SECTION 9

Analysis of Critical Points in the Market Chain

Guiding questions

1. How can we identify the critical points that limit a market chain's development?
2. Is differentiating market chain actors and their opinions valid when we seek to identify the critical points? Why or why not?
3. If we identify differentiated critical points with market chain actors, how can we connect them later in the analysis?
4. Why is it important to identify not only the critical points, but also understand their causes and effects on the market chain?
5. Is it possible to connect various critical points along the market chain?
6. Once the critical points are identified, how can we use them to plan processes of innovation and market chain development?
7. Can we find critical points that influence the market chain more than others? What would happen if they were resolved? Could strategies to resolve these points lead to dramatic increases in market chain competitiveness?
8. Why is benchmarking important for understanding the limitations in the selected market chain?

Introduction

This section provides a method to identify critical points where the market chain faces internal or external limitations, analyze the causes and effects of these limitations, identify solutions for these bottlenecks, compare the market chain with the competition, and finally design a logical path towards increased market chain competitiveness.

All exercises described in this section will be carried out by groups of strategic actors previously identified by functional categories along the market chain. See Sections 7 and 8 for more information on the selection of strategic actors. An explanation of how to identify factors limiting competitiveness, how to analyze their causes and effects, and a way of translating limitations into opportunities follows. The process is explained graphically in Figure 13.

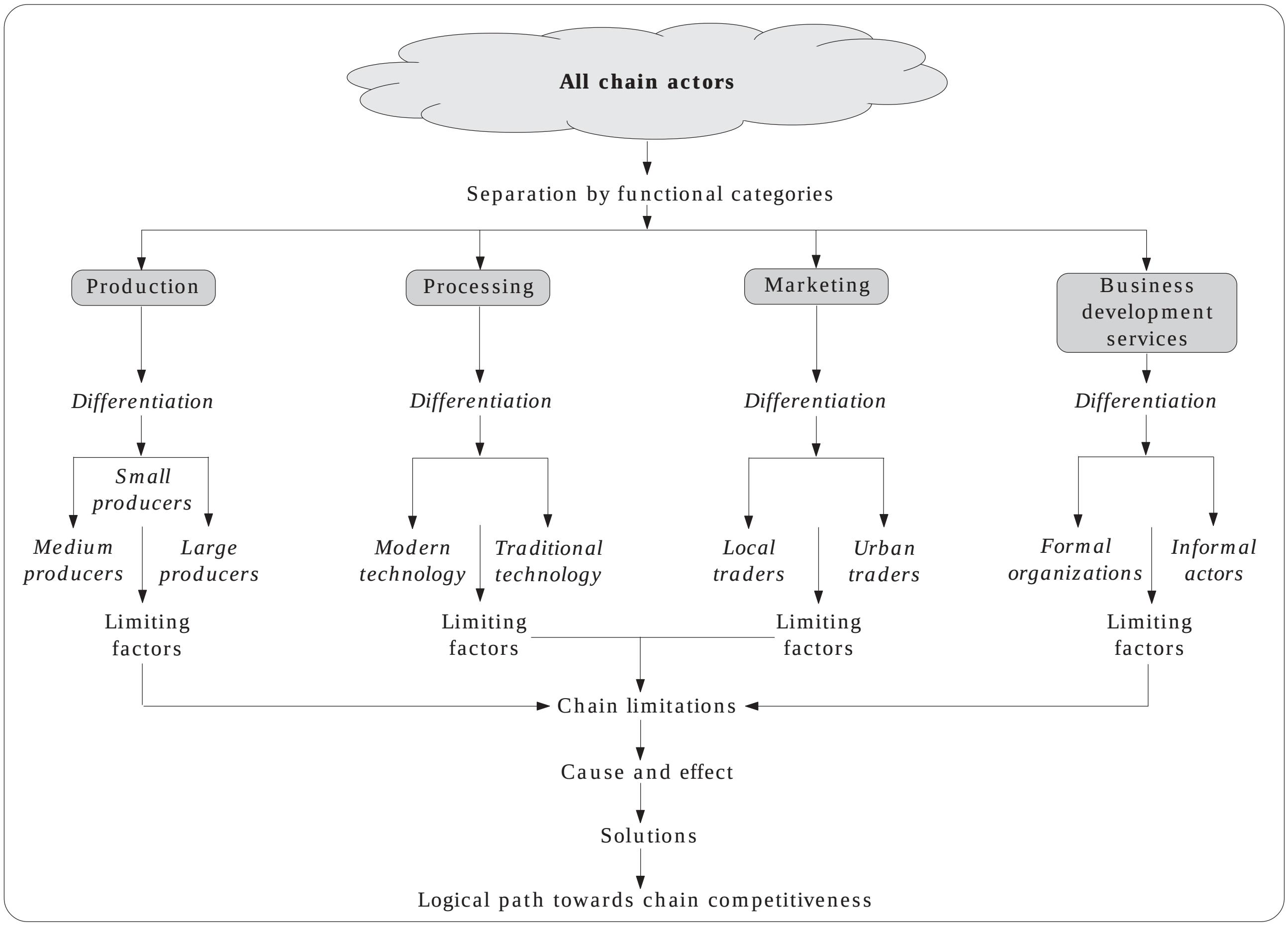

Figure 13. Analysis of critical points in the market chain.

Identification of Limiting Factors

This tool has two steps: (1) a brainstorming session focused on identifying existing limits in the system, both internal and external and (2) the selection of the most critical limitations. This exercise is carried out by actors grouped by functional category followed by a plenary session to share the results.

Brainstorming session

First, ask the group to identify the limits that they see as important in the market chain. Each idea should be written on a card according to the following rules: (a) one idea per card, (b) not more than three lines long, and (c) in big letters so that everyone can read the comments. (In groups where level of schooling is limited, drawings representing ideas can be used.)

Once the ideas have been collected and put onto cards (leave 15 to 20 minutes for this exercise), clarify ideas and find out if the card effectively conveys the idea of the author. Similar ideas should be grouped. Once ideas have been grouped, define the central ideas of the group in one phrase on a different colored card. This summary card is placed on top of the group of individual cards so that everyone can review whether or not the key ideas have been captured. At the end of this process (of 15 to 30 minutes), the final cards are placed on the wall where all participants can see them and read them out loud (see below for example).

Access to funds (credit for working capital and credit)	Access to inputs (lower production costs)
Training and technical assistance (in production)	Improvement of breeds
Improvement of pastures	Marketing

Prioritization of limitations

There are various ways of arranging the identified problems. If the group is relatively homogeneous in terms of participation (no single person dominates the group), and if the group has a limited number of problems (eight maximum), the pairwise ranking tool described below can be used. If there is a marked tendency for one or more persons to influence the decisions of the group or if there are large number of problems, it is better to opt for a secret vote to capture more clearly the opinion of the group and not just that of the most vocal members.

Pairwise ranking

A pair wise ranking process uses a matrix where the identified problems are placed in identical rows and columns as seen in the following example (Table 20).

Based on this example, work proceeds in the following fashion: (1) identical themes are not compared (access to funds against access to funds, for example) and each pair will be compared once only (for this reason only half the matrix will be filled in); (2) the facilitator asks, "between access to funds and access to inputs, which should be solved first?; (3) the group discusses the question in an attempt to reach a consensus; (4) the answer is written on the card and the group proceeds to the next pair of problems; (5) notes should be taken on the rationale behind the decision (for example, why are pastures more critical than access to funds). The logic behind the decisions is sometimes more illustrative than the decision itself. Depending on the group, this exercise takes between 30 and 45 minutes. At the end of the exercise you should have something similar to the following matrix (Table 21).

