



**Universidad del Azuay**

**Faculty of Legal Sciences**

**School of International Studies**

**Generation of an International Commercialization Proposal for the Asociación  
Agropecuaria-Artesanal de Productores Orgánicos Cuencas del Río Mayo,  
ACRIM, through the promotion of its page <http://www.acrim.org.ec>**

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## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated, mainly, to my parents and brothers who have been my unconditional support in this path, for having inspired me and motivated me to complete a new stage in my life.

*Cristina Quezada*

## **Acknowledgments**

I am infinitely grateful to God for being my fundamental pillar and for being the one who has guided me along this path.

To my parents and my siblings because of always trusting me and never leaving me alone. To my parents because of teaching me little by little, with patience how to fight and face life's problems, for loving me and giving me the support I needed to complete this stage, my eternal gratitude to the most important people in my life.

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## **Abstract**

In today's world the internet has become an indispensable tool for the majority of the population, they communicate, browse and market through this tool, which is why e-commerce has increasingly replaced the traditional physical purchase-sale. This has also been a key tool at the time of internationalizing a product, brand or service. However, the internationalization process is easier for large enterprises that have experience in the field of exports, but micro, small and medium enterprises do not have the same opportunities when making their product known abroad. For this reason, this degree work aims to be a guide for MSMEs which wish to venture into e-commerce, as a tool to internationalize, through the creation of an online store, and its promotion and positioning through digital marketing strategies. For this purpose, a small association located in Zamora Chinchipe called Asociación Agropecuaria-Artesanal de Productores Orgánicos Cuencas del Río Mayo (ACRIM) was taken as a case study, in order to propose the adaptation of its website in such a way that it also works as an online store. In the first chapter the normative body will be analyzed to understand the current situation of the country. In the second chapter there will be more about the association. Finally, the third chapter will show the process for the association to adapt its website and function as an online store, and the digital marketing strategies necessary for its positioning.

## **Introduction**

The efforts of the Ecuadorian Government for replacing importations with national products through the strengthening of national industry have been intensified. Since the change in the productive matrix, which is part of the National Plan for Good Living, has been announced, efforts have been made to promote national production, by implementing more and more programs that facilitate the production process for the companies as well as the commercialization process.

The objective of the government, with this law, is not only to have more production but also to reach the international market, to increase participation of Ecuadorian products worldwide, to augment national incomes, thus, improving the national economy and every citizen's economy. Nevertheless, it is noticeable that, for several years, huge companies monopolize Ecuadorian exportations; such enterprises export traditional products like shrimp, bananas, flowers and cacao tree fruit. These source materials generate the highest income in the Ecuadorian commerce balance. In this situation, is there an opportunity for those small companies that want to internationalize themselves?

MSMEs do not have a mass production, hindering the exportation process, since many times they only count with the basic stock to supply the national market. In virtue of this, the most recommended and specific option for this type of companies to internationalize themselves is electronic commerce since, nowadays, the internet is the most used E-tool to execute any kind of transaction, including commercial ones allowing E-commerce to become the most efficient and viable option for international trade.

Because of this I want to develop a commercialization plan for an Ecuadorian Association of Coffee and Other Products, such as banana, cassava, carrot, etc. The plantation is located in the province of Zamora Chinchipe and I am going to promote it through the creation and promotion of an on-line store which allows announcement to publicize the products, with their unique brand, reaching national and international market. The objective of this graduation project is that both the on-line store and digital

marketing strategies are fully adapted to necessities and conditions of the association. Besides, this work will give guidelines to other associations or micro, small and medium enterprises that need to explore Electronic Commerce.

The first chapter is based on an analysis of the Ecuadorian regulatory framework, in order to know a little bit more about what is happening right now in Ecuador with respect to furtherance in the increase of commercialization. In this manner, first, we will analyze the National Plan For Good Living and its objective related to the Change of the Productive Matrix, since diverse state projects are being implemented considering this Regulation; likewise we will study the Organic Code Of Production, Commerce and Investments and the law which regulates Electronic commerce in Ecuador, as well, in such manner, we will be able to know the guidelines to be followed in order to implement E-commerce.

In the second chapter, there will be more information about the association under study. Knowing more about the history of it, the portfolio of products offered, the production process that takes place, among other important points of the Asociación Agropecuaria-Artesanal de Productores Orgánicos Cuencas del Río Mayo (ACRIM). Also a little more will be known about the Bracamoros Fair organized by two associations of Zamora, one of them ACRIM by which it has been possible to establish contact with international customers.

Finally, the third chapter is based on the marketing and positioning plan for the association, trying to fulfill all the company needs. Here we will present the different elements needed for the creation of an online store, the ordering and distribution to be used and the shipping agency in charge of this process both nationally and internationally; also, we will know the way of payment, electronic invoicing and refunds processes. At the end, we will analyze digital marketing strategies that will be implemented to publicize the on-line store and every product to be offered with the special objective of gaining commerce traffic and positioning globally.

## **CHAPTER 1: ECUADOR'S CURRENT SITUATION**

### **Introduction**

In order to understand the current situation in Ecuador and the changes to be reached for improving it, it is important we know some relevant aspects about our country's laws and regulations. In this chapter we will study the National Plan for Good Living, which was initiated recently for improving Ecuadorian society and the whole nation.

Moreover, I examine one of the most important objectives of this plan because it seeks to improve the National Economy. Such objective exists in the Productive Matrix. Also, we will analyze, briefly, the Organic Code of Production, Commerce and Investments, as a normative body to comprehend economic and social policies to be executed in order to achieve national development.

Once we have understood recent changes and final objectives with respect to the Ecuadorian economic environment, we will analyze MSMEs and Associations in Ecuador: how they have emerged during recent years through the support they receive; we will study their respective regulations too. This is very important, since my graduation project seeks to strengthen national industry by helping and supporting these enterprises in order to increase the percentage of national exportations and incomes in our Ecuador. Finally, I analyze the situation of Electronic Commerce in Ecuador: its whole evolution process, its importance and how it is the best promotion tool for companies to introduce their products in the international market. In this sense, we will be able to know the best features needed to take the major advantage of this global tool, in such way clients and companies can execute safer transactions. Besides, we will introduce the law that regulates E-commerce in Ecuador and the specific entities we should analyze.

We must have a clear idea of these issues for helping ACRIM Association to enhance the promotion of both products and the Association as well, in Ecuador and globally. ACRIM will perform its trade activities by accessing through E-Commerce.

## **Analysis of the National Plan for Good Living**

### **Definition**

The National Plan for Good Living is a document that serves as a guide, which includes very clear guidelines with twelve objectives, showing the appropriate route for reaching the best performance in every labor or activity. The PNBV<sup>1</sup> was developed by the government of the Citizen Revolution, which was in charge of our country from 2007. This Plan was developed in the government program of the last presidential term of Rafael Correa, 2013-2017.

"Good Living is a social mobilizing idea that goes beyond the concept of Development -it is in force in the Western tradition- because it is associated to a broader progress notion. It is not a new development paradigm, but a social, liberating alternative that proposes other priorities for social organization, different than the simple economic growth implicit in the Development paradigm". (Senplades, 2013, p.16)

We notice this Plan focuses not only on the economic interests of Ecuador, but also on interests of our population and on the rights that everyone has to live in a healthy environment; for this, it is very important to defend and to protect the rights of nature. As the PNBV document mentions, "these rights were enshrined in our Constitution of 2008, which also made Ecuador a benchmark, for being the first nation on the planet that recognizes the rights of nature inside its constitutional framework."(Senplades, 2013, page 16)

The Plan has some objectives that seek to continue with the historical transformation of Ecuador. In this sense we need to eradicate neoliberalism in order to reach Good Living Socialism. Regarding this Edgar Morin, political scientist and thinker, says:

"I must recognize my full intellectual convergence with the National Plan for Good Living, through which I identify many concerns and sensitivities that

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<sup>1</sup> PNBV: Acronym for National Plan for Good Living in Spanish.

encourage me after decades: the necessity of linking political, economic, social, territorial and sustainability spheres ..., for developing more inclusive policies, better adapted to the reality of our modern era ". (Senplades, 2013, page 21)

In summary, the intention of the PNBV 2013-2017 is to achieve Good Living for the entire Ecuadorian community from now and into the future. The *Sumak Kawsay*<sup>2</sup> Concept is also very important to study because its main aims are to strengthen social union, community values, and participation of all individuals and collectivities in order to build their own destiny. Respect and equity to national ecosystems' diversity are essential to keep developing a balance between environment and human beings.

### **Structure**

The National Plan for Good Living is composed of twelve clear and concrete objectives necessary to achieve Good Living. These objectives are organized into three fundamental axes: "1) change in power relations for construction of popular power; 2) rights, liberties and capacities for Good Living; and 3) economic-productive transformation from a change of productive matrix "(Senplades, 2013, page 80) The 12 main objectives are shown below:

1. To consolidate democratic State and construction of popular power.
2. To sponsor equality, cohesion, inclusion; and social/territorial equity in diversity.
3. To improve the population's life quality.
4. To strengthen capacities and potentialities of citizens and citizenship.
5. To create spaces for common meetings and to strengthen national identity, diverse identities, plurinationality, interdependence and interculturality.
6. To consolidate transformation of justice and to fortify integral security, by a strict and total respect of human rights.
7. To guarantee nature's rights and to promote territorial, global and environmental sustainability.

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<sup>2</sup> Sumak Kawsay: "Good Living" in Quichua.

8. To consolidate social and solidarity economic system in a sustainable way.
9. To guarantee decent work in all its forms.
10. To stimulate transformation of the Productive Matrix.
11. To assure sovereignty and efficiency of strategic sectors for industrial and technological transformation.
12. To assert sovereignty and peace, and to deepen strategic insertion in the whole world, including Latin American integration. (Senplades, 2013, page 83)

### **Relationship with the Objectives**

The present graduation project fits perfectly with four of the twelve objectives mentioned above. First, with objective 4; "To strengthen capacities and potentialities of citizens and citizenship. "If we want a nation's economy to prosper citizens should have a high quality education in order to increase general knowledge and community wisdoms. "Educating in this model turns into a constant dialogue, in which learning and teaching are continuous practices for social participants... For this; we ought to settle processes of creation, accumulation, specialization and transfer of knowledge to productive sectors." (Senplades, 2013) This is why ACRIM Association provides constant training to all coffee producers and partners working in our association, in such way we are able to obtain the best quality products.

The next objective related to my project is the objective number 7: "To guarantee nature's rights and to promote territorial, global and environmental sustainability." Recently, Ecuador has greatly emphasized environmental protection of our planet Earth, since Ecuador is the main provider of natural resources in such a way that our economy depends on the exportations of these goods. This is the reason why the NGLP (National Plan for Good Living) has the following main priorities: "conservation and sustainable use of natural heritage and its natural resources, insertion of environmentally clean technologies, application of energy efficiency and a greater participation of renewable energies; as well as prevention, control and mitigation of pollution and production; sustainable consumption and post-consumption."(Senplades, 2013)



As we will demonstrate in the subsequent chapters, protection, care and respect for Nature/Environment is a fundamental value of our Association since we maintain several environmentally friendly practices, in order to provide good products essential for people's health without harming the environment.

With regard to social matters, we will study objective 9: "To guarantee decent work in all its forms". If we want to reach and, then, to enjoy Good Living, it is vitally important to stop considering work as one of the elements of production; on the contrary, "To work" and "Work" must be treated as a sacred, fecund and creator action, value and immersed in Good Living in order to develop every talent every person possess.

Our Ecuadorian Constitution establishes that the generation of decent and stable work is the basis for achieving development; so it is vital to fulfill and to guarantee rights of workers. For this "...public policy efforts must stimulate economic activities that generate work, assure fair remuneration, healthy work environments, employment stability and absolutely none discrimination." (Senplades, 2013) In accordance with this issue, below I will detail the way in which ACRIM Association fulfills and guarantees rights of each one of the partners and coffee farmers, by respecting the competent authority.

Finally, with respect to the economic ambit, we analyzed objective 10: "To stimulate transformation of the productive matrix", since this is one of the main pillars of my graduation project. The last years our Citizen Revolution government has been working to reach a radical change in economy; by gradually fomenting national production development, in such way we can reduce importations and increase exportations. For fulfilling these goals government has defined changes in the productive structure to diversify economy, to energize productivity and to guarantee national sovereignty in production and internal consumption, in order to exit from primary-exportation<sup>3</sup> dependence" (Senplades, 2013). This beneficial action will allow the Ecuadorian Nation to gain competitiveness and recognition in the international

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<sup>3</sup> Primary-Exporter: Production of primary goods (raw material) for exportation.

market. Through my investigation project I am going to seek to replace importations by means of supplying the Ecuadorian market; and, also, I want to introduce the Association and its products into the global market, so we can satisfy our fundamental objective.

## **Productive Matrix Change Analysis**

### **Definition**

In order to understand what innovations government wants to achieve by changing the productive matrix, first, we must know its definition given by the National Secretariat of Planning and Development in 2012. According to SENPLADES<sup>4</sup>, the productive matrix is the way in which a whole society organizes to produce certain goods and services, including technical or economic processes and interaction of social participants in productive activities and social relations resultant from these processes.

Besides, transformation of the productive matrix "implies transition from an extra-activist<sup>5</sup> primary export specialization pattern to a pattern that privileges diversified, eco-efficient<sup>6</sup> production with greater added value, as well as services based on a knowledge and biodiversity economy."(Secretaría Nacional de Planificación y Desarrollo, 2012)

With this change we want to generate wealth based in an adequate and righteous exploitation of natural resources in Ecuador, with the support of capacities and knowledges of the entire Ecuadorian population. Nevertheless, for performing such changes at the macro level, all institutions, both state and private, should coordinate themselves and concentrate all their efforts on the same purpose.

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<sup>4</sup> SENPLADES: Acronym for National Secretariat for Planning and Development.

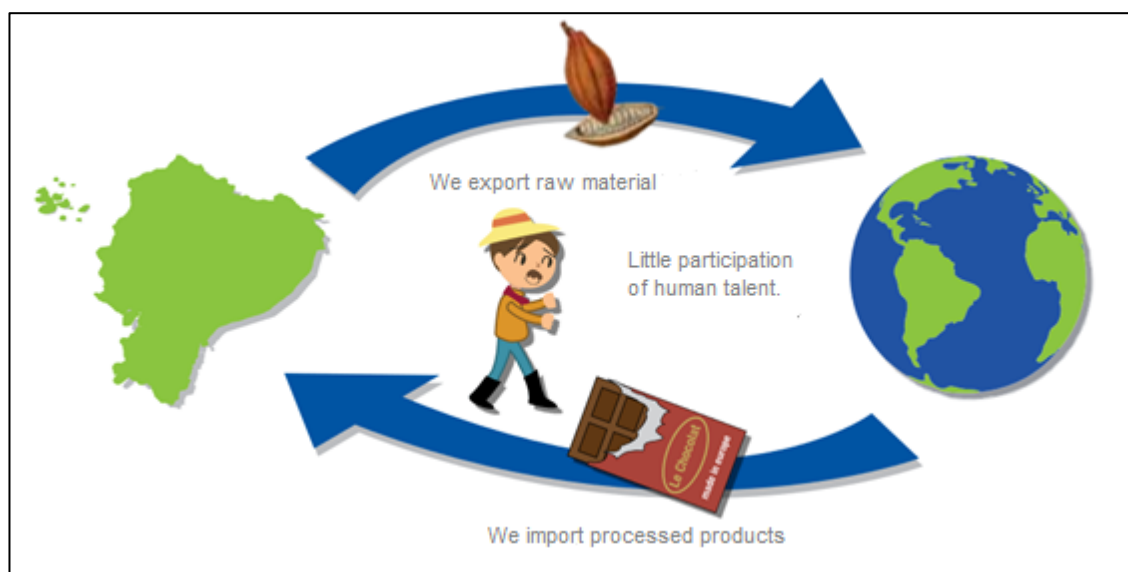
<sup>5</sup> Extra-activist: Extraction of natural resources to export them as raw material.

<sup>6</sup> Eco-efficient: Sustainability applied to environmental care.

## History

For several years Ecuador has based its economy on exportation of raw materials and importation of processed products with high added value. The primary economy sectors were based on agriculture, forestry, livestock, fishing and oil. But the Ecuadorian economy was based in oil mostly, insomuch as highest incomes come from the sale of petroleum. Manufacturing participation was minimal, which has been always a problem for our national development. The production of primary goods provided to external market was performed with low technification or transformation, decreasing profits. These events have provoked a primary-exporter pattern, making the Ecuadorian economy vulnerable to price fluctuations in products circulating the international market. This is a great disadvantage for our country because of the huge difference between prices of raw materials to be sold and added value products bought by Ecuador. The graph below clearly shows the productive matrix of Ecuador throughout the years.

**Image 1. Current productive matrix of Ecuador.**



Source: SENPLADES, 2012.

## Present

With the change of the productive matrix, we want to enhance productive capacity in order to improve manufacturing of goods and exportations, as well; in such way we can reduce importations and trading deficit. For this, it is fundamental that the quantity of industries in Ecuador grows, with the support of capacities and wisdoms of the

entire population. The main objective of these beneficial actions is to evolve from a nation that only depends on exportation of primary products, to a country that fructifies by producing goods and services with added value, for selling them in the global market.

**Image 2. New productive matrix of Ecuador.**



Source: SENPLADES, 2012.

If we want to achieve this complex task we must know that change in the productive matrix is based on four fundamental axes such as: diversification of production, which means to generate new industries and businesses; the second refers to added value and the necessity our country has of trading its products; but not as a raw material anymore, but as transformed merchandise. The third vital axis is the selective barter of importations with goods and services, thus, finally stop buying products from abroad, the same that can be manufactured in Ecuador. The fourth axis is the improvement of exportable supply, with new partners, major diversification of products and international destinations.

