

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

The case study in Ecuador concerns only one part of the coffee chain, from the plantation till the transport to the coffee burners. Visits and interviews were carried out in order to check the applicability and the relevance of the criteria and the monitoring system. The interviews were held semi-structured, based on the list of criteria for the label for sustainable development.

The trip included visits to coffee plantations –where coffee is grown and processed into dry peeled beans–, coffee buyers and a coffee processing plant. Various farms were visited: regular, fair trade and organic farms. Some were part of larger organisations, others were unorganised. Only small farmers were visited. In Ecuador most of the coffee seems to be produced by farmers owning less than 5 ha. Large plantations are extremely rare. The 2 biggest plantations of the country seem to have 200 ha.

## **2 PLANNING**

### **2.1 PARTICIPATING MEMBERS**

- Sophie Spillemaeckers (SS) (Ethibel),
- Liesbeth Taverniers (LT) (CDO),
- Prof. Patrick Van Damme (PVD) and Tinneke Dirckx (TD) (vakgroep Tropische Landbouw, RUG),
- Jorge Duque Rivera (JDR) (ESPOL).

### **2.2 SCHEDULE**

Mission from September 7<sup>th</sup> till September 16<sup>th</sup>

#### **Monday 9 September 2002 – Guayaquil – Alamor**

- Meeting in ESPOL with ir. Victor Bastidas Jimenez, Rector of ESPOL: SS, LT, TD, PVD, JDR.
- LT leaves for Cotacachi.
- Travel to Alamor and meeting with farmers' association El Tigre, VECO people and farmers by SS, TD, PVD and JDR.

#### **Tuesday 10 September 2002 –Alamor / Cotacachi**

- Meeting at VECO office with Veco staff, representatives of PROCAP and SS, TD, PVD, JDR. Presentation of VECO's activities: organisation of coffee producers in groups in order to apply for niche markets and increase quality and yields.
- Field visit of small farmers around Alamor, interview by SS, TD, PVD, JDR.
- LT attends the 'Expo – Conferencia Internacional 2002-Culturas vivas por un ambiente sano y comercio justo, hacia un desarrollo sustentable- III Conferencia Internacional de café sustentable y comercio justo' in Cotacachi. [a]

#### **Wednesday 11 September 2002 – Las Cochas communities / VECO-Quito**

- Field visit, interview of farmers from communities supported by VECO/PROCAP and of independent farmers by SS, TD, PVD, JDR in Las Cochas.

- LT travels from Cotacachi to Quito. Meeting with Nicolas Eberhart from VECO. Discussing of his remarks on the criteria list and the brand ambitions of the coffee retailers. [b]

#### **Thursday 12 September 2002 – Catamayo: CORECAF/COFENAC**

- Visit of the coffee federation (FAPACAFES) and the plant hired by COFENAC where coffee is (prepared for and) exported. Interview of staff members and Nicolas Eberhart (VECO) by SS, LT, TD, PVD and JDR.

#### **Friday 13 September 2002 – Catamayo – Guayaquil**

- Travel from Catamayo to Guayaquil.
- Visit of unorganised small coffee farmers and small coffee buyers in Chagnapambe: interviews by SS, TD, PVD, JDR, LT.

#### **Saturday 14 September 2002 Jipi-japa / Elcafé**

- PVD leaves for Belgium
- Field visit to Jipi-Japa: interview of 4 coffee sellers (middlemen) and coffee growers by LT and TD.
- Visit of the plant of Elcafé processing coffee, Interview with José García, responsible for the purchase, Guayaquil, by SS and JDR.

