Milan Pact Awards 2025	**CHONE**						
Country	Ecuador						
Population	128,166						
Title of practice	Productive Reforestation using cacao						
Subtitle	Reforestation to Achieve Economic and Environmental Resilience in the Cacao Sector of Chone Canton						
MUFPP Recommended Action	Apply an ecosystem approach to guide holistic and integrated land use planning and management in collaboration with both urban and rural authorities and other natural resource managers by combining landscape features, for example with risk-minimizing strategies to enhance opportunities for agroecological production, conservation of biodiversity and farmland, climate change adaptation, tourism, leisure and other ecosystem services. – FOOD PRODUCTION						
Starting year	2022	**Ending year (if any)**			2027	☐already submitted in the past	
Actors and stakeholders' involvement	**Municipal departments**	**Other public institutions**	**NGOs CSOs**	**Research centres**	**Private sectors**	**International organizations**	**Other**
	3	3	2	4	2002	4	1
Budget	Over the course of 4 years, a total investment of €648,792.54 was made. It was financed as follows: a) Municipal Budget 55% €354,490.24 b) Development partners 16% (inputs) €104,637.31 c) Academia 16% (land) €105,216 d) Private sector 2% (input support) €14,304.99 e) Producers 11% (seeds) €70,144						
Brief description	This resilience-building practice benefits producers who occupy 17% of Chone's agricultural land and aims to restore areas degraded by deforestation and intensive livestock and farming practices, with a focus on watersheds and riverbanks in communities vulnerable to flood-related threats. The GAD, through its technical team (including extension agents and agroecologists), provides support to producers in the integrated management of cacao farms. This same team also manages a nursery for the production of fine-flavor national cacao plants, using seeds from promising trees that are resistant to disease and adapted to the local environment. These plants are distributed free of charge and under registration to producers who have completed the technical assistance process. The goal for 2027 is to benefit 5,000 producers and reforest 5,000 hectares, contributing to the restoration of both the ecosystem and the cacao-growing landscape. This is based on an agroforestry farm model, where cacao cultivation is combined with native fruit and forest tree species, allowing for simultaneous improvement of the socioeconomic conditions of farming families and the resilience of the local agri-food system. After three years of implementation, 2,000 producers (40% of the goal) have already benefited — 47% women and 53% men — across 216 communities. As a result, 800 hectares of cacao farms have been restored, and 1,120 hectareshave been reforested (38% of the target).						
Innovation	Governance - Through the Agreement for the Shared Management of the Exclusive Competence in Productive Development, the Provincial Government of Manabí delegated this responsibility to the GAD Chone, allowing the municipality to carry out projects in this area. This delegation enabled the allocation of municipal funds and the implementation of the practice in alignment with the Provincial Productive Development Plan. In addition, GAD Chone has signed cooperation agreements with 14 municipalities in the province of Manabí, facilitating the exchange of experiences among technical teams involved in this initiative. Use of Understory Agroforestry Methodology- After the delivery of cacao plants to producers, hands-on field training sessions are conducted to teach and implement grafting techniques using high-yield varieties. Complementary to this, the associated production of fruit trees and local vegetable varieties						

	is promoted. This approach optimizes resource use, diversifies income sources, and strengthens the environmental sustainability of the agro-productive system. Data Collection- Through the use of the KoboToolbox digital tool, data is recorded from the initial distribution of plants to the cacao production stage. This allows for the mapping of beneficiaries, enabling future data analysis and informed decision-making to improve the practice over time.
Impact	Social- Since 2022, the initiative has engaged 2,000 producers (47% women and 53% men) from 216 communities, with a focus on rural youth and adolescents (31%), older adults (10%), and children (20%). Environmental- The project promotes the reforestation and restoration of land degraded by intensive agricultural and livestock practices, which currently occupy 67% of Chone's territory. Through cacao-based agroforestry systems, it works directly with producers who cultivate in harmony with watersheds and river estuaries, helping to prevent erosion, reduce sediment runoff, and mitigate the flooding that periodically affects the canton. This intervention supports the restoration of fragile ecosystems, biodiversity conservation, and improved water regulation. Additionally, the implementation of cacao agroforestry systems is expected to increase carbon sequestration, with an estimated storage of 140 Mg C/ha in aboveground biomass and soils within the restored areas, thereby strengthening local climate resilience. Economic- Since 2022, the cacao production from the first distributed plants is estimated to have generated an economic flow of €1,488,219.98, through activities such as planting, maintenance, harvesting, post-harvest processing, transportation, marketing, and related services. By 2027, the projected total economic impact is €13,476,989.45. To date, the initiative has created 900 jobs, with a projection to reach 3,000 jobs by 2027.
Inclusion	The practice integrates multiple dimensions of the local agri-food system. It promotes the adoption of sustainable technologies that enhance production efficiency and diversify farmers' incomes through cacao-based agroforestry systems, which provide economic, social, and environmental benefits. These systems strengthen water regulation in the canton's watersheds, improve soil fertility, increase carbon sequestration, and reduce vulnerability to flooding, aligning with MUFPP actions 17, 19, 21, 22, and 25. Territorial inclusion is reflected in the participation of 216 rural communities, with a priority focus on degraded areas and zones of high agroclimatic risk. Multilevel governance has been essential, through collaboration between GAD Chone, the Provincial Government, the Ministries of Agriculture and Environment, universities, research institutes, producer organizations, and international cooperation programs such as "Ecosystem-based Adaptation – EbA LAC." The private sector also plays an active role, particularly in the provision of bio-inputs and nursery services. This network of actors has made it possible to consolidate strategic alliances, ensure knowledge transfer, and build resilience from the local to the provincial level.