### **Link with COPCI Regulations**

The Organic Code of Production, Commerce and Investments<sup>7</sup> was put in force by means of publication in Official Gazette Supplement No. 351 on December 29th, 2010. According to Article 3, its main objective is:

<sup>7</sup> COPCI because of its abbreviations in Spanish.

“To regulate the production process in stages of production, distribution, exchange, commerce, consumption, management of externalities and productive investments oriented to realization of Good Living ... it also seeks to generate and to consolidate regulations and conditions that upgrade, impulse and encourage greater added value production, in such manner Ecuador increases its productivity and promotes transformation on its productive matrix.”(COPCI, 2010)

Likewise, COPCI’s article 4 mentions the aims of such transformation in literal a):

“a) To transform the Productive Matrix, by fortifying it with greater added value, making it enhancer of any kind of services, based on knowledge and innovation; and environmentally sustainable and eco-efficient as well.”

Literal e) of this same article refers to the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship, in order to transform the productive matrix through the support of science and technology, thus creating a larger society of owners, producers and entrepreneurs.

The role of the Ecuadorian State is fundamental in the productive matrix transformation process, because it will develop this change through policies and implementation of instruments and incentives in tax, fiscal or investment fields. Our National government will give incentives to productive investment by fomenting systematic competitiveness of economy, through the provision of important public goods such as health, education, basic services and infrastructure; the enhancement of public research institutions and investment in human talent improvement for reaching high economic development; implementation of a trading policy which develops every economy partner, every economy participant; including both micro, small and medium enterprises; among other factors too. (COPCI, 2010)

The COPCI also refers to external commerce, which is fundamental for our change in the productive matrix; for this, we need to know the true importance of global trade in these present times. "External commerce represents exchange between a nation and another, in terms of goods, merchandise and services. In such way nations involved

can fulfill their external and internal market necessities. "(Ceballos, sf) Foreign trading has played a very important role for some years and now it is really emphasized in the whole planet, since nowadays all countries are interconnected; and because of globalization, exchange of products worldwide has revolutionized the entire world's economy, in some countries more than others.

COPCI's fourth book is composed of four titles. It is about External Commerce, mentioning on "Advancement and Promotion of Exportations" in Title IV. Article 93 is about improving functions of the State in promoting and increasing exportations with different mechanisms of direct application, such as the access to tariff preference programs or other advantages derived from trading agreements with other nations. There would be the legal rights of returning taxes paid for importations of raw materials or mercantile inputs, benefiting from distinct customs regimes, from financial assistance or financial facilitation provided for national programs. The assistance to seminars, conferences or other training programs that allow integral development of population would be a right as well, and the right to access incentives for heightening productive investment.

## **MSMEs in Ecuador**

### **Definition**

MSMEs<sup>8</sup> play an important role in economic development of countries worldwide, whether offering or demanding goods and services; besides MSMEs is an employment source. To understand more about MSMEs we are going to learn what they mean.

MSMEs mean Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises existing in the national economy and market. "They are business organizations composed by a limited amount of assets, workers and sales level." (Gonzalez Bonilla, 2016)

According to Article 54<sup>th</sup> from the Organic Code of Production, Commerce and Investment, MSMEs are:

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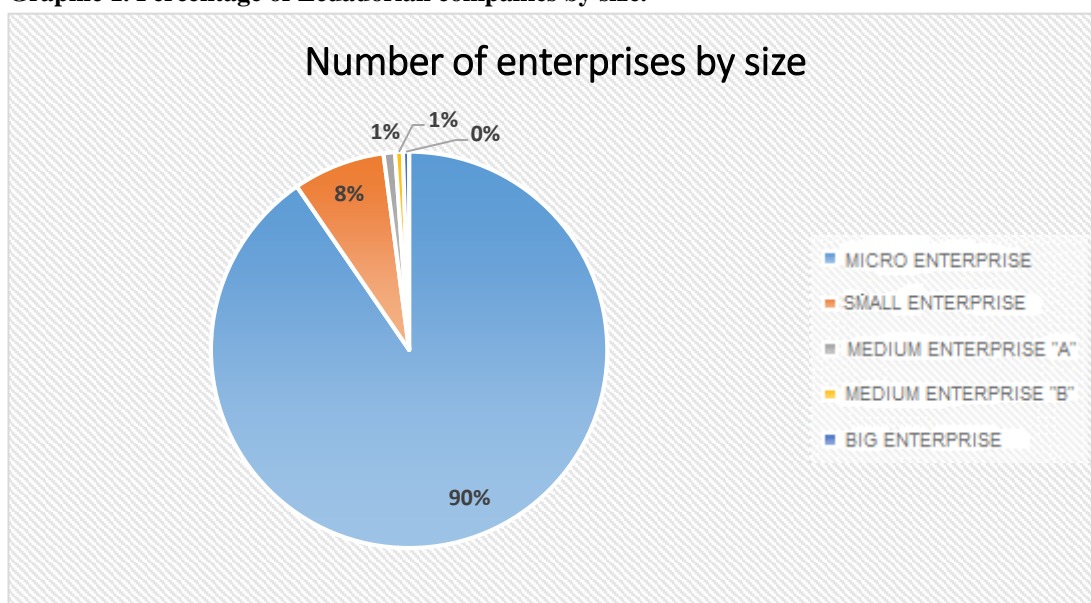
<sup>8</sup> MSMEs: Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

“The Micro, Small and Medium company or enterprise is any natural or legal person or entity that, as a productive unit, exercises a production, trading and/or services activity; and fulfills with the number of workers and with annual sales’ gross value; which are established for each category, in conformity with ranges indicated in this Code.” (COPCI, 2010)

### Current Situation

Presently, it is essential to know the role of MSMEs in Ecuador, since they represent the largest percentage of companies incorporated in Ecuador. The micro, small and medium enterprises give a really significant contribution to the Ecuadorian business sector. We know this thanks to the National Economic Census executed by the National Institute of Statistics and Census on 2010, and updated to 2015. 9 out of 10 Ecuadorian enterprises belong to the category of MSMEs.

**Graphic 1. Percentage of Ecuadorian companies by size.**



Source: National Statistics and Census Institute (INEC), 2015. Elaborated by: Author.

This information shows the relevance of MSMEs in Ecuador, since they represent the highest percentage of enterprises, which makes government develop more policies to regulate and support such companies. In Ecuador, MSMEs have a greater participation in economic sectors of construction, manufacturing and commerce. We must be aware that companies have to fulfill certain parameters to be part of this special category. In

accordance to regulations inscribed by the Andean Nations' Community in its Resolution 1260, companies should have a specific number of personnel and sales, in order to classify them as micro, small or medium enterprise. Next, I will display the parameters of this classification:

**Table 1. Parameters for the classification of MSMEs and Large companies.**

Enterprises clasification	Annual sales volumes	Staff
Micro enterprise	Less than 100.000	1 to 9
Small enterprise	From 100.001 to 1'000.000	10 to 49
Medium enterprise "A"	From 1'000.000 to 2'000.000	50 to 99
Medium enterprise "B"	From 2'000.002 to 5'000.000	100 to 199
Big enterprise	From 5'000.001 onwards	200 onwards

Source: National Statistics and Census Institute (INEC), 2015.

Ecuador has been given more and more importance to MSMEs, and by means of the Citizens' Revolution we have created several programs focused on determining presence and importance of MSMEs companies in Ecuadorian economy; because of this, the Sub-secretary of MSMEs and Handcrafts of the Ministry of Industries and Productivity has established a clear mission with respect to management of MSMEs, which focuses on:

“To promote sustainable and maintainable development of Micro, Small And Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and Artisanal Productive Units, through generation of public policies and strategies that encourage their enterprises, their formalization, their productive capacities, generation of networks and productive links, to be inserted in national and international markets.” (Subsecretaría de MIPYMES y Artesanías, 2016)

Luis Alberto Muñoz, former Sub-Secretary of MSMEs and Handicrafts, said: “In Ecuador there are 500,000 economic units, of which more than 90% are MSMEs, so we need to fortify them.” (Ministries of Industries and Productivity, 2013) This way, we observe the necessity of fomenting international participation of our Ecuadorian MSMEs, in such mode Ecuador increases its role in global commerce. The Ministry of Industries and Productivity will motivate all owners of MSMEs in order to start commercialization abroad. For this reason, last year there was a conference on external



commerce oriented to MSMEs' members. "During the speech given by Paúl Pereira, Sub-Secretary of MSMEs and Handicrafts of MIPRO<sup>9</sup>, the members learned about processes and participants involved in exportations and importations, with special emphasis on empowerment of MSMEs or MSMEs, so their products reach foreign markets."(Ministerio de Industrias y Productividad, 2016) Nevertheless, the coordinator of Pyme Observatory of Simon Bolivar Andean University, Wilson Araque, mentions that we require more support and major work coordination between MIPRO and other public entities such as the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES) or Pro-Ecuador.

### **Regulation**

In the third book "Business Development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, and Production Democratization" from Organic Code of Production, Commerce and Investments, alludes to foment for micro, small and medium companies; entities that regulate MSMEs; productive development mechanisms. This title also mentions how to do unique registration of these enterprises, simplification of procedures, and democratization for productive transformation of such companies, and other important parameters.

Article 53 establishes that all artisans to be qualified in this category will enjoy benefits established in COPCI. Also, in order to be qualified for our category, article 107 mentions this classification will depend on size of the company, annual sales level and number of employees.

Article 54 makes reference to legal bodies which regulate the different MSMEs in Ecuador. "The Sectorial Production Council will coordinate policies of foment and development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises with sectorial ministries in the field of their competences." (COPCI, 2010) The following literals above contain some

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<sup>9</sup> MIPRO: Abbreviations of Ministry of Industries and Productivity.

duties and policies the Sectorial Production Council has to apply for determining MSMEs' policies:

- a. To approve policies, plans, programs and projects recommended by the executing agency, as well as to monitor and to evaluate management of entities in charge of this; considering cultural, social and environmental features of each zone and articulating measures needed for technical and financial support;
- b. To formulate, to prioritize and to coordinate actions for sustainable development of MSMEs; and to establish the annual budget for implementation of main programs and plans;
- c. To authorize creation and to supervise development of infrastructure specialized in this area, such as: MSMEs' development centers, research and technological development centers, which are required in order to foment, to facilitate and to impulse productive development of these companies;
- d. To coordinate with specialized public and private entities training programs, information, technical assistance and commercial promotion, aimed at promoting participation of MSMEs in global trading;
- e. To propitiate participation of universities and local, national and international education centers in development of entrepreneurship and production programs, articulating beneficial actions for productive sectors in order to strengthen MSMEs;
- f. To promote application of certain principles, criteria necessary for the quality certification in MSMEs, determined by the competent authority;
- g. To impulse implementation of clean production and social responsibility programs conducted by MSMEs;
- h. To boost implementation of information and organizational development tools supporting the link between public and private institutions who participate in the MSMEs' business development;

- i. To organize actions in order to facilitate free access to credit for MSMEs, with public and private sector institutions, linked to business financing. (COPCI, 2010)

Article 108 refers to the RUM (Unique Registry of MSMEs) with the sole purpose of identifying and categorizing every MSMEs in accordance to production of goods, services or manufacturing. The RUM number assigned to each MSMEs is equal to the RUC<sup>10</sup> number registered in the SRI<sup>11</sup>.

## **Associations in Ecuador**

### **Definition**

The number of associations in Ecuador has increased recently because people need to enhance their productive activities for increasing their economic incomes. Individually, this is a very complicated purpose to achieve because of the intense competition of large companies existing in our trading market. It would be much easier to enter the global market by joining with more producers. According to some definitions, the associations are:

"The 'partnership in participation' association type occurs when a trader gives one or more persons a share in profits or losses from one or more operations of the whole commerce process." (Sanchez & Barriga, s.f.)

"An association is a legal entity that is constituted by agreement of three or more legally constituted natural persons, who commit to share wisdoms, tools and activities in order to obtain legal and common purposes with general or particular interest; which are endowed with statutes that rule their functioning. "(Castilla-La Mancha, s.f)

We must truly know activities performed in the associations, in such a way that they fulfill with the definitions above. Every association should be totally lawful and legal.

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<sup>10</sup> RUC: Unique Taxpayer Registry.

<sup>11</sup> SRI: Acronym for Internal Taxes Service in Spanish.

They cannot go against any Ecuadorian legislation, thus protecting our society. All obligations, duties and rights established when forming the associations, must be fulfilled by all their partners and workers.

## **Regulation**

Associations, as well as any form of organization, are regulated by different codes and regulations, which establish different parameters to be fulfilled. Below, I include some different international declarations that recognize the right to freely associate to commercialize:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Art. 20.
- American Declaration of Rights and Obligations of Humankind. Art. 22.
- American Convention on Human Rights. Art. 16.

The 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution, in force until now, in paragraphs 7 and 8 from article 326, establishes the workers' right to create associations:

“Art. 326. - The right to work is based on the following principles:

7. There will be warranty for the right to freedom of organization of workers without previous authorization. This right includes forming unions, syndicates, associations and other kinds of organization; there will be the right to affiliate and to disenroll as well, guaranteeing an effective organization of employers and employees.

8. The Ecuadorian State will create organizations of female workers and male workers, female employers and male employers, in accordance with law. Our government will promote its democratic, participatory and transparent functioning rotation in management.” (Asamblea Constituyente, 2008)

In this sense we appreciate that Ecuadorian State recognizes the right of all persons to organize freely, which means, they do not require a previous permission to gather together in order to form unions, syndicates, associations, guilds or any other type of

organization they need, as long as it is recognized by our respective law, and they can even enter or leave with respect to their interests.

The right to freely associate is also recognized in the Ecuadorian Labor Code, which regulates and allows professional associations, workers' associations, confederations, syndicates, committees of enterprises and federations, among others. This code includes obligations of employers and employees, warranties for leaders of associations and complete protection of all workers and employers too. It is basic to determine number of workers in order to shape an association. Also, there are precise actions needed to be done when being part of a collective contract; there is specific way of proceeding in case of contract's dissolution due to issues related to workers' associations.

The entity in charge of regulating and verifying associations and their activities is the Superintendence of Popular and Solidary Economy. The SEPS<sup>12</sup> is a technical entity of supervision and control of popular and solidary economy organizations, with public law legality and administrative-financial autonomy, seeking development, stability, solidity and proper functioning of the popular solidary economic sector." (Superintendence of Popular and Solidary Economy) This entity is regulated by the Organic Law of Popular and Solidary Economy, which recognizes and fortifies the EPS<sup>13</sup> and the Popular and Solidary Financial Sector both in its exercise as in the relations established with other economy sectors and the Ecuadorian State, always procuring that all people and organizations are sheltered by this Law; in such way we can fulfill and satisfy good living and common good. There would be greater gender equity, by respecting different cultural identities, social and environmental responsibility, fair commerce and equitable distribution of surplus. Below, the article 8 tells us about different forms of organizations:

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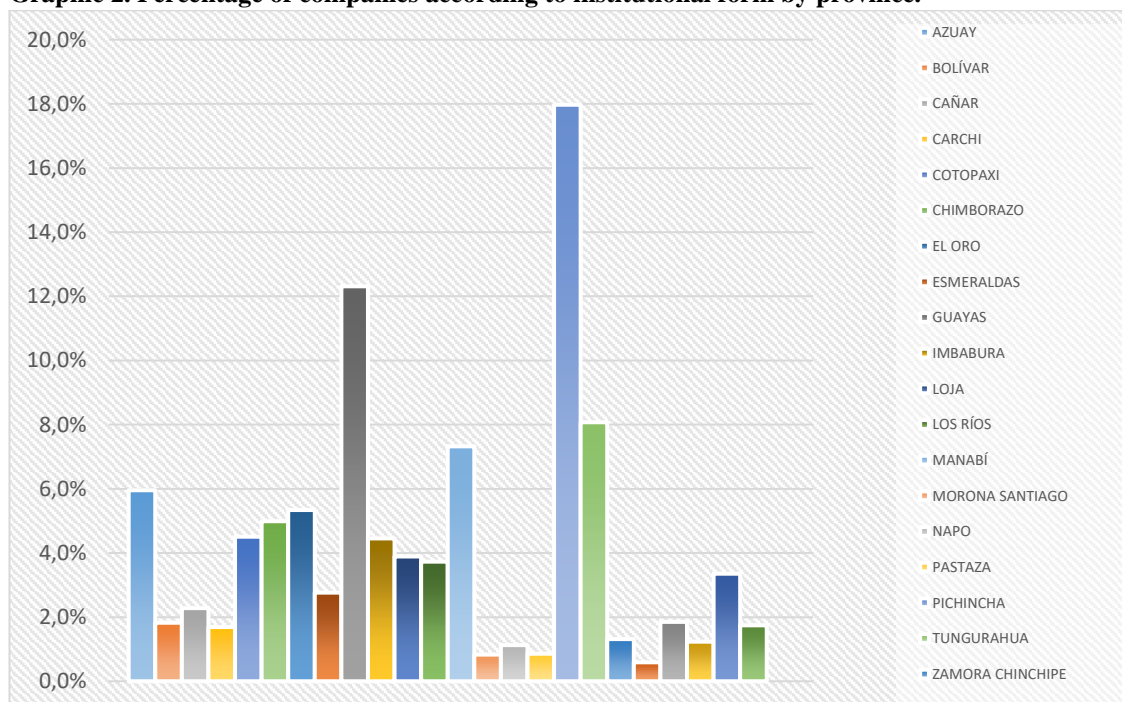
<sup>12</sup> SEPS: Abbreviations of Superintendence of Popular and Solidary Economy in Spanish.

