



# End Evaluation of Solidaridad's Advocacy for Change programme 2016-2020

Volume II Case studies

Aidenvironment

# **End Evaluation of Solidaridad's Advocacy for Change programme 2016-2020**

## **Volume II: Case studies**

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# **Case study 1: Multi Stakeholder platforms in Fresh Fruit and Vegetables in Southern and Eastern Africa**

## **Acknowledgements**

This evaluation has been unique because it has been done entirely at a distance, without any field visits, through long-distance calls (Skype, Whatsapp, direct phone calls or other means). Many thanks to the Project Manager for Southern and East and Central Africa, Karin Kleinbooi, Julius Ssemyalo (Uganda) and Maria Sengelela (Tanzania), and the Mozambique team led by Francisco Nhanale in helping to introduce the research team to external stakeholders for interviews, and to all the Solidaridad staff who gave their time to be interviewed and to review this document.

## Introduction

As a major part of this end-evaluation of the Solidaridad AfC programme, 5 case studies were undertaken. Case studies are focused on a central theme, and usually encompass different project/s falling within this theme, in different countries. This is case study 1, which takes a comparative approach to understanding how multi stakeholder platforms (MSPs) function and with what impact, with a particular focus on MSPs in **Tanzania** and **Uganda**. These countries were selected due to practical reasons (specifically language) and to capture the diversity in progress and outcomes demonstrated in the two countries. Due to research constraints a 'light-touch' research approach (limited interviews with Solidaridad staff only) was applied for **Mozambique**, **South Africa** and **Zambia**, with the intention of incorporating some findings from other geographies. These insights are mainly incorporated into the later sections of this report (impacts and recommendations). The intention is to visit Mozambique later in 2020 for primary field research if COVID-19 allows for the resumption of safe travel.

The project evaluation was conducted by Emma Blackmore, through review of documents on the Advocacy for Change programme and the specific multi-stakeholder platforms in the country and a series of on-distance interviews with project staff, project partners and selected stakeholders (Annex 1.2). The interviews were semi-structured, using a questionnaire which was specifically developed for this case study (Annex 2), and which was altered depending on whether the interviewee was internal Solidaridad staff or external staff. This questionnaire was aligned with the agreed evaluation questions and checklists in the inception report for this assignment. The aim has been to have a limited number of interviews with men and women that represent the diversity of stakeholders, from private, public, civil society and community levels, but the overall number and diversity of interviews was ultimately constrained by the availability of stakeholders to participate within the required timelines, in some cases stakeholders were constrained by a lack of mobile phone and internet coverage, and the list of stakeholders provided to us by the in-country research team.

A draft version of this case study report has been shared with the local Solidaridad team, with adjustments being made based on feedback and leading to this final version.

The aim has been to develop short and to-the-point case study reports. The structure is as follows:

- Section 1: Basic information of the project or projects being part of the case study
- Section 2: Origin, context and relevance
- Section 3: Theory of change
- Section 4: Results and effectiveness
- Section 5: Role and strategies by Solidaridad
- Section 6: Impacts, sustainability and systemic change
- Section 7: Contribution by Solidaridad and external factors
- Section 8: Lessons and recommendations

## Basic information of the project/s of the case study

REC	SAF and East and Central Africa
Project title	Continental Healthy Fruits and Vegetables (Enabling Policy Environment)
Country/ies	Tanzania
Plaza reference no.	1649/1420 EPE G&C - AfricaGap
Overall Objective	Promote an inclusive and competitive F&V sector through adoption of sustainably improved Continental standard, that will enhance the safety and quality products in Africa
Specific Objectives	<p>SO1: Establish, convene and support national and continental level stakeholder dialogues through a multi-stakeholder initiative to discuss continental food safety policy issues.</p> <p>SO2: Formulate a continental voluntary standard for sustainable fruits and vegetables value chains, in order to ensure that fruits and vegetables are healthy (safe) and the product value chains are socially, environmentally and economically sustainable.</p> <p>SO3: Build the capacity of relevant stakeholders, with a special focus on civil society organisations, to effectively engage in dialogue and policy change processes in the Fruit and Vegetable sector.</p> <p>SO4: Create awareness, disseminate knowledge and learning, and provide documented lessons for future improvement of the standard as well as link to other Solidaridad initiative in the continent.</p>
Partners	<p>Tanzania Bureau of Standards</p> <p>Ministry of Agriculture</p> <p>Tropical Pesticides Research Institute</p> <p>Horticultural Training Institute</p> <p>RIKOLTO (formerly VECO East Africa)</p> <p>Hydom Eco farmers</p> <p>Kilimanjaro Certification and Consultancy</p> <p>Home veggies</p> <p>Tanzania Horticultural Association (TAHA)</p>

Platform members	<p>Community Support Initiative Tanzania (COSITA)  Usambara Lishe Trust  Widows encouragement and HIV Aids Foundation  Tanzania Environmental Development Organization  Women Development in science and technology (WODSTA)  Solidaridad  Kibiu Farmers Association  Hydom Eco Farmers  Muunganiko wa Vikundi vya Wakulima Tanzania (MVIWATA)  Beth Farms  Tanzania Bureau of Standards  Ministry of agriculture  Plant Health Services  Horticultural Training Institute, Tengeru  Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO), Arusha  Tropical Pesticides Research Institute  Kilimanjaro Certification and Consultancy  Mesula Ltd  Tanzania Horticultural Association (TAHA)  Rikolto VECO  Homeveg  World Vegetable Centre  Frigoken</p>
Project time period	2016-2020
Project budget	€500,000 (total 5 year period budget). Co-funding was a condition.

REC	REC SA and REC ECA
Project title	EPE Country - Enabling Policy for Improved Livelihoods
Country/ies	Uganda
Plaza reference no.	1419
Overall Objective	Promote an inclusive and competitive horticulture sector through adoption of sustainably improved standard in the F&V sector that will enhance the safety and quality of horticulture products in Uganda.
Specific Objectives	SO1: Establish, convenes and supports national level stakeholder dialogues through a multi-stakeholder initiative to discuss food safety policy issues in Uganda SO2: Formulate a national voluntary standard for sustainable fruits and vegetables value chains, in order to ensure that local and export fruits and vegetables are healthy (safe) and the product value chains are socially, environmentally and economically sustainable. SO3: Build the capacity of relevant stakeholders, with a special focus on civil society organisations, to effectively engage in dialogue and policy change processes in the Fruit and Vegetable sector in Uganda. SO4: Create awareness, disseminate Knowledge and learning, and provide documented lessons for future improvement of the standard as well as link to other Solidaridad initiative in the continent.
Partners	AgriProFocus Uganda Royal Dutch Embassy of Uganda Local CSOs, UVGMA
Platform members	Ministry of agriculture, animal industry and fisheries (MAAIF) Ministry of trade, industry and cooperatives (MTIC) Uganda export promotion board (UEPB) Uganda national bureau of standards (UNBS) Makerere University Kampala National agriculture advisory services (NAADS) Uganda fruits and vegetables exporters and producers association (UFVEPA) National organic agriculture movement in Uganda (NOGAMU) Uganda national farmers federation (UNFFE) Uganda consumer association/ consumer education trust (CONSENT) Uganda fruit and vegetables market vendors association (UFVMA) – vendors Exclusive organics (EO) – Company Farmers pride/Pearl – outgrowers scheme Rikolto Participatory ecological land use management (PELUM) Agriculture Journalist AgriProfocus
Project time period	2016-2020
Budget	689,728 EURO <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Please note this budget is combined with work for tea, and cannot be separated.

## Origin, context and relevance

Work on MSPs in Southern and Eastern African countries in fresh fruit and vegetables emerged from an identified need, and plan, to create an enabling environment for safe production of food by smallholder farmers and subsequently market access. The planned approach was the development of a continental GAP (AfricaGAP) to allow African countries to better negotiate market access with the EU. The plan was to 1) bring together stakeholders in Ghana<sup>2</sup>, Tanzania and South Africa to a platform for shared dialogue, and 2) to develop national standards to work towards solutions for locally and internationally recognised interventions to address food safety. 1) and 2) were designed to support the emergence of AfricaGAP which would be applied continentally. However, after the original proposal was submitted and funding was obtained, AfricaGAP was considered a step too far because of political challenges: there are different trading blocs within Eastern and Southern Africa which are already using their preferred, and different, standards; and whereas Kenya has a national standard, Uganda and Tanzania lacked a national standard which was a necessary building block for a regional standard, both in terms of informing the content of a regional standard (and the negotiating capacity of those countries) and farmers' ability to meet standards.