Next, each factor is scored based on the number of times it appears and assigned an order of priority according to this frequency. To clarify, explain to the participants that the votes received by each limitation will be counted, and thus determine which factor is

Table 20. Incomplete example of a pairwise ranking exercise.

Problems	Access to funds	Access to inputs	Training and technical assistance	Improvement of breeds	Pastures	Marketing
Access to funds						
Access to inputs						
Training and technical assistance						
Improvement of breeds						
Pastures						
Marketing						

Table 21. Complete example of a pairwise ranking exercise.

Problems	Access to funds	Access to inputs	Training and technical assistance	Improvement of breeds	Pastures	Marketing
Access to funds		Funds	Training	Funds	Pastures	Marketing
Access to inputs			Training	Improvement of breeds	Pastures	Marketing
Training and technical assistance				Training	Training	Training
Improvement of breeds					Pastures	Marketing
Pastures						Marketing
Marketing						

the most urgent to resolve. Table 22 shows the results of this scoring for the example being developed.

Consolidation of limitations

Once the factors are ranked by each group of actors, the results are shared in a plenary session. Each group explains its final ranking results, focusing on the rationale behind their decisions and why one factor is more important than the others. The facilitators should note limitations that are similar across groups, even if they use different terms to describe basically the same problem. If doubts or inconsistencies exist among the results, they can be clarified at this time.

At the end of the socialization process, a consolidated list of limiting factors is generated. At this time, similar or related limitations are grouped as in the brainstorming exercise. The rank assigned to each limitation by each group is also noted as shown in Table 23.

It is common for groups to rank limiting factors that are exclusive to them highly. Despite this, the facilitators should focus on identifying limitations that are valid along the whole market chain—such as marketing in the previous example—to highlight the relations between limiting factors in each link and the overall competitiveness of the market chain. At this point it is useful to refer to the market chain map and review which of the ranked limitations have causes and effects in more than one link.

Following this exercise, the most common or strategic limitations are identified amongst all the actors to be analyzed in more detail. The identification of common limitations is done by

Table 22. Final ranking of limitations.

Limitations	Frequency	Order of priority	Observations
Training and technical assistance	5	1	Notes on why each decision was made
Marketing	4	2	
Pastures	3	3	
Financial	2	4	
Improvement of breeds	1	5	
Purchase of inputs	0	6	

Table 23. Example of a consolidation of limitations in a market chain.

Limitations	Order of importance for each group		
	Producers	Processors	Support system
Training and technical assistance for milk production	1	-	6
Marketing (publicity, presentation, transport, suitability of sales points)	2	1	3
Pasture improvement (low yields)	3	-	8
Access to working capital and credit	4	-	4
Improvement of breeds (low performance)	5	-	8
Cost of inputs	6	-	-
Training and technical assistance in processing milk products	-	2	9
Weak organization and lack of internal regulations	-	3	1
Need to construct new infrastructure for the processing plant	-	4	-
Management of processing sub-products (whey and cream)	-	5	-
Requirements of team and machinery	-	6	-
Business capacity	-	-	2
Legal limitations	-	-	5
Deficient quality control	-	-	7

SOURCE: Authors' adaptation from the Workshop Formulación de Estrategia de Competitividad para Lácteos, Asociación de Empresarios Agroindustriales de la Sub-Cuenca del Río Cabuyal (ASERCA), 1999.

comparing the prioritized lists and seeking similar or related themes among the actors (the marketing example noted previously). In the case of strategic limitations, a wider discussion on market chain competitiveness is facilitated to identify the causes of the common limitations. This second process becomes easier as causes and effects of each limitation are analyzed, as described in the following section.

We recommend selecting between three and five common or strategic limitations to analyze. It is normal to find that many of the other limitations ranked by the different actors appear as causes or effects of one or more of the strategic limitations. By seeking common limitations to analyze, the focus of the group is squarely centered on finding solutions that benefit most actors, generate positive synergies along the market chain, and help solve other minor limitations that are specific to each functional category.

Analysis of Cause and Effect

As a result of the ranking exercises, a list of limitations is generated to analyze in greater detail. This list must be manageable (a maximum of five is a good rule of thumb), respond to the concerns of the actors, and should contain limitations whose solution generates benefits for more than one group of actors in the market chain. The common limitations can be worked on first among the actors in each segment of the chain, followed by those that have been identified as strategic among all participants. As the analysis of causes and effects advances, the multiple relationships between limitations will become clear (for example, some limitations are causes or effects of others), so that it is hardly ever necessary to work with more than five limitations.

This analysis is carried out using the technique of problems trees.

Problems trees to analyze limitations

A problem tree (or cause and effect analysis) includes the following steps:

1. Put the selected limitation half way down the workspace (paper, wall, floor), explaining clearly to participants the reasons why it was selected. Care must be taken in explaining the problem clearly—and achieving a consensus on this—since the validity of the analysis depends on a common understanding of the problem.
2. Ask participants about the causes. Questions should be structured in the following way: Why are there low yields, poor quality, and little supply planning of cassava roots? Each time that participants reply, the idea should be noted on the card and placed underneath the initial problem. Once the card is placed, the question is repeated—Why?—and the answer noted on a new card. The objective is to generate chains of causality to understand not only the central, visible problem, but also its causes. It is important to discuss and clarify as much as possible the diverse causes of each problem, and the relationships between problems. Normally, analysis is continued to the second level of causality, although this work can extend—or deepen—to provide greater analysis of a particular point if necessary.

Once the causes of the limitation are analyzed, the facilitator initiates the analysis of the effects using the phrase: What are the effects or results of this limitation? The effects analysis then follows the same logic as described above. For effects, analysis is also carried through to the second level of effects. If the facilitator wishes to analyze the links between the limitation and wider themes—livelihoods, for example—the analysis can be amplified further.

At the end of the exercise, a much clearer idea should be held about the real causes of the problems, their effects, and how to enter to improve the situation (Figure 14).

Once relevant problems trees have been defined for the selected limitations, the next step is to identify the relationships between limitations. As noted previously, it is common to find that some limitations are in fact causes or effects of others.

