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The Income and Marketing of Cocoa in the Meleko Bangkit Forest Farmers' Group, Sama Guna Village, Tanjung Subdistrict, North Lombok Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the cocoa cultivation system, farm income, marketing chain structure, marketing costs and margins, and factors supporting and inhibiting cocoa farming in the Meleko Bangkit Forest Farmer Group, Sama Guna Village, Tanjung Subdistrict, North Lombok Regency. The study used a descriptive method with a snowball sampling technique, and data were collected through observation, interviews, questionnaires, and literature reviews. The results showed that farmers applied cocoa cultivation in an agroforestry system with varying planting, maintenance, and harvesting patterns. The average farmer's income reached IDR 17,717,901/year, indicating that cocoa farming is feasible. The marketing structure consists of three marketing chains involving small collectors, village collectors, and inter-island traders, with the highest marketing costs and margins occurring at the inter-island trader level. Supporting factors for farming include competitive cocoa prices and agroecological suitability, while the main inhibiting factors are farmers' weak bargaining position and the length of the marketing chain. This study emphasizes the importance of strengthening farmer institutions and improving the marketing system to increase the income and welfare of cocoa farmers

INTRODUCTION

North Lombok Regency has the characteristics of a dry mountainous area with an altitude of 50–500 meters above sea level, a region whose economy is highly dependent on the agricultural sector. In this context, plantations emerge as a sub-sector that makes a significant contribution, especially through leading commodities such as cocoa, which is known to be suitable for forest conditions and has high economic value.

Production data shows that cocoa has a strategic position in this region. With an area of 2,991 ha and a total production of 1,670 tons, North Lombok Regency ranks first in cocoa production in West Nusa Tenggara (Central Statistics Agency of West Nusa Tenggara, 2023). Gangga and Tanjung subdistricts are the main production centers. In Sama Guna Village, Tanjung Subdistrict, there is the Meleko Bangkit Community Forest Management Group, which serves as a forum for 767 farmers to manage 1,284.6 hectares of Community Forest. Farmers utilize the land for agroforestry, planting various types of crops, including coffee, cloves, durian, avocado, banana, and cocoa, with cocoa as the main commodity due to its high price.

Despite their considerable potential, farmers face marketing constraints, such as prices determined by traders and long marketing chains, resulting in an uneven distribution of added value. This situation highlights the importance of research on cocoa income and marketing at KTH Meleko Bangkit to understand farmers' incomes and the existing cocoa marketing system.

METHODS

This study was conducted in July-August 2025 in Sama Guna Village, Tanjung Subdistrict, North Lombok Regency. The research method used was descriptive. The sample was determined using snowball sampling. The research respondents consisted of cocoa farmers in KTH Meleko Bangkit, collectors, and wholesalers on Lombok Island. Data were collected through observation, interviews, questionnaires, and literature studies. The research variables included planting, maintenance, harvesting, income, type of actor, actor function, purchase price, selling price, marketing costs, cultivation, maintenance, production, and marketing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' Livelihoods

Respondents involved in the cocoa marketing chain in Sama Guna Village generally have diverse main occupations. There are 42 respondents, consisting of 37 farmers and 5 others who are cocoa entrepreneurs (collecting traders and inter-island traders). Of the farmer group, 30 people have their main occupation in the agricultural sector, while of the cocoa entrepreneur group, 4 people work in the cocoa trading business sector, and the remaining 1 person works primarily as a teacher. The most common type of side job among farmer respondents is as a livestock farmer, with 6 people (14%). On the other hand, 18 respondents (43%) did not have a side job. This condition reflects that they are completely dependent on their main activity as farmers. In addition, from the group of cocoa entrepreneurs, the majority of respondents did not have a side job, namely, 3 people (7%). Meanwhile, only 1 respondent (2%) had a side job, namely working as a grocery trader.

Age of Respondents

Based on the research that has been conducted, the following table shows the age data of the respondents:

Table 1. Age of Respondent

No.	Age Range (Years)	Number (people)	Percentage (%)
1	27-37	8	19
2	38-48	15	36
3	49-59	12	28
4	>60	7	17
Number		42	100

The age range of respondents was between 27 and over 60 years old. The age distribution of respondents showed that most cocoa farmers and marketers were in the adult age group (38-48 years old). The large number of respondents in the adult age range was also due to slow regeneration in the agricultural sector, where agricultural land is often managed by individuals who have long been involved in this activity.