These projects emerged based on assumptions by Solidaridad that safe fresh fruit and vegetables (FF&V) was a necessity in the respective countries for producers to access markets, improve their incomes and food security, and for consumers to be better protected, and that standards – developed via MSPs – are the most effective way to achieve the production of safe FF&V. There are notable differences in need and rationale for the project from a consumption perspective depending on the country. For example, in Mozambique there was a gap in the market for the supply of locally produced, safe, high quality products as a result of increased demand by a growing middle class and expatriates associated with increased mining in the country). In Uganda and Tanzania questions remain over local consumer demand, specifically the ability of consumers to pay a premium for safe food (a necessity to incentivize producers to make the extra investments necessary) and awareness of the value they place – if any – on food safety. All countries had plans for complementary capacity-building efforts in relation to both the capacity of CSOs to engage in lobbying and advocacy, and in the capacity of smallholder farmers to meet the standards (e.g. through piloting, training etc.) – though the actual delivery of capacity building efforts has been variable (see Section 4).

Projects have therefore focussed on the national level through the establishment of multi-stakeholder platforms to work towards establishing national food safety standards (Tanzania, Mozambique, Uganda, and Zambia), or where a proliferation of standards exists, to harmonize standards and improve the capacity of smallholder farmers to access these standards (as is the case in South Africa, although work in this country has now stalled – see an explanation in Section 4, below).

In both Tanzania and Uganda, MSPs were newly established by Solidaridad. These platforms could be considered national, in the sense that their work focused on national issues. In the case of Tanzania the nationwide platform evolved as a result of the need for food safety standard in the country but the work of the platform became more prominent in the Northern zone of Tanzania, due to its selection as an initial standard pilot area entitled “*Arusha food smart city*”. In Mozambique and Zambia, new platforms have also been established, which build strongly on the existing networks and work in the respective sectors.

In Tanzania, the emphasis has been on developing a national standard for safe and sustainable fresh fruit and vegetables. This was the original aim of the Ugandan platform, but the country manager explained that the government (specifically the Ministry responsible for agriculture) was not very keen on either developing a semi-private standard (using the GlobalGAP system as a benchmark) – due to a lack of capacity to pay the associated annual fees, and to help ensure compliance, or a mandatory

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<sup>2</sup> Ghana withdrew in 2016 because at the time, they had a limited fruit and vegetable scope in their project outfit.

national standard since this was regarded as premature in light of a lack of a wider enabling policy framework. For an enforceable mandatory national standard to be developed, the government thought it more appropriate/useful to develop a broader horticulture strategy and program under which a national standard would later be operationalized.

After funding had been confirmed for the countries, the in-country teams (in Tanzania, Uganda, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia) commissioned research to explore the sector-specific issues in more detail and present them to stakeholders for their buy-in. For example, in Tanzania, an external consultant was used to carry out research (e.g. KIIs with key stakeholders, farmers etc., desk review) to understand the key issues in the sector in relation to safety. Similarly, in Uganda, an external consultancy was commissioned on capacity assessment of key stakeholders to understand their capacity to lobby and advocate for policy change, as well as to carry out a SWOT assessment. The results were presented at the beginning of the platform to its members to help align them around the vision for the sector and to agree on necessary interventions. Later in 2019, a benchmarking learning trip was conducted to Kenya with participation from key public and private sector platform members to understand more about what a successful horticultural sector looks like, and how this relates to standards development and horticultural policy.

In Mozambique, a baseline study and assessment was carried out on the sector to understand the key issues that would need addressing through a national standard. Many gaps were identified, including how food is being stored, that minimum residues levels are being exceeded etc. One of Solidaridad's staff in Mozambique explained that *"we already knew we were going to work on a standard, we thought it was necessary, but wanted to test this perception to see if it was a reality – do those [food safety] gaps actually exist, which with minimal good agricultural practices and training – could be shifted"*. This data was used as a way to ensure credibility of the platform and its work, to raise awareness of the sector stakeholders and to emphasise the need to them of establishing a national standard – rather than as a way to guide the overall approach to working in the sector. In addition, a learning trip was taken in 2017 with key stakeholders to Mauritius to learn from the process they had adopted to create a national standard.

## Theory of change

The AfC programme's theory of change is to contribute to a more enabling policy environment i.e. improved public policies and corporate / private policies, with regulations, mechanisms and incentives for inclusive and sustainable practices. The strategy to do so was by supporting the capacity development of southern CSOs in lobbying and advocating (for systemic changes). Three different lobby and advocacy strategies were defined:

1. *Lobby, direct advice and support*, by directly providing knowledge, advice and practical tools to public and private decision makers to improve policy making and enforcement;
2. *Mobilise & convene multi-stakeholder partnerships and dialogue*, by establishing multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) and dialogue and convening relevant stakeholders;
3. *Capacity enhancement and empowerment*, by supporting and mobilizing civil society to engage in, participate in and contribute to meaningful dialogue and policy change processes.

The specific countries do not have schematic theories of change but rather a long narrative (outlined in the respective inception reports<sup>3</sup>), which are interpreted and summarized for the focus countries below. In both countries the MSPs were the primary entry point and vehicle to deliver on the theory of change. It is through the MSP that advice and support – in the form of standards development, for example, is achieved (strategy 1 above) and lobbying is done. Though capacity building (strategy 3) is a stated feature of most of the projects included in this evaluation, the emphasis has been less on capacity building for lobbying and advocacy (as CSOs had established track records of working in the sector) and more on capacity building of producers to enable them to meet the standards (see section 5 on Solidaridad's strategies).

It should be noted that the ToC for Tanzania is combined with that of South Africa and Ghana in the Healthy Foods for Africa inception report (2016), because the work's original focus was on bringing stakeholders together from these three separate countries to prepare for the development of a continental standard. It can be summarised as follows:

- Improving the FF&V sector in developing countries has a positive impact on the food and nutrition security of the people engaged in the sector and for urban and rural consumers.
- Sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regulations and controls in African countries are limited because of the informality of supply chains but are necessary to protect consumers from health risks and for the broader development of the sector.
- FF&V is important for a healthy diet, and consumption in African countries is growing due to population growth and increased per capita consumption.
- Smallholder farmers are excluded from market opportunities as a result of not complying with standards.
- Tanzania lacks local standards for FF&V, and there is no continental GAP for the local and export market.
- Market opportunities exist in the EU: high per capita consumption levels throughout the year etc., which could be reaped if farmers were able to produce safe and high quality food conforming to an endorsed continental GAP standard.
- Number of different trade blocs EAC, SADC, ECOWAS with different ideologies and no success in bringing them together into one trading block.
- In addition, participation of African Countries at CODEX Alimentarius or "Food Code", has been inconsistent, and lacks continental approach.

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<sup>3</sup> Enabling F&V Policy Influencing for Improved Livelihoods in Uganda. EPE – Fruits and Vegetable Uganda. SECAEC Final inception report. 2016, and the Healthy Foods For Africa inception report.; [Healthy Fruit & Veg for Africa!](#) FRUITS AND VEGETABLES. Solidaridad Eastern and Central Africa Expertise centre. (SECAEC). FINAL INCEPTION REPORT, 2016.