### **3 INTERVIEWS AND FIELD VISITS**

#### **3.1 COFFEE PLANTATIONS**

##### **3.1.1 Overview visits and interviews**

Field visit of small farmers around Alamor (10 September 02)

- Interview with farmer [2], member of PROCAP
- Interview with farmer [3], member of UPML (a Christian women organisation of Loja)

Field visit of small farmers from communities supported by VECO/PROCAP and of independent farmers in Las Cochas (11 september '02)

- Interview with wife of a farmer who is member of PROCAP/VECO [4]
- Interview with teachers and director of primary school in Las Cochas [5]
- Interview with farmers who are member of PROCAP/VECO [6, 7]
- Interview with farmer who is not a member of PROCAP [8]

Field visit to Jipi-Japa

- interview coffee growers [9] (14 september '02)

##### **3.1.2 Results**

###### **Farming system**

Farmers in the Las Cochas communities typically own 3 ha of land per family for agricultural production. They also raise pigs and chickens and there is a cottage industry of panela (a kind of candy, produced out of brown sugar and butter). Daily living allowance is gathered through sale of small cattle and poultry and through labour. When the coffee season is over, farmers and older children migrate to the coast and work in road building, construction, ... Coffee is grown as cash crop

to gain cash income. Mandarins and oranges from the shadow trees in the coffee plantations are also sold [4,6,7].

In Jipi-Japa the average farm is 2 to 3 ha. The farmers think coffee is not a profitable crop but the farmers continue growing it hoping prices will rise one day. They also grow other crops and start to keep bees [9]. Beside coffee, farmers can plant maize and have pasture. Vegetables are only grown in winter when there is enough rain [2]. Farmer [7] has 12 pieces of cattle, 3 ha of maize, cassava, sugarcane, jucca,... He is self-sufficient. Exceptionally he has to buy some maize [7]. The farmer owns 3 ha of coffee [4, 7,8]. The farmer owns 1 ha coffee [5]. By raising cattle one can gain much more profit (than by growing coffee), but there is not always enough space for pasture [4, 6, 7, 8].

### **Coffee harvesting**

There is only one harvest/year, yielding between 350 and 1500 kg/ha. During the harvesting period of two months, farmers organise three picking rounds in which only red berries are picked resulting in quality coffee. This means that the workload increased compared to the previous method of picking all the cherries (green, red and black) in one round. [1, 2, 3] In Jipi-Japa the coffee is picked in one round [9]. In El Tigre, yields are high because the soil is very fertile: 30 quintals/ha [1].

The other fields produce:

- 20 quintals/ha [3]
- 12,5 quintals/ha or 45 kg/ha [4]
- 7 quintals/ha [6]
- 13,5 quintals/ha [8]

### **Renewal of plantation**

Each year, old, less productive plants are replaced by new, young coffee plants raised/bred on the farm itself. These young, productive plants are adapted to local circumstances and produce higher yields than old plants [1, 2, 7, 9]. Plant holes are filled with sand, dung, and compost [2, 9]. Cold circumstances cause growth retardation of young plants [2]. Plants are not replaced but kept young and productive by pruning [4].

### **Fertilisers**

Farmers produce organic fertiliser by composting waste (incl coffee pulp). This practice is very labour intensive. [1,9] In most cases they do not produce enough fertiliser for the whole field [1]. Farmers with a lot of cattle can produce enough organic fertiliser for their coffee fields [2]. No chemical fertilisers are used [2,3,4,6,9].

### **Pests and diseases**

The major problem is caused by cold temperatures (hail), and fungi (*'mal de hilachas'* or *'mal de hielo'*) [2,4,6,7,8]. Broca is a pest that can be prevented by picking all the coffee, without leaving cherries on the field. This way, parasites cannot survive. Sometimes broca is brought in with traders [4, 6, 9]. Against fungi, plants are dredged up with ashes. This method seems not very effective as these diseases are common in the wet season in which the rain washes away the ashes [2]. In Jipi-Japa, there seems to be a lot of knowledge on self-made, natural pesticides. [9]

### **Shadow**

In Colombia 40% shadow is sustained, while in Ecuador 50% seems to be optimal. Shadow percentage should be adapted to local circumstances to be optimal [1]. Many different tree species are used to create shadow: bananas, citrus trees, cherimoya, leucena, guyava, 'roblong' and terminalia. Especially fruit trees generate some extra profit for farmers [1,2,3,6,7,9]. Farmer 3 received shadow

trees from UPML. Maintenance of the ideal percentage of shadow asks a lot of labour through pruning.