Meanwhile, the small number of farmers in the younger age group is due to their declining interest in working in the agricultural sector. The crisis of young farmers and the dominance of older farmers has consequences for the development of sustainable agriculture. In addition, this will threaten food security and the sustainability of the agricultural sector (Sri Hery Susilowati, 2016).

Respondents' Education Level

Higher education usually provides greater opportunities to receive and adopt new knowledge related to cultivation techniques, land management, and market access. Conversely, low levels of education can limit farmers' ability to understand information. The identity of respondents based on their level of education can be seen in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Respondents` Education Level

No.	Level of Education	Number (people)	Percentage (%)
1	Bachelor's degree	3	7
2	Diploma II	1	2
3	High school	13	31
4	Junior high school	3	7
5	Elementary school	16	38
6	No schooling	6	15
Number		42	100

The dominance of respondents with basic education levels shows that most cocoa farmers still come from communities with low levels of formal education. This situation is inseparable from the social and economic conditions of rural communities, which tend to prioritize work over education. In addition, limited access to educational facilities in rural areas in the past has also contributed to the low education levels of respondents. Farmers with low levels of education tend to rely on generational experience rather than technical knowledge based on training.

Planting

The cocoa seeds planted by Meleko Bangkit farmers are obtained from independent nurseries. In addition, farmer groups sometimes provide cocoa seeds, which farmers then plant on their land at the beginning of the rainy season with irregular planting distances or adjusted to the space available between forest vegetation. The types of cocoa planted by farmers can be seen in the following table:

Table 3. Distribution of Cocoa Types Cultivated by Farmers

No.	type of cocoa	Number (people)	Percentage (%)
1	Criollo	2	5
2	Forastero	8	22
3	Criollo - Forastero	13	35
4	Blend (Criollo – Forastero - Trinitario)	14	38
Number		37	100

The dominant type of cocoa cultivated by farmers is a mixture of Criollo, Forastero, and Trinitario varieties. Farmers tend to choose to cultivate mixed varieties because they are considered to provide more stable and productive yields throughout the year compared to planting only one variety.

Meanwhile, Criollo is the least cultivated variety despite being known for having the best bean quality in the global cocoa market. This is due to the limited access of some farmers to cocoa seeds that are superior in terms of productivity. In addition, this type of cocoa has low productivity, slow growth, and is very susceptible to pests and diseases, requiring a high level of care.

Maintenance

Maintenance is a follow-up stage after planting that plays an important role in keeping plant growth optimal. Data on the various types of cocoa plant maintenance are presented in the following table:

Table 4. Various Methods of Cocoa Plant Maintenance

No.	Maintenance Variety	Intensity	Number (people)	Percentage (%)
1	Pruning	Regularly	24	65%
		Rarely	13	35%
2	Weeding	Once a month	15	41%
		Twice a month	22	59%
3	Fertilization	Once a year	15	40%
		Twice a year	4	11%
		Never	18	49%

Based on the overall findings regarding the various maintenance practices carried out by farmers, it can be seen that farmers tend to emphasize maintenance in areas that are easy to do and produce immediate results, while aspects that require more costs and knowledge, such as fertilization and pest and disease control, are still not a top priority for farmers. This indicates the need for encouragement in the form of extension and assistance so that all aspects of maintenance can be carried out in a balanced manner in order to increase the productivity and quality of cocoa produced.

Harvesting

Based on the research results, data were obtained on the frequency of cocoa harvesting by 37 respondents, as shown in Table 5 below:

Table 5. Cocoa Harvesting Frequency

No.	Harvest Frequency	Number (people)	Percentage (%)
1	Once a month	23	62
2	Uncertain	14	38
Number		37	100

The results of the study show that out of a total of 37 farmers, 62% harvest cocoa once a month, while 38% are inconsistent. They harvest between 2 and 8 times a year. This is due to the fact that they have fewer productive plants. During the harvesting process, the tools commonly used by farmers are machetes and scissors. Cocoa pods that are ready to be harvested are usually marked by a change in color on their skin. For example, for Forastero cocoa, the skin changes from green to yellow.