<sup>13</sup> EPS: Acronym of Popular and Solidary Economy in Spanish.

“Art. 8. Organization Forms. - For the efficiency of this Law, the organizations formed in the Community, Associative and Cooperativist Sectors, and the Popular Economic Units as well integrate the Popular and Solidary Economy.”  
(Asamblea Nacional, 2011)

The following graph shows the percentage of popular and solidarity economy organizations, which includes Ecuadorian associations of each province of the country:

**Graphic 2. Percentage of companies according to institutional form by province.**



Source: National Statistics and Census Institute (INEC), 2015. Elaborated by: Author.

## Electronic Commerce in Ecuador

### Definition

According to the World Commerce Organization, Electronic Commerce or "E-Commerce", is the "production, distribution, commercialization, sale or delivery of goods, merchandise and services by cyber-electronic tools and devices." (Organización Mundial del Comercio, 1998). In other words, E-Commerce encompasses any commercial operation of goods or services performed through electronic devices like telephone, cell-phone, computer or smart-phone by using the Internet Web.

Electronic Commerce is also considered as "use of internet, digital web and software applications for business. E-Commerce includes digital commercial transactions between organizations and individuals. "(Laudon & Guercio Traver, 2014) The innovative advantage of this type of trading is that the physical presence of both buyer and seller do not have to be in the same location to execute the transaction; which means all transactions can be done although trade participants are in different places of our world.

There are many types of electronic commerce classified according to the number of participants or the objective of each transaction. The agents that participate in these mercantile operations are enterprises, consumers and national governments. Today, the best known transaction types are: B2C (Business to Consumer) which are online businesses who sell to individual consumers; B2B (Business to Business) online businesses that happens between companies; C2C (Consumer to Consumer) This type of commerce offers consumers ways to sell to other consumers; B2G (Business to Government) business transaction that befalls between an enterprise and a government entity; the Social electronic commerce is performed throughout social networks or by online social relations; the Mobile electronic commerce (M-Commerce) utilizes mobile devices for executing transactions on the global web, and the Local electronic commerce who focuses on attracting consumers based on real geographic location. (Laudon & Guercio Traver, 2014)

## **Present**

Lastly, electronic commerce plays a vital role in the buying and selling process worldwide. Now, enterprises should have something more than a website to offer products or services, which means, companies must have the option to execute sales transactions in such mode that potential buyers have much easier access to merchandise. Consumers are very accustomed to purchase online, since cyber trust level has increased significantly, because payment methods are safer than before due to different new tools such as Pay Pal and Pay Phone. E-Commerce has succeeded in the global market because of the awesome advantages it offers. For example, people can buy any product in different parts of the world without moving from their home,

with really quick response to necessities of users, great dynamism for business management, and the benefit of being acknowledged in the external international market.

According to data from UNCTAD, in 2015 the magnitude of electronic commerce worldwide was 25 billion dollars, from which 90% belonged to B2B commerce and the remaining 10% was B2C trade. We note that United States is the leading country in the global market with electronic sales exceeding 7 billion dollars, then, comes Japan with 2.5 billion dollars and China in third place with 2 billion dollars. After these nations, we have South Korea, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Canada, Spain and Australia. These ten economies lead the ranking of electronic commerce worldwide and together, they sum more than 16 billion from the 25 billion dollars generated in this commercial activity.

With respect to Latin America, the countries that lead sales through electronic media are Brazil, México, Argentina, Chile and Perú. In 2014, Internet sales represented approximately \$46,400 million, with a growing tendency, since we hope that the total numerical figure will reach \$84,900 million in 2018. This happens due to entrance of electronic devices such as computers, smart-phones and tablets in our region in recent years. Although there is still a long way to reach sales and importance that China and United States have in the electronic market; E-commerce is gaining more and more popularity in Latin America.

### **Situation in Ecuador**

As we already know, Electronic Commerce offers many advantages, making purchases and sales much easier to perform; nevertheless, commercial growth in Ecuador has advanced slowly because Ecuadorians prefer to acquire products and services in the traditional way, which means going to physical markets, where they are able to appreciate the product they are going to buy closely. Besides, people who use E-Commerce tools have greater purchasing power, and, therefore they own credit cards and bank accounts that facilitate their transactions.



The slow growth of electronic commerce in Ecuador has been caused by the following factors: Ecuadorians do not trust in this process in a complete way. On a Demand - E-Commerce survey performed by Mintel<sup>14</sup> in 2015 we observe that 60% of people who answered this survey do not purchase online because they don't want to submit their personal data or information about their credit cards on the Internet; while 33% of persons do not buy on the web due to lack of knowledge. (El Telégrafo, 2016)

Another influential factor is the low participation of big enterprises in this process, which results in a shortage offer of online products and services. Medium and large companies in the Ecuadorian market, 90% have Internet access and less than 20% of companies purchase and sell on this electronic platform. This is why our State must reach 70% in order to implement this model of business. The slow commercial growth in Ecuador is due to lack of knowledge on use and application of E-Commerce. According to INEC<sup>15</sup> data, in 2014, 17.1% of Ecuadorian companies executed a commercial transaction through the Internet. 29.5% of the purchases were done on the Internet platform, and the total sales through web represented 35.9%.

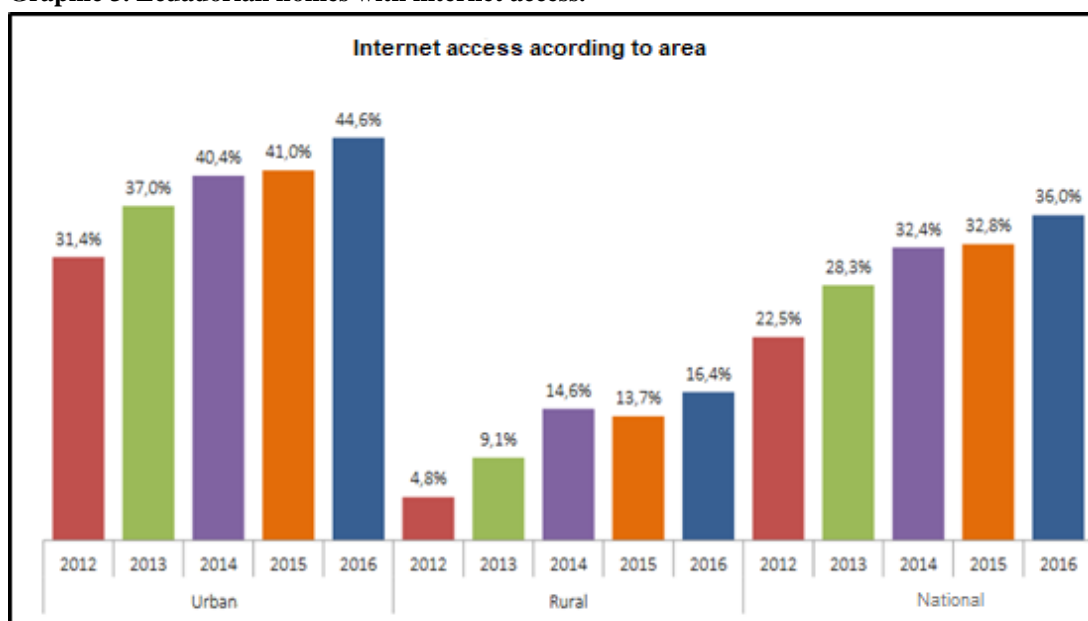
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<sup>14</sup> Mintel: Abbreviations of Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Society in Spanish.

<sup>15</sup> INEC: Abbreviation of National Institute of Statistics and Census in Spanish.

The limited access to Internet in some places of Ecuador is also a problem that affects slow development of electronic commerce in our country. According to data provided by INEC in 2016, only 36% of Ecuadorian population has access to Internet service; this represents a growth of 13.5 points since 2011. In urban areas 44.6% of homes have internet, while only 16.4% of homes has Internet access in rural areas.

**Graphic 3. Ecuadorian homes with internet access.**



Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos (INEC) 2016.

Despite all these obstacles, Ecuador keeps working hard in order to improve electronic commerce development, by increasing its potential in the entire country. In the 2015 E-Commerce Day of Guayaquil's Commerce Chamber, we learned that Ecuador moves approximately \$540 million dollars per year, showing a growth of 35%, according to Pablo Arosemena, president of Guayaquil's Commerce Chamber. He also argued: "With the addition of 1.9% to Ecuadorian economy in 2015, we can see digital economy going much faster." (El Universo, 2015)

Nuno Acosta, Laika's manager, supervises a company dedicated to digital advertising in social and internet networks. He mentioned that enterprises in Ecuador invest approximately \$50 million dollars, showing a major annual growth, which has doubled and even tripled in comparison to 2003, when we invested \$15 million dollars. He also particularized that huge companies invest the most in digital advertising and PYMEs spend almost \$100 monthly for promoting their products on Internet. In this sense, we

conclude that not only big companies are working through online commerce, but also Small and Medium enterprises; which are stepping forward by being part of this business model.

The change in the productive matrix we have been seeking for years in Ecuador for some years has been supported by electronic commerce with much faster promotion and commercialization of products from enterprises in the Ecuadorian market. This is a special opportunity for developing E-Businesses. “The electronic commerce foment contributes to change the productive matrix through the use of TIC, allowing to utilize, to develop and to create new sales’ platforms for small and medium companies in order to commercialize both nationally and internationally.” (Narea, 2016) SENPLADES in an information brochure about production matrix change. This booklet shows the fourteen prioritized industries, in which our Government will pay more attention and attend better for promoting their development.

**Image 3. Prioritized industries.**

<b>Table 1: Prioritized industries</b>	
<b>Sector</b>	<b>Industry</b>
GOODS	1) Fresh and processed foods
	2) Biotechnology (biochemistry and biomedicine)
	3) Apparel and footwear
	4) Renewable energy
	5) Pharmaceutical industry
	6) Metalworking
	7) Petrochemistry
	8) Wood forest products
SERVICES	9) Environmental services
	10) Technology (software, hardware and computer services)
	11) Vehicles, automotive, bodies and parts
	12) Building
	13) Transport and logistics
	14) Tourism

Source: SENPLADES, 2012.

In the Image 3 we can appreciate that the food sector is in first place of these prioritized industries, which along together with the development of electronic commerce in Ecuador generate successful commercial activities or entrepreneurships. These elements will contribute with a huge percentage to the change on the productive matrix.

Ecuador is a small country, with an enviably good geographic location. In matters of electronic commerce, our nation lives an early maturation process in comparison to other countries of the region which already have a highly developed digital society. Despite of this, both, our government's great effort and the companies' commitment to work together, will increase the offer of products in digital platforms, thus enhancing electronic commerce in Ecuador, in order to know E-Commerce better and make it profitable for our country.

## **Regulation**

### **Electronic Commerce Law**

The Law On Electronic Commerce, Electronic Signatures and Data Messages of Ecuador is best known as Electronic Commerce Law (ECL). It was issued on April 17th, 2002, by means of Law No. 67, published in the Official Registry, Supplement No. 577. This Law is composed by the following five titles, with their respective chapters, which clearly explain how every electronic commerce issue is regulated:

- TITLE I. ON DATA MESSAGES.
  - Chapter I. General Principles.
- TITLE II. ON ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES, ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE CERTIFICATES, INFORMATION CERTIFICATION ENTITIES, ELECTRONIC SERVICES PROMOTION ENTITIES; AND REGULATION AND CONTROL ORGANISMS FOR ACCREDITED CERTIFICATION ENTITIES.
  - Chapter I: Electronic Signatures.
  - Chapter II: Electronic Signature Certificates.
  - Chapter III: Information Certification Entities.

- Chapter IV: Electronic Services' Promotion and Diffusion Entities, and Regulation and Control Organisms for Accredited Certification Entities.
- TITLE III. ON ELECTRONIC SERVICES, ELECTRONIC AND TELEMATIC HIRING, RIGHTS OF USERS, AND PUBLIC INSTRUMENTS.
  - Chapter I: Electronic Services.
  - Chapter II: Electronic and Telematic Hiring.
  - Chapter III: Rights of Users or Consumers of Electronic Services.
  - Chapter IV: Public Instruments.
- TITLE IV: ELECTRONIC TEST AND NOTIFICATIONS.
  - Chapter I. Electronic Test.
- TITLE V: INFORMATIVE INFRACTIONS.
  - Chapter I: Computer Infractions.

In addition, the LCE<sup>16</sup> has 10 General Dispositions, 2 Transitory Dispositions and 1 Final Disposition.

### **Content of the Electronic Commerce Law**

The Electronic Commerce Law starts with the Preliminary Title, which specifies in the article 1, the objective of such regulation, which is: To regulate data messages, electronic signature, certification services, electronic and telematic hiring, and electronic services to be provided through different types of information networks, including electronic commerce and the complete protection of all users.

Title I details General Principles of the Law. It recognizes the legal value of data messages, which will have the same features and effects as any written document. Data messages will be submitted to all regulations, national laws and international intellectual property agreements. We must emphasize that confidentiality and

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<sup>16</sup> LCE: Abbreviation of Electronic Commerce Law in Spanish.

reservation of information contained in data messages is also regulated by this law; and in case of breach, there will be the respective sanctions of this Law

In addition, also mentioned are the general principles, conservation of data messages, according to LCE information that is submitted to it shall be kept as long as this is available for consultation when you need it; that it be preserved in its original format and does not have any changes; have any data that facilitates determining the origin of it and the date, time or location where it was created, sent or received. Finally, this title refers to data protection, stating that before preparing, transferring or using any database obtained, directly or indirectly, from use of data messages, it must have the specific consent of the transmitters.

Title II, about electronic signatures, refers to everything that allows identifying the owner of the data messages. The electronic signature is all the data, in electronic form, contained in the data messages used to verify the identity of the transmitter person. The Electronic signature helps to confirm the issuer recognizes the information found in the data message, this way, being submitted to all the respective obligations. Such could be used and controlled only by the owner person. The electronic signature has the same validity and it will have the same juridical effects as a handwritten signature; besides electronic signatures have indefinite duration.

Subsequently, the electronic signature certificates are discussed, which are granted by the certifying information entities. These certificates verify the link between a person and an electronic signature. This parameter also mentions that certificates issued by international certification entities will have the same legal validity as documents issued by the respective Ecuadorian authority as long as they keep being trustful and fulfill with requirements established in our respective Law.

This title makes reference to two different types of organizations, as well: promotion and diffusion of electronic services; and regulation and control bodies for accredited certification entities. Article 36 tells us about the entity for promotion and diffusion of electronic services, including electronic commerce and use of electronic signatures in promotion of exterior commerce mostly. Such entity is named Council for External

Trading and Investments "COMEXI". Nowadays, COMEXI turned into the External Commerce Committee or COMEX.

Article 37 is about the regulatory and control organism of accredited certification entities, which is the National Telecommunications Council "CONATEL". This juridical body is authorized to cancel or to suspend certification entities, being able to suspend electronic signature certificates, if the certification entity issues defective documents without the respective responsibility. Currently, this agency is called Regulation and Control Agency for Telecommunications "ARCOTEL."

The most relevant in Title III is the rights granted to users or consumers of electronic services. One of these rights is the right of a user to be clearly informed about all programs and equipments required for accessing the electronic registry or data messages. Users must express their acquiescence before any registration. Additionally, all users will be provided with clear and precise information to be prepared in case of changes in equipments and programs. The user could revoke her/his consent freely anytime.

Title IV, headed "Electronic Test and Notifications", mentions all devices to be considered, such as: data messages, electronic signature, electronic documents and both national and international certificates, regardless of their origin or place of sailing. In case of an electronic signature certified by the respective authority, we will presume such signature fulfills with all necessary requirements and we would suppose it has not been notified since the moment of its emission.

The last title of this law is called "Computer Infractions". It goes from article 57 to article 64; making reference to all procedure methods in case of breach of any of the articles contemplated in this law. Nevertheless, this title and its articles were derogated by the new Integral Organic Penal Code published in the Official Registry, Supplement No. 180 of February 10th, 2014. The ninth derogatory disposition of this code says: "To derogate Title V, from article 57 to article 64, from the Law for Electronic Commerce, Signatures and Data Messages published in the Supplement of the Official Registry No. 557 of April 17th, 2002." (Ministerio de Justicia, Derechos Humanos y Cultos, 2014)

## **CHAPTER 2: THE ASSOCIATION**

### **Introduction**

After the study of the general situation of Ecuador, I discovered the true importance of associations and their functioning in our country which is the reason why I will proceed to a further study of the ACRIM Association. First, we will perform a brief analysis of the different regulatory entities that ACRIM has respected. Next, I will show much more information about our association.

This second chapter will detail essential information on the Artisan-Agricultural-Livestock Association of Organic Producers “Cuencas Del Río Mayo”: ACRIM. We will investigate the history of this Association in order to know how it has been growing and constituted by Ecuadorians. Additionally, we will analyze ACRIM’s environment and competence. We will get to know its objectives, its organization chart, and its current location, among other important points. In the same way, I will show a SWOT (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats) analysis for learning more about benefits and threats for ACRIM in the global market.

Likewise, the following issues are going to be studied: Clean Production Territory ordinance, portfolio of products offered in the market, production processes, and how partners supply and distribute coffee to the Association. It is also important to know the current commercialization form and all the technical assistance for the products to fulfill with high quality demands, thus, satisfying every customer. We will study the quality control process to be performed, which represents one of the greatest challenges for our Association.