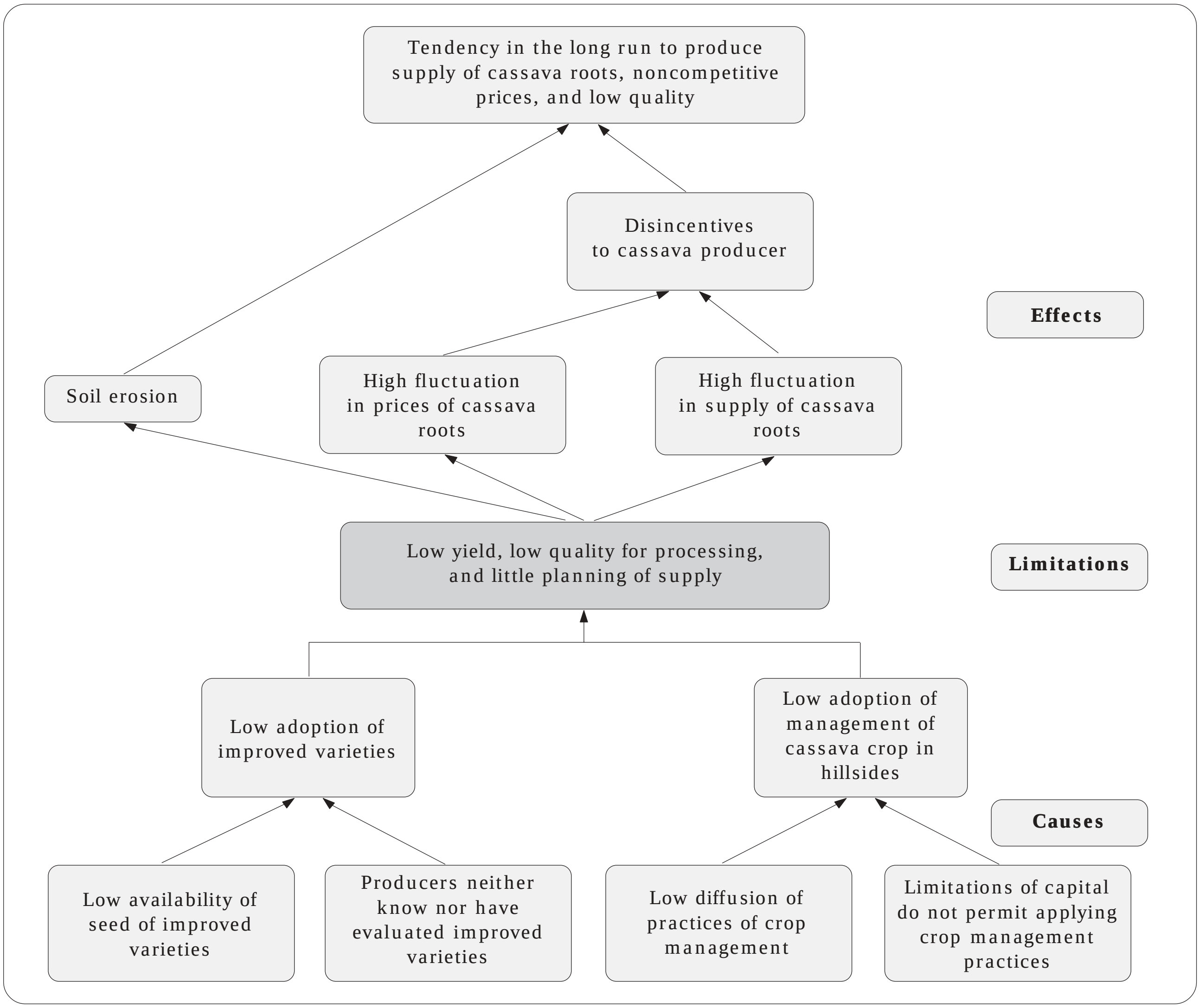

Figure 14. Example of a problem tree.

General problem tree for the market chain

Based on the problem trees for selected limitations, a general tree is constructed to represent the difficulties facing the market chain at the time of analysis. The level of detail in this final tree can be less than in the specific trees. The goal is to link all the trees in a logical fashion. Normally, the sum of market chain limitations adds up to low levels of competitiveness, but on occasions some limitations may actually be effects of others.

When constructing an overall cause and effect analysis for the market chain, facilitators must clearly identify the logical relations between causes and effects that appear in the tree. Equally, it is important to review the relations between levels of causes and effects so that the more profound causes are clearly related, and if possible causally linked, with the identified limitations. If this process is carried out effectively, it provides a solid starting point to identify possible solutions to the market chain's limitations.

Figure 15 shows an example of a general problems tree for a market chain. The limitations with a shaded background are those that were analyzed in the specific trees.

This analysis clearly identified the principal causes of the market chain's low competitiveness and the effects of this on producer livelihoods. In this case, the problem tree was generated by chicken producers, and thus reflects their viewpoint more than that of other chain members. A more complete example for the market chain for plantain in the Dominican Republic is shown in Figure 16.

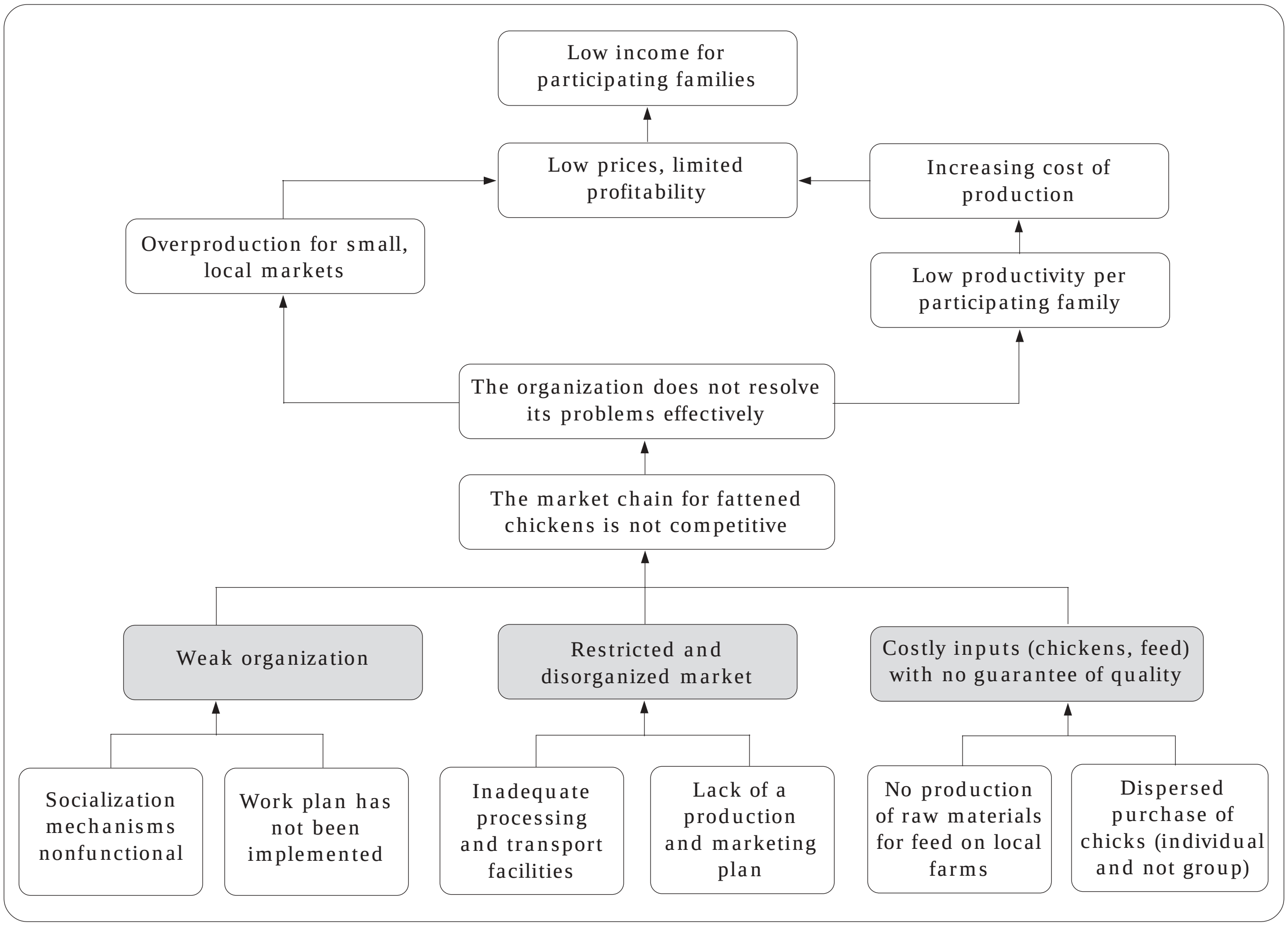

Figure 15. Simple example of a general problem tree for a market chain.

