

## Cocoa with the Flavour of Peace

**In Puerto Asís, Putumayo the first cocoa laboratory is inaugurated which seeks to support local producers and to strengthen the cocoa value chain.**

**Puerto Asís, September 13th 2022.** Producers from AGROPAL and AGROPASIS will strengthen the cocoa value chain with a new Cocoa Laboratory that was built in the village of La Carmelita in the municipality of Puerto Asís, Putumayo. The objective of the laboratory is to support local communities and young people by providing new technology that will improve the quality of their crops and the effectiveness of their production process. This project is framed within the PDETs initiative implemented through Renewal Territory Agency – ART- and within the Territories of Opportunity and the "Cacao with Flavor of Peace" strategy. The laboratory is a reality thanks to the support of the National Learning Service - SENA, Gran Tierra Energy and USAID.

The Cocoa Laboratory has high quality equipment such as toaster ovens, grain coolers, crushers, scrapers, refiners, timers, and chocolate agroindustry elements. These new tools will allow local producers to test their products and improve its quality, which will in turn lead to better producing crops and expanded market opportunities. This project had an investment of more than COP\$1,000 billion and will benefit more than 100 small producers from the associations of the Puerto Vega corridor and will also promote entrepreneurship with the youth people of Putumayo.

The Laboratory is located within the El Cuembí Rural Ecological Educational Institution in La Carmelita and will also:

- Help producers expand their knowledge for specialized quality crops
- Generate economic development opportunities for the communities of the Puerto Vega – Teteyé corridor
- Promote the alternative development of legal crops
- Link the participation of young people with the value chain of local agricultural production
- Create a generation of small businesses by adding value

Manuel Buitrago the President and Country Manager of Gran Tierra Energy in Colombia stated, "Gran Tierra Energy is proud to be a part of the launch of the Cocoa Laboratory in Puerto Asís today. This project will support local families and producers who will now have a high-tech tools to improve the quality of their cocoa crops, which will in turn help grow their businesses.

Gran Tierra will continue supporting initiatives that contribute to the economic development of the Putumayo and benefit of the people who live near our operations”.

Likewise, SENA’s Regional Director for Putumayo, William Rodríguez, emphasized the support that the Entity provides to the communities "We have managed to provide courses in chocolate transformation, technical tours and rural extension, not only to the communities of the corridor, but also to young high school graduates to generate the value, analysis and evaluation of the sensory attributes of the cocoa”.

Through the strengthening of training with SENA, through this project it has also been possible to offer courses in chocolate transformation, technical tours and rural extension, not only to the communities of the corridor, but also to young high school graduates to generate value, analysis and evaluation of sensory attributes of the cocoa bean.