Additionally, we will investigate the ACRIM international certifications, which allow it to be more competitive and welcomed in the national market, and to achieve a broader entry into the global market.

Finally, we will present more about "Bracamoros Coffee" fair that takes place in the towns of Palanda and Zumba. This event is organized by ACRIM and APECAP associations.



## **ACRIM Regulatory Entities**

It is important to know different entities that regulate our ACRIM association in Ecuador. Associations are regulated depending on their size or activity, since they have different objectives and principles.

ACRIM was first regulated by MAGAP<sup>17</sup>, currently known as MAG<sup>18</sup>. MAG is the institution that regulates, facilitates, controls and evaluates agricultural, artisan, livestock, aquaculture and fishing production of Ecuador; besides, it promotes rural development and sustainable growth of the sector's production and productivity, thus, impulsing all producers to develop, especially those who belong to rural family agriculture, maintaining incentive to productive activities. MAG focuses more on small family associations. After this, ACRIM was regulated by MIPRO, which focuses more on regulating non-profit associations or mini-entrepreneurships up to a certain limit. Finally, as ACRIM was increasing in number of partners and production, SEPS started to regulate ACRIM. SEPS is in charge of controlling organizations that belong to popular and solidary economy. Such institutions “organize and develop processes of production, exchange, commercialization, financing and consumption of goods, merchandise and services through relations based on solidarity, cooperation and reciprocity, by placing the human being as subject and purpose of their activity.” (Superintendencia de Economía Popular y Solidaria, s.f.)

## **Information of the ACRIM Association**

### **History**

The Asociación Agropecuaria-Artesanal de Productores Orgánicos Cuencas del Río Mayo, ACRIM, “started its formation in 2000, due to the initiative of a group of producers. It took almost 9 years for this work to consolidate and ACRIM forms part

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<sup>17</sup> MAGAP: Abbreviation of Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fishing in Spanish.

<sup>18</sup> MAG: Abbreviation of Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in Spanish.

of FAPECAFES<sup>19</sup>, making it, in this way, one of the strongest organizations in the region with excellent coffee quality.” (ACRIM, s.f.)

In Chito Parrish, from Chinchipe town, 20 Ecuadorian people created the Organic Producers’ Cooperative "San Antonio de Chito". This same year, the Chinchipe Alternative Association was formed in the town of Zumba. Until 2004, these organizations were created with the only finality of commercializing all coffee production through FAPECAFES.

In 2005, juridical difficulties began to appear, which caused the separation of these organizations from FAPECAFES. For this reason "San Antonio de Chito" Cooperative was liquidated in order to create the Association of Ecologic Producers of Organic Coffee "Cuencas Del Río Mayo", best known as ACRIM, which was made up of 48 producers from Chito and Zumba. This Association wanted to be part of FAPECAFES, but they did not have the minimum number of members required by this Federation, so ACRIM decided to join with the Association of Ecologic Producers of High Altitude Palanda Coffee, APECAP. This way, ACRIM and APECAP entered FAPECAFES, becoming the major coffee production area of the south of Ecuador, in volume and in quality.

Throughout time, members, partners and production began to have an accelerated growth. Logistics capacity and personnel of APECAP did not allow ACRIM to do an efficient job, causing losses, both for the association and for Palanda and Chinchipe partners.

Years later, in July, 2009, the number of partners of Chinchipe town exceeded 100 members; then, the representatives from the parishes of Zumba, Cordón Fronterizo, Rancho Carmen, Progreso, Padilla and Chito decided to leave APECAP and continue as ACRIM only, with its respective own directive. In February, 2010, the FAPECAFES’ General Assembly allowed the ACRIM Association to become a member of this Federation. ACRIM's coffee production this year was approximately

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<sup>19</sup> FAPECAFES: Regional Federation of Southern Associations of Small Ecological Coffee Growers located in Catamayo, Ecuador.

1200 quintals per year. Also in 2010, this Association increased its offer, starting not only to produce coffee products, but alternative products such as bananas and cocoa too.

ACRIM registered as an organization of artisan-agricultural production of organic producers for certified quality special markets. On August 11th, 2013, this was approved by respecting the new Law of the Popular and Solidary Economy Institute, which is regulated by the SEPS.

### **Company Environment**

With regard to the external environment of the Association, we need to know that ACRIM has coffee competitors, both nationally and internationally. The most well-known international brands worldwide in the country come from Colombia because of its reputation as one of the best coffee in quality and production. Some well-known international brands are: Colcafé, Juan Valdez Café, Starbucks Coffee, Café de Colombia, etc. In the Ecuadorian market there are brands that know how to reach the best positions, like Sí Café, Café Oro and Nescafé. ACRIM's closest competition is the coffee produced in associations located near Chinchipe town, among which we have Café Victoria, produced in FAPECAFES, and Infinito Café produced by APECAP.

### **Mission and Vision**

The ACRIM Association has the mission of providing quality and certified organic products. ACRIM offers services useful for all its partners and members. Its mission is one of its main principles: to respect nature, and to find balance between Mother Nature and Humanity. The mission is mentioned textually:

“To be an association of artisanal-agricultural production of organic products, for certified quality special markets; to offer effective technical assistance services, marketing, credit, machinery and supplies to all the participants; to manage and to self-manage human and financial resources responsibly, by pushing forward the equilibrium between humankind, women, men and nature.”  
(ACRIM, s.f.)

Likewise, the vision of this Association is clear and precise; informing potential customers of everything offered, as well as key information such as infrastructure, personnel, production and other info. The vision is:

"The partners and we, ACRIM's workers, always want to be a solid and competitive institution, in order to provide our customers coffee and other alternative products with high certified organic quality. The infrastructure, machinery with high production volumes reaches an average of 5,000 coffee quintals per year. This way, we give our partners and members the best market price, having own physical infrastructure and latest technology equipments and machinery. Because of the technical personnel of the factory, ACRIM is the largest and most successful organization of the region. "(ACRIM, s.f)

## **Objectives**

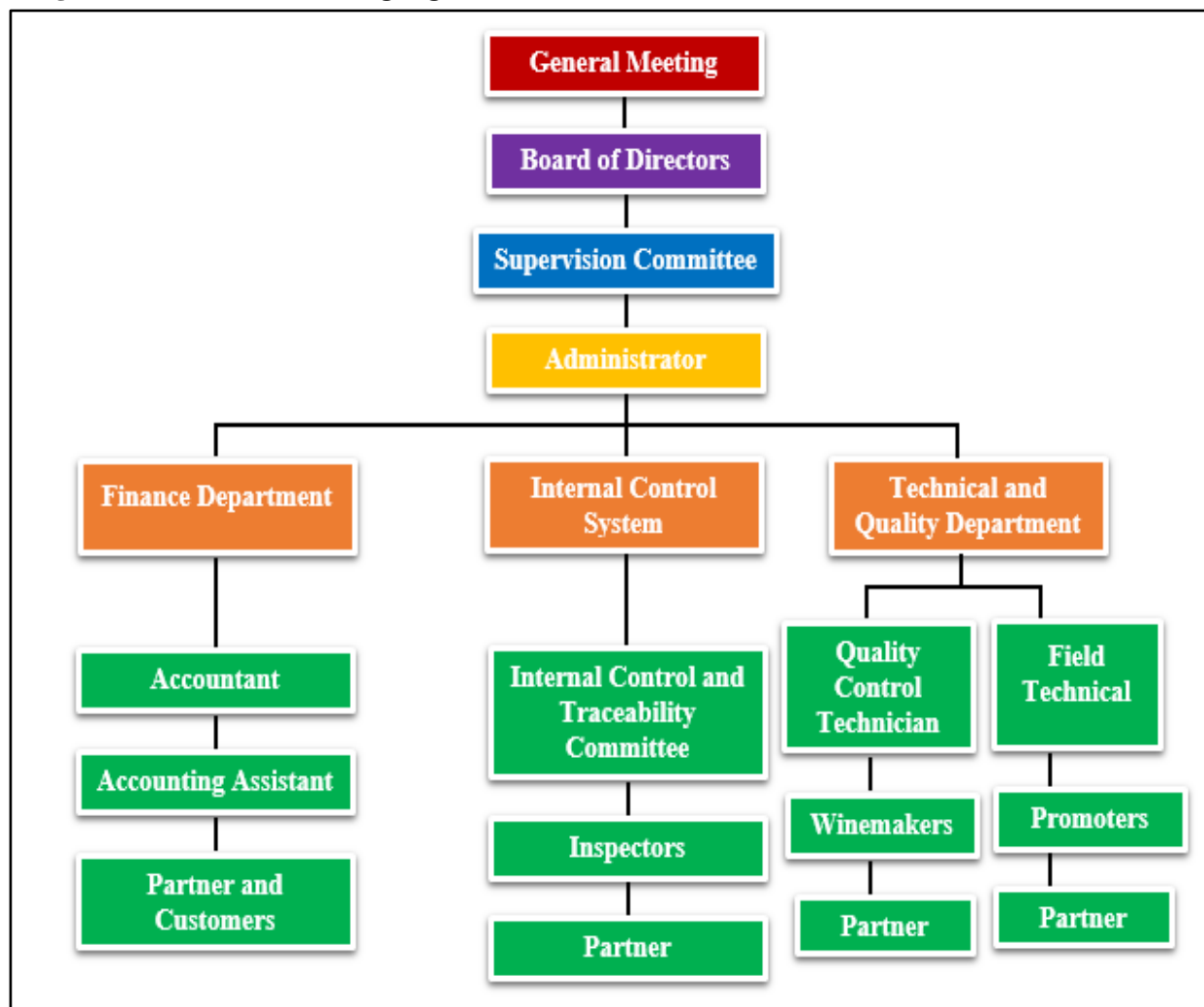
ACRIM establishes clear objectives for social improvement of its members, and with lots of efforts and constant hard work these following goals have been fulfilled

- Associative commercialization.
  - Production of high quality coffee and alternative products.
  - Transformation of coffee and alternative products.
  - Food sovereignty.
  - Use of innovative and environmental friendly techniques and technologies.
- (ACRIM, s.f.)

## **Organization Chart**

ACRIM's structural organization chart is formed as follows:

**Image 4. ACRIM's Structural Organigram.**



Source: ACRIM.

### **Organization in Figures**

Below I display a chart summarizing ACRIM's production, partners, members and certifications:

**Table 2. ACRIM information in figures.**

<b>Number of Partner Producers</b>	150 Partners: 131 men y 19 women
<b>Number of base groups</b>	6 base groups: Fronterizo, Zumba, Rancho Carmen, Progreso, Centinela Rio Blanco, Chito (San Luis, Reina del Cisne, Guayabal).
<b>Total hectares of farm</b>	1560 hectares
<b>Total hectares of coffee production</b>	327.75 hectares
<b>Annual production</b>	
<b>Washed coffee</b>	2.500 - 3.000 sacks of 69 kg of exportable gold coffee
<b>Banana</b>	85 tons in 2013, 204.36 tons in 2017
<b>Cassava</b>	58.11 tons in 2017
<b>“Arracacha” (Carrots)</b>	42.31 tons in 2017
<b>Certifications</b>	
<b>Organic</b>	BCS since 2001
<b>Fair trade</b>	FLO – since 2002
<b>Small Producers seal - SPP</b>	BCS since 2012

Source: ACRIM.

There are 150 producers of which 124 are organic. The remainder are in transition to become organic for approximately 2 years as long as they fulfill all the necessary requirements established by ACRIM. Regarding the 1560 hectares of farm, we must be aware this total includes every farm belonging to every member of this Association. Just 327.75 hectares are destined to coffee production, which means; only these hectares have certification that allows members producing coffee to be delivered to ACRIM. With respect to annual production, the previous table shows annual production of washed coffee, banana, cassava and *arracacha* (carrot) in tons. These are the main commercialization products of our Association. Moreover, ACRIM possesses production certification for passion fruit, guanabana and cacao, but such fruits are not commercialized yet. Finally, my chart shows ACRIM’s certifications,

which serve for authenticating and guaranteeing that products are organic, there is fair trading and producers are small.

### **Geographic Location**

ACRIM Association is located at the south of Zamora Chinchipe Province, in Zumba town, which belongs to Chinchipe town, on the Peruvian border. Chinchipe town belongs to Zamora Chinchipe province. This name is originated from the Mayo-Chinchipe River that crosses the town from north to south. This town limits are Palanda town to the north, with Loja province to the west, and with Cajamarca Department to the southeastern region in Peru.

### **Productive Process**

This process begins with coffee harvesting. Chinchipe town has climatic conditions that allow 2 harvest periods, one occurs between March and October, and the other occurs between December and February, but this is smaller.

This harvest is performed by selecting coffee beans that are 100% mature, trying not to harvest green, very ripe, colored or dried grains. Pulping<sup>20</sup> process is then performed, which is realized individually by each producer with small machines, in their respective farms. After this the coffee is fermented for 14 to 16 hours in order to proceed to washing and drying processes.

Once the coffee grains are washed, they get drained and dried; for this, producers use marquees with plastic cover and net, allowing adequate air circulation for preventing humidity, in such way coffee natural features are preserved.

Next in the process, each producer takes their respective coffee to ACRIM's collection center. Here, they perform a physical analysis of coffee quality, by checking several aspects such as humidity, yield, cleanliness and defects of coffee grains. Besides,

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<sup>20</sup> Pulping: Process that consists in extracting the pulp of some fruits.

ACRIM workers execute an organoleptic<sup>21</sup> analysis in order to qualify that all features are in proper terms of scent, body and acidity. According to the obtained results, coffee is divided into special coffee and normal coffee. All coffee grains stored in ACRIM's warehouses score 82 points on the SCAA<sup>22</sup> scale.

Once coffee grains arrive at ACRIM Association warehouses, comes a long process; it is a large procedure consisting of many steps in order to obtain the desired product. This special procedure starts when the respective partner takes coffee to ACRIM facilities for being weighed, in order to know the exact amount of coffee received. Next, ACRIM workers place coffee grains in lots of jute sacks, of 100 vellum pounds each.

**Image 5. Employees weighing the amount of delivered coffee**



Source: Author.

**Image 6. 100-pound sacks.**



Source: Author.

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<sup>21</sup> Organoleptic: It refers to any property of a food or other product perceived through the senses, including its taste, color, smell and texture.

<sup>22</sup> SCAA: Specialty Coffee Association of America.



Then, employees take a 300-gram sample of each bag and thresh it in a specialized machine; such process takes from 2 to 3 minutes, obtaining *green* or *gold* coffee (names for different types of coffee in ACRIM).

**Image 7. Sample of coffee to be threshed.**



Source: Author.

**Image 8. Coffee in process of threshing.**



Source: Author.

**Image 9. Threshed coffee.**



Source: Author.

After this procedure the sample is very hot, so workers settle it until it cools off. Once cold, the sample is used for measuring coffee's humidity, by utilizing a small machine. Coffee's optimum humidity should vary from 10% to 12%, and if it is greater, they proceed to separate wet coffee and put it in an adequate place. Coffee sacks used for samples and all the remaining sacks of the initial coffee partner.

**Image 10. Humidity measuring machine**



Source: Author.

**Image 11. Coffee ready to measure humidity.**



Source: Author.

**Image 12. Coffee temperature.**



Source: Author.

**Image 13. Dry and wet coffee.**



Source: Author.

All coffee turned out to be in a percentage higher than 12% moisture, previously classified, it takes some specialized machines for drying. This process should be performed at a suitable temperature, in the case of coffee in ACRIM, the temperature is regulated so that it reaches up to 35 °, when the machine reaches this, it stops and stops working for that coffee is dried more than recommended. Then we proceed to make the coffee from the machine and placed again in 100-pound jute sacks.

**Image 14. Coffee drying machine**



Source: Author.

**Image 15. Thermostat**



Source: Author.

**Image 16. Coffee in the drying process.**



Source: Author.

**Image 17. Employee weighing coffee at 100 pounds.**



Source: Author.

All 300 gram samples that fulfill the humidity requirements are taken to another department in order to be weighed. The temperature is measured again as well. Next, artisans proceed to take a small tool divided in three parts: the top part is called 15, the middle is 14 and the last is 0. They put the coffee sample here and start to shake it strongly, until coffee falls down and reaches the 0 section. All coffee remaining in 15 section is exportable, since it fulfills quality requirements demanded by international market, including an optimal coffee grain size. The exported coffee grains must be big. The grains that remain in 14 section are “descarte<sup>23</sup>”. These grains are a little smaller. At the end, what remains in 0 section is cisco coffee, a sub-product. This is the smallest grain of all and its samples show more failings. Exportable coffee has value that varies from \$250 to \$400, “descarte” coffee is worth \$150 approximately, and cisco coffee varies from \$100 to \$120. The prices are assigned in accordance with the coffee tasting celebrated by the respective technician. This degustation evaluates coffee quality, and it is made with small coffee samples only.

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<sup>23</sup> Descarte: Denomination in Spanish given to a specific coffee quality.



**Image 18. Machine for weighing and measuring humidity.**



Source: Author.

**Image 19. Tool to determine the quality.**



Source: Author.

**Image 20. Quality determination process**



Source: Author.

**Image 21. Export coffee.**



Source: Author.

**Image 22. Descarte coffee.**



Source: Author.

**Image 23. Cisco coffee.**



Source: Author.

At last, ACRIM prepares special receipts containing the delivered amount of coffee in pounds as well as quantities of exportable coffee, discarded coffee and cisco coffee. With these coffee receipts ACRIM's accountant is able to pay only \$180 for each coffee sack in advance of the total. The rest of money is paid after trading our coffee.