SOURCE: Authors' adaptation from the Proyecto Productivo Integrado (PPI) for chicken rearing, Asociación de Productores y Expendidores de Pollos del Norte de Cauca (ASOPROEX), and Corporación para Estudios Interdisciplinarios y Asesoría Técnica (CETEC), Colombia, 2001.

From limitations to solutions

In addition to providing a more profound understanding of the challenges within a market chain, problem trees can be useful for identifying possible solutions. Causes can be translated into objectives or activities of a project with the central limitation as the general objective, while effects become either indicators of progress or impact. Figure 17 explains this process.

If the problem tree has been carefully constructed—with clear logical links between the different levels—this process should be relatively simple. If it is difficult to translate problems into objectives, the tree's logic should be revised to find gaps or inconsistencies.

To facilitate this exercise, the participants should work to transform the negative points form the problem tree into a positive expression that is placed in the solution tree (Figure 18). It is easier to begin with the central limitation and move downwards (that is to say, change the causes into specific objectives or into activities), and then repeat the process upwards translating direct effects into progress and impact indicators. Given that most market chains contribute to economic aspects of livelihoods, it is difficult to maintain total causality at this step. If we need to know specifically how much a market chain contributes to a particular livelihood strategy, this requires further analysis with market chain participants and the use of complementary livelihood analysis tools.

Comparing the Market Chain to the Competition—"Benchmarking"

Before moving to the design of a strategy to increase competitiveness, it is useful at this stage to compare key competitive aspects of our market chain with other similar market chains. This process is known as benchmarking. The

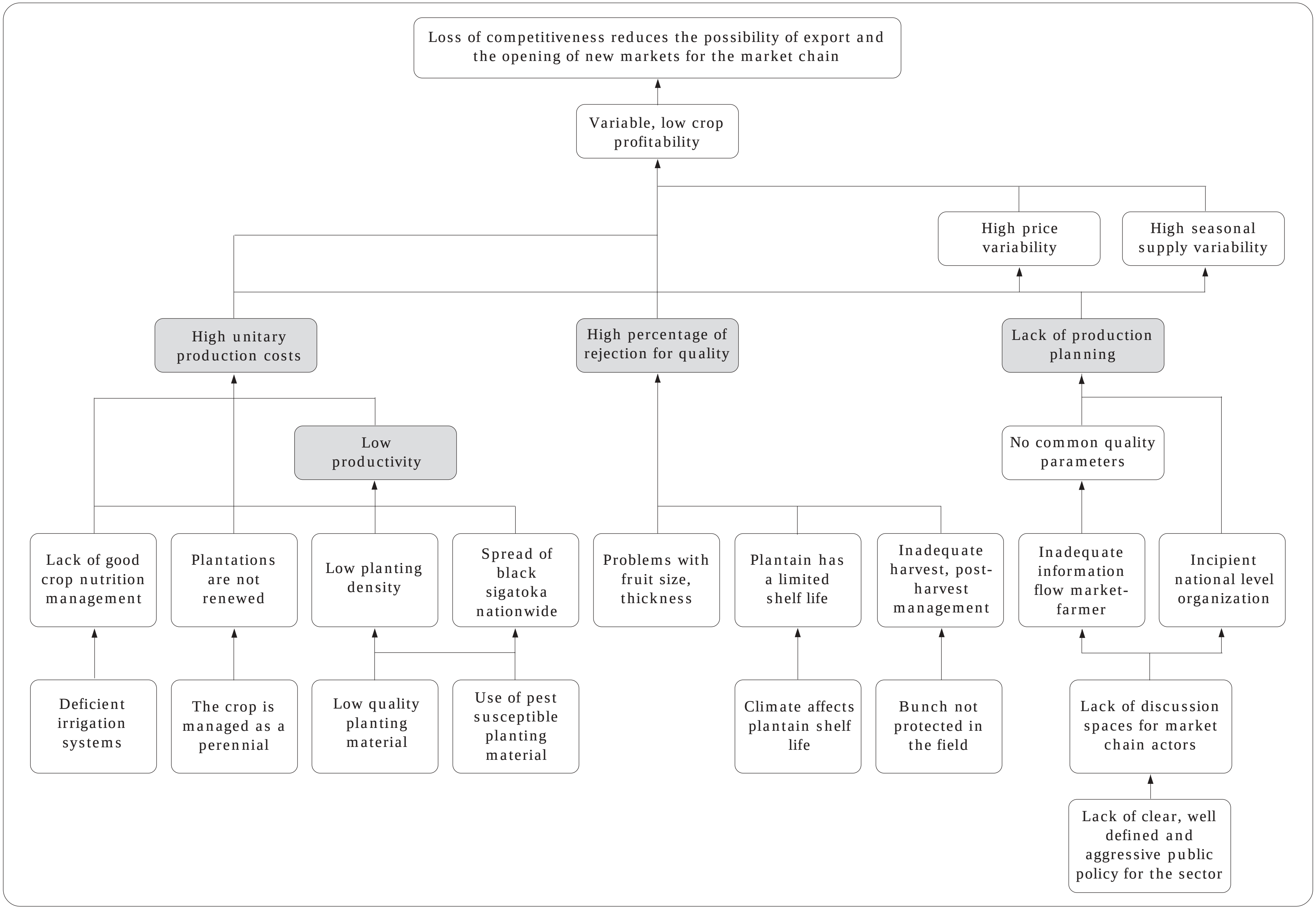

Figure 16. Complete example of a general problem tree for a market chain.

SOURCE: Authors' adaptation from field work in the Dominican Republic by the Public Private Partnerships for Agroindustrial Research Project implemented by ISNAR and CIAT and supported by BMZ, Germany.