### **Erosion**

Several methods to control erosion are used: barriers [2,6,7] planting on contour lines [2,7] and in a triangular way [2,3, 6,7,9]. Selective weeding is also practised [2,6,7,9] (*herba louisa* and *pega pega* are actively tolerated)

### **Burning practises**

UPLM advises farmers not to burn their lands [3].

### **Labour practices**

Some farmers hire labour for pruning, harvesting and weeding activities [1], but most of the time relatives and friends help each other [9]. Labourers are paid 5 US\$/working day (of max. 8 hours) [3, 4]. Normally 15 days are needed per hectare for weeding. Some weeds can be tolerated (by keeping them short) in the field resulting in a 50% time saving for weeding activities when a lot of these weeds are present in the fields [1, 2]. To get good quality coffee, only red coffee cherries should be picked during the harvest, increasing the workload, as three picking rounds are needed [2].

### **Production costs**

To maintain 1ha of land under coffee production, a farmer needs 700 to 800 US\$ [1].

### **Child labour**

In Ecuador there is no law that obliges children to go to school. Children are not always attending school during the harvesting period which coincidences with school period. 90% of the children finish primary school. It seems there is no difference between children from coffee farmers and other children. Most parents know that schooling is important, but still some of the farmers do not find it necessary, as they themselves never went to school. Between 70 and 80% of the children continues to secondary school. Children go to school from 7.30 h till 12.30 h, so they can still help on the farm in the afternoon [5]. As interviews indicated that child labour is an issue, the local school was visited for more global information. In almost all 'parochias' there is a school, and in most areas secondary schools are present. All children under 12 can attend easily and for free basic education. Since one year schools are subsidised by the government to give meals at midday to the children. This had a positive influence on the number of children attending classes. So the economic issue, combined with a cultural issue (not all farmers recognise the importance of education?) could be the problem. Alamor itself has a high school and 2 branches of the university of Loja. Quality of higher education is a problem because good teachers are very expensive and do not want to come to these laid back areas [5]. Procap pretends that the children do not quit primary school for economic reasons. Farmer 3 has 7 children who all went to primary school till the age of 10 year. Then they started helping their father on the field. Farmer 4 has 4 children who all went to high school. In Jipi-japa most children go to school and help on the farm from the age of 12 years. They continue school in the afternoon. [9]

### **3.1.3 Conclusions**

- In Ecuador most coffee is planted by small farmers owning less than 5 ha;
- Coffee is their main cash resource they are dependent on it;
- Coffee price is very low, and farmers that are not growing biological or fair trade coffee do not invest a lot in their plantations;
- As most plantations are very neglected, and few plants are replaced, diseases show up;
- All plantations have shadow plants;

- Unorganised farmers do not look at the quality of the picked beans and harvest in one time;
- Coffee sold as high quality contain only mature beans, picking has to be done in three rounds;
- Farmers that are producing special coffee use measures against erosion;
- Hired labour is not exploited, as there is more demand than offer;
- A lot of unorganised coffee farmers seem to naturally apply environmentally friendly methods, as they do not have the means to buy chemical products. Yet get very low prices for their coffee, which is bought and sold as low quality coffee;
- knowledge about the market is often too limited;
- Children are not obliged to go to school. More than 20% of the children stop going at the age of 12, and 10% even earlier. Both economic and cultural reasons seem to be at the base.

## **3.2 PROCESSING OF COFFEE BEANS**

### **3.2.1 Visits and interviews**

Meeting with farmers' association El Tigre, VECO people and farmers (9 September 2002): interview with farmer [1], member of PROCAP

### **3.2.2 Results**

The coffee processing installation of the farmers' association El Tigre was operational when visited. Real working circumstances could be observed/checked for both dry and wet processing. Brief interview with farmers on coffee production to get a first idea of used production methods.