- By using a participatory approach (i.e. an MSP/dialogue table) to bring country-level representatives together an AfricaGAP protocol could be developed – spearheaded by Solidaridad and Dutch Embassies in respective countries – presented to CODEX Alimentarius for recognition and endorsement, with lobbying and influencing to support.
- However, very early on there was an overall recognition by all the project teams, that before this continental approach, there was a need to create MSPs/establish dialogue at a country level (Tanzania, Uganda, Mozambique and Ghana) to first establish national standards, which at the time, did not exist.
- For effective dialogue and lobbying among the CSOs, there is a need to build the capacity of the CSOs on organization, dialogue and management capacity, to be able to effectively dialogue with other stakeholders.
- National standards will lead to increased demand for safe FF&V, which in turn will lead to improved household nutrition and food security: *‘We envisage that through this initiative, the F&V business case for smallholder farmers, traders (Local and Exporters), and governments in Africa, will be enhanced, through improved demand for the product, both at national and international levels.’*

The ToC for Uganda assumes that having a national standard for safe FF&V (later described as UgandaGAP) will help smallholders access markets as well as improve the safety of food for local consumers, some of whom are increasingly safety aware. It is also claimed that it is a necessity in light of national regulations not having the desired effect. However, the consumption element of the ToC is to a certain degree muddled: it talks of increased demand for food safety (in some segments) and under-consumption (in other segments). It is unclear in the ToC what the reason is for the low consumption levels, although there are implications that this is in part due to ‘lost revenues’, presumably from market exclusion. While not well articulated it implies that a national standard could improve market opportunities for smallholder farmers (local, national and regional) leading to improved food security. Though the ToC does mention capacity building, this is not a central component of it, but perhaps deserves more attention if the intervention is to deliver on enhanced market access, as well as safer food. There is also a mention of the use of ICT tools (Rural Horizons) to monitor improvements in capacity of smallholders to meet the guidelines.

In both ToCs the pathways in relation to the standard and increased consumption (both with regards to improving food security and in demand for high quality and safer food) is undefined. There is an assumption that demand for safe and high quality FF&V exists, but the ToC/rationale remains silent on whether this safer food will cost more and whether the purchasing power exist amongst a significantly large portion of the population to pay those premiums to incentivise the necessary investments in production by smallholder farmers. Though there is mention of a business case, the explanation of how this business case arises is weak. There are no specific efforts to address the consumption side, more an assumption that demand will exist for safer FF&V – either locally or in the EU – and that this alone will create the business case for farmers to meet standards and thus for standards to drive change in a sector.

In addition, there is an assumption that having standards in place will lead to farmers being able to access new market opportunities, without much consideration of what is needed at the production level to move farmers towards compliance – through the inception reports do mention plans for capacity building – specifically of CSOs – to more effectively engage in dialogue and policy change processes, the emphasis appears to be more on participating in dialogue and influencing policy than the capacity to meet standards and thus to capitalize on the market opportunities that the ToC emphasizes will be delivered by standards.

However, a number of country programmes have recognized this gap in the ToC and their original vision and have added capacity building of farmers to meet the standard as a key objective. For example, in Tanzania capacity-building objectives were added to the original vision of the platform to ensure the standards development aspect could be realised. In-country staff in Tanzania explained that there was *“no point developing the standard without farmers having the ability to implement. Capacity building*

*started through piloting the standard – key partners took the initiative and the lead in these aspects.”* Work in Mozambique has had the same realization – with capacity of farmers to meet the standard being notably absent from the ToC outlined in its inception report but with efforts now being made to increase those capacities. The country manager recognized that in order for *“the project to have a proper impact, the enabling policy environment needs to be worked on in parallel with getting farmers ready for the market”*.

## Results and effectiveness

This section focuses on results and effectiveness of work in Tanzania and Uganda, as focus countries for this research – although we touch on results in other countries where available.

### Results table, Tanzania

Indicator	Results 2019	Target 2020	comments
# of companies or producers that meet national, international or sector specific sustainability standards or Good Practices	Tanzania: 200 smallholder farmers were trained on the national standard and GAP	Tanzania: 200 farmers are expected to meet the national standard	
# CSOs/POs that are being trained or supported to effectively participate in decision making and dialogue (increased L&A capacities)	Tanzania: 6 CSOs 13 POs	Tanzania: 6 CSOs 12 POs	Presume work is ongoing with the same POs
# of new or improved policies, mechanisms and regulations presented, submitted or adopted by public or private decision makers	Tanzania: 2 mechanisms (standard for GAP and GHP and Control Points and Compliance Criteria for the standard) were drafted and presented to the Ministry of Industries and trade for gazetting	Tanzania: 2 policy on food safety and 1 standard for good production and good handling practices to be adopted	
# of brands and companies (private partners) supported to implement national level regulations/standards	Tanzania: 2 companies engaged in discussions on purchasing fruits and vegetables produced by the farmers implementing the local standard	Tanzania: 2 companies engaged in discussions on purchasing fruits and vegetables produced by the farmers implementing the local standard	Results in 2019 same as target 2020. Discussions ongoing?
# MSPs/networks/dialogue convened or participated in	Tanzania: The project convened 3 regional/national multi stakeholder dialogues in 2019 and participated in 3 strategic meetings and 1 multi-stakeholder dialogue held by TAHA	Tanzania: The project will convene 3 regional/national multi stakeholder dialogues in 2020	

*Please note: it was not possible for the research team to separate out monitoring results for FF&V and tea in Uganda, using the data provided by Solidaridad directly, which means the results would not have been accurate. For that reason the Ugandan results have been excluded from the table above.*

### Convening stakeholders, enhancing dialogue, success in creating the MSP, quality of the MSP, governance, and inclusiveness

The national MSPs are at various stages of implementation. In Tanzania and Mozambique, good progress has been made. In Tanzania, the platform is awaiting the gazetting of the standard. In Mozambique, the standard has a government mandate and is undergoing final drafting changes. In Zambia and Uganda work is still in its early stages.

In South Africa, there were already several private standards being implemented in FF&V and a sense that a new national standard did not need to be developed, but rather harmonization of public and a host of private sector standards would be more constructive. In light of the decision, it was also premature to work on developing a regional standard (AfricaGAP) and build on existing work with a range of horticulture sector stakeholders, became the basis of the established multi-stakeholder platform (with representation from the sector, government, standard bodies, retailers, farmer associations, CSOs, and other private sector partners). This in itself was a major achievement because

the sector is very fragmented, reactionary and there are multiple self-serving interests relating to sustainable development and the inclusion of smallholder farmers in supply chains.

The aim of the South African platform was to coordinate disjointed efforts in the sector, collaborate where necessary and jointly resource the support for smallholders market readiness through the creation of an entry-level harmonized standard for the sector as well as a capacity building approach to facilitate supply chain integration in local markets. Solidaridad promoted the use of an ICT tool (Rural Horizons, which was already relevant to local contexts as it had been benchmarked against existing sector standards in both the fruit and sugarcane sectors by Solidaridad (in separate projects)) to inform capacity assessments and to build producers' capacity and capabilities to work towards achieving one set of standards. This would also demonstrate that harmonization of standards is possible. This need for capacity building to ensure farmers could comply with standards was a shared aim within the MSP. In addition, in 2017, Solidaridad, together with a consortium of sector stakeholders, and with input from other sector stakeholders and experts, applied for EU funding from the SWITCH Africa Green facility. This brought together government, the five (5) major retailers in South Africa, farmer associations, standards bodies and civil society implementation organisations to test and trial the use of a tool to build the capacity of farmers to meet standards, building strongly on the work and sector priorities identified by the MSP. However, due to the evolution of Solidaridad's digital vision, new digital solutions were introduced in 2018 (Farming Solution), which replaced Rural Horizons. Solidaridad consequently lost credibility with key stakeholders and partners, who then left the MSP. As a result, the team decided (in 2018) to focus on Zambia instead since it was lacking a food safety standard, and resources were reallocated accordingly. In 2019, a portion of funding from the program budget was also diverted to Uganda (see below).

Progress in the different countries has depended on: how long ago work began, resource allocation (which has been far higher for some countries than others), in particular to staff recruitment, competition for in-country staff time with other sectors/platforms (e.g. the tea MSP in Uganda), political context (whether the platform and standard has obtained or required government mandate, whether government processes offer the opportunity for the platform to develop a standard), and changing Solidaridad priorities which in some cases have compromised credibility (e.g. in South Africa, with the introduction of new technology for smallholder farmer capacity development). Major changes to the initial project as well as 'complementary' PfC project plans (the SWITCH AFRICA Green work) led to the collapse of the South Africa MSP. In the meantime, the addition of work in Zambia to develop a national standard, and the resumption of activities in the F&V sub-sector in Uganda in 2018/2019 – after a false start in 2016/17 – took place.

The project in Tanzania saw the successful establishment of a multi-stakeholder platform to develop a national food safety standard for FF&V. The platform started with a few key partners and has grown over time as other organisations have shown their interest in joining. The first members were the Ministry of Agriculture, The Tanzania National Bureau of Standards (TBS), NGOs (Rikolto, Agriprofocus), CSOs, farmer representatives and private sector – representing a large cross-section of the sector.