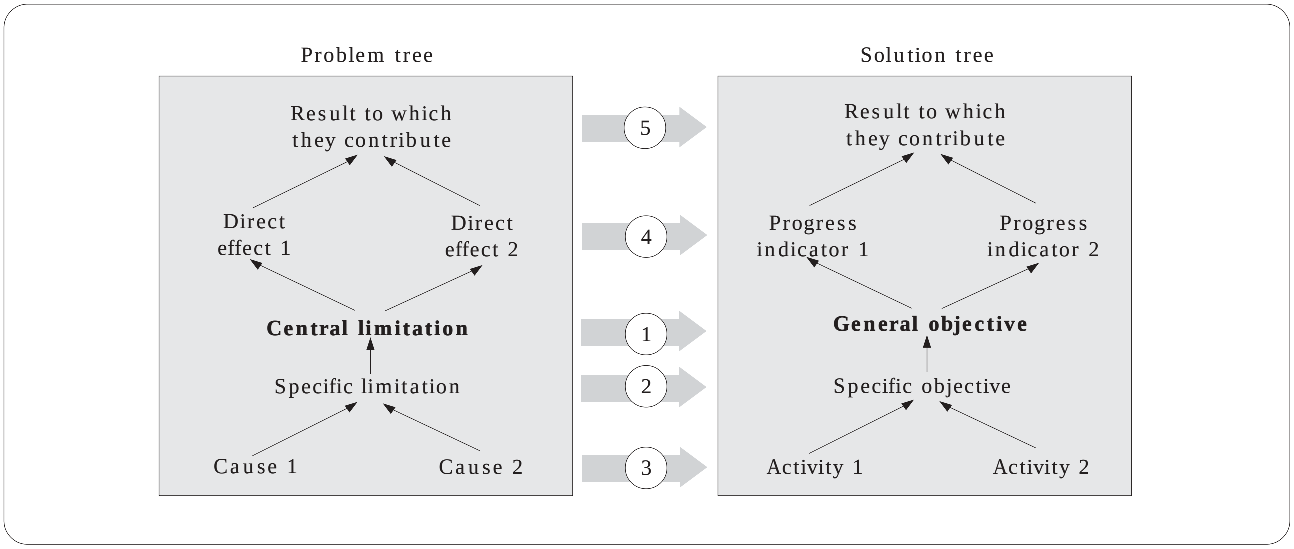

Figure 17. Using a problem tree to identify solutions.

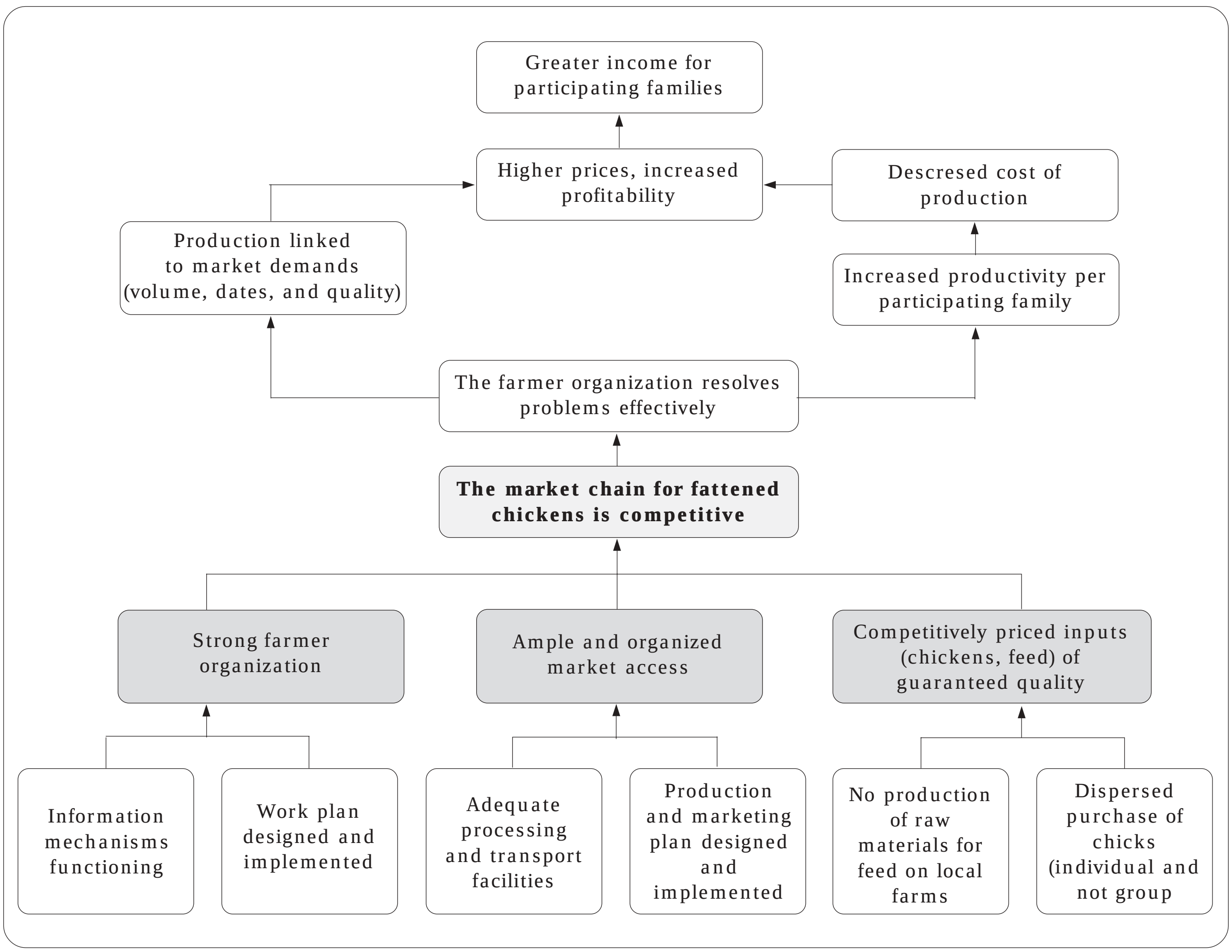

Figure 18. Example of a solution tree.

SOURCE: Authors' adaptation from the Proyecto Productivo Integrado (PPI) of rural chickens, Asociación de Productores y Expendidores de Pollos del Norte de Cauca (ASOPROEX), and Corporación para Estudios Interdisciplinarios y Asesoría Técnica (CETEC), Colombia, 2001.

market chains selected for comparison may be direct competitors—i.e., in the same markets or market segments—or indirect competitors—i.e., in other markets or market segments. If a similar market chain serving a more attractive market segment can be found, this is a good point of reference, as it can show market chain actors how close or far they are from being able to enter a potentially more lucrative market segment. If no such market chain exists, comparing key competitive variables with the direct competition is useful.

Key competitive variables to keep in mind for this analysis include[30]:

- Access to key markets (distance, road links, communication).
- Product quality.
- Product quantity.
- Productivity and technology employed.
- Production costs or sales price.
- Product presentation or packaging.
- Distribution channels.
- Production peaks and shortages throughout the year.
- Brand or product image.
- Associated services.

Information for this exercise is best gathered by organizing cross-visits to competing market chains by the market chain actors. Prior to these visits, the market chain actors should develop simple questionnaires that allow them to quickly gather impressions on key competitive variables in a systematic fashion. At the end of the visit, a short meeting to document and share the findings should be held. Information obtained can be organized in a simple table (Table 24).

Prospective Market Tendencies and Defining a Simple Marketing Strategy[31]

Prior to designing a strategy to increase the competitiveness of our market chain, it is important to analyze the competitive potential of our chain. This process is known as a prospective market analysis. Such a process helps clarify the marketing strategy or strategies most suited to our chain as well as identify the need for specific strategic activities to increase our chance of success. A useful starting point for this analysis is the identification and characterization of existing markets for existing products from our market chain. Much relevant information has already been gathered in the rapid market survey (see Section 6) and can be reviewed here. In addition to existing products and markets, we should also examine potential new markets, the opportunity for new product development, and the potential to diversity towards new products and markets. The Ansoff matrix presented in Section 5 is a useful to organize this analysis.