5 kg of berries result in 1 kg of dry beans (washed, green coffee). For wet processing farmers use a depulping machine which in some cases is property of the group and in other cases property of the farmer himself. Sometimes, the slimy layer is removed by a second machine, some kind of centrifuge. Both machines use water (1).

For good quality coffee, wet processing is used. The processing machine needed only 1l of water/kg, the old system needed 30 l/kg. Most farmers of the cooperative rent this machine. The wastewater is directed to a small stream and the waste is used as organic fertiliser on the fields. The coffee is sun-dried above the ground on canvas.

Low quality coffee is processed by a dry system and is sun dried on the ground. When farms are not concentrated, they will each buy their own dry-processing machine, generally using the dry method. All of the visited farms dry the beans in the sun.

### **3.2.3 Conclusions**

- No treatment or reuse of wastewater of coffee-peeling machine;
- The peeling machine has a very economical water use;
- The machine is used by a lot of farmers of the surroundings;
- Only sun drying is used.

### 3.3 ORGANISATIONS FOR TECHNICAL SUPPORT OF FARMERS

#### 3.3.1 Overview visits and interviews

- Meeting at VECO office with Veco staff, representatives of PROCAP (10 September 2002)
- Field visit of small farmers around Alamor (10 September 02): interview with farmer [3], member of UPML (a Christian women organisation of Loja)
- Field visit to Jipi-Japa: interview coffee growers (14 september '02) .

#### 3.3.2 Results

VECO (Vredeseilanden-Coopibo) is a Belgian independent and pluralistic non governmental organization for development cooperation specialized in food security. In the visited province, a local Vredeseilanden team supports small coffee producers and their families through, inter alia, marketing unions such as PROCAP.

PROCAP is an association of coffee farmers and was founded to have the opportunity of receiving support from VECO. VECO's technical support comprises training in agricultural techniques, post-harvest treatment, quality control, bookkeeping, and legislation for organic and non-organic coffee production. They help them to apply for niche markets and to increase quality and yields. Mechanisms of international price setting are also explained to the farmers [1,2].

They also give a management courses. Group leaders are trained in leading and organising meetings and in principles of working in groups [1,2,4]. Here positive discrimination is applied, 50% have to be women. After the training almost all men get leading positions, the women only exceptionally.

PROCAP is aware of the fact that not all children of farmers attend school. In the future they will work around this theme and create more awareness with the farmers about the importance of school.

They only work with small farmers, with max 7 ha. Control of quality and compliance with standards and rules for organic coffee are organised by an internal committee reporting to BioLatina which is responsible for organic certification. In consultation with BioLatina, PROCAP defined its own production standards and measures for organic production, adapted to the specific situation of the production region. BioLatina is accredited by Naturland, Germany, and is allowed to give an organic certification which is recognised in Europe.

A better coffee price is obtained by cooperating with PROCAP [2, 4, 6, 7, 8]. Farmers are paid 25% up front (57\$/quintal (+/- 45 kg) for organic coffee or 48\$/quintal for normal coffee) after harvesting. The remaining part is paid when green, washed coffee is delivered. If yields are high and coffee prices good, a small part of the benefit goes to the organisation. This capitalisation percentage for the organisation is fixed by the general meeting who also decides on the prices paid to farmers according to reference prices.

To become a member of PROCAP, farmers must be coffee growers, they have to organise themselves in a group, and have to participate in extension/educational sessions and apply the taught principles, and they have to agree on producing along the norms (i.e. coffee cultivation without chemicals, taking erosion measures, maintaining the right shadow percentage, etc.).

