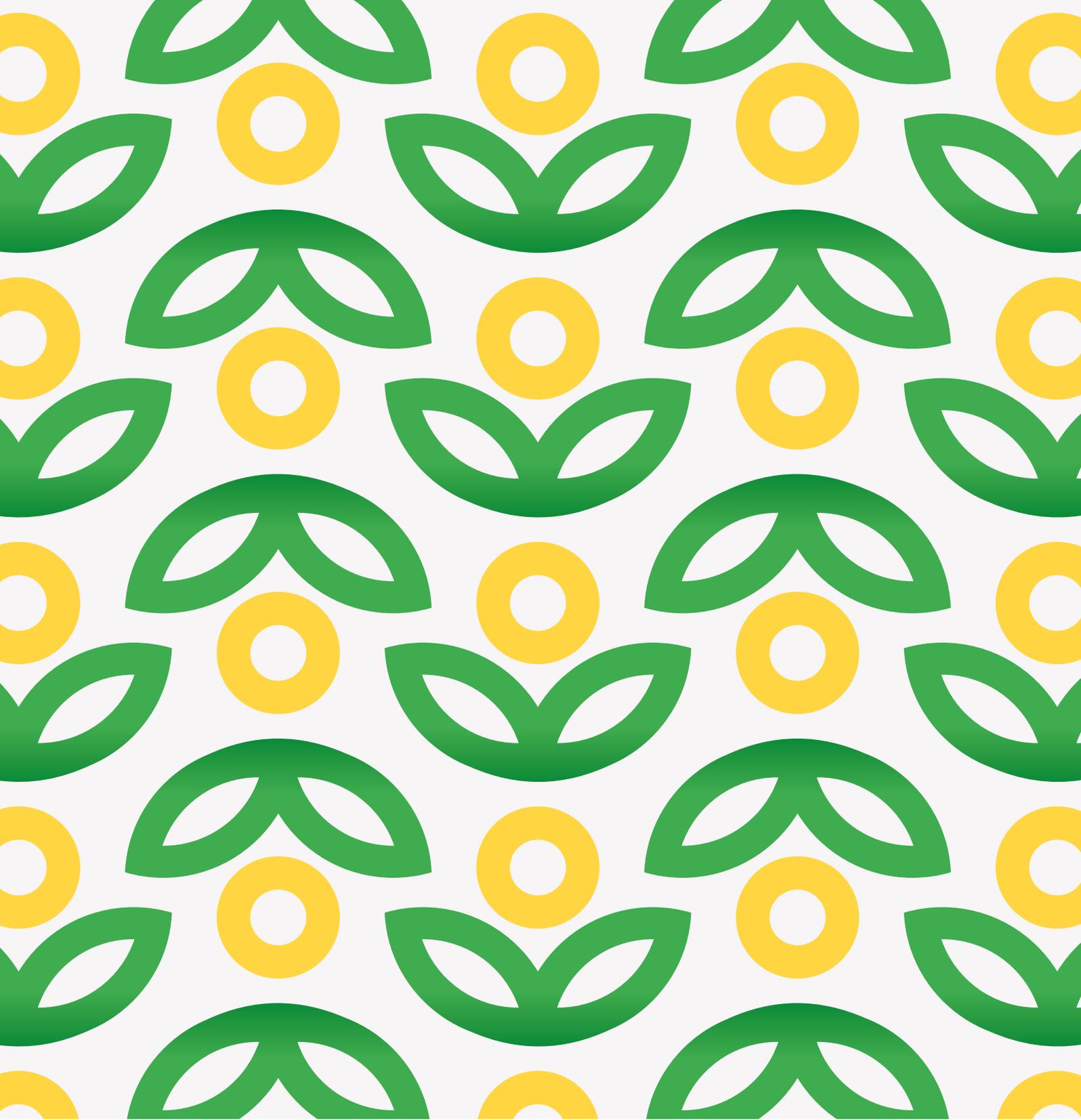
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