While this tool was initially developed to classify the diverse growth alternatives for individual firms, it can also be used to facilitate an analysis of a combination of actors linked along a market chain. In this sense, the market chain replaces the product or individual firm in the

30. Adapted from Van der Heyden and Camacho (2004), p. 57.

31. Adapted from the Public Private Partnerships for Agroindustrial Research Project implemented by ISNAR and CIAT and supported by BMZ, Germany.

Table 24. Simple benchmarking tool.

Competitive variables	Current situation in our market chain	Competing market chain 1	Competing market chain 2
Market access			
Product quality			
Product quantity			
Productivity and technology employed			
Production costs/sales price			
Product presentation			
Distribution channels			
Production peaks or valleys			
Brand or product image			
Associated services			

original analysis. For our purposes, the strategies contained in matrix may be defined in the following way:

1. *Market penetration*
Assess if, in the medium term, we can increase sales of products from our market chain to existing market segments, without changing the product we offer.

2. *Market development*
Identify new market segments for existing products from the market chain. Examples include expanding into new geographical areas (from provincial markets to the capital city) or selling to new segments of the population who do not currently consume products from our market chain but could potentially do so in the future.

3. *Product development*
Detect opportunities for new or modified products from the market chain for existing clients and market segments. Examples include product differentiation through new packaging, brands, or additional processing, among others.

4. *Diversification*
Detect opportunities for new products for new clients or markets.

In a prospective market analysis we should consider alternatives in all four quadrants of the matrix, while bearing in mind that the relative risk increases as we move from a relatively simple strategy of market penetration to a complex one of diversification. The level of risk that the chain actors are willing and able to assume should guide the final selection of marketing strategies.

To develop this analysis, the service provider, in collaboration with chain actors, identifies the level of risk that the market chain can assume over the next 5 years. Based on this risk assessment, a basket of potential strategies (quadrants) can be selected and compared. It is likely that the market chain actors will opt for a mixed approach, including more than one strategy to reduce risk while leaving the door open for greater returns.

To facilitate this exercise the following questions are useful:

- What is the growth potential of the existing markets, products and sub-products from the market chain? What do we need to take full advantage of this potential?
- What new markets, products, or sub-products from the market chain show the greatest potential for growth? What are the requirements (quality, packaging, minimum volumes, etc.) for these new markets? Can the products or sub-products from our market chain compete in these markets? What are the technical and financial implications of competing in these markets?
- In what markets, products, or sub-products is there unmet demand?
- In which markets, products, or sub-products does the area have competitive advantages? How can we capitalize on these advantages?

The output from this analysis is a list of possible future opportunities in new and potential markets and products for the market chain with their respective requirements. Table 25 shows an example for the mango market chain in Ecuador.

Once all the potential opportunities for market penetration, market development, new product development and, if applicable, diversification are listed, the service provider and the chain actors select those that are of most interest to them. For these opportunities, care should be taken to characterize in greater detail both the market potential as well as the technical and financial requirements necessary to take advantage of this potential. In some cases, it may be necessary to enlist the support of external market experts to provide additional information about these issues, especially if the markets in question are global.

The final result of this exercise is a table listing the products, markets, and requirements for each opportunity selected. A partial example is shown in Table 26. Once this exercise is completed, the service provider and chain actors are ready to design a local path to increase the competitiveness of the market chain.

Designing a Logical Path to Increase Competitiveness

With a general solution tree, a simple benchmarking exercise to review competitive or alternative options, and an initial marketing strategy for the market chain the group is ready to design a strategy to increase competitiveness.

Table 25. Market strategy opportunities for mango market chain of Ecuador.

	Existing products	New markets
Existing markets	• Fresh mango without hydrothermal treatment in Europe, Canada, Colombia, and the national market. • Fresh mango with hydrothermal treatment in Chile, Mexico, and USA. • Mango pulps and juices.	• Fresh mango with hydrothermal treatment in Japan and China. • Mango pulps and juices.
New products	• 100% natural mango juices with no water added and less viscosity. • Clarified or carbonated 100% natural mango juice. • Mango pulp with antioxidant properties and increased carotene content. • Dried mango, mango chips, pickled mango. • Mango slices in clarified juices. • Carotene extracts.	

Table 26. Market opportunities and requirements for broccoli in Ecuador.

Product	Existing market(s)	Potential market(s)	Requirements
Frozen broccoli	• USA. • Canada (low export volume, good potential for growth). • European Union (Germany, Italy, United Kingdom most important). • Japan.	• France. • Southern zone countries (e.g., Brazil imports from Belgium). • Asia (non-producing countries like Malaysia). • Eastern Europe (especially Russia).	• To enter other European countries, new presentations, and additional value adding is needed. • The difficulty with Brazil is the need for exclusive containers for broccoli. One option is via Manaus. • Entering Asia may be difficult with China and India, although China has pest and pesticide residue problems.
Fresh broccoli	• National market	• USA. • Europe. • Andean Region (specifically Colombia and Venezuela).	• The national market is small and requires promotional strategies. • Additional work is needed on conservation techniques in containers. • Changes needed in harvest and post-harvest practices (bacteriological control, rapid temperature reduction).

A useful first step at this stage is the design of a logical path. A logical path is nothing more than the organization of the specific objectives in chronological order, plus the definition of a common vision of the future for the market chain. Why is this step important? Principally because one or more of the specific objectives facilitates, drives or is a prerequisite for other more complex changes planned for the market chain. A logical path helps build consensus focus limited resources to achieve the greatest possible impact in the shortest amount of time.

The facilitation of this process is an exercise in logic. Based on the general solution tree, the general objective is defined and the specific objectives are placed on cards and read out to remind participants. Next, the central limitation is placed at the left end of the workspace and the general objective at the right, thus showing both where we are and where we hope to end up. The participants are then asked to define in few words both extremes bearing in mind the results of the benchmarking study.

Visioning—Where Do We Want to Go and How Do We Get There?

How can we describe our current situation? How can we describe where we hope to arrive?

These ideas are noted on cards and placed below each extreme. At this point, it is recommended to focus more on the right-hand extreme—commonly known as the **vision**—to clearly define a desired future for the market chain. The vision can be a few lines or a paragraph, what is important is to pick up the feelings of the participants, place them in a concrete timeframe (within 5 years, for example), and define measurable or verifiable changes. Depending on the size of the group, it can be useful to work initially in subgroups, with each subgroup responsible for generating some words or short key phrases for the market chain's future. Then the facilitators collect all the contributions and construct a shared future vision.

Once the two extremes are clear, the specific objectives from the objective tree are reviewed to identify a logical order for their implementation. Facilitators can use phrases such as "starting from where we are now we hope to reach our desired future in 5 years by achieving the following objectives..."

The following questions tend to generate debate amongst the participants.

- Which one or ones come first?
- Is there one or several objectives whose achievement would leverage important changes in the others?
- Are there objectives that depend on others?
- Where do we begin, and why?

In our experience, at the end of the debate, one or two objectives with the potential to catalyze change tend to emerge. These specific objectives are placed a little to the right of the central limitation previously identified.

The process continues with the placement of other specific objectives in a logical pattern flowing from right to left until all the specific objectives have been placed between the two ends (see Figure 19).

Once the objectives are logically organized, activities and results are defined for each objective. At this stage, the logical path clearly identifies the key entry point or points followed by additional linked objectives to guide the market chain to the desired future (Figure 20).