Some farmers receive support of UPML if they organise themselves in groups (3). They have been receiving seeds (maize and peanut), seedlings (also coffee) and plastic bags to grow seedlings themselves. The organisation also provides technical support to improve the coffee quality. Better

prices for coffee are received: 55US\$/ 50 kg for washed coffee. Farmers are considering producing organic coffee. For the moment they just grow normal coffee. For the production of organic coffee they will need more training. This training is not provided by UPML.

The farmers' community of La Union in Jipi-Japa are more or less organised (They meet to discuss, but they do not share machines for example.) as a farmer's community and make a point of women being represented. They receive some technical support from COFENAC. They have been part of a larger organisation in Jipi-Japa, but were definitely disappointed. This organisation is no longer there. The community does not need to make major changes in the way of coffee growing to apply for the conditions of PROCAP. Being member of PROCAP they would be able to make some profit out of coffee. [9]

### **3.3.3 Conclusions**

on PROCAP:

- The aim of the project is giving sustainable means to the farmers. They do not want them to become dependent on the project.
- They promote the production of organic coffee, and are in search for niche markets.
- Farmers are trained.
- They try to apply a positive discrimination for women.
- Roughly 10% of the farmers' children younger than 12 do not attend primary school, and 25% of the children between 12 and 15 do not attend secondary school.
- There is no sensibilisation of the farmers concerning scolarisation.
- There are no schemes for social security.

on UPML

- The help to farmers was mostly given through gifts, which is not a sustainable way.
- The farmer was not well informed about organic coffee, but was well aware of the difference in price.

## **3.4 INDEPENDENT COFFEE BUYERS, NOT LINKED TO AN ORGANISATION**

### **3.4.1 Overview of visits and interviews**

- Visit of unorganised small coffee farmers and small coffee buyers in Chagnapambe (13 september '02).
- Field visit to Jipi-Japa: interview of 4 coffee sellers (middlemen) and coffee growers (14 september '02) .

### **3.4.2 Results**

The small coffee buyers of Chagnapambe, who buy the coffee from the small farmers in the villages, are dependent on the large buyers from the cities. Farmers receive one and the same basic price for all coffee. Later this coffee will be sold in the towns as low quality. They are not trusted by the farmers and try to buy at the lowest possible prices. Farmers have tried to organise themselves in the past, but have had some bad experiences, and are now very suspicious of any kind of organisation. The recent coffee prices were as low as 25 dollars/quintal. As prices are this low, farmers do not invest a lot in working on the coffee plantations, which affects the quality and the quantity of the product.

Coffee buyers/sellers in the Jipi-Japa region do not distinguish different qualities/classes of coffee: they only pay a low price to farmers. They make profit by buying small quantities of coffee from farmers and selling large amounts to exporters. They also buy and sell maize and peanuts. When exporters from far away come in, competition increases and prices rise. When international coffee prices are good, exporters come in several times per week to buy coffee

### **3.4.3 Conclusions**

- Unorganised coffee farmers get very low prices for coffee and have no market and knowledge of high quality coffee.
- Farmers feel helpless, since they feel coffee buyers exploit them and they have no knowledge of the market.
- Unorganised small coffee farmers have a difficult access to the quality coffee market.

## **3.5 COFFEE EXPORTER**

### **3.5.1 Overview of visits and interviews**

- Visit of the coffee federation (FAPACAFES)
- Visit of the plant hired by COFENAC where coffee is (prepared for and) exported. Interview of staff members and Nicolas Eberhart (VECO)( 12 September 02)

### **3.5.2 Results**

Federación de Asociaciones de Pequeños cafetaleros Ecologicos del Sur (FAPACAFES) is a federation of 4 associations of coffee producers (PROCAP, PROCAFE, AFOCAM and APECAP). By bringing together several associations, the processed volume increases and costs decrease, meaning an increase in profits. The committee meets once a month. Each association is represented by 2 members.