The MSP was considered to have a good breadth of stakeholders, and to have all the key stakeholders there. Having a diverse cross-section of participants was important to ensure all groups; including producer groups and civil society were represented. However, Solidaridad and partners would have liked more funding to have platforms and dialogues in different geographies (i.e. add southern regions and Zanzibar) – since the platform was limited in how many representatives it could bring in from other regions (outside of Arusha).

On gender, Solidaridad set themselves a minimum participation target for women in platform meetings, the steering committee and in capacity building work of 40%. They felt they had a strong rationale for including women: they are very important in producing, preparing and buying produce, and so are an important stakeholder in determining food safety – their actions and opinions are important. However, it can be a challenge recruiting enough women for several reasons. Firstly, some organisations only propose men to be part of the platform (there may be no women in their organisation), or there may be

staffing changes which mean a woman who originally attended the platform is replaced by a man. Solidaridad argues that they made a specific effort to recruit women and ensure their participation but explained that *“some gender aspects are beyond our control.”* This lack of participation was confirmed by an external partner who stated that it was very hard to ensure good representation of women. He explained that this reflects the fact that in Tanzania women do not typically fill leadership roles (e.g. representing farmers etc), a reflection of the dominant social and cultural norms in the country. He estimates that there were 12 people in total on the platform and only two women. He felt that Solidaridad could have done more in terms of gender mobilisation and capacity building of women at an earlier stage. Youth, on the other hand, were well represented.

In Uganda, progress in convening members, deciding on an area of focus and a work plan has been much slower. Though the platform is in place (and was technically established in 2016), only a small number of activities have been carried out, with a lot of “stop-start”. The original MSP effectively became dormant. The original intention was to develop a mandatory national standard (“Uganda GAP”<sup>4</sup>), conduct capacity building of CSOs so they could participate in lobbying, and contribute to advocacy on the standard. However, the development of Uganda GAP is no longer the primary target of the work in Uganda, at least in the short term. The Government of Uganda (specifically the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries, and Fisheries (MAAIF)) preferred that investments and efforts be made to develop a horticulture strategy and program under which a mandatory standard could later be operationalized. The MSP still forms the core component of the work as contributions from both public and private stakeholders is key for the participatory development of (and therefore buy in to) a new strategy. Some of the members of the policy framework task force (both public and private) would be drawn from the Solidaridad-led MSP. Considering the ambition was for a mandatory Uganda GAP, buy-in from Government was deemed essential.

However, there are also assertions that the country manager did not focus his efforts on FF&V because his work in tea would have been a quicker win, since the facilitation role that Solidaridad could play in developing the tea policy was much clearer from the outset and government buy-in for Solidaridad to do so was stronger. It was also argued that he would have lacked capacity to work on both. Despite having some budget for activities in Uganda, funds were not allocated at the time, for example to horticulture MSP member partners to carry out capacity building activities. The country manager argues that this is because they were short of the budget needed to both contribute to the completion of the standard and work on the horticulture strategy and program. As a result, some momentum has been lost, and some of the members have scattered. There are transaction costs involved in having to re-mobilise stakeholders to participate.

The plan is now to use the MSP to develop a strategy (policy framework) and program (action plan) to achieve safe and healthy FF&V. This work is also awaiting government buy-in, but it is expected that this will be easier to obtain than for a national standard. The action plan would be able to include the development of a standard and related curriculum later on. The in-country manager also felt this would be more obtainable in light of the limited resources available. In addition, there does not appear to be any work being done in relation to the use of ICT tools and capacity building has not happened (as had originally been planned, see more information in the results section) – though this may be because the standards orientation has fallen away in the short term.

As of 2019, activities in the MSP resumed, with instruction to RECSA to allocate 40,000 EURO to Uganda. Work began with an experience sharing trip to Kenya (which has a successful horticulture sector, specifically in relation to export, food safety policies and KenyaGAP) to understand the possibilities for

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<sup>4</sup> Though project staff referred to the standard as UgandaGAP, in reality this label would not be possible because of copyright infringements with GlobalGAP, since while the standard might be benchmarked or informed by what other East Africa countries have done the intention was not for it to be a private or semi-private standard and/or be part of the GlobalGAP family.

Uganda's horticultural sector, what might be replicated there and to reignite the platform. The learning trip had multi stakeholder participation (e.g. from MAAIF, as well as CSOs, private sector and non-private sector). Government buy-in was seen as particularly important, hence their invitation to the learning trip. The platform has a steering committee in place. As well as the trip, the wider platform has had two meetings, while the steering committee has had 3-4 meetings. In these meetings roles and responsibilities have been defined. The country manager explained that the platform has not yet figured out how to meet physically with standard operating procedures put in place by the Ministry responsible for health and also to meet remotely in light of the COVID-19 challenges so progress has somewhat stalled. The external consultant, Solidaridad staff and other stakeholders also presented research on issues on the ground at the beginning of the re-ignition of the platform (based on a SWOT analysis of the sector) to ensure everyone had a shared understanding of the issues and what might be needed in the sector.

In Uganda, despite the stop-start nature of the work, Solidaridad has done a good job of convening a large number of stakeholders from a diverse set of stakeholder groups (government, private sector, media, producers, CSOs, academia). External stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation considered the *"set up to have been done well"*, with *"most of the right stakeholder groups being represented"*. They were unsure as to the inclusion of women and youth, however, arguing that this may have been done via CSOs who were part of the platform. There was felt to be great value in the platform bringing together these stakeholders from the FF&V sector, since this type of coordination had been severely lacking before.

One Solidaridad staff member – not directly involved in the Uganda work – explained that it could be difficult to recruit representatives from certain stakeholder groups. Farmers groups, and cooperatives, for example could be difficult to recruit because of their expectations of the benefits of participation. A number of them expected some form of reimbursement for their time or the donation of an asset to their group, which is what often happens in development projects in the country – rather than seeing that they could benefit in the long-term from an improved policy environment or improved market access (e.g. to the EU). This lack of reimbursement or tangible benefit led to disappointment among some groups who then ceased to participate in the platform. There was a sense that their expectations on the potential benefits of their participation could have been better managed at the outset: *"the inception phase may have moved too quickly – perhaps we should have given more time to explaining everything to everyone and getting people bought into the same issues."*

In Mozambique, a new platform was established to respond to what was seen as a significant market opportunity (that of safe and high quality FF&V) which could support the country to reach its agricultural potential. A platform was successfully established with a cross-section of sector stakeholders, which was led by a core group (consisting of CSOs, private sector, government, farmer representatives etc), who would meet more regularly to discuss relevant issues. The platform began by presenting research commissioned by Solidaridad on key issues in the sector to *"get everyone on the same page"*. However, the issue of safe (high quality and sustainable FF&V sector) was seen as *"low hanging fruit"*, in the sense that people easily agreed on the issues and challenges in the sector and the government was supportive of the platform's work.

The smaller group (the equivalent of a steering committee) made it easier to ensure progress. Following engagements with GlobalGAP and retailers with an established footprint in Mozambique, which were led from South Africa, the platform appointed an external (Mozambican) company with standards drafting expertise to guide the platform through the standards development process. The process started with a number of country-wide consultations with different stakeholder groups to get relevant input. The use of a private company to drive the standards development process was necessary because the national bureau of standards (whose remit is to develop national standards, and who were part of the platform) did not yet have the requisite skills or capacity to drive the process.

## Capacities and capacity building of platform members and Solidaridad

In relation to Solidaridad's own capacity and capacity building, there was no formal capacity building offered for staff in Tanzania and Uganda. In Tanzania, more junior staff learnt on the job. Some external stakeholders felt that the skills of Solidaridad's staff in Tanzania in relation to lobbying could be improved, particularly in relation to strategizing around who to lobby, when and how (covered in more detail in 4.3).

The pathways of Solidaridad in relation to 'capacity-building' of platform members focused on:

1. Convening meetings, field visits of participating CSOs and representatives from the Public Offices. Participants are sometimes facilitated with transport refund by public means rates
2. Providing information or evidence to CSOs through the platform (e.g. presenting information on the key issues relating to food safety in the sector)
3. Capacity building with farmers, or poor consumers on the ground to enhance their understanding of the standard and/or food safety issues to enhance capabilities to implement the standard or demand safe food.