Cocoa Production

Cocoa production is greatly influenced by the number of plants entering the productive phase. The number of productive plants and annual cocoa production can be seen in Table 6 below:

Table 6. Cocoa Production

No	Name	Land Area (Ha)	Number of plants	Producing Plants	Production Yield (Kg/Years)
1	Raden Muhdin	2	800	650	800
2	Mahsan	1	300	250	250
3	Riati	1	200	200	150
4	Sumaini	1	300	300	250
5	Mirsah	1	500	400	350
6	Minarti	0,7	150	100	100
7	Mariono	2	550	500	400
8	Raden Riahandika	1	500	300	250
9	Sarsih	1	100	50	50
10	Azan Adikuswara	0,5	100	100	80
11	Raden Edi Sutarno	1	400	300	350
12	Raden Sudirman	1,5	200	200	150
13	Raden Arta	1	500	300	200
14	Raden Mardi	1	200	100	130
15	Putra	0,8	300	100	180
16	Martodi	0,5	50	30	20
17	Husada	0,6	100	70	50
18	Supriadi	0,8	300	250	150
19	Remati	0,6	100	50	50
20	Kasdianto	0,7	100	80	80
21	Redin	0,8	150	150	180
22	Reda Suhirvan	1,5	400	350	400
23	Aldi Suhendra	1	250	150	150
24	Irnep	1	400	370	450
25	Erwin	0,8	300	300	250
26	Sinardi	0,7	200	150	120
27	Suparti	0,7	200	150	150
28	Heri	0,7	150	100	80
29	Raden Sapdi	1	200	150	100
30	Lalu Madiono	1	150	150	150
31	Raden Sudirep	3	1000	900	1000
32	Raden Sunar	0,7	150	100	80
33	Sarnim	1,2	400	300	400
34	Raden Sono	1,6	500	450	550
35	Raden Arti	1	300	200	180
36	Raden Suadi	1,5	300	280	200
37	Raden Nuriadi	0,7	50	50	30
Number		38,6	10.850	8.630	8.510
Average		1	293	233	230

Of the total 10,850 cocoa trees planted, 8,630 are productive, while 2,220 are young trees. The average number of productive cocoa trees is 233. The farmer with the lowest number of productive trees is Martodi, who only has 30 productive trees, followed by Sarsih, Remati, and Raden Nuriadi, each of whom has 50 productive trees. Based on interviews with the four respondents, they mentioned that the temperature on their land tends to be low (cold), which is not ideal for cocoa cultivation.

Temperatures that are too low can inhibit flowering and cocoa development, which ultimately affects crop yields. The ideal temperature for growing cocoa is around 25°C, so the lower the altitude of the cocoa plantation, the higher its suitability (Maulani, 2020).

In terms of cocoa production, the table above shows that each farmer's annual cocoa production ranges from 20 to 1,000 kg. The farmer with the highest production is Raden Sudirep, with a total production of 1,000 kg per year. Next is Raden Muhdin, who produces 800 kg/year. This is due to several factors, including the size of the land owned and the number of productive plants, as well as maintenance factors. The average production of farmers is 230 kg. Overall, total cocoa production reaches 8,510 kg/year.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture (2025), national cocoa productivity reaches 710 kg/ha/year, while the cocoa productivity produced by all respondents is only around 220 kg/ha/year, which is certainly very low compared to national productivity. Low production is caused by the fact that most of the cocoa plants owned by farmers are old, so their productivity has declined.

Production Costs

1. Fixed Costs

The fixed costs incurred by farmers in this study only include equipment depreciation costs. The equipment subject to depreciation is presented in the following table:

Table 7. Total and Average Depreciation Value of Equipment

No	Name of Tool	Total Depreciation Value of Farmers' Equipment (Rp/year)	Average Depreciation Value of Equipment (Rp/year/person)
1	Hoe	849.696	23.603
2	Sickle	4.034.107	109.030
3	Machete	1.460.714	39.479
4	Scissors	342.321	9.252
5	Bucket	485.214	13.114
Number		7.172.054	194.477

The tool with the highest depreciation value is the sickle. The high depreciation value of the sickle is due to the fact that it is the main tool most frequently used in maintenance and harvesting activities, such as weeding, pruning branches, and splitting cocoa pods. Meanwhile, machetes and hoes also have a fairly high depreciation value because they are used regularly in harvesting and soil loosening activities.

Overall, the total depreciation value of the tools is IDR 7,172,054 with an average of IDR 194,477/year/farmer. Although the depreciation cost per farmer is not too high, the efficiency of tool use and maintenance still needs to be considered. This is important so that the tools have a longer service life, thereby reducing replacement costs and ultimately improving efficiency in cocoa farming activities.

