

Community-Led Development Incubator Participant Application 2027-2028

Organization Name	
Name and Title of Contact Person	
Organization Vision or Mission Statement (if available)	
Email of Contact Person	
Organization Physical Address/Location	
Phone Number (WhatsApp) of Contact Person	
Organization Social Media Handles (optional)	
Name and contact information for person who helped you complete this application (if relevant)	

About

The Chain Collaborative (TCC)'s mission is to co-create opportunities and strengthen capacities for community-led change in the coffee sector. Through our Community-Led Development (CLD) Incubator program, we build relationships with emerging and established organizations in coffee-growing regions of Latin America and East & Central Africa, providing access to often first-time funding for their community-driven initiatives. In addition to our CLD Incubator, we consult for impact-driven organizations and companies, train coffee professionals in sustainability through virtual coursework, and innovate across the value stream via special collaborations.

Our Commitment to Community-Led Development

We believe that coffee communities make the best decisions about their own development and that sustainable change comes from local leadership. If we support a community's vision by investing in their leaders who are committed and driven to see change, we believe we can build more equitable and sustainable communities with beneficiaries at the helm of their own initiatives. In sum, we challenge traditional top-down models of development, whereby an outside organization offers a pre-designed service or program, or imposes a project on a community. TCC is different. We invest exclusively in the skills and visions of community-based organizations so that they can bring their own projects to life.

Our Community-Led Development Incubator Program

The CLD Incubator is a three-phased, 18-month opportunity for community-based organizations in coffee-growing regions of Latin America and East & Central Africa to design, carry out, and measure the impact of their own community-driven projects. Participants organizations can be cooperatives, associations, social enterprises, or other formal or informal networks that have a vision to create, implement, and sustain change to impact their local community. Each participant organization nominates up to three leaders to represent them in the Incubator. Latin America Incubator cohorts are conducted in Spanish, while East & Central Africa cohorts are conducted in English. If an organization would like to nominate a leader to represent them who does not speak Spanish or English, they are more than welcome to do so; TCC will hire someone to provide translation throughout the program.

After being accepted into the program, participant organizations complete three program phases: 1) a six-month Learning & Design Phase, 2) a nine-month Implementation Phase, and 3) a three-month Reporting & Offboarding Phase. During the Learning & Design phase, through monthly all-cohort and one-one-one sessions with TCC, participant organizations build relationships with one another, co-develop their project design and evaluation skills, and establish organization-specific project proposals as well as accompanying project budgets, timelines, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks—all with the robust support of TCC.

Once they submit their complete project documents, which they will have designed in collaboration with their community members, participant organizations receive \$15,000 USD to carry out their initiatives and enter the nine-month Implementation Phase. During this time, they fully implement the projects they have prioritized and designed alongside their communities, and continue to meet with TCC on a monthly basis. Finally, during the three-month Reporting & Offboarding Phase, participant organizations apply the monitoring and evaluation frameworks they designed during the program's first phase, reporting on their project's impact; they also offboard from the program and onboard into the TCC Alumni Network, a virtual community for past Incubator participants to continue learning together and accessing support for their community-driven initiatives.

Together, the three phases of the CLD Incubator allow participant organizations to design a community-led project, implement it with robust support, report on its impact, and join an ongoing TCC-led network of changemakers in the coffee sector. To date, Incubator projects have led to increased income generation, knowledge development, the enhanced participation of women and youth in agriculture, greater climate resilience, and more.

Benefits to Participant Organizations:

- Training on international community-led development and regenerative leadership; strategic visioning; project planning; project budgeting and timeline development; monitoring, evaluation, and learning; and partnership development for long-term sustainability—all with a focus on how to use these skills in collaboration with community members to benefit the broader community, both during and after the Incubator program.
- Funding in the amount of \$15,000 USD for a community-designed project.
- Opportunity to collaborate with TCC, other cohort members, and supply chain partners.
- TCC mentorship throughout the program via group and one-on-one meetings.
- Recognition as a TCC partner via social media and other platforms.

Participant Organization Requirements and Eligibility:

The ideal participant organization:

- Is a community-based organization in a coffee-producing region passionate about creating equitable and sustainable change within and alongside their community.
- Has the ability to make an 18-month commitment and complete each of the program phases during 2027 and 2028.
- Is able to engage in remote communication, primarily via Zoom calls and WhatsApp.
- Has the ability to nominate up to three leaders from the organization who can commit to representing the organization in the Incubator through:
 - *Learning & Design Phase:* Once-monthly group calls (2 hours in length), once-monthly individual calls (1 hour in length), and additional time to work alongside their community to develop a project plan and other documents.
 - *Implementation Phase and Reporting & Offboarding Phase:* Once monthly calls, one hour in length, either group or individual, and additional time to implement and measure the impact of their community-designed project.

Application Process:

- Send completed application questions to TCC by February 1, 2027
- Up to two rounds of remote video interviews with TCC staff in February and March 2027 (or before, depending on when application is sent)
- Final selection by March 15, 2027
- Program start: April 2027

Note: If you need support in the translation of this application or would prefer to complete the application verbally, please contact us.

Application Questions

Organization Information

1. What is the history of your organization, enterprise, or community of farmers? Describe how the farmers or farmworkers you engage with are organized today, and how the community is engaged in your initiatives.
2. Tell us about the vision for your initiative, organization, enterprise, or community of farmers. Has your vision evolved over time, and in what ways?
3. What are some of the current challenges that your community is facing and attempting to address? How are you and your community currently addressing these challenges? How do you hope to address them in the future?
4. What are the existing assets, resources, and capacities (human, financial, environmental, or other) in your community? How do community leaders engage with community members to ensure their voices are heard?
5. Has your community led and implemented projects in the past? If so, what were they, and what were the impacts that those projects sparked?

Coffee-Related Information

1. Please describe your involvement in the coffee sector today. If relevant, you may answer the following questions: How many farmers do you work with that are growing and selling coffee? Do you work with male and female farmers? What species or varieties are grown? What are the quality and productivity levels, harvest season details, and average land holdings that you are aware of? If relevant, how do you process coffee for sale? Who do you sell to? Do you engage with farmworkers?
2. What do you see as your current role in the coffee industry? What is the value you bring to community members as related to the coffee industry? What is the vision of your involvement with the coffee industry over time? How do you hope to grow?

Vision for Participation in the Community-Led Development Incubator

1. What would a successful partnership with TCC look like to you? What do you hope to give and what do you hope to receive?

2. Do you have any initial ideas about what type of project you may want to design and implement within and alongside your community as part of the Incubator?

3. Please provide any additional thoughts, ideas, or information that you would like to share with TCC.

References

Please provide up to three professional references who can speak about their experience collaborating with you, and about your commitment to your community.

Name	
Title/Organization	
Contact Information (Email or WhatsApp)	
Relationship to Applicant	

Name	
Title/Organization	
Contact Information (Email or WhatsApp)	
Relationship to Applicant	

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Relationship to Applicant	

Additional Information

- If desired, applicants can send along 2-5 photos that best represent themselves, their community, or their farm, to give TCC a visual of work conducted to date.
- Once completed, send this completed application to [**hello@thechaincollaborative.org**](mailto:hello@thechaincollaborative.org) with the subject line "Your Organization Name – TCC Community-Led Development Incubator Application."
- If needed, TCC can accommodate verbal applications. However, we prefer to start with a written application and encourage applicants to seek support as needed for the written component.
- Should you have any further questions about the Incubator, you may address them to the same email listed above.

Good luck! We look forward to receiving your application!