## Portfolio of offered products

The Ecuadorian Amazonian region cultivates its coffee under agroforestry systems, generating an area of great diversity of cultivated species. 70% of ACRIM producers cultivate typical and bourbon species, which present innate organoleptic attributes. They grow other varieties such as *caturra* and *pacas* species too. The different types of coffee are:

### 1. Green Coffee

Southern Ecuador, in the highlands of Zamora Chinchipe province, possesses the greatest biodiversity in the world. Coffee is one of the fruit crops that guarantee stable incomes for coffee grower families, thus avoiding harmful deforestation. The large number of species in the zone, together along with warm humid climate and an adequate post-harvest process produce a high-altitude green coffee fully balanced in body, scent and acidity.

### 2. Special Coffee (*Cafés Especiales*)

High experienced growers cultivate these special coffee grains in excellent geographical conditions of weather and soil of the region. Additionally, ACRIM counts on the best equipped laboratory in the best way and qualified tasters, thus allowing a professional selection of each coffee allotment that enters ACRIM's Association. The coffee lots are classified with the following scale in accordance to the customers' demand:

- 82 - 84 points (organic or conventional coffee).
- From 84 to 85 points (double A, AA coffee).
- Up from 85 to 87 points (triple A, AAA coffee)
- More than 87 points (Microlote) (ACRIM; s.f.)

### 3. Roasted Coffee

Roasted coffee offered by ACRIM is called "Río Mayo Coffee" because it is grown on Mayo-Chinchipe riverside. In this region Acrim cultivates a 100% Arabica

coffee. Agriculturists harvest such coffee grains very carefully in order to be roasted, ground and packed for consumption. ACRIM's roasted coffee is part of "Café Victoria" Family, which is a brand of FAPECAFES.

#### 4. Banana

Banana is one of the basic fruit products for feeding families. Around 2005, ACRIM performed a diversification project for increasing incomes to stop depending on coffee production only. Zamora province grows a banana species known as "Dominique" with rich quality and flavor. So, ACRIM, along with APECAP and APEOSAE (Zamora associations), started supplying normal bananas and peeled bananas to FAPECAFES, which is the federation in charge of hiring production service for converting it into *chifles* (fried sliced bananas) called "Zamora Chips", presented in three flavors: salty, spicy and sweet.

#### 5. Cacao

In Chinchipe, cocoa cultivation is ancestral. Investigations implemented by the Cultural Heritage Institute has demonstrated cacao has been an ancestral fruit for Mayo-Chinchipe culture since 5,500 years B.C. Currently, ACRIM producers count on 3 types of cacao: National Cacao, Fine Scent Cacao and White Pearl Cacao. Such kinds of cacao are mainly known for their organoleptic qualities, creating the best chocolates in the whole Universe. Although cacao production volumes are small and low traded, since cacao growers do not have much access to global market; ACRIM is motivating its partners to increase cacao production, in order to generate additional incomes by selling cacao.

### **Distinctive Features**

One of the main features of ACRIM's coffee is its total organic composition, making it more optimal for human consumption, thus benefiting our health.

Besides our coffee is a high quality product, because Acrim cultivates and harvests efficiently, with the best care, in order to provide a first class coffee for every client or coffee lover.

Finally, there is a coffee that not only provides the above features, but also provides customer satisfaction, since it gets so many looking to buy a coffee, the best scent, and flavor at a low price.

### SWOT Analysis

After knowing and understanding the previous ACRIM's information, I will perform a SWOT analysis in order to determine Acrim's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for taking the best decisions. Strengths and Opportunities belong to the internal analysis. On the other hand, Weaknesses and Threats are studied by an external analysis.

**Table 3. ACRIM's SWOT.**

<b>STRENGTHS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Excellent product quality.</li> <li>- 100% organic coffee.</li> <li>- Competitive price in the market.</li> <li>- Favorable natural conditions for coffee production.</li> </ul>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotion of the national industry: change of the productive matrix.</li> <li>- Tendency of consumers for organic products that do not harm the environment or health.</li> <li>- Government support for developing associations.</li> </ul>
<b>WEAKNESSES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Little production infrastructure.</li> <li>- Staff not fully trained.</li> <li>- Reduced presence in the national and international market.</li> <li>- Lack of funding sources.</li> </ul>	<b>THREATS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National and international competition.</li> <li>- Admission of new suppliers of organic products to the market.</li> </ul>

Source: Information provided by the ACRIM Association. Elaborated by: Author.

## **Clean Production Territory**

In Ecuador, agroforestry production systems for coffee, bananas, cocoa, fruits and trees of different species have contributed to preservation of national parks and protected areas. Besides, such systems serve as connectivity links between protected areas and natural corridors for the life of different species of animals which inhabit this area.

For this reason, the Provincial Government of Zamora Chinchipe has declared Palanda and Chinchipe as Clean Production Territories. This declaration allows different producers to voluntarily commit to implement certain practices that contribute to natural resources conservation in the region, in such way we all help to preserve culture and tradition for improving life quality of Zamora's population. Production practices must fulfill with the following clean production principles:

- Appropriate Water Resource management.
- Agroforestry systems, silvopastoral<sup>24</sup> and biodiversity.
- Soil conservation.
- Organic production.
- Adequate waste management.
- Interculturality and food sovereignty.

TPL<sup>25</sup> is an ordinance emitted for Zamora and Chinchipe towns only; but nowadays ACRIM is working to apply such ordinance at the whole provincial level. ACRIM is located in Chinchipe town and it has been fulfilling all production practices. When we acquire products from ACRIM we are contributing with Clean Production Territories. It is announced that it is being complied with in certain products or advertising.

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<sup>24</sup> Silvopastoral: System for Amazon region, incorporating trees and/or fodder shrubs in lands occupied with pastures for raising cattle and livestock activities. This activity represents an alternative production and conservation.

<sup>25</sup> TPL: Abbreviation of Clean Production Territory in Spanish.



## **Beginnings of the TPL ordinance**

### **ACRIM Creates Management Committee for Clean Production Territory Project**

The committee to be in charge of managing the Clean Production Territory Declaration to Mayo-Chinchipe riverside is located in Palanda and Chinchipe towns, in Zamora Chinchipe province. This committee was formed on Tuesday, February 28th, 2012 by representatives of the Provincial Government of Zamora Chinchipe, Agro-industrial Association of Agro-ecological Coffee Growers of Palanda (APECAP), Coffee Growers' Association of Chinchipe's Mayo River (ACRIM) and Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fishing (MAGAP). (ACRIM; s.f.) Such committee also includes representatives of parish governments and municipalities of Palanda and Chinchipe, COFENAC, Foment Bank, Farmers' Association, Savings and Financial Credit Cooperative "Nuevo Amanecer", among others.

The directive board and the management committee were formed in a meeting attended by 70 persons linked to different institutions and organizations committed to this project.

“For Zamora Chinchipe's Prefect, Salvador Quishpe, the work started three years ago in order to impulse agro-ecological production in that zone is the reason to keep enhancing the initiative of agriculturists. With this declaration, we want to guarantee agro-ecological production in the whole area and to boost clean production projects and cleanliness activities. The declaration will involve the care of Colambo-Yacuri and Podocarpus natural reserves.” (ACRIM; s.f.)

German Technical Cooperation has supported the Provincial Government of Zamora Chinchipe with technical assistance for sowing of coffee, cacao and banana. These two organizations have worked together in order to protect soil, increase of forest planting, environmental consciousness, livestock genetic improvement, and other several activities related to agro-ecological production and environmental care.

Salvador Quishpe, Zamora Chinchipe's prefect, said: “we want to make more people be conscientious, helping us to preserve our lands as clean protection territories. This

will benefit families' sustenance.” (ACRIM; s.f) Quishpe also mentioned that deforestation rates, from 1990 to 2008, were reduced to 55% in Chinchipe and 36% in Palanda.

When this ordinance was put in force, the first thing that the committee sought was to train workers of Palanda and Chinchipe Associations. On December 20th, 21st and 22nd of 2013, in Zumba parish from Chinchipe such ordinance mentioned: “the TPL promoters received theoretical-practical instruction of the seventh and last module of the TPL Promoter Training Program corresponding to “Adequate waste management”.” (ACRIM; s.f) This training encompassed 17 students, including technicians, promoters and producers of APECAP and ACRIM associations. In January 2014, they continued with their formation and training, including a practical workshop with assistance spots in Palanda and Chinchipe, in order to optimize good agricultural practices, in concordance to the six TPL ordinance principles. At the end of this practical workshop students were assessed to be accredited as promoters of TPL, accreditation is endorsed by FUNDER and the Ministry of Education.

### **Commercialization**

ACRIM is part of the Regional Federation of Southern Associations of Small Ecological Coffee Growers (FAPECAFES), and because of this it has achieved alliances with roasters, importers and distributors, who value quality and origin of all the products to help them positionate better in the international market. The diverse certifications of each product has made possible that fruits like banana, guayaba or guava and white carrot are being traded with United States, France, Germany and Belgium in global markets.

Every ACRIM exportation is made through FAPECAFES because this federation is in charge of exportation procedure; nevertheless, the exported products logo shows the exporter is FAPECAFES and producer is ACRIM.

Basically, ACRIM sends the product to FAPECAFES as raw material, since it is sent as vellum coffee. The Federation removes vellum from coffee and we classify grains by size. Every coffee grain exceeding size 15" net will be exported according to the

demands of the international market. The rest of the coffee will be commercialized in Ecuador.

This same situation occurs with banana, guayaba and white carrot, which are sent as raw material to FAPECAFES to be transformed in order obtain "Zamora Chips" fried banana slices as exportation products. There are also alternative products like arracacha (mandioca) or cassava (white carrot, manioc), guanabana, yellow, green, red and purple passion fruit, etc.

**Image 24. Chips produced by FAPECAFES.**



Source: ACRIM.

In the national market, ACRIM has been making partnerships in order to trade roasted and ground coffee, and other well elaborated products as well, thus embracing the entire Ecuador.

### **MAYU brand and logo**

MAYU coffee is a product that belongs to the Artisan-Agricultural Association of Organic Producers "Cuenca del Río Mayo": ACRIM. The brand was officially launched in July 2017. This product is traded through ACRIM, not FAPECAFES like previous products, and ACRIM works really hard in order to export MAYO coffee for reaching international markets.

For the creation of the milled coffee's commercial name, we held a practical seminar in which all producers participated. The conference was about creative processes involved in the creation of a brand. Everyone collaborated in the ideas brainstorming

and in debates for defining strengths and weaknesses of the product. At the end of this practical process ACRIM people generated the following list of values and main attributes:

- Communitarian growth background.
- Clean Production Territories.
- Product quality: Arabica type.
- Flavor/scent.
- Salutary.
- Organic Gourmet Coffee/High-Altitude Coffee.
- Border Territory.
- Biosphere Reserve.
- Fair Trade/Fair Commerce.

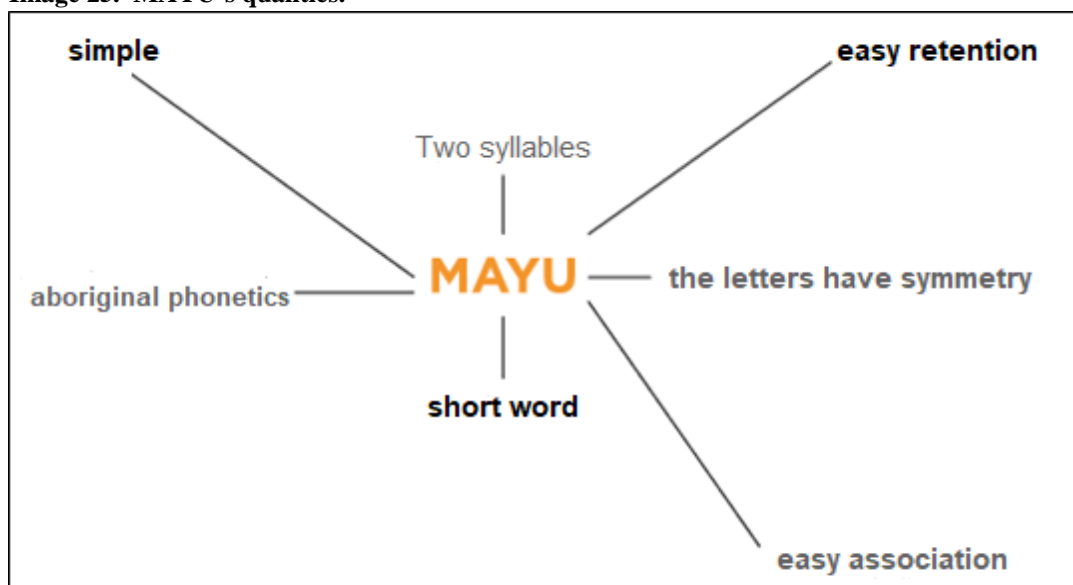
Once they applied such features, we proceeded to brainstorm names that more reflect these qualities and attributes, obtaining various names given by producers and the designer, which are:

- PAISANITO
- FRONTERA
- ALCAFÉ
- ZUM
- CAFÉ SUR
- RICAFÉ
- TERRA SUR
- EL RÍO
- LA RIVERA
- CORDILLERA
- MORACAFÉ
- ZUMBAYAKU
- MAYU

The three most favorite names were ZUM, MORACAFÉ and MAYU. They consulted IEPI<sup>26</sup> with these three options in order to execute the phonetic search procedure tool, in which MAYU showed the best results, since the other options presented high similarity degree with other brands in the coffee category.

Additionally, for a product's commercial name to originate pregnant in consumers, it must be attractive and easy to retain and to pronounce. MAYU is a Quechua word that means "River." MAYU's formal qualities are:

**Image 25. MAYU's qualities.**



Source: ACRIM.

Besides, MAYU has been the correct option, since it respects RIO MAYO brand, the previous name of a coffee commercialized by ACRIM. The new brand's logo has vivid life colors easy to identify, which is one of the coffee features too:

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<sup>26</sup> IEPI: Ecuadorian Intellectual Property Institute for its abbreviations in Spanish.

**Image 26. MAYU's Logo.**



Source: ACRIM.

## **Packaging**

MAYU's ground coffee packaging protects the product from moisture and from other elements that could damage its final presentation. This previous process is performed in order to preserve coffee's scent, which is vital in every coffee brand.

Packaging is presented in three basic colors: yellow, red and light green since these are best identify the brand. MAYU coffee comes in 250 grams presentation and packings' dimensions are: 20 cm long and 9.5 cm wide.

**Image 27. MAYU coffee packaging.**



Source: ACRIM.

## **Technical Assistance**

ACRIM is increasingly concerned in training its members and partners on different topics for improving production. That is why, ACRIM has made agreements with some institutions working in the region such as Provincial Government of Zamora Chinchipe, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), National Coffee Council (COFENAC), German Technical Cooperation (GIZ). This special committee coordinates technical assistance to all productive members of the Association, with teaching on the following topics:

- Production.
- Harvesting.
- Post-Harvesting.
- Fertilization.
- Socio-Organizational Enhancement.

These trainings are imparted to 150 active partners of ACRIM at least three times a year. The expert capacitors go to each base group in order to meet and to talk with every member in person. The Association's Directive Board get reunited with presidents of each group once a month at ACRIM offices.

## **Quality Control**

Quality control for ACRIM products is performed in two phases:

The first phase consists of supervising lands of each producer, with the support of an Internal Control Committee (CIC) conformed by ACRIM's president, secretary, coordinator and a member of every group. These controls are executed once a year as minimum.

The second control phase is performed when coffee arrives to ACRIM warehouses. Each coffee allotment that enters is checked by Acrim's Quality Department as follows:

- Physical analysis: Control of humidity, physical appearance, performance, quantity of defects.
- Sensory analysis: Controls rate profile and determines type or/and quality of the coffee. (ACRIM; s.f.)

In order to perform the quality control process, the Association counts on:

- Professional personnel fully trained in quality control.
- Modern laboratory for performing sensorial analysis.
- Documentation system guaranteeing traceability. (ACRIM; s.f.)

### **International Certifications**

ACRIM products have won some international certifications like the Organic Production Certification (BCS), Fair Commerce Certification and Small Producers' Seal. All these entities guarantee that our products have been produced and processed always seeking for a balance between environmental, social and economic fields, in order to assure agricultural production sustainability in the region.

BCS “is an independent certification agency headquartered in Germany, where it was the first accredited certification body to carry out the implementation of the European Regulation for organic production.” (BCS ÖKO-GARANTIE, 2016) This agency arrived for the first time Ecuador in 1998, where work was begun with some pioneering companies in organic production in the country. In 2002, it was established as a company in Riobamba, Ecuador. Since then it has been entering more into the area of organic production in the country, reaching until 2016 to cover more than 70% of the certification of organic products that are marketed both in the domestic market and in the international market.

FAIRTRADE certification is performed by FLO-CERT, which is a company who verifies the fulfillment of all FAIRTRADE requirements in order to guarantee social and environmental parameters are accomplished. Every producer gets FAIRTRADE prices and FAIRTRADE bonus.



The symbol of small producers is an initiative launched in 2006 by Latin American and Caribbean Coordinator of Small Producers of Fair Trade, with the support of the Fair Trade and Solidary Economy movement from many continents. (BCS ÖKO-GARANTIE, 2016) This stamp lets you know that small producers' merchandise present high quality. The jobs every ACRIM worker do guarantee decent life in communities, local economies, health and environment of producers and consumers.

### **Bracamoros Fair**

Bracamoros fair, known as "Bracamoros Coffee", is a showcase for all coffee producers in southern Ecuador to show their best products. This fair is attended by several people in order to taste the different coffees that are presented, so many times coffee buyers from other countries come to buy the best coffee. This fair is held every year, alternately in the two main coffee towns of Zamora Chinchipe province, Zumba and Palanda. One year is performed in a canton and the following year in the other.