The emphasis of capacity building in both Tanzania and Uganda seems to be less about lobbying and advocacy capacity-building in its truest sense (e.g. having improved capacities and knowledge of how to develop lobbying strategies, or engage with government and/or other policymakers to advocate for change) and more about an emphasis on information and knowledge provision to CSOs, or of CSOs participating in the platform so as to provide insights and contributions to the standards drafting process (and thereby contribute to indirectly to lobbying and advocacy). This may be a reflection of Solidaridad being the main driver of policy change and/or the in-country staff's own skills, capacities, formal training etc.

As one Solidaridad staff member stated for Tanzania that: *"the strategy is to carry out capacity-building and awareness creation, make sure policies are pro-poor, make poor people aware of food safety. Capacitated people will then be in place to help draft the policy – provide their opinions, add their insights. Engaging with CSOs helps to ensure we have the right influences in place to shape the policy and inform the policy from bottom. Practically speaking this has involved meetings with farmers, consumers, and other value chain players, CSOs."* Another Solidaridad staff member mentioned in relation to Uganda that *"Capacity building of CSOs was meant to be a key activity/objective of the Uganda FF&V work, to help them influence the platform and contribute to informing policies, but this was lost along the way. Funds were consequently allocated elsewhere"*.

In terms of capacity building of smallholder producers, this appears to have come later in both Tanzania and Mozambique in recognition of the fact that the strategy of developing a standard alone cannot improve on food safety, without simultaneously working to increase the capacity of farmers to actually implement the standard. In Tanzania, for example, Solidaridad and its partners have undertaken a number of pilots to demonstrate how the standard might be met by smallholders farmers, as well as using kiosks to test the marketing aspect (whether consumers would be interested in food produced to those standards), and to raise awareness amongst consumers of the need for safe FF&V. Plans for 2020 – now likely delayed due to COVID-19, include the continuation and expansion of capacity building programs on food safety and the standard to more producer groups, local CSOs and traders. In Uganda, there have not yet been any efforts to build the capacities of smallholder farmers to produce safe food – though this would have been arguably premature in light of the lack of agreement on the required approach to firstly achieve policy change.

In Mozambique, significant effort appears to have been made to train CSOs and producer groups (as well as providing some resources for them to participate in meetings) to support them in ensuring their members are able to adopt good agricultural practices, and thus meet the requirements of the standard). Currently Solidaridad staff are implementing the draft standard MozBoPa in 4 demo plots and to scale up towards: *"finding strategic places in the country and establishing more pilots where we can*

*test the standard. We hope these pilots will demonstrate that the standard can be economical, protect the environment (standards compliance), labour conditions and social issues. We will organize farmers in clusters and put proper planting programmes in place, use greenhouses etc, provide quality seedlings provided to farmers in a systematic way.”*

#### **Engagement with policy makers, policy changes or implementation of policies**

In Tanzania, the MSP and its steering committee was used to lead on the formal standards development process, facilitated by the TBS. The MSP had a strong mandate from government to play the standards drafting role – and a number of government representatives (e.g. from the Ministry of Agriculture and TBS) were part of the platform from the outset. Their mandate was essential in light of the standard being a national standard. The formal national standards setting process gave a strong opportunity for the MSP to have influence.

In Tanzania, the project has reached stage 4, where policy changes (i.e. the national standard) have been proposed. They are awaiting the adoption of the standard through gazetting by the Ministry of Industry, which would take the project to stage 5, where policy changes are adopted. There have been some delays in gazetting due to mistakes made by TBS in drafting (they had labelled the standard incorrectly – the system is not automated), which meant that the standard had to go back to TBS to be redrafted, and then was resubmitted. This was followed by another delay after the elections brought about new office holders.

Solidaridad feels it *“has kept on top of the gazetting process”* by keeping the pressure on the TBS head of standards department, who will then push the “legal person” who in turn applies pressure on the Minister. This appears to be quite an indirect route for lobbying and influence, and Solidaridad appears to lack a more direct route through to the Ministry of Industries and Trade. Although the TBS sits under the Ministry of Industry, Solidaridad explained that the connection between them is relatively weak, which may also have slowed the advocacy and lobbying process down. However, Solidaridad wondered whether they might have benefited from the inclusion of a representative from the Ministry of Industry in the platform at the outset of the process.

One partner felt that perhaps Solidaridad did not have the right contacts to put pressure on the right places on government. Although government was represented on the platform, and government representatives were invited to key meetings, these were not necessarily high-level government representatives. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture was represented by extension officers, which made sense from a content perspective (i.e. the technicalities of the standard) but these individuals were not key decision-makers or influencers on the standard being implemented. This partner also wondered whether Solidaridad should have made better use of parliamentary committees and representatives to expedite the process – relevant individuals could have been identified in early stages of the process to bring them on board, which would have allowed Solidaridad to gain some allies and pass on their messages to the right people earlier on. To get the standard passed *“it needs a lot of knowledge of lobbying and advocacy. Needs very good connections to government officials to fast track processes. Solidaridad did not invest much in those networks early on which would have helped gazetting”*. Other partners/external stakeholders contend that there is no uniform approach that is best suited to lobbying – it all depends on the individual government representative in place at the time with the decision-making power and what they respond best to.

The political context in Tanzania has also posed additional challenges to getting the standard gazetted, such as the abrupt change in minister who has the authority to sign off on the standard. In order for the Minister to sign off on a document, they have to understand the document and be able to defend it. If a new minister comes on board, it takes time for this person to understand the standard, and they may be overwhelmed by other priorities. The challenge is described as such: *“Every time someone leaves the office, everything needs to start from scratch. People often move to other ministries, which means the*

*standard effectively gets “stuck”, waiting for the new person to understand the standard, sign off on it etc. The person in charge currently has other priorities. We need time to get him on board”.* COVID-19 has now deprioritized the standard gazetting further.

Solidaridad and its partners are working on complementary policy change, through lobbying for a broader food safety policy for Arusha (which would be implemented by the Arusha city council). Solidaridad are playing an important role in ensuring the policy is pro-poor by promoting awareness of the policies amongst poor groups (through meetings with CSOs and producer groups) and in trying to inform the policy’s design to take account of the realities on the ground. Solidaridad are now using their strong networks and credibility to push in a new direction.

In Uganda, the focus of the platform has changed over time when it became clear that the government mandate for UgandaGAP would not be forthcoming. The country manager decided that an easier target would be for the platform to feed into a horticulture strategy (policy framework) and action plan (horticulture program) for safe FF&V, which has buy-in from the Ministry responsible for Agriculture rather than a standard. The strategy around policy change and engagement has therefore changed in response to considerations of feasibility. However, the development of a framework and action plan still requires a government mandate – specifically because the government has its preferred way of development policy frameworks (using their preferred consultants, and consultation dialogues in which case government would need to also make a funding contribution) – but the mandate for this is regarded as easier to achieve than for a standard. The platform is still waiting for this mandate to be obtained (and the associated co-funding), though the in-country manager is positive that this mandate will be obtained and that it is mainly COVID that has delayed this mandate.

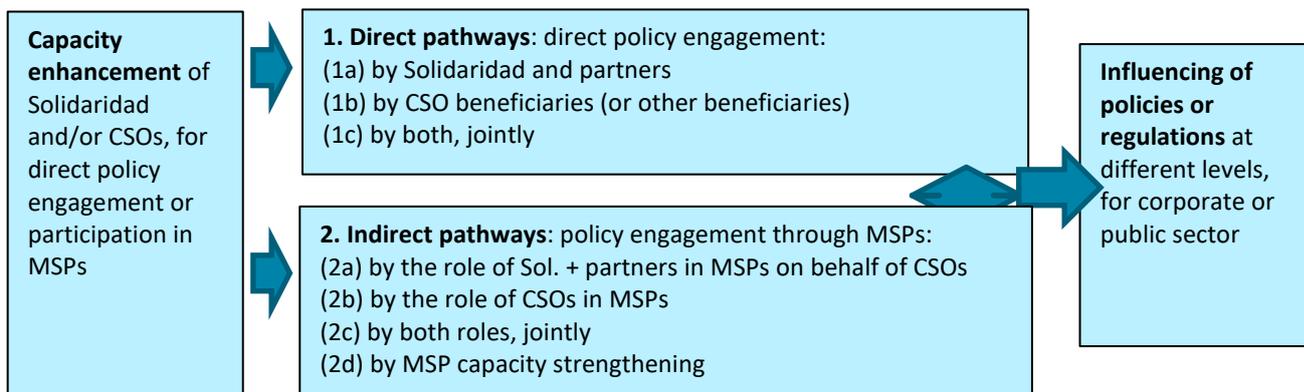
External and internal staff feel that the country manager has done a good job in reaching out and connecting to government officials. He has been able to have 1-on-1 meetings with representatives from MAAIF and the Military (who are very influential in Uganda): *“This has been a huge plus for the project”*. However, despite these good connections and lobbying efforts the government has yet to commit the funds – which may be explained by a low resource envelope budgetary allocation to the Agriculture sector (Uganda’ Agriculture budget oscillates around 4% of the total budget which is way below the recommended 10% Maputo Declaration, 2003) .