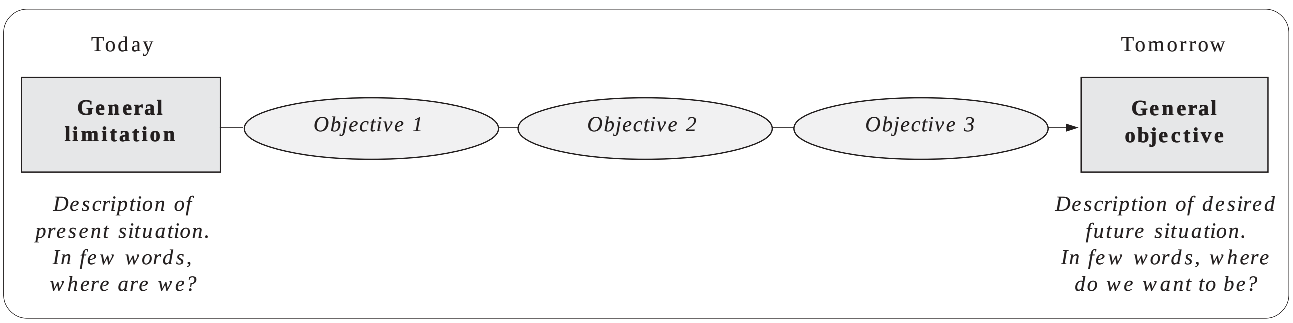

Figure 19. Definition of a logical path.

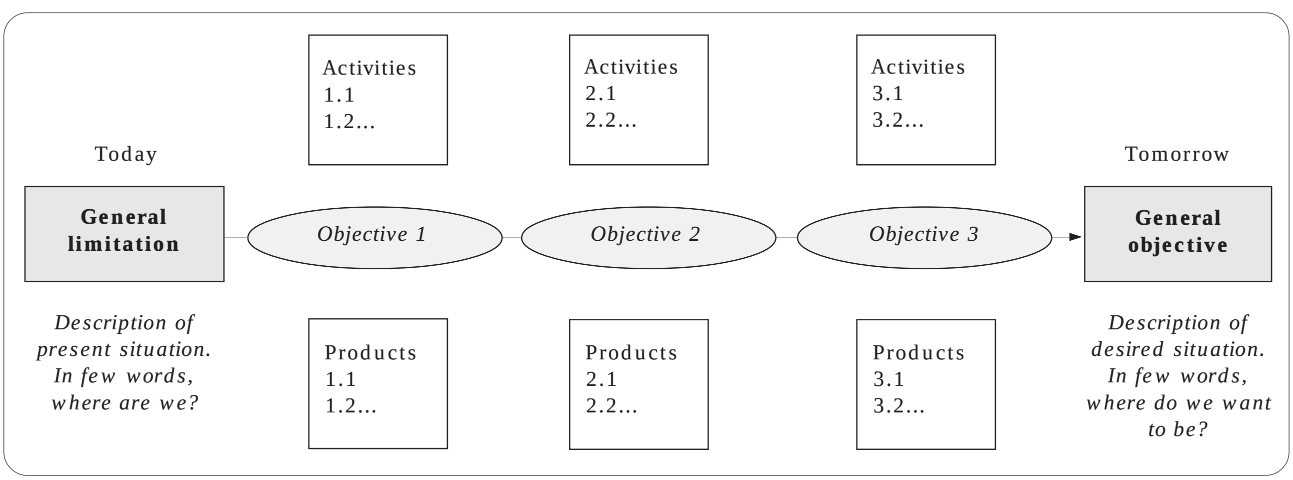

Figure 20. Complete simple logical path with actions and results.

In most cases, reality is much less logical and linear than Figure 15. In these cases, the logical path can be represented with diverse parallel objectives that are necessary prerequisites for others further ahead. The objective of this exercise is to visually chart a future course that is understood by all participants in the strategy to increase competitiveness. An example of a more complete version of a logical path appears in Figure 21.

An example of a logical path is shown in Figure 22.

Preparation of Business Plans

To facilitate the implementation of the logical path, the development of simple investment plans for each objective is recommended. These plans should, for each objective: (a) clearly state the projected activities and expected outcomes in this area; (b) provide a solid estimate of the financial requirements and expected returns on this investment; (c) outline an assessment of the risks entailed in work on this topic; and (d) contain a timeframe for implementation. The final investment plan should be concise—about 5 pages is a good rule of thumb—and include sufficient information to assess the relative costs and benefits of intervening or not in this area of the market chain.

Inputs for this investment plan come from the logical path (each objective becomes the center of an investment plan) as well as from other information gathered during the analysis of the market chain. In addition to this information, the preparation of short investment plans requires that the service provider and market chain actors review the cost and expected benefits of intervening in the chain at the selected point, assess the potential risks of this intervention, and develop a timeframe for this work. The following steps can facilitate this process:

1. Service provider and market chain actors review each objective of the logical path and their respective activities and products. If