In 2008, dialogues began between the associations of Palanda and Zumba, APECAP and ACRIM since they are the two main coffee production organizations in the province. The first fair of "Bracamoros Coffee" was held in 2009 in Zumba, this fair being the first was small, but came to be known in more detail about the quality and variety of coffee that Zamora Chinchipe has. In it, the producers of the best coffee are awarded which encourages more people to participate in it every year.

In 2012, it began to receive support from institutions in the province to hold the fair. For example, in this same year an agreement was signed with the Provincial Government to promote the TPL.

The fair is called "Bracamoros Coffee" in 2014. This name was chosen for several reasons, first the word "Bracamoros" refers to the people who lived in the Santa Ana sector in the Palanda town. For its part, "coffee" is mainly given because this word means coffee in the English language and an attempt was made to refer to the international markets, the United States and Europe, to which the Palanda and Chinchipe coffee arrives. Subsequently, it also received the support of the Ministry of

Agriculture and Livestock, MAG. This happened because they recognized that it is an event that has a great regional, national and international connotation.

**Image 28. "Bracamoros Coffee" fair logo.**



Fuente: ACRIM.

The last fair was the ninth edition of "Bracamoros Coffee", which had its official launch in Zamora city in September 2017. It was a really productive and touristic event promoted through different media on September 29th and 30th, 2017 in the city of Zumba. This year the organizer of the fair was Asociación Agropecuaria Artesanal de Productores Orgánicos Cuencas del Río Mayo (ACRIM) that worked together with other institutions. Several coffee producers from Zamora Chinchipe and Loja participated, as well as international companies, tourists and citizens in general.

Many activities were celebrated in this four-day fair, including "coffee samples" roasting for different competitions: coffee lot tasting, toasting of finalist samples of coffee auction contest; conference cycle; election and coronation of Queen of the Fair; opening and exhibition of coffee stands, clean production territories, bio-entrepreneurships, agricultural products, craftmade merchandise, gastronomy, small animals, among others. "(La Hora, 2017).

It is important to highlight Bracamoros fair is very important because national producers are able to meet foreign coffee companies' representatives. For example, Vitalino Merino Carrión is a coffee producer of the Federation of Small Agricultural

Exporters of the South of the Ecuadorian Amazon (APEOSAE), who won the first place in one of the most important contests of the fair, his coffee obtained a qualification of 87.1 points, managing to sell a lot of 10 quintals to the company Caravela Coffees of Colombia, at a price of 595 dollars per quintal. The second place was obtained by Mr. Ilber Abad Jiménez of ACRIM, with a score of his coffee of 85.35 points. While the third place was obtained by Segundo Malacatos, from the PROCAFEQ Association located in the city of Loja, since their coffee obtained a score of 85.1.

Also, other auctions were held, a lot of 20 quintals was purchased by the Cooperative Coffees of the United States, each quintal costing 455 dollars. For their part, the companies Quijote Café de Alemania and Sol Café de Perú participated as a qualifying jury.

**Image 29. Award to the first place.**



Source: Gobierno provincial de Zamora Chinchipe

**Image 30. Qualification by the jury.**



Source: Gobierno provincial de Zamora Chinchipe

**Image 31. Coffee participating in the fair.**



Source: Gobierno provincial de Zamora Chinchipe

**Image 32. Participating brands of the fair.**



Source: Gobierno provincial de Zamora Chinchipe

Year after year we continue working for "Bracamoros Coffee" Fair so it possesses a greater welcome both nationally and internationally, in order to introduce coffee quality grown in the southern region of Ecuador, and not only in this region, but throughout the country as well. It is a great opportunity to participate in this fair, since ACRIM will have contact with international companies interested in buying coffee.

## **CHAPTER 3: MARKETING AND POSITIONING PLAN**

### **Introduction**

This chapter will develop a marketing plan based on the creation of an online store that will be adapted to ACRIM's web page, with the objective of selling and promoting its products at national and international level. First, it describes the general features of a web page for what will release its definition, the different types that exist and its main elements. Besides, the Association's web page will be clearly analyzed to know how it is elaborated and how it presents respective information on its products. Finally, E-commerce necessary tools will be analyzed.

Later, we will proceed to analyze three fundamental systems for proper functioning of an online store: ordering, delivery and payment systems. With regard to the ordering system, it is important to detail step by step the process that will take place from the moment carried out through the web page, until it is dispatched to the factory. With regard to product shipment, Ecuador has three transportation companies working nationally and internationally; these will be analyzed in order to choose the best option for our association, considering cost, payment method, delivery time and safety. The payment system is one of the most important factors in the electronic commerce field, since it must provide safety for both the person who buys and the person who sells. This is why I will analyze different payment methods existing in online transactions in order to select the most convenient method for the Association. Here the issues related to reimbursement and electronic invoicing will also be addressed.

Once we analyze these issues is important to study different generic marketing strategies for reaching a correct positioning of the website on the Internet. I will examine some digital marketing strategies such as: SMM, SEM, SEO, affiliate marketing and off-line advertising in order to select the best for ACRIM.

## **Website Marketing**

### **Definition of Web-Site**

A web page is a collection of electronic documents that belong to World Wide Web (WWW), simply known as Web or Internet. The Web is conformed by websites, and web sites are conformed by web pages. Web pages usually have links, hyperlinks or links, which facilitate navigation between different contents. Web-sites are built with HTML<sup>27</sup> languages. Web-pages “contain specific information on a particular topic, which is stored in a computer system connected to global information network, in such way this document can be consulted by anyone who connects to the global communications network.” (Milenium, 2016)

A web page can be static, because its content never changes, or dynamic. In dynamic web pages, text is usually combined with images, which gives birth to some vital cyber actions, like highlighted text or highlighted images allowing to open another section in the same page, to open a different web page, to start an e-mail message or to open a different website. Web-pages are usually “endowed with an attractive design, they are optimized and they are presentation cards for an enterprise, a person or a specific professional.” (Definición.de, 2016)

In general, a web page needs a place to stay, so that in this way, the user when requesting the information they need from their browser, is loaded and appears on the computer. For this reason, the websites are located on a web server or also known as host, which is defined as a large computer that allows viewing the content requested by the network. This storage service is known as hosting. (Oliver, 2016)

### **Types of Web Pages**

Web pages can be classified according to their construction and functionality. According to its construction we have:

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<sup>27</sup> HTML: Hyper Text Markup Language.

- Static web pages: The displayed information is permanent, which means that user cannot interact. Content can be read only. No databases, so to modify it you have to access the server, where the information is kept. These types of pages are purely informative.
- Dynamic web pages: these pages can modify the content they have, this can also be done by users who visit these pages. You can create or modify its appearance through navigation with forms, text, images, videos, sound, among other tools. In addition, "these contents interact with a database in which each of the user's records are kept." (Galan, 2017)

On the other hand, due to their functionality, they are classified as:

- Blogs: these are portals where articles of opinion on a particular topic are found, where the contents are located in order of publication, the most recent being in the first place. Here, users can write their comments giving their points of view.
- Online stores: are websites where products or services are sold. These are web versions of a physical store, so they have catalogs of products, promotions, prices, recommendations and comments from other users. Payments are made through credit cards, generally, and deliveries of purchased products are made through delivery companies that work nationally and internationally.
- Corporate websites: these are the official sites of a company where the description of the company is located, as well as the main information about who they are, their location, what they do and other important information. In addition, the products or services offered are displayed, however, they can not be purchased on this page.
- Forums: forums are virtual spaces where several people meet to discuss a specific topic. In general, there are two figures, the administrator or administrators, who are responsible for moderating the messages, and the users who publish them.
- Download sites: these are intended to provide users with the information they are looking for in the form of a download of some type of file. These can be

programs (software) to install on the user's computer or any other file in different formats.

- Search engines: are pages created with the sole purpose of helping users find the information they need just by typing key words. In addition, they may include advertising.
- Press: in general, news is constantly uploaded here so that the user can find out what is happening in their city, country or the whole world. There are some magazines or newspapers that have a website, in addition to its printed version, however, some only have the web version. These pages are the most visited on the Internet.
- Wikis: These are web pages created and modified by users, they have access to their content directly from their browser.
- Video consumption sites: in these you can find audiovisual content, they are financed through advertising, like television.
- Educational: they are web pages that are assimilated to "virtual classrooms" where students can find educational content, interact with other students and even make inquiries about this content. It can be found from free content to content with cost.
- Games websites: platforms where you can choose a series of online games in which you can participate individually or in groups.
- Social networks: sites in which several people share different information such as personal interests, personal information, travel, friends, or professional information, studies, professional experience, among others. (GCF Community Foundation International, 2016)
- Governmental: these web pages belong to government entities and their objective is to publish important information such as their mission, achieved objectives, activities carried out. Also, online procedures, calls and other mechanisms for citizen participation are offered.
- Banking: several banks and financial institutions have made great strides to offer a better service to their customers through the web, offering the ease of making transactions through their web pages.



- Web applications: sites where special applications are found. They usually offer free or cost modalities, as well as plans for companies.

### **Main elements of a web page**

The important elements with which a web page must have to provide efficiency and effectiveness are text, images, audio, sounds, hyperlinks, domain, among others.

- Text: the text, in a web page, is one of the most significant elements, since the majority of users when browsing these pages, what they seek, fundamentally, is information in written form. Something important to know is that, as English becomes a universal language, it is common for many websites to offer information in their native language and in other languages, mainly in English.
- Images: the images are very helpful when creating a web page, since it helps to make the design more attractive, as well as allowing visual information to be displayed. However, the abuse of these on a web page could cause it to become heavy at the time of loading.
- Web space: this element is fundamental, since a server is needed to be able to place our web page and that it is visible to any user.
- Domain: the domain name is a unique name with which a web page is identified, that is, it is the first part with which a web address is recognized. Therefore, it is important that this name be short, easy to remember and that it be related to the content of the page. Each domain has an extension at the end, among the best known are:
  - .gov: assigned to institutions that belong to every National government.
  - .edu: for exclusive use of educational institutions.
  - .info: intended for information diffusion.
  - .biz: for business and commercial activities.
  - .com: used for commercial companies.
  - .net: for network related sites.
  - .org: non-profit organizations. (Sitios Regios, 2016)
- Hyperlinks: a web page becomes more interesting when it is connected to other pages through hyperlinks or links.

- Videos: it has become common to find web pages with videos included, this is because a video helps to capture the attention of the users and makes it easier to inform them about any type of information.
- Animations: animations are cartoons that have different uses, such as the deployment of interactive drawings, which can capture the attention of users, are recommended for web pages, since they are easy to create and take up little memory.
- Sounds: lately you can add sound to web pages, you can also download audio files used on mobile devices. It is usually in MP3 format due to the quality it offers.
- Other elements: fairly common elements that are also part of a web page are banners, frames and forms. (Akus.net, 2012)

### **ACRIM website analysis**

Once having thoroughly analyzed what a web page is, its elements and existing types, it is necessary to perform an analysis of the web page of the association under study, ACRIM, in order to know how it is structured and see the main changes that should be carried out in order to achieve national and international positioning, and in turn, achieve the desired sales increase.

In the first place it is important to know that the domain of the website of the association [www.acrim.org.ec](http://www.acrim.org.ec) fulfills the necessary requirements to be an easy address to remember, it is composed of the name of the same "ACRIM" and with an extension. The extension of this is ".org", since as mentioned above it is used for non-profit organizations, the ACRIM when creating this web page belonged to MIPRO so it is understood that it was a non-profit association, and this, although it has already become part of the SEPS, in the SRI it continues to be a non-profit organization, so no modification to this extension has been made. It is also composed of ".ec" since this extension belongs to Ecuador and this association is formed in this country.

When a web page is opened, the first thing that appears is the homepage, so it is very important that it be striking, clear and concise. Being the first thing that users will see when they enter the page of the association, it must capture the attention of them, for

which images related to the products they offer have been used, especially images of coffee, which is the main product of ACRIM, so an image related to the city where it is located has also been used. In addition, you can see phrases that describe the quality of the products, the features that ACRIM presents, as well as some important news of the association. In the final part of the initial page there is a map indicating where it is located, ending with another phrase that highlights one of the main qualities of the association. The content of the page is available in two languages: in Spanish (native language) and in English, which allows companies from foreign markets to also know and understand the information found in it.

Image 33. Homepage of the ACRIM website.



Source: ACRIM.

Image 34. Homepage of the ACRIM website.



Source: ACRIM.



The next option in the menu bar of the page is "Who we are" in this section you can find information clearly about the association as its mission, vision, history, purpose of the organization, the organization in figures, its geographical location, news where there are important data or reports in which the association has participated, and contact in which the telephone and mail of the different directives of the organization are shown, as well as a contact form to directly ask any question or doubt that the user have, which will be answered as soon as possible all with the aim of generating trust in users and potential customers who visit the page.

Image 35. "Who we are" section of the ACRIM website.



Source: ACRIM.

Image 36. Contact form available on the ACRIM website.



Source: ACRIM.

Then we find the section “Products”, where you can find all the products offered by the association. By clicking on each of these, a description opens showing the main features, the place where it is produced, among other important aspects of the product, as well as images that show the same. The options that are found are green coffee, special coffees, roasted coffee, banana, cocoa which were described above. Also, there is the option of certifications in which the different certificates with which the products count are mentioned.

**Image 37. “Products” section of the ACRIM website.**



Source: ACRIM.

Subsequently, there is the section "Services" which shows the services that are carried out internally by the association with the purpose of informing the visitors to the page, some of the controls that are carried out in the association. This section contains information on the commercialization of the ACRIM, where the markets to which the products of this association have been listed, in the technical advice the institutions that are part of the training committee for the members of the association are listed and the association, and the quality control where it is detailed how this process is carried out in the ACRIM.



**Image 38. “Services” section of the ACRIM website.**



Source: ACRIM.

The last two sections that are in the menu bar are biodiversity and culture, and TPL. In the first one you will find information about the region itself, where some of the best-known national parks are described by the great biodiversity they have, the same ones found in the Ecuadorian East, as well as the culture of the province of Zamora Chinchipe, which is where the ACRIM is located. Finally, in the TPL option "Clean Production Territory" details are given about this declaration, which was described in the previous chapter.

**Image 39. “Biodiversity and Culture” section of the ACRIM website.**



Source: ACRIM.

By analyzing each of the elements that this web page has and the structure of it, you can classify this page on corporate websites, as it is the official website of the association and you will find information describing it, and it shows the products that are offered, however, to achieve the desired results, which are basically to increase sales in the national market and try to be known in the foreign market in order to increase the exports of their products, this web page it has to become an online store, that is, the ACRIM must add to its website the online sale option, in order to provide a better service to its potential buyers and greater access to the purchase of the products. Since e-commerce is one of the best options when carrying out commercial transactions worldwide, implementing this service within the association would allow it to have a great advantage over its competition, above all national.

### **Costs**

The price ACRIM pays for publishing its website on the Internet, with its own name, domain and hosting is \$ 140 per year. This payment is made to the company "Paper and Pencil" which is located in the city of Loja, Ecuador. This company is dedicated to web design, so it has been chosen by the association to make its website and publish it on the Internet.

### **Creation of an online store**

For the creation of an online store it is essential to follow a series of steps so that it shows the desired results:

1. To choose name and domain of the online store: choosing a good name for the online store is essential. As mentioned above, both the name and the domain play an important role, so they must be descriptive and short, as well as easy to write and remember.
2. To select a good hosting company: as it is known, the hosting helps to store the files that are part of a web page, so the better the server there are more benefits for the users and for the positioning in the search engines, since It will have a better response time. A slow online store will cause users to get tired and leave the page.

3. To pick a warranty emitter: if you are going to create an online store it is essential to choose a distributor that is responsible for directly sending the products, which customers acquire in the online store, to your home on time and without having suffered any hurt.
4. To choose a CMS for E-Commerce: to choose a correct CMS must take into account the requirements and needs of the client, ease of access, use and management and optimization in SEO. The CMS allow the selection of design templates, free or paid, that will cover the needs of the company. You have to choose an attractive design and directed to the function that the company fulfills.
5. To add payment systems: it is advisable to offer the greatest amount of means of payment for the convenience of the clients. for those customers who do not have their credit card at hand, these days this method is widely used; bank transfer used by clients who do not yet have sufficient confidence to enter their banking information in these pages; credit or debit card are the most used method in e-commerce, in addition the cost for this service, charged by banks, is reduced; It is also recommended to offer the cash on delivery for customers to pay when the product arrives at your home, it is used by users who do not fully trust in online commerce.
6. To create a blog and social networks: to attract traffic to the online store it is essential to create a blog that talks about the business sector, and that serves to promote the products indirectly or directly. For this it is also important to disseminate the contents through social networks.
7. To create advertising and online marketing campaigns: creating an online store is just the beginning of a company's work, the results start to be optimal when it is made known through online marketing or advertising campaigns on the Internet. It is important to apply online marketing strategies to publicize the brand and products. The monitoring that is given to these campaigns should be daily and constant to, in this way, see the benefits or disadvantages they give to know which ones to continue using and which ones do not.



(Ventura, 2016)

### **Main features of ACRIM's on-line store**

The first thing that must be implemented in the ACRIM website is an extra section in the menu bar called "Store". Here the first thing that visitors should do is register, that is, create an account with their email, personal information and a password with which they can access to make purchases in ACRIM. It is important that this has an excellent presentation, since the buyer does not have the possibility of observing the products physically, so they must be presented in the best possible way using clear images and videos.