They work together with COFENAC, a private-law organization with social and public aims. It promotes the competitiveness of Ecuadorian coffee on the international market based on increased productivity of farms, improved quality of coffee beans, and the production of special coffees. Daily operation of COFENAC at the plant includes quality control and coffee processing, bookkeeping and marketing. They follow the market and set their prices in function of it. They also try to find niche markets and educate the member organisations.

Part of the coffee is sold as FLO coffee for a fixed price of 124 dollars/quintals. The rest is sold at (lower) market prices. The organisations get a price between both for their coffee.

Organic coffee makes up 40% of the total amount of processed coffee and its share is still increasing. They want to become a leader in quantity and quality of Ecuador's Specialty Coffee Market. Due to severe and strict quality control, only 5% of the exported coffee is rejected.

A discussion was held on international price setting mechanisms and labelling mechanisms for organic coffee and Ecuadorian legislation regarding to organic production and labelling. The coffee prices are related to the stock market, and are very variable due to speculation. To get good prices for coffee one has to follow the stock market at least on a daily bases, and to react quickly. As coffee is a product that can be stocked for some time, exporting firms tend to speculate with those stocks on the market. For this reason there is an international demand to extend the official storage life of coffee.



### **3.5.3 Conclusions**

- By working together the co-operations can follow the market and can offer larger quantities of coffee.
- Their specialisation in niche markets, FLO coffee and organic coffee and the careful quality controls allow them to diminish costs and to get higher prices for their coffee;
- The organisation is still too small to be able to produce enough to become an important seller;
- The coffee sorting machine produces noise nuisances.

## **3.6 COFFEE PROCESSING PLANT**

### **3.6.1 Overview of visits and interviews**

Visit of the plant of Elcafé processing coffee, Interview with José García, responsible for the purchase, Guayaquil (14 September 2002).

### **3.6.2 Results**

Elcafé is an Ecuadorian company founded in 1978. Its sister company, Ultramares Corporación C.A. is a leading green coffee exporter, in business for more than 60 years. Elcafé is part of the Noboa group. The plant that was visited has a production capacity of 800 ton a month and produces different kinds of instant coffee (spray-dried, agglomerated and freeze-dried), decaffeinated coffee, instant flavoured coffee, roast & ground coffee and frozen coffee extract.

They are in the process of obtaining the ISO 9001 certification and want to recognize their laboratory by a European accreditation Institute. The company complies to the European hccp norms for food industry, this to earn the trust of European buyers.

Elcafé has been certified to process organic coffee by the Bolivian partners of the Institute for Market ecology (IMO) of Switzerland and by Naturland of Germany. Before producing organic instant coffee the machines have to be cleaned in the presence of IMO Control. IMO can also pay visits at random. Every six months the company has to produce a report concerning the selling of the organic instant coffee. Till now they are still searching for clients who want to order enough quantities of organic instant coffee to begin with the production.

All organic coffee is purchased outside Ecuador on large plantations. They say Ecuadorian producers cannot provide them with the necessary quantities.

The plant is very modern and clean. It uses advanced techniques. Protecting gear is present at some parts, but not everywhere. Not all workers are using the necessary protective equipment. The management proclaims it is available, but workers are not interested in using it.

A health and safety department is present, but only open during the working hours of the medical personnel. First aid kits are present on the premises. Some workers seem to be trained in first aid. There seems to be an annual training of safety measures.

The plant has 300 employees. There is a clear distinction between workers producing manual labour and the others. From the 60 manual labourers, only 10 to 15% have long-term contracts. Most only receive contracts on a yearly basis. They work 6 days a week, 10 to 12 hours a day. The basic salary

is 240 dollars for 6x8 hours, which is slightly more than the minimum wage, but far behind a living wage in the city. Supplementary hours are paid as normal hours, except Sundays and holidays that are paid more. Their yearly turnover is 20%. Short-term contracts do not include vacations. When workers ask for it, the company gives them loans.

The administration, the chiefs and the quality controllers (240 persons in total) have long-term contracts, work 8x5 hours a week, do not produce exceeding over hours and have higher salaries.