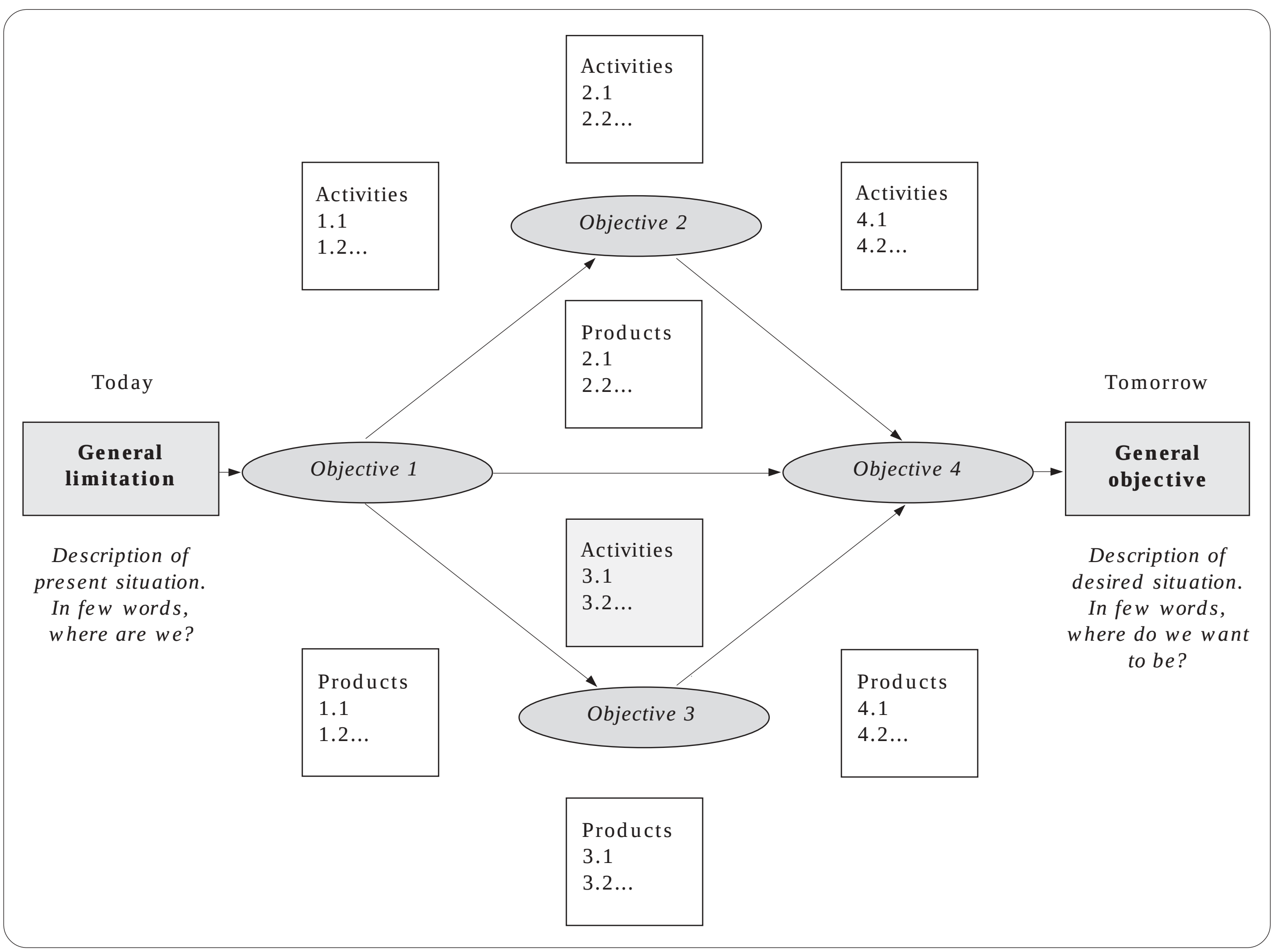

Figure 21. Complete logical path with parallel actions and results.

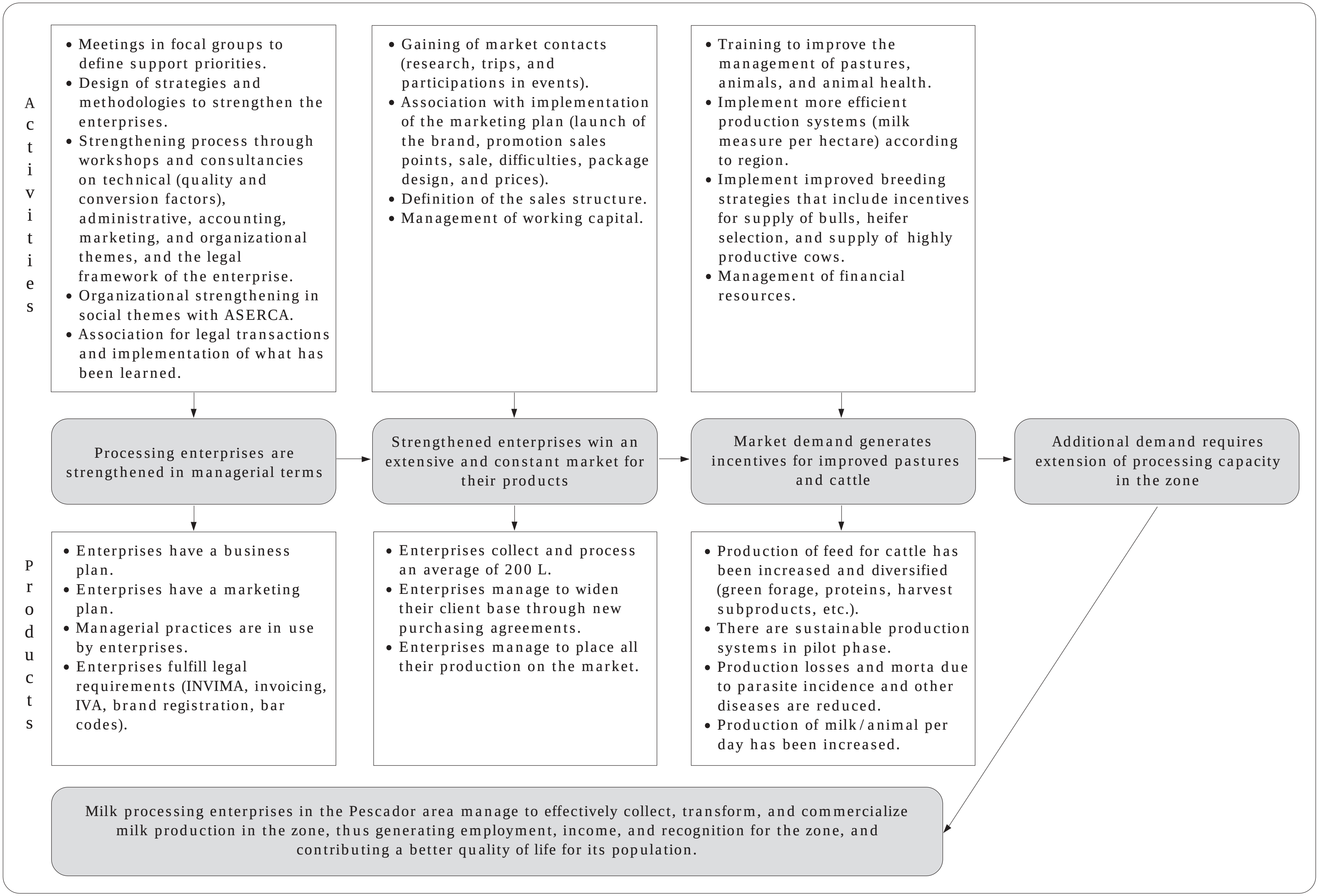

Figure 22. Example of a logical path for a strategy to increase competitiveness.

these are judged appropriate they are adopted as the projected activities and outcomes for the objective.

2. Activities are listed in chronological fashion—what comes first and what comes later—and costs assigned to each. Assigned costs should be as accurate and honest as possible with the information available, as they will provide an important point of analysis once outcomes and expected benefits are included.
3. Expected outcomes and benefits are reviewed for each objective to assure that they can be met with the proposed activities and financial resources. For each objective, the service provider should estimate the return on investment by quantifying the proposed outcomes or benefits and comparing that figure with the sum of the required investments. The return on investment usually has a longer timeframe than the investment plan but, as a rule of thumb, should not exceed 5 years[32].
4. Costs and benefits are compared to assess the relative return for the planned investments in each objective.
5. Information generated in this exercise is documented and the short investment plans prepared as inputs for the final strategy.

32. The participation of an accountant or someone versed in simple financial analysis using Excel is recommended at this stage, especially if no one in the support organization of chain actors has experience in this kind of calculations.

In our experience, the development of specific investment plans can be assigned to groups of market chain actors and staff from the service provider as an activity to develop between the end of the workshop on the logical path and prior to the final negotiation session with all chain actors. In this case, a space of 2 weeks should be sufficient to develop a business plan for each objective of the logical path. These plans may be shared as soon as available but, in any case, will be presented and discussed at the final session with all market chain actors. For an example of the format for a business plan, see Appendix 3.

In this section we have explained how to carry out an analysis of critical points, from their identification to their translation into objectives, and their inclusion in a logical path to increase the market chain's competitiveness. In addition we have presented simple exercises to assess the competitive position of the market chain with regard to similar market chains and select marketing positions to build on or strengthen the competitive position of the market chain. With the logical path and investment plans in hand, the facilitating organization is ready to systematize all the information generated up to now and share it with the market chain actors. Based on this information, discussions will be facilitated, decisions made, and resources committed to strengthen the market chain. The next section explains how to facilitate the negotiating process between the actors and design the final strategy.