MAIFF further observed the need for a strategy and program to bring all interventions on food safety in the sector together – as they had perceived there to be some duplication of effort and overlapping focus. This may be challenging the willingness of the government to commit to the Solidaridad-led platform. For example, there is also a task force on EU (safety breach) alerts in place and a multistakeholder platform on minimal residue limits and harmful organisms (which is co-funded by the Embassy of Netherlands in Kampala).

There is also difference in opinion between the ministry responsible for agriculture and Solidaridad country manager as to the cause of safety issues in FF&V: with the former arguing it comes down to specific production issues, and the latter arguing that the issue is broader and is also linked to a lack of support/broader enabling environment e.g. from government extension workers, for safer production.

In Mozambique, the platform and Solidaridad have succeeded in obtaining the buy-in of the government, by inviting them to participate in the platform in the early stages. The government lacked the capacity (knowledge and resources) to develop the standards themselves, though they felt it was necessary and the relevant minister was keen to make changes to the safety of FF&V. The policy environment was therefore conducive and the timing was opportune. In addition, Solidaridad has succeeded in keeping regular contact with the government and keeping them involved in the process throughout. The standard has undergone various stages of drafting and iterations in response to feedback, but Solidaridad are now waiting for the opportunity to present it to relevant government departments for feedback and further changes. At the same time the platform is working to ensure the relevant policy frameworks are in place to make the standard mandatory, to maximise its impact.

## Strategies and role of Solidaridad



Note: PI = Policy Influencing; CE = Capacity Enhancement

In Tanzania, the project started with the establishment of a platform to develop a national food safety standard for FF&V. It took both an indirect route to policy engagement (2c) and a direct pathway to policy engagement (1a). In the indirect route, Solidaridad, CSOs and other members of the platform were involved in drafting the standard (either via membership on the technical committee or divisional committees, or those committees drawing on the knowledge, expertise and opinions of the broader platform members). In the direct pathway, Solidaridad has sought to influence the government by one of the platform's key partners (the Tanzania Bureau of Standards) to have the new national standard for safe FF&V passed. The standard is currently awaiting gazetting by the Ministry of Industry. As explained above, the lobbying and advocacy approach taken to try and ensure the standard is passed has been a somewhat convoluted one.

As explained above, capacity enhancement of Solidaridad and or CSOs for direct policy engagement was extremely limited (representing the first step in the schematic above). However, the capacity of CSOs to participate in the platform was enhanced through mobilization, resource allocation to fund travel etc.

In Uganda, as in Tanzania, the project aims to have two routes to policy influence. Direct, by Solidaridad, to obtain a government mandate for the platform's work to develop a framework and action plan to deliver on safe and sustainable FF&V in the country, and indirect, via the platform's members, to influence the content of that framework and action plan (1a and 2c). Other planned activities included capacity building of CSOs – through resource allocation by Solidaridad to its partners – and it was in this area that Solidaridad failed to make progress.

The evaluation revealed some key insights – based primarily on Tanzania and Uganda, but also insights from Mozambique, Zambia and South Africa – on the role of Solidaridad in lobbying and advocacy.

The use of a multi stakeholder platform to propose new policies appears to be a credible means of doing so – by including a number of different voices and having “*strength in numbers*”. It means there is greater weight behind the lobbying approaches that are then adopted by Solidaridad, its partners, or the platform members. The impact is likely to be greater because there are a large number of organisations working towards the same goal, without duplicating effort. The platforms, in turn, require an effective convenor or facilitator and Solidaridad in all cases appears to play this role very well. They are effective in championing an idea and suggesting an agenda, bringing relevant stakeholders together, and being responsible for the logistical considerations such as choosing venues and providing some resources for CSOs to attend. Their facilitation and personal skills are a key asset in an MSP.

In Tanzania, a key strategy adopted by Solidaridad for recruitment for the platform – considering their previous experience in the sector and the region was limited – was to invite key stakeholders who have “mileage” (i.e. influence) in the sector and/or have many good contacts of their own (as well as having information and knowledge to offer and a willingness to participate). For example, the presence of “*MoA would help to encourage others to join*”. Organisations like the Tanzania Horticultural Association (TAHA), AgriProFocus and Rikolto have good existing networks of stakeholders in the sector which Solidaridad could access to invite people to join the platform. AgriProFocus stated that it played an important role in bringing in other organisations from their networks.

People joined the platform because they had an interest in the subject matter, and they saw it as a platform through which to offer and obtain information. There were no barriers to join and no formal application process. Other partners were identified as the process advanced, including organisations that are required to be part of the formal standards development process, as required by TBS, and were to be members of the technical committee or divisional committees for standards drafting, for example the Tanzania Drugs and Food Administration and Tanzania Chamber of Commerce.

The platform began by presenting research of key issues in the sector to ensure everyone had the same level of understanding. This research was carried out by a consultant with expertise in the sector, and was based on on-the-ground discussions with farmers and key stakeholders, to understand the issues and challenges in the sector and what Solidaridad, and others, might be able to contribute. This research was important in confirming that Solidaridad’s existing plans – as submitted to the donors – were the right ones. Research also allowed Solidaridad to present the “*hard facts and figures*” relevant to food safety and quality in the FF&V sector to stakeholders, which was very effective in ensuring everyone had the same level of understanding of the issues and to get them to buy in to Solidaridad’s vision. This meant stakeholders have better knowledge on sustainable solutions and how to implement these.

The successful creation and outcomes of the MSP in Tanzania reveal a number of key insights on how Solidaridad has (and can) most effectively establish and manage MSPs:

- 1) Where Solidaridad has existing networks and experience in a country, it can be very useful to draw on those networks for recruiting members of a platform (e.g. in South Africa and Zambia). However, the Tanzania case shows that it is not essential if Solidaridad is able to utilize the networks of other close partners.
- 2) The roles and responsibilities of the platform’s members were established clearly at the outset during a brainstorming and discussion session with the stakeholders. This was deemed as very important by both Solidaridad and platform members to ensure progress. Organisations offered up ideas of what they would do, based on their strengths and suggested roles for others. They committed to this work using their own resources, which was seen as vital to ensuring sustainability. This showed that platform members were willing to place the issue of safe and sustainable FF&V on their own agendas. A formal membership agreement was not deemed as necessary.
- 3) The platform held a “good number” of meetings (three times a year as a platform and more often for the steering/technical committees). This helped the platform build trust and be effective.
- 4) The platform’s work fed directly into the formal standards development process, as laid out by TBS. The steering committee (SC) of the platform served as the technical committee (TC) for the standards development process. The TC would provide regular updates to the platform on progress. The SC/TC members were elected by the wider platform. Turnout to meetings was typically good: around 80% of members on average at each meeting – however some representatives are often busy in the field and are less likely to attend than others.
- 5) The meetings themselves were well facilitated and managed, which has been very important in ensuring the platform is a success. Solidaridad ensured there were clear rules at the outset for how communication should happen, so no one dominated the sessions. They explained that

everyone is equal, and everyone has the right to speak up. External stakeholders felt that Solidaridad did a very good job at facilitating the platform meetings to ensure all could meaningfully participate and to ensure that more vulnerable groups can contribute to policy change. Breakout groups were also regularly used when discussing specific issues to ensure everyone contributed. External stakeholders felt that everyone was able to participate in the MSP dialogue and therefore to lobby for policy change as a group (strength in numbers was very important).