2. Variable Costs

Variable costs are the total costs that are influenced by the amount of production. The variable costs incurred in cocoa farming can be seen in Table 8 as follows:

Table 8. Total and Average Variable Costs Per Year

No	Components	Total Cost (Rp/year)	Average Cost (Rp/year)
1	Fertilizer	28.475.000	769.595
2	Pesticides	2.450.000	66.216
3	Labor costs	19.800.000	535.135
4	Sacks	1.630.000	44.054
5	Transportation	5.250.000	141.892
Number		57.605.000	1.556.892

The total variable costs incurred by farmers amounted to Rp. 57,605,000/year, with an average cost of Rp. 1,556,892/year. The highest variable cost incurred by farmers is for fertilizer purchases made by 14 farmers. The type of fertilizer used by farmers is NPK 16-16-16 fertilizer, which costs Rp. 25,000/kg. The total amount of fertilizer used in one year is 1,139 kg. Furthermore, the cost of purchasing sacks is among the lowest because they are only needed during harvest or packaging. In addition, the price of sacks is relatively cheaper than other variable costs.

3. Total production cost

Total production costs are the total costs incurred in cocoa farming. The results of the total production cost calculations can be seen in the following table:

Table 9. Total and Average Annual Production Costs

No	Details	Total Production Costs (Rp/year)	Average Production Costs (Rp/year/person)
1	Fixed Costs	7.172.054	194.477
2	Variable Costs	57.605.000	1.556.892
Number		64.777.054	1.751.369

Variable costs account for a larger proportion than fixed costs, namely 89% of total production costs. The dominance of variable costs is due to high production input requirements. Efficiency in managing variable costs can have a significant impact on reducing total production costs and ultimately increasing farmers' profits.

Acceptance of Cocoa Farming

The amount of income is influenced by the amount of production and the selling price obtained by farmers. The higher the price and volume of production, the greater the income obtained by farmers (Tumoka, 2013). Based on the calculations, data on cocoa farming income is presented in the following table:

Table 10. Total and Average Revenue

No	Details	Production Volume (kg/year)	Average Cocoa Price (Rp/kg)	Revenue (Rp/year)
1	Total Production	8.510	84.649	720.362.990
2	Average Production	230	84.649	19.469.270

Table 10 shows that the total cocoa production was 8,510 kg/year, with an average production of 230 kg/year/farmer. The average selling price of cocoa was Rp. 84,649/kg, which resulted in an average income of Rp. 19,469,270/year. Meanwhile, the total income of all respondents is Rp. 720,362,990/year. This total income shows that cocoa farming can contribute significantly to farmers' income. However, the amount of income depends heavily on two factors, namely production volume and selling price.

Cocoa Farming Income

Income is the net profit actually received after deducting all expenses incurred. The net income calculation results are presented in the following table:

Table 11. Average Income

No	Details	Number (Rp/year/person)
1	Average Revenue	19.469.270
2	Average Production Cost	1.751.369
Number		17.717.901

The table above shows the net income of each farmer, which is Rp. 17,717,901/year. The success of farmers in increasing their income greatly depends on their ability to manage production factors efficiently. Optimizing fertilizer use, proper pest and disease control, and the application of good cultivation techniques can encourage increased production, which has a direct impact on increased income.

Marketing Value Chain Structure

In the cocoa marketing chain in KTH Meleko Bangkit, there are four chain actors consisting of farmers, small collectors, village collectors, and inter-island traders. The relationship between each actor is as producers and consumers who distribute cocoa to the next actor. Based on the results of the investigation, three marketing chains were obtained, which are presented in more detail in the following figure:

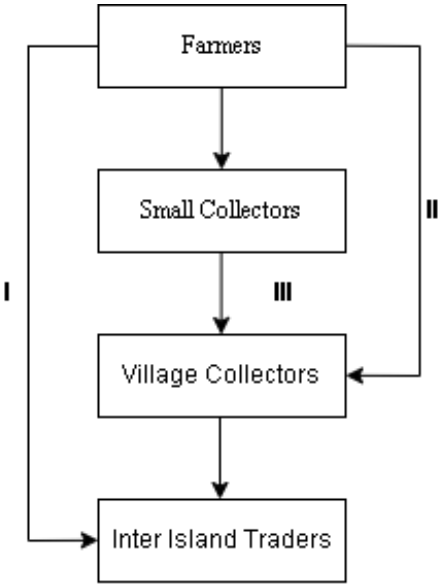

Figure 1. Marketing Chain

Cocoa marketing by 37 Meleko Bangkit farmers is divided into three marketing chains. In the first marketing chain, 14 farmers sell cocoa directly to inter-island traders. Farmers who sell cocoa through this first marketing chain are those who have access to locations relatively close to these traders. Next, in the second marketing chain, there are 17 farmers who sell cocoa to village collectors, who then sell it to inter-island traders. The third marketing chain involves more marketing institutions. In this chain, 6 farmers sell cocoa to small collectors, who then resell it to village collectors and pass it on to inter-island traders.

In the process of transporting cocoa beans through each marketing chain, there are activities and roles carried out by each actor so that they obtain added value from the functions they perform. Farmers, in this case, act as cocoa producers, small collectors collect cocoa beans from small-scale farmers, village collectors collect cocoa on a larger scale and also ensure the level of dryness. Inter-island traders then act as distributors of cocoa beans to factories and large-scale traders. Before selling

cocoa, inter-island traders first sort the beans based on quality, from water content to the separation of beans and impurities or drying residues.

Marketing Costs

In this study, marketing costs were calculated based on transportation costs, labor wages, and other costs such as the purchase of sacks for packaging. The results of the marketing cost calculations are presented in the following table:

Table 12. Marketing Costs

Marketing Channels	Marketing Institutions	Transportation Costs (Rp/kg)	Labor Costs (Rp/kg)	Other Costs (Rp/kg)	Total Marketing Costs (Rp/kg)
1	Manufacturer	481	0	50	531
	Inter-island trader	450	500	100	1.050
2	Manufacturer	283	0	50	333
	Village collector traders	150	250	100	500
	Inter-island trader	450	500	100	1.050
3	Manufacturer	347	0	50	397
	Small collector traders	250	0	100	350
	Village collector traders	200	250	100	550
	Inter-island trader	450	500	100	1.050

The table above shows that producers in each type of marketing chain do not bear labor costs. This is because producers sell their products independently using motorcycles. The highest marketing costs are borne by producers in the first channel, amounting to Rp. 531/kg. These high marketing costs are due to the fact that marketing intensity tends to be more frequent compared to farmers in other marketing chains. At the trader level, inter-island traders bear higher marketing costs than other marketing actors. This condition is due to the high volume of cocoa sold in a single shipment, which reaches 10 tons per week. In addition, the distance between islands and the labor required also influence the amount of marketing costs borne by inter-island traders.

Marketing Margin

Marketing margin is the difference between the price paid by consumers and the price received by producers (Najah et al., 2024). Marketing margin describes the amount of profit earned by marketing institutions in return for the marketing functions they perform. The results of the analysis of marketing margin can be seen in Table 13 as follows:

Table 13. Marketing Margin

Marketing Channel	Marketing Agency	Purchase Price (Rp/kg)	Selling Price (Rp/kg)	Marketing Margin (Rp/kg)
1	Manufacturer	-	84.000	-
	Inter-island trader	84.000	92.000	8.000
2	Manufacturer	-	83.059	-
	Village collector traders	83.059	87.000	3.941
	Inter-island trader	87.000	92.000	5.000
3	Manufacturer	-	83.000	-
	Small collector traders	83.000	85.000	2.000
	Village collector traders	85.000	87.000	2.000
	Inter-island trader	87.000	92.000	5.000

The highest marketing margin was found among inter-island traders at Rp8,000/kg, while the lowest margin of Rp2,000/kg was obtained by small collectors and village collectors in the third marketing chain. This margin difference occurs because inter-island traders have stronger bargaining power, as they have greater capabilities and capital. This allows them to determine the purchase price from local traders and farmers. Conversely, farmers and small traders are in a weak position in the marketing chain.

Farmer`s Share

The farmer's share is the portion received by farmers from the price paid by end consumers (Yunita & Noviar, 2021). The results of the calculations regarding the farmer's share can be seen in the following table:

Table 14. Farmer`s Share

Marketing Channel	Farmer Price (Rp/Kg)	Consumer Price (Rp/Kg)	Farmer`s Share (%)
1	84.000	92.000	91
2	83.059	92.000	90
3	83.000	92.000	90

Based on the table, it is known that the farmer's share obtained by farmers in the first channel is 91%, while in the second and third channels it is 90%. This difference shows that the first marketing channel gives farmers a higher proportion of the price compared to other channels, so that the farmer's share obtained by farmers is higher.