In addition, this section should have some important features so that the user's shopping experience is pleasant and satisfying, these are:

- **Catalog:** it is one of the main presentation tools, since this is where all the products with which the company counts and that are available to buyers are disclosed, as well as showing the variety of each one and the price of it. The images are what connect customers with the product, these together with a short and detailed description, influence the purchase decision.
- **"Layered" navigation** that allows buyers to divide the catalog into categories and sub-categories that allow faster navigation. You can also count on a search engine that is fast, functional and effective that provides concrete and correct results.
- **Updates:** it is essential to keep the existing products updated, checking that there are existing products to avoid inconveniences at the time of purchase.
- **Accessible information about the purchase:** the buyer must always know which products she/he is acquiring, that is, entering his shopping cart. In addition to being able to modify your purchase quickly and easily.
- **Easy payment process:** when the customer has finished making their purchase, they must have access to make the payment quickly and easily, to avoid inconveniences and dislikes of the consumer.

- Security: the user, when providing his data in an online store, must be sure that he is carrying out his transactions with serious companies and that the data granted will be used only for the detailed purposes, as well as having the certainty that they will not be intercepted by third parties at the time of the transaction. For this, it is very important to have a digital certificate that legitimizes the client the seriousness of the matter.
- Transportation, handling and tracking: customers must be informed of the medium in which their order will be transported to their home, as well as allowing them to track it so that the place where the package is at all times is known.
- Comments on the products: allowing customers who have already purchased the product to make their comments about it is important for the purchase decision of new customers. It is a tool that many of the buyers want to find on a web page both to read comments already available, and to add yours.

## **Sales procedure**

### **Ordering and dispatchment system**

At this point, the client must be informed about different stages of products to arrive clients' homes, so we need to execute the following steps:

1. The first step is the order that the client makes, where he/she enters his/her personal data, name, address, email, among others. Here, before confirming the order, the client will have to confirm their data after entering them, in order to correct errors if they exist.
2. Then proceed to receive the order in the association, where there will be a person in charge of verifying the same and check the customer's data. In addition, it will be verified that the respective payment has been made in the terms proposed.
3. The person in charge of this process will proceed to verify that there is existence of the ordered products in the warehouse, besides verifying that all the data of the order, such as price, quantity, among others, are correct. Subsequently, an email will be sent to the customer where they will be

informed of the total cost of the order, the price of the product plus the cost of shipping.

4. After that, the electronic invoice and the estimated time of arrival of the order will be sent. Along with this a tracking code will be sent, with this you can enter the website of the contracted transport company and see where the package is located.
5. The person in charge of the order will be waiting until it arrives at the client's address. Likewise, you will have to be willing to assist the customer in case of any doubt or problem that may arise with respect to the delivery or the product.
6. The association will be willing to make any refund or reimbursement in case the situation warrants it.

### **Shipping System**

The success of an online store depends a lot on services of transportation and delivery. To sell a quality product that arrives in bad condition or does not reach its destination, will generate disadvantages and losses for the company. In the country there are several shipping agencies, however, it is important to choose the option that best suits the needs of the association considering the cost, insurance, delivery time, among other factors.

For this reason, to choose the transport company that best suits the ACRIM, it is important to consider the following factors:

- The reliability that the shipping agency presents, that is, that it offers a guarantee of delivery and seriousness in its work.
- The cost of the shipment they offer, that the rates are competitive.
- The volumetric weight that they allow to send: weight and measurements of the package.
- That has national and international coverage.
- Optimum delivery time.
- Technology that allows the tracking of the package.

- Merchandise Insurance.

Considering these features, we have analyzed three shipping agencies working at national and international level: Correos Del Ecuador, Servientrega and DHL.

### **Correos Del Ecuador**

Correos del Ecuador is a public company that provides postal and logistic services nationally and internationally, present in the country for 183 years. The products and services that this company offers have been modernized according to the needs of customers and the market. The company has a wide range of products and services, among which it offers the sending and receiving of correspondence and parcels, complementary services, money transfer, mailbox management, postal items, postal packaging, advertising, and philately. Correos Del Ecuador has 302 agencies, branches and windows with presence in the 24 provinces of the country, with coverage in 193 countries. (Correos Del Ecuador, 2017)

Correos del Ecuador offers the Exporta Fácil program, which serves to facilitate the exports of micro, small and medium enterprises, artisans, and actors of the popular and solidary economy of the country. This is a "simplified, fast and economic system of exports by postal mailings through the public operator Correos del Ecuador". (Exporta Fácil, 2017)

In order to use Exporta Fácil program, it is important that the value of the merchandise does not exceed \$5,000, and the maximum weight allowed for each package is 30 kilograms. In addition to several benefits that this provides as insurance of the merchandise, tracking of the package through the web page, direct contact with the company in case of any question or doubt. For corporate clients there are extra benefits such as credits, discounts, door-to-door service and free customs procedures.

Another benefit provided by the program is the mandatory insurance for all exported merchandise whose value exceeds \$50 that covers losses, damage or spoil, with a deductible value of 10%. This value will be charged at the moment the export process is completed at the Correos Del Ecuador windows.

- Jewelry, crystals and porcelain: 2%
- Other merchandise: 1.5%

Exporta Fácil provides two exportation modalities: EMS and Certificate.

1. EMS: It is the fastest service and receives priority treatment at local, national and international level. A barcode is assigned to each shipment, which is in the guide, with this you can track the package from leaving the offices to its final destination, from the website.

Weight:

- National: Does not have a weight limit.
- International: Up to 30 kilograms of weight or according to the weight limits established by each country of destination.

Features:

- Delivery method: At the place of destination.
  - Dimensions of the package: 1.05m wide x 1.05m high x 1.05m deep.
  - Tracking and tracking: through web page.
  - Insurance: in national shipments insurance is optional, for international shipments if you have insurance.
  - Coverage: 192 countries.
  - Compensation.
  - Delivery time: 5 to 12 days.
2. Certificate: It is the regular postal service; it has the assignment of a barcode for its tracking on the Internet. It has a standard treatment and its delivery times are more delayed than the EMS.

Weight:

- National: Does not have a weight limit.
- International:

Small package: 2 kg. For sending samples mostly.

Postal commission: 30 kg or according to the weight limit established by the country of shipment.

Features:

- Delivery method: At the place of destination.
- Dimensions of the package: 1.05m wide x 1.05m high x 1.05m deep.
- Tracking and tracking: Through web page.
- Insurance: in national shipments insurance is optional, for international shipments if you have insurance.
- Coverage: 192 countries.
- Delivery time: 7 to 15 days.
- Compensation.

Below is a table showing delivery times to some countries of the two modes will display Exporta Fácil:

**Table 4. Delivery times in EMS and Certificate.**

TIEMPOS					
Zonas	Cobertura	EMS		CERTIFICADO	
		Mínimo (días)	Máximo (días)	Mínimo (días)	Máximo (días)
Zona 1	Pacto Andino	5	6	7	9
Zona 2	EEUU	5	6	7	9
Zona 3	Canadá e islas de Centroamérica	5	6	7	9
Zona 4	Europa	7	9	10	11
Zona 5	Asia	10	12	13	15
Zona 6	Resto del mundo	10	12	13	15

Source: Exporta Fácil, 2017.

In Correos del Ecuador, the shipment of a sack of coffee in grain of 100 pounds, which is the weight with which it works within ACRIM, at a national level has an approximate cost of \$ 22.85, while internationally it costs \$ 382, 70 On the other hand, a box of 20cm wide, 25cm long and 16cm high with a weight of 12 pounds, where 20

bags of 250 grams of MAYU are packed, has a national cost of \$ 6,16 and internationally \$ 160.

### **Servientrega**

Servientrega Ecuador SA is one of the most important companies in the country specialized in transport, logistics and communication, with a wide coverage nationally and internationally, which was born on April 11, 1994. It has reached more than 80% of the Ecuadorian market, reaching more than 308 cities, with more than 2,100 transactions per day. It offers several services among which are the transport of merchandise and documents, promotional logistics, packaging and packaging, distribution of publications, and international box (Global Box). It also sends to more than 200 countries around the world. (Servientrega, 2015)

Servientrega handles two types of transport of merchandise: Premiere Merchandise and Industrial Merchandise. The first type "Premier Merchandise" is aimed at natural customers and companies that handle multilevel sales, either by catalog or internet, which have high distribution needs and which has a guide that covers a unit for a single recipient. The service also offers collection and delivery of door-to-door packages, sending them on the same day, reaching towns and cities with difficult access. Also, there is the possibility of tracking the package through the website of the company, convenient payment methods such as for corporate clients, credit payments are offered, you can pay with any means of payment and through a single payment. Electronic bill.

The second type of shipment is "Industrial Merchandise" this, meanwhile, is used for companies that have a high volume of shipments to chain stores, distributors, wholesalers, among others. It has a logistics process that has minimum delivery times, minimum cargo handling, media, security systems and specialized technology to provide information on each shipment made. The tracking of the merchandise can be done through a bar code on the company's page. Also, customers are provided with special software to keep track of shipments and billing, this without an additional charge. (Servientrega, 2015)

Servientrega has managed to position itself as the leading transport company nationwide, all thanks to the delivery times and the security it provides. Delivery times within the country vary between 24 to 72 hours maximum, while international shipments can last from 2 to 5 days.

**Table 5. International delivery times**

<b>Destiny</b>	<b>Time (Days)</b>
Miami	2
Rest of the USA, Canada	3
Colombia (Bogota)	2 to 3
Rest of Colombia	3 to 4
South and Central America	2 to 3
Spain, Italy, France	3
Rest of Western Europe	3 to 4
Eastern Europe	4 to 5
Asia	5
Rest of the World	5

Source: Servientrega, 2015. Elaborated by: Author.

Servientrega allows a maximum weight per package: 100000 kilograms. To be a corporate client and enjoy the benefits of this, you have to invoice 200 monthly minimum dollars. With respect to insurance, the company tries to maintain direct communication with the means of transport that carry the merchandise, in order to avoid any inconvenience. In addition, you try to deliver the package in the time allowed, for which the client can verify if this requirement was met. In case of any damage, Servientrega assumes full responsibility for the merchandise declared by the customer. Also, another security factor implemented is to assure the customer that the merchandise will arrive as it was sent, for which great efforts have been made to have a minimum handling of the boxes, envelopes or packaging.

## **DHL**

Deutsche Post DHL is a transport and parcel company recognized worldwide. It was founded in San Francisco, United States in 1969, however, in 1978 the headquarters of this company moved to Germany. It currently has a 74% share in the global market. DHL Ecuador, with 33 years of work in the country, has its headquarters in Quito and



Guayaquil. It offers several services among which are global shipments through air, sea, land and rail transport, storage, packaging, repairs, deposits, distribution of mail and international freight, logistics, among others.

“DHL is present in more than 220 countries and territories of the planet, this makes us the most international company in the world. With more than 350,000 employees, we provide solutions for an almost infinite amount of logistics needs. DHL is part of the world's leading postal and logistics company Deutsche Post DHL Group, and includes the DHL Express, DHL Parcel, DHL E-Commerce, DHL Global Forwarding, DHL Freight and DHL Supply Chain business units.”  
(DHL, 2015)

In Ecuador E-Commerce service that works in the rest of the countries is still not developed, however, DHL Ecuador has a program called Pymexporta which aims to simplify the internationalization process of all the micro and small companies in the country. Among the solutions provided by Pymexporta are door-to-door service, advice on foreign trade and logistics, training, tracking and control of shipments, dynamism for sample shipments, competitive prices and different forms of payment. This program seeks to help micro and small companies to make their shipments both nationally and internationally with highly competitive prices and discounts according to the volume of shipments. (Pymexporta, 2017)

Pymexporta has the BASC certification which guarantees security in the customs and in the control of drug trafficking. In addition, it has its own GPS system that allows you to track shipments through its website. Pymexporta has a payment policy of 15 days counted from the issuance of the invoice, also has different types of billing. In terms of delivery times these vary depending on the destination, nationwide can vary between 24 to 48 hours, while internationally delayed between 4 to 7 days. The package insurance is included in the shipping cost and the maximum weight allowed is 70 kg. (Pymexporta, 2017)

At DHL, the shipment of a sack of 100-pound coffee beans internationally has a cost of \$ 1070.16. For what the company recommended to send in boxes of 25 kg, since internationally has a cost of \$ 488.21 where sending two boxes to complete the 100

pounds the cost is \$ 976.42. A box of 50 kg of coffee, with insurance, nationally has a cost of \$ 160.87 and without insurance \$ 146.83. On the other hand, a box of 20cm wide, 25cm long and 16cm high with a weight of 12 pounds, of MAYU coffee, insured nationally it costs \$ 40.23 and without insurance \$ 26.23; while at an international level it costs \$ 290.75.

### **Analysis**

After the analysis of shipping agencies, we approve to use Ecuadorian Postal Service, “Correos Del Ecuador” because the prices are lower in relation to the analyzed competition, both nationally and internationally, which prevents the price of the product from becoming more expensive. Although shipping times are lower in Servientrega, unfortunately this agency does not send coffee or any type of food, so it is not possible to work with it.

### **Payment methods**

In e-commerce it is important to have a secure payment system, since this factor is one of the most fixed by users when making a purchase, in addition to providing seriousness to the online store. An electronic payment system is a transaction, through the internet, where a payment is made through a financial institution, but this entity must be a third party different from the seller and buyer. In general, there are three main actors: a buyer, a seller and a financial institution that is usually a bank.

Online payment systems vary widely in different countries around the world. For example, in Asia or Europe credit cards are not frequently used as a means of payment, while in the United States it is the most common form. In China, checks or cash are widely used. In Japan, on the other hand, bank transfers and payments against reimbursements are the most used means in online purchases. (Laudon & Guercio Traver, 2014)

There are several online payment methods, but the most commonly used are:

- Bank Cards (credit or debit)
- PayPal

- Bank transfers or deposits.
- Pay-Phone
- •Cash on delivery.

## **Credit Cards**

Online purchases have become very common these days. Most web pages of all kinds around the world offer the option to sell online, where each of these allows you to make payments from sales with bank cards, since it is one of the fastest and simplest forms to make a payment on the internet. To formalize the purchase in an online store, when paying with a bank card, you can choose whether to do it with a credit or debit card, but for this it is important to know what each one means and how they work.

A credit card allows the holder of the same to have a limited credit limit with which he can make purchases in establishments that allow this system. This card allows buying and paying in the future, that is, the owner can start paying the debt incurred, usually the next month, so it is not necessary that the account has funds at the time of making the purchase. The cardholder does not acquire the debt with the provider of the good or service, but with the financial institution to which the credit card belongs, generally small interest is generated by this action. On the other hand, in the debit card the holder of the same will have access only to the amount of money that he has in his current account of the bank to which he is associated. So at the time of purchase, the owner must have money without the possibility of spending more.

The process of payment by credit or debit card in an online store works as follows. First of all, it is important to make sure that the website where you are going to buy is safe, so it is important to look at the secure purchase stamps that are usually at the bottom of the page. Then, and once all the products that are going to be acquired and placed in the cart have been selected, it is important to verify that the products and the price match what was requested. When the payment process is passed, it is passed to a secure tunnel through an SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) security system which protects customer information, protecting it from third parties. All card data must be filled out and the financial institution sends a security code to the cardholder as a security

mechanism, when accepting and completing the purchase, the buyer's bank immediately credits the amount of money to the supplier's bank.

## **PayPal**

PayPal is an online payment platform founded in 1997 in California, United States, which became officially owned by eBay in 2002. Currently, it operates throughout the world, serving as an electronic alternative to traditional payment methods. It is one of the largest online payment platforms. PayPal is one of the easiest and safest ways to pay and receive online payments. It has reached more than 203 million accounts worldwide and is located in 202 countries. (PayPal, 2017)

It is one of the most used online payment methods, in these days, for the security and confidence that it offers to the clients, since they can pay in the way they prefer, credit cards, bank accounts, among others, without having to share the financial information with the institutions, every time they make a purchase. The buyer can make his/her payment online with PayPal only by entering his email and password with which he registered on this platform.

To create a PayPal account is really simple, what you have to do first is register on the platform. A registration process is followed where the personal data are entered and a credit or debit card is associated with which you want to work to make the payments in the future. When making the purchase, if you pay with this system all you have to do is enter the email and the password with which you registered, and then the selling party will not see the personal data or information of the buyer's card. Immediately, PayPal transfers the purchase amount from the account of the person who bought it to the seller's account.

A problem exists when wanting to associate a company with PayPal, since in order to offer the payment option with this platform, a large amount of documentation must be submitted. In addition to this, for MSMEs that sell online, another limitation is the high fees charged for each transaction, this is due to the strong position it has reached in the world market. But, the important thing about offering this payment method is that it generates prestige and seriousness to the online store.

## **Bank Transfers or Deposits**

Bank transfers or deposits are the simplest payment methods to implement in an online store, since the seller only has to provide an account number and the name of the bank in which he has to make the deposit or to which he has to make the transference. It is important that the seller send an email informing the seller that he has received the transfer and that the order is confirmed.

The advantage of this payment method is that no commission is charged to the seller, and the company that sells sends the product when it is confirmed that the payment has been made. On the other hand, the advantage for the buyer is that it provides greater security when buying online, since you should not enter any personal information or information from your bank cards, the transaction is handled directly by the financial entity. However, the biggest disadvantage of this method is that there can usually be a delay when making a purchase, since it can take a period of 48 hours between the buyer to transfer the amount and the seller receives the same and send the product. This usually delays the arrival of the order which generates discomfort to the client.

Although bank transfers are becoming less common, in our country it is still a widely used method, given the distrust that still exists of making payments on the Internet.