- 6) Personal skills are very important in those leading or convening members of an MSP and the Tanzania team has those skills. They were regarded as *“very interactive. Good communicators: they speak to people as though they have known them forever.”* The personal skills of Solidaridad is very important to reach out to potential members and to keep them connected and engaged.
- 7) The platform also had a clear workplan from the outset, though it was adaptable, which was important to intensify certain activities (e.g. lobbying) or to allow for delays (e.g. in the drafting of the standard).
- 8) Though some technical knowledge may be missing from Solidaridad staff, this is less important because of the emphasis on the platform as a key tool for *lobbying and advocacy*; knowledge gaps can be filled by platform members.

A number of challenges or weaknesses in Solidaridad’s MSP approaches have also existed:

Solidaridad plays an important role in strategizing around policy change – figuring out what opportunities exist to influence policy or feed into policy processes: for example identifying opportunities for policy change to deliver on safe food. But in order for these policies to ultimately be passed it is also important for Solidaridad to be effective in strategizing around policy and advocacy. For example, it is important to identify who the key decision-makers are that will determine whether a standard or policy is passed, how might they be brought into the process or the platform early on to ensure their buy in, what political processes can be fed into for additional lobbying strength/buy in from other parts of government etc. This was done more effectively in some countries than others – depending largely on the knowledge, skills and connections of the in-country Solidaridad staff. Some partners felt that Solidaridad is well placed to carry out L&A activities because they are well placed to speak on others’ behalf. They understand the private sector, but are not-for-profit, meaning they can represent a diversity of stakeholders well. Solidaridad’s international reputation is a key asset, and for some in-country governments, there is added credibility knowing that the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs is behind some of their work.

There is also a need to dedicate sufficient resources (time and funds) to platform building and lobbying. Uganda shows the risks of being too ambitious in how many platforms one individual could work on. There is a large contrast between what Mozambique has been able to do with Mozbopa and adequate funding (and therefore staffing) as compared with Uganda, South Africa, Zambia and Tanzania.

Solidaridad have faced some challenges in some countries due to staffing changes happening abruptly, challenging plans or progress (e.g. Zambia), as well as changes at central management level which impacted on the course of the project. In addition, there have been changes in priorities and strategies mid-way through some projects (e.g. in South Africa, where the introduction of the Rural Horizons tool was quickly superseded by Farming Solution, despite stakeholders having bought into the former). This meant that Solidaridad lost momentum just at the time of the successful award from the EU SWITCH Africa Green funding facility (1.2 million euros) which was directly related and co-created with key stakeholders on the MSP and which shared the integrated compliance capacity agenda for smallholder farmers.

## Impacts, sustainability and systemic change

### Signs of sustainability and scaling

In Tanzania, sustainability has been built into the MSP in various ways. Firstly, through the clear allocation of roles and responsibility of platform members at the outset of the platform it has sought to ensure that even when the platform ceases to exist, or Solidaridad withdraws, that work in the sector continues through the platform members. Ensuring that an effective steering committee is in place can help to ensure relevant organisations take responsibility for continuing the work. Secondly, the platform has sought to ensure that key organisations (namely TAHA, Rikolto, Solidaridad and COLEACP) make a more formal commitment to continuing the work plan and the vision of the platform through an MoU. The MoU can be used to hold the respective organisations to account on their commitments to the sector and to deliver what is needed to achieve the vision. There is a strong sense from interviewed partners that the work and the platform will be sustained without Solidaridad. The strong foundations put in place by Solidaridad – in terms of a common agenda, and bringing key organisations together – is undoubtedly a critical success factor in this.

There are some signs of scaling. Although standards development started as a key focus, broader food policy (the development of a food safety policy for Arusha city) was identified as a secondary and complementary policy change objective. The platform and its stakeholders are now seeking resources to work on this. In addition, some key partners are allocating funds to work on similar issues and policy changes in other regions.

In Uganda, it is too early to say whether the work of the platform will be sustainable – though the decision/ability to move forward with the work is dependent on government buy-in through a formal mandate for the MSP to do the required work and commit funds. This is regarded as central to the future sustainability of the platform and demonstrates that sustainability has been considered and built in from the outset.

### Outcomes and impacts

In Tanzania there is a sense that the national standard they are working on will definitely be passed – but it is now a “waiting game” with some continued lobbying required. There is a sense the standard could have a significant impact on sustainability, consumer health, potential for export earnings, but there are two key constraints in this regard which are worth noting. Firstly, government ‘ownership’ of the standard could severely limit its accessibility – the government intends to charge per download of the standard with a fixed rate per page (around 20 cents). There is no plan to ensure variations in cost depending on who is trying to access the standards. Traders do not have the right to buy one standard for ‘their’ producers and disseminate. This is a serious concern but one that was not raised by Solidaridad itself in interviews, rather by key partners. However, it is likely a key constraint to future impact. By all accounts efforts are being made to change the government’s mind in this respect, but there is arguably a need (and the possibility of) to have understood this fully at the outset, to allow for simultaneous lobbying and for accessibility to be a condition under which the MSP would agree to take the lead in standards development (which ultimately saved TBS effort and resources).

### Systemic changes

Systemic issue	Change: Tanzania*	Change: Uganda*	Remarks
Trust and dialogue between stakeholders			Tanzania: Trust already existed in the sector to an extent, but the platform has improved dialogue which was lacking. Uganda: no such

			platform existed and so dialogue between stakeholders has improved, but too early to say if trust levels have changed.
Coordination and alignment between stakeholders / shared vision			Tanzania: strong improvement in coordination and alignment between stakeholders – stakeholders mutually agreed on roles and responsibilities to deliver on the same vision Uganda: too early to tell, but some signs of improvement in coordination.
Change power dynamics between stakeholders			In Tanzania, CSOS had a stronger voice than before. In Uganda, the dominance and the power of the private sector in determining what happened in the sector is countered.
Strengthening of civic space (civic empowerment, both men and women)			Tanzania: civic space already existed for FF&V-sector issues. Uganda: too early to tell.
Shift mindsets and norms? Of MSP participants? Of targeted decision / policy makers			Tanzania: Was not really necessary Uganda: too early to tell
Increased investment in the sector			Tanzania: no signs yet, perhaps will happen in the future. Uganda: too early.
Increased transparency / accountability of stakeholders			Tanzania: commitments made by platform members to one another during agreement of roles and responsibilities offers a source of peer pressure and holding one another to account. Uganda: too early to know
Improved access to markets			Tanzania: too early to tell. Improved access is a possibility, but depends on ability to meet the standards (and therefore related capacity building attempts). Uganda: too early to know.

\* yes = green; no = yellow; moderate = blue; too early to tell = grey

In Tanzania, the platform has addressed a number of drivers of systemic change. With regards to trust and dialogue, trust was already there between major sector stakeholders (or at least there was no mistrust) – players already knew each other well. But the platform helped solidify and strengthen trust to a degree, particularly in relation to the government who were invited to all meetings. Stakeholders could also use the platform as means to see that others were doing what they said they would do – contributing to trust.

One external partner argued that: *“more trust has been developed. Before – I didn’t know Solidaridad, I didn’t know what they were doing and I saw them as a competitor. I then came to realise that we are doing the same thing, and we should align and complement each other. This helped to develop trust. There are a number of other organisations who we now also communicate with as colleagues due to the*

*Platform. The government is also more trusting of us – communication is much better throughout the sector. The government asks us to contribute knowledge as a result of the platform and their awareness of our, and other stakeholders' work.”* The platform was very effective in increasing dialogue in the sector, thereby facilitating coordination and alignment between stakeholders. Clear roles and responsibilities were assigned during the initial meetings, based on what was needed and what others were able to do, facilitating coordination and transparency in commitments. Peer pressure amongst partners in MSP to deliver on their agreed upon roles and responsibilities meaning partners were held to account. The platform also catalysed strong partnerships. This is exemplified by the consortium MoU, where a smaller number of key organisations have committed to continuing the work that was identified as necessary in the platform.

There was a shift in power dynamics as a result of the platform. Solidaridad helped to build the capacity of CSOs, giving them more confidence and a stronger voice in the platform and beyond. Civic space already existed, but the national standards development process was important in offering space for the MSP stakeholders to influence change.