Overall, the proportion of value received by farmers in all marketing channels can be considered efficient because the farmer's share obtained by farmers is more than 50%, as stated (Megawati et al., 2022). If the portion received by farmers is <50%, it can be said that it is not yet efficient; conversely, if it is >50%, it can be said that the marketing carried out is efficient.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Cocoa Farming

In practice, the success of cocoa farming is greatly influenced by various factors that can either support or inhibit it, from the planting process to the marketing of the produce. The supporting and inhibiting factors in cocoa farming can be seen in the following table:

Table 15. Factors Supporting and Hindering Cocoa Farming

Aspect	Supporting Factors	Hindering Factors
Planting	Fertile soil conditions	Unpredictable seasonal changes
Maintenance	Regular pruning and weeding are carried out	Pest attacks and diseases
Production	Cocoa plants produce crops throughout the year	Declining productivity
Marketing	Selling prices are higher than those of other commodities	Selling prices are determined by buyers

Based on the research results presented, in terms of planting, fertile soil conditions are a major supporting factor in supporting cocoa plant growth. This is in line with the opinion of Prihantoro et al. (2024), who stated that fertile soil conditions provide sufficient nutrients for plant growth. However, unexpected seasonal changes are a hindering factor because they can disrupt planting patterns and water availability.

In terms of maintenance, regular pruning and weeding are cultivation practices that support increased productivity. However, pest and disease

attacks remain a significant obstacle. This problem is a serious obstacle because it can reduce productivity and even threaten the sustainability of crops. As stated (Hakkar et al., 2014), disease outbreaks such as fruit rot are one of the main obstacles that can affect the global cocoa production system.

In addition, in terms of production, cocoa plants that produce throughout the year are a supporting factor for farmers. This condition is in line with the opinion (Ichsan D.P and Irsal, 2013), which states that cocoa plants have the ability to produce sustainably. However, a limiting factor that arises is a decline in plant productivity as the plants age, thus requiring a plant rejuvenation program.

From a marketing perspective, the relatively high selling price of cocoa compared to other agricultural commodities is a supporting factor that encourages farmers to continue growing cocoa. On the other hand, the selling price, which is still determined by buyers, is a hindering factor for farmers. This condition reflects the weak bargaining position of farmers in the marketing chain.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research that has been conducted, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Cocoa farmers in KTH Meleko Bangkit plant at the beginning of the rainy season with irregular planting distances due to limited space in the agroforestry system. The most widely cultivated cocoa varieties are a mixture of Criollo, Forastero and Trinitario (38%), followed by a combination of Crillo and Forastero (35%), Forastero (22%) and Criollo (5%). In terms of maintenance, 65% of farmers routinely prune, 59% weed twice a month, and 51% use fertilizer, while only 22% of farmers use pesticides for pest and disease control. In terms of harvesting, 62% of farmers harvest regularly once a month, while the remaining 38% harvest irregularly, ranging from two to eight times a year. The average income of a farmer is IDR 17,717,901/year.
2. Farmers are divided into three marketing chains, where the first marketing chain involves farmers selling cocoa directly to inter-island traders. The second involves farmers selling cocoa to village collectors, who then resell it to inter-island traders. Third: farmers sell cocoa to small collectors, who then resell it to village collectors and on to inter-island traders.
3. The highest marketing costs are borne by inter-island traders at Rp1,050/kg, while the highest marketing costs at the producer level are incurred by farmers in the first marketing channel, amounting to Rp531/kg. Marketing margins differ across channels. In the first channel, the margin obtained by inter-island traders is Rp8,000/kg. In the second channel, the margin obtained by village collectors is Rp3,941/kg and by inter-island traders is Rp5,000/kg. Then, in the third channel, the margin obtained by small collectors is Rp2,000/kg, village collectors is Rp2,000/kg, and inter-island traders is Rp5,000/kg. This shows that the longer the marketing chain, the more the margin will be spread to many other actors.
4. The supporting factors for cocoa farming are fertile soil conditions, regular pruning and weeding, cocoa plants that produce throughout the year, and higher selling prices compared to other commodities. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors are seasonal changes, pest and disease attacks, declining productivity, and selling prices determined by buyers.

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