Within the administration there seem to be a high percentage of women, even at a higher level.

The company has an environmental officer, who can follow courses and who is responsible for the installation that treats the wastewater. The wastewater is released at 32°.

All workers are given the opportunity to grow within the company. They prefer to give promotion to people with experience on the work floor. On a higher-level employees are allowed to follow courses in function of their work.

18.000 to 20.000 quintals of coffee/week are purchased from Corecaf. This NGO based organisation instructs farmers in different farming techniques (coffee, mais, ...), helping them to be less dependent on coffee harvests. They buy from little producers in the East who have 2 to 3 ha. Each ha produces about 5 quintals. Corecaf receives 23 dollars/quintal.

### **3.6.3 Remarks**

- The plant is certified to process organic coffee.
- The plant is in the process to obtain ISO 9001.
- Organic coffee is bought only from large plantations outside Ecuador.
- The Ecuadorian coffee is purchased through an NGO with a social background.
- The plant treats its wastewaters.
- The administrative employees have in general long-term contracts, and receive all the legal benefits.
- Working hours exceed regularly 48 hours a week, and even 60 hours a week.
- Workers do not receive living wages.
- Protection gear is not always used.
- Maximum 15% of the non-administrative workers have a permanent contract and have no right to take vacation

## **4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 COFFEE CASE**

During the field visit of one week it was possible to get a general picture of coffee farming in Ecuador. It is not necessary for the Belgian team to continue the coffee research in Ecuador (and/or somewhere else in Latin America), this can be followed by ESPOL. For the design of the label/criteria it might be more useful to broaden the number of cases studies (other than coffee). In general, farmers seem to be interested in converting to organic coffee. Labelling initiatives are seen as positive.

## 4.2 CRITERIA

The used list of criteria was applicable. Some adjustments need to be made to the ecological and economic criteria, because some are not clear or can be interpreted too broadly. Some concepts should be worked out more deeply, but no major changes are needed. The social criteria are clear and well explained.

A small brochure, accompanying the list of criteria and containing more detailed information on the used criteria could help to clarify some concepts and to make the list more operational, especially for people who are not familiar with (this kind of) labelling and certification.

Involvement of field-experts in the development of criteria lists is required. [a,b]

Criteria that seem inevitable in one region, are not necessarily applicable to coffee growers in other regions. [a,b]

A difference has to be made between the approach of small organisations as farms and handicraft workers, and bigger, more structured organisations as industrial plants.

The format of the list could be changed so that it becomes more a 'working instrument', for example by putting it in a table, with different columns (criteria, different scores, ways to check the criteria,...). By putting the list in this format, all dubious cases will become clear and can be clarified.

## 4.3 MONITORING

It became clear that the auditor has to know the sector. A preliminary research or knowledge of specific problems in the sector is necessary. The interviewer needs thorough knowledge of the criteria so the interviews can be held semi-structured.

Most of the organisations visited reported to spend a lot of time in answering questions of foreign visitors, all interested in controlling the same aspects. Therefore, it would be interesting to construct a network to allow access to the results of those visits, in order to gain more information without unnecessary controls.

A difference must be made between the monitoring of small organisations (eg. small farms) and large plants. *Small organisations* are hard to monitor via Internet. When visiting on-site, an auditor acquainted with the local culture can easily get an impression of the environmental and the social circumstances. When interviewing small organisations, questions seemed to be answered openly and problems were reported. Infractions on the criteria are not always experienced as problematic. In this case, child labour on the farms was seen as normal, and neither were the wages and the working hours. In both cases the people interviewed were not aware of the criteria used by the labelling system. For the monitoring of *large plants*, external interviews with workers organisations and NGO's are needed. Interviews with the workers do not always guarantee a clear view of working conditions. In larger companies, one single person, even from the management, will never be aware of all the topics of the label, so several persons must be interviewed. Security measures need to be monitored by a person acquainted with the process.