There was not a significant need to shift mindsets and norms, of either participants or policymakers. Everyone was to a great extent on the same page in regards to what was needed in the sector. But Solidaridad hopes it has or will be able to change the mindsets of consumers by raising awareness of food safety issues. However, awareness raising of producers is likely increased – of the need for safe and healthy FF&V – as a result of the work of the 40 or so members who have significant reach into communities (e.g. farmers) and have access to other networks to raise awareness etc.

In Uganda, the limited progress of the platform and its work means it is too early to talk meaningfully of impact. However, there is already a sense from some key partners of the platform's potential to address some systemic issues in the sector. For example, the horticultural sector has historically been dominated by the private sector – in terms of decision-making and action (*“the sector has been left in the hands of the private sector”*). The voice of the private sector was stronger than all the other stakeholders. This platform has been able to, and has the potential to continue to, strengthen the voices of other stakeholders and encourage them to engage in the key issues and contribute to the sector's development. In this sense it can help to rebalance some existing imbalances of power in the sector and beyond.

According to one key external stakeholder (a representative from a producer group), the platform has also helped to improve awareness in the sector of who is working in it, and who is doing what. This awareness did not exist before. This has enhanced transparency of the sector, which may improve accountability in the future. There has also been some improvement in coordination of stakeholders in the sector as a result of the platform, since members have been able to engage bilaterally with one another on relevant issues or activities as a result of an improved understanding of what they do.

The platform has already offered an opportunity (with a study trip to Kenya, and cross learning from the tea platform in Uganda) to learn from other sectors and countries in terms of the value of a platform and how to implement relevant national safety policy for FF&V. This increases the potential for the mindsets and norms of key stakeholders – e.g. government – to be changed, but it is too early to tell whether mindsets have yet been changed. However, the platform, through its members, has improved knowledge of on the ground activities, and grassroots issues which the government often lacks awareness of (in part due to lack of local government presence e.g. extension officers on the ground). The platform has brought the ministry closer to farmers. This is demonstrated by the fact that the government is requesting information from the platform: the platform is now regarded as a credible and accessible source of expertise and evidence on issues on the ground from which the government can draw from. The platform thus provides a strong opportunity/mechanism to get that information to the right places.

Similarly, in Zambia, the platform is in its early stages due to the challenge of getting the government (Ministry of Agriculture) to be the local driver and owner of the process. Following a ban on the

importation of certain fresh produce products from South Africa it seemed an opportune time to engage the government to prioritise the FF&V sector, provide a policy framework and resource allocation to enable the ignition of a vibrant local supply chain. However, following threats by mainly the South African supermarkets to withdraw from the country altogether, the ban (lasting just over a month) was lifted. Five stakeholder meetings were held between 2018-2019 but there was a reluctance from government to co-fund and participate in the platform, and an expectation that Solidaridad would fund and resource the whole process, which was not possible in light of the resources available. However, through continued efforts, Solidaridad through the MSP and a wide range of individual engagements, were able to raise the awareness of a lack of a policy for food safety. Government has sought advice from Solidaridad and its platform members on its Proposed Food Safety Bill in mid-2019, demonstrating credibility of the platform and its members and the value of bringing key players together to influence policies. The Food Safety Act was ratified in August 2019. Although there are still lingering concerns about implementation of the Act it does provide the foundation for the development of a localgap for Zambia.

In terms of sector transformation, it is too early to see any kind of impact in any of the countries in which MSPs have been used to develop standards or influence policies in relation to the safety and quality of FF&V. The potential impacts of the standards could include access to markets, improved livelihoods, and health, as well as environmental sustainability. But, as previously mentioned, this is highly dependent on consumer demand (either locally, or being able to tap into international markets) and the capacities of farmers to comply with standards – both of which are highly significant conditions/assumptions, which themselves arguably require significant attention, resources and time from Solidaridad and/or partners as enabling factors.

## Contribution by Solidaridad and external factors

The table below shows some of the external factors (highlighted in green or red) that have – or very likely will – enabled or constrained the success and impact of Solidaridad’s work in MSPs for FF&V (with a specific focus on Tanzania and Mozambique where most progress has been made).

<i>Institutional</i>	<i>Market</i>	<i>Other</i>
<p><i>Negative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Political instability (e.g. elections, leadership change)</b></li> <li>• Negative power dynamics in public institutions</li> <li>• Limited civic space</li> <li>• <b>Low capacity of government</b></li> <li>• Lack of accountability mechanisms</li> </ul> <p><i>Positive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Existing policy framework</b></li> <li>• Good institutional coordination</li> <li>• <b>A policy window/ alignment with existing policies</b></li> <li>• Decentralization processes</li> <li>• <b>Low capacity of government</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Negative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Weak business case</b></li> <li>• <b>Low market demand / profitability</b></li> <li>• Protectionism/ national interests</li> <li>• Fear for price competition</li> <li>• Market crisis (e.g. economic down, lower prices, trade disputes, exchange rate)</li> </ul> <p><i>Positive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market pressure for sustainable production</li> <li>• <b>Market demand (e.g. emerging middle class)</b></li> <li>• <b>Market crises</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Negative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fragmentation of stakeholders</li> <li>• Lack of trust / polarized positions between stakeholders</li> <li>• Insecurity</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Pest and disease outbreak</li> <li>• Poverty</li> <li>• Gender inequality</li> <li>• Irrelevant financial expectations</li> </ul> <p><i>Positive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of urgency for climate change</li> </ul>

In Tanzania and Mozambique, if (or when) the standard is gazetted, Solidaridad and its partners and platform members will have made an arguably significant contribution to policy change in the country through the MSP, though implementation of the standard on the ground and consumer demand for safe and healthy fresh fruit and veg (and ability to pay a premium to incentivise producers) remains a key unanswered question but may be a significant future constraining impact.

The successful work in Tanzania and Mozambique places these countries in a better position to be able to influence any future AfricaGAP processes – if these remain the ultimate aim of Solidaridad’s work – through being able to offer advice and evidence on what has worked, and what has not in standards drafting (and implementation if and when the time comes) and in better understanding the required processes.

Though Solidaridad should be credited for its success to date in Tanzania and Mozambique, there have been a number of enabling factors which have increased its chances of success. Firstly, the timing of the platforms and the standards development was opportune. Organisations and key decision-makers in both Tanzania and Mozambique were starting to think about food safety issues but they were not entirely sure how to advance the issues and where to start. By Solidaridad’s own admissions, therefore, the platform “*came at a welcome time*”. In addition, it was able to feed into, or leverage an existing policy process and opportunity (standards development led by TBS) which requires an MSP or multi stakeholder input, or they were able to fill the gaps left by an under-capacitated government. Finally, the contexts in which the work took place allowed for the platforms to flourish and to link to policy. In Mozambique, for example, the new minister was keen on the work and enthusiastic about making changes to the FF&V sector. Certainly, in regards to the FF&V sector in Tanzania there was sufficient civic space for the platform to do its work.

Due to the credibility Solidaridad has established, its existing networks and knowledge of issues in the sector, its potential for future contribution is great and work is already underway for broader policy change to be lobbied for by Solidaridad and others.

In terms of constraints, external factors include excessive bureaucracy, which has slowed: the drafting of the standard to date (e.g. mistakes in labelling of the standard by TBS); and the gazetting process due to changes in decision-makers (the relevant minister) at the highest level.

In terms of synergies with innovation themes, there have been significant efforts to integrate the innovation theme of gender inclusivity, but with limited success – as explained above, due to pre-existing structural constraints in the countries which the project itself cannot substantively address. The integration of climate innovations appears to be limited. If passed, the standards in Mozambique and Zambia should help to ensure that public goods, and social and environmental functions in a landscape are safeguarded.

The work has strong synergy with good practices, since the standards (assuming they are passed) and Solidaridad's associated capacity-building work will help producers to implement good agricultural practices that optimise their social, environmental and economic performance. The complementarity between this work and the Robust infrastructure results area is less clear/weaker.

In Zambia, recent work to develop a national standard has built on existing work in the country leveraging the networks and knowledge already established as well as the Food Safety Act which lays the groundwork for a localgap. With efforts to obtain commitment from Ministry of Agriculture having been unsuccessful, Solidaridad has targeted a different government player, the Zambia Bureau of Standards (ZABS). With ZABS and the Consumer Unity Trust Society (CUTS) MoUs are being putting in place to formalise a commitment to collaborate on the development of a standard, the provision of technical assistance, who will lead the process (