## **PayPhone**

Since smartphones or smartphones circulate in the world market, the possibility of using mobile devices as means of payment has become a reality. Through mobile applications, payments can be made in physical and virtual stores that are associated with this option. The most recent and innovative APP that is positioning itself in Latin American countries is PayPhone.

PayPhone is a recent mobile application that appeared in the market and with which you can buy and sell safely. The buyer does not need to share their personal or financial information with any store at the time of purchase. All you have to do is register with PayPhone indicating your country and cell phone number, since this will work later, a security code will be indicated with which the account will be validated. Then we proceed to enter the personal data of the client and finally, the credit or debit cards are

registered with which we will work. At the time of purchase, transactions will be made only by giving the cell phone number, the customer will receive a notification with a unique code with which the transaction will be made instantly. The PayPhone application will be responsible for making the payment, working internally with the bank of the buyer and seller. (PayPhone, 2017)

For a company to join Pay-Phone Store and to charge its customers through this application, it must fulfill certain requirements. The registration will be made on the PayPhone website where you will have to provide information about the company such as the country, R.U.C, company name, commercial name, commercial activity, address and location, as well as financial data of the company. The data will be verified by PayPhone and an email will be sent where the necessary documentation to complete the registration will be indicated. To charge for a sale, the seller must enter your account in PayPhone Store, here you must enter the value you want to collect, the customer's phone number will be requested, where the client's photo will appear and the seller must confirm the sale, immediately a receipt of payment will be generated which will be sent to the client to confirm that the transaction was successful. (PayPhone, 2016)

### **Cash on delivery**

The payment against reimbursement is one of the methods of payment that every time is used less in the e-commerce. In this method the customer pays at the moment of receiving the product, that is, he/she makes the payment to the transport company that takes the order to his home. In general, transport agencies charge high fees for this service, which is usually charged to the customer, which causes the cost of the product to rise.

The advantages of this method are that it encourages many customers to buy online stores that offer this form of payment, since they can pay when they receive the product, which generates confidence. However, it has disadvantages for the seller, since there is the possibility that the customer rejects the order when it arrives at his home, which would cause the transport costs to be borne by the selling company.

## **Application**

After making an analysis of the different payment methods most used today, we have proceeded to choose three methods to implement them in the ACRIM online store:

- Credit Cards: MasterCard, Visa and Diners Club.
- Bank transfers or deposits.
- PayPhone.

These payment methods have been chosen for different reasons. In the first place, bank cards are one of the most widely used methods at the national and international level when making an online purchase, since little by little the security measures in this process have been worked hard, which has allowed each time it is more reliable to make a payment online using a credit or debit card. Bank transfers or deposits will be implemented due to the fact that at a national level there are still people who do not trust the internet completely, so they prefer to make payments for their online purchases in the traditional way, many times not because they do not trust in the company that sells, but because they do not have sufficient confidence in entering financial data on the internet or simply because they are small stores that do not have bank accounts so they have to pay through deposits. Finally, PayPhone because it is a mobile application that is being used more and more frequently both nationally and internationally, in addition to the registration of the Association does not generate high and detrimental to the same commissions.

## **Management of Reimbursements in Payment Methods**

In order to provide more confidence to consumers it is important that an online store offers the option of refund for any reason that may happen. This will somehow help the positioning of the store. Some reasons for making a refund may be that the requested product is not available for the date that the client requested or he regrets the purchase, in addition to any incident that may occur in the way of sending the order.

In these cases, reimbursements will be made as follows:

- In the case that the payment was with bank cards, you must enter the POS and make the refund of the exact amount to the customer. Likewise, the POS system will return to the seller the commission charged for the transaction.
- When a transfer or deposit was made, the only thing that must be done is to ask the client for the bank account number to make the transfer with the same amount of money.
- In the case of PayPal or PayPhone, you must enter the seller's account and the money will be refunded to the customer.

### **Electronic billing**

Working with electronic invoices has become a modality in many parts of the world, including Ecuador. According to the Internal Revenue Service, electronic invoicing is "another form of issuance of sales receipts that fulfills the legal and regulatory requirements required by the SRI, guaranteeing the authenticity of its origin and integrity of its content." (Servicios de Rentas Internas, 2015)

A digital sales receipt has the same legal effects as a physical invoice, that is, both evidences the exchange of goods or services for an amount of money. Electronic invoicing takes place through digital means and it will have legal validity only if it contains an electronic signature. Some of the documents that can also be issued electronically, apart from the invoices, are: credit notes, debit notes, withholding vouchers and referral guides.

Among the benefits offered by electronic invoicing are the reduction of time when sending receipts, contributes to the environment since paper or printing inks are not used, it offers greater security in the safekeeping of documents, there is less possibility of falsifying the documents. (Servicios de Rentas Internas, 2015)

For being able to issue electronic receipts, you must first submit a request to the SRI through its website. The SRI will authorize the issuance of these vouchers, provided that it has an electronic signature, a software that generates electronic vouchers (its own or using the free tool for electronic vouchers), an internet connection and a password to access the services of the SRI in line. Once the application for the issuance



of electronic vouchers has been accepted, the SRI will provide a software tool to generate, formulate, sign and send these vouchers, which can be downloaded and installed for free from the SRI website. (Servicios de Rentas Internas, 2015)

### **Positioning of the Website**

The positioning of a website is one of the key points to make it succeed in the market. Web positioning is all the techniques that allow a web page to appear as one of the first options when making a search on Internet search engines such as Google, YouTube, Bing, among others. Attracting visitor traffic to the website is essential, since in this way future buyers are obtained. For this, it is important to apply the correct digital marketing and positioning strategies.

### **Social Media Marketing (SMM)**

Social Media Marketing or SMM is a tool that allows you to promote a web page combining the objectives of Internet marketing with social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest or blogs, micro-blogging sites, sites in where content is shared, among others, in order to reinforce relationships between the company and customers or between customers, maintain or attract new customers, or position a brand. The organization of the company that owns the website is the one that will allow the success of the same with the help of the SMM, that is why it is recommended that the owners be active and proactive when communicating their products and services to their clients, all this with the aim of positioning itself in the minds of consumers.

The SMM has several objectives such as generating traffic to the website, protecting the brand and maintaining a reputation with consumers, increasing contacts, reaching the target audience, so this is one of the best options when wanting to position the brand. One of the greatest advantages offered by this method is that you can receive feedback and advice from users who visit the page, since they will want to interact with the products and services, ideas that are in the online store, for which they will give opinions. The best options to promote a page are:

- Facebook Ads: When you want to have a massive presence this is the best option. You can choose the budget with which the company wants to work, it can be per day or according to the needs of the same. In addition, you can segment the audience you want to reach.
- YouTube Ads: In this platform ads are given in the form of videos where you pay for each visualization that it has. In case the user skips the ad, it has no cost.
- Twitter Ads: The ads given on this platform are in the form of tweets, trends and account suggestions. The size of the audience or the frequency of visits will be those that establish the cost.
- LinkedIn Ads: It is the best option to improve the profile of the company. The ads are direct, like Facebook, you can segment and select what budget you want to work with.
- Instagram or Pinterest: It is used when the activity of the company focuses more on a visual or aesthetic aspect, since the ads on these platforms are through images. (Lane, 2014)

### **Search Engine Marketing (SEO and SEM)**

Within Online Marketing, having a good positioning in search engines is one of the most important and effective ways to publicize a web page. SEO and SEM are the most used online positioning techniques, since they allow a web page to get a better position when making a search on any search engine such as Google, Yahoo or Bing, with the sole objective of achieving that this page is easily found.

SEO or Search Engine Optimization is a set of techniques that aim to improve the visibility of a web page in search engines, naturally or organically, without having to pay. This is done with the aim of attracting quality traffic to the website. We try to position and maintain it for a long time in the first results in search engines most frequented by users, so it is important to determine the keywords with which they can find the page. These keywords must be related to the products, activities or services offered by the website.

To achieve positioning among the first positions of a search is important to perform tactics from the optimization to the development of the content of the website. For this it is essential to follow two steps: Optimize the website for Google and Position the website in Google. The first step refers to the importance of the page having necessary information for customers, as well as being designed so that search engines know what is offered or what the page is dedicated to and where to locate it where necessary. The second step is to be among the first positions when a search is made, in order to get more visits, this is where the determination of the keywords comes into play.

On the other hand, SEM or Search Engine Marketing are the advertising campaigns that can be advertised on Google platforms. In online marketing, like SEO, is one of the most used methods. Basically, the SEM manages a pay-per-click system, that is, each time a user enters the link to the website, an amount of money must be paid. The price paid for the campaign depends on the budget that the advertiser has, since this is the one that decides what plan it requires. One of the advantages is that you can have more control of how many visits the page has.

Google AdWords is the most used Google advertising platform to apply the SEM strategy. It is divided into the search and display network. In the search network are Google search sites and others that are not of this, while the display network is millions of websites that are associated with Google, videos and applications, a clear example is YouTube. With AdWords you can create ads that contain texts, images or videos that allow you to advertise in any site or search engine quickly and easily, where you must pay only for clicks. (Danani, 2014)

To create an account on Google AdWords, you must follow the following steps:

1. First you have to create an account in AdWords, for which it is essential to have an account in Gmail, the data and the address of the web page that will be associated will be entered.
2. Subsequently, we proceed to indicate the budget that is going to be invested in the advertisement per day, the target audience is chosen, the location, the keywords and the advertisement. It is important to select the option to receive suggestions and recommendations to improve the performance of the ad.

3. Then, proceed to configure the country, currency and time zone in which the account will be found. Fill these points are very important, because if you want to do campaigns in other countries, AdWords to publish the ads will be guided by the time zone that is placed at this point.
4. In the last step, you will find the options that will allow you to know the movement of the ad, that is, the number of clicks per day.

### **Affiliate Marketing**

Affiliate marketing is a digital marketing strategy that is based on the model of payment for results or obtaining results, that is, the advertiser pays when he starts to see results, not impressions or clicks. It is widely used by small or large companies seeking to promote their products or services, paying in a previously agreed upon way to the web, blogs, among others that help to promote them. Websites, known as affiliates, advertise advertisers through advertisements or promotions. These affiliates receive a commission when a user enters their website and performs any of the actions that are raised previously.

This marketing method involves three parties: the advertiser who is the owner of the product or service, the affiliate who is the one who manages the website where it is going to advertise, and a platform that is the advertising space where the advertisement will be. This type of marketing has benefits for both the advertiser by the fact that only makes the payment if you get results, and for affiliates who focus on sending traffic to the advertiser and charge when you have results or actions occur. To obtain efficient results, it is very important to know well the target audience you are planning to reach, in addition to defining the niche of the website, to be certain that at the moment of promoting, followers will be interested in the information and it will be attractive. There are some companies that are dedicated to providing the service of affiliation, among the best known are: Coobis, Amazon, Adpv, eBay, Zanox, Mercado Libre. Affiliate marketing has three different programs with different remuneration types each:

- Payment for conversion: the payment is made when a client enters the website of the advertiser, referred by the affiliate, and acquires any of the products or services.
- Pay per click: the affiliate receives the payment depending on the number of visitors that have been directed to the web page of the sponsor, that is, they have clicked on the link that was found on the affiliate's page.
- Payment by form: the sponsor makes a payment to the affiliate according to the number of people who have entered their website, thanks to the affiliate reference, and have filled out a form with their data.

### **Off-line advertising**

Offline advertising is a way to promote a brand, products or services, using traditional channels, that is, the internet are not used as a means of dissemination. Each time, this type of advertising, is more used by online stores of all sizes promoting their assets through television ads, magazines, billboards, newspapers, radios, among others. The benefit of using this type of advertising is that almost all people are in contact with any of these media throughout the day, without having to be connected to the internet. The most used ways for advertising off-line are:

- Announcements for the mass media: television, radios, newspapers and magazines are used to broadcast the advertisement. This is because a good number of the users still have contact with these media, being the most expensive television.
- Posters in public spaces: they can be static or animated and can be found in billboards in the street, bus stops or crowded public places.
- Merchandising: attract the attention of the buyer in the place where he makes the purchase decision. Resources are used such as the wrapping of the product, its location, presentation, among others.
- Commercial mail at home: when brochures or flyers are sent to the address of potential buyers.

- Fairs: they are made to inform the various sectors of the products that are offered. In general, these fairs serve not only to get new buyers, but also, to make contact with other companies.

(Monardez Miranda, 2016)

## **Implementation**

Now, that we have analyzed each one of the different digital marketing strategies, ACRIM will implement three of these in order to achieve the best positioning of the association's website:

- Marketing SMM: this strategy is one of the ones that provide the best results, since social networks are currently frequented by people of different ages. Through Facebook and Twitter, which are the most used social networks, not only nationally, but also internationally, different paid advertising campaigns will be promoted, to publicize the ACRIM website. In addition, in these social networks an ACRIM page will be created where information and photos of the different products offered by the association will be provided, as well as having a link on the website to direct users to it.
- SEO Marketing: first, we will try to optimize the website, in such a way that it will provide a greater impact to the users who visit it, as well as making navigating through it easy and fast. In this way Google will consider this as an efficient and functional web page, which will make it be located at the top of the search engine, without having to pay Google for the ads. In addition, a rigorous selection of keywords will be made to find the page.
- Off-line advertising: As this advertising is still widely used and recommended to reach people from different places, it will also be implemented for the positioning of the ACRIM website. It will be advertised through radio and television ads, in addition to applying an efficient merchandising of the product, in order to be attractive and position itself in the minds of consumers. In addition, emphasis will continue to be placed on the holding of fairs, such as the Bracamoros Coffee fair, since thanks to this it has managed to attract more international customers and companies interested in buying the product.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusions**

After a long research in my graduation project, I conclude that E-commerce is one of the most effective and efficient tools when promoting brands, services or products in global market. By means of the creation of an on-line store, micro, small and medium enterprises are more able to perform commercial transactions with different national and international clients. This cyber tool requires minimum investment, knowledge and simple procedures, which motivates us to use it. In this sense, E- Commerce becomes a sustainable alternative for those entrepreneurs who wish to increase their sales level, breaking boundaries and geographic and cultural barriers.

ACRIM is a small association without experience in foreign commerce; since ACRIM sells its products to FAPECAFES that is in charge of exportation. Nevertheless, our association struggles to be part of such exportation processes every day, in order to be recognized in the national market and more widely in the international market. In virtue of Ecuador's government initiative of changing the productive matrix, ACRIM can venture into external trade through the most used option in last years: E-Commerce.

For this it has been concluded that creating an on-line store for ACRIM is fundamental in order to introduce all products to be offered, including raw material and the new brand: MAYU, which is well known in the Ecuadorian market and soon it will enter the international market. ACRIM virtual store is not going to be created from scratch, because ACRIM had a website before. However, online purchase options will be implemented with every tool needed in order to perform commercial transactions on the Internet. Creating an online store, allows us to know in a dynamic manner features and properties of products. It also allows us to interact directly with customers, providing an advantage for the association that will be able to know better clients' preferences, concerns or claims.

For developing these conclusions, it was important to investigate Ecuador's current situation in order to know opportunities that ACRIM has at the time of taking

decisions. Besides it was necessary to examine the association's nature, as well as the way it works and its products, in order to develop a web strategy that is adaptable.

In the same way, it was necessary to find out everything related to the websites and their operation in order that the association knows in advance what it wants to do and where it should focus. By knowing how an online store works with regards to the ordering, shipping and payments system, as well as the reimbursement process, billing among other important elements, it was possible to clearly determine which options will be used in the ACRIM online store, in addition to disclosing information to other associations or companies that wish to venture into electronic commerce.

With regard to the positioning plan, it has been proposed to choose the best options to be able to publicize the association, its products and its new brand. Among those chosen for the association are the use of social networks, search engines and offline advertising, choosing these options thinking clearly about the needs of the association and also because their costs are low and accessible, as well as easy to use. However, other advertising options have been pointed out and described allowing ACRIM to know more about them and select some other convenient option, since the present title work intends to serve as a direction guide for the association.

## **Recommendations**

In this sense, I recommend that Ecuadorian MSMEs use and take advantage of programs offered by our government so they participate in international trading. For that reason, it is important that enterprises are always constantly updating themselves to the changes that occur in national and international markets. They should invest in improving their products' quality and they should enter into electronic commerce in order to reach the international market by eliminating all restrictions or barriers. I also recommend all MSMEs or associations to evolve and to update themselves with respect to creation of an online store because online shopping is very fashionable these days, so they need to maintain a good marketing positioning strategy by constantly updating the website for guaranteeing major satisfaction to all customers.



I recommend ACRIM association updating its web-page often, thus making it more attractive to potential clients and visitors, avoiding slow velocity navigation. If ACRIM implements updating tools for E-Commerce, it would be much easier to trade, to sell and to buy in local, national and international markets.

Bracamoros Fair has helped a lot to know more about ACRIM Association and it has made possible selling coffee sacks to different international enterprises directly. It is very important to increase the sales volume by giving customers the facility of purchasing more, without making them travel to Ecuador and without depending on Bracamoros fair. The website must intend to save all such expenses.

Besides, ACRIM should implement digital marketing strategies in order to publicize its website at national and international levels. For this, it is vital to put a lot of effort into monitoring and constant updating of its web-site, including emission and updating of catalogs, products, prices, etc. An evaluation option should be implemented so clients can qualify products, give their opinions, complaints or recommendations, considering it is fundamental to give immediate response to all these situations in order to satisfy every client needs.

Additionally, ACRIM ought to publicize its new brand, MAYU, by means of its website or through digital marketing strategies. By virtue of the fact that MAYU is an Ecuadorian brand, when it reaches international markets, Ecuador will be accomplishing a high standard commerce reputation, by exporting coffee not as raw material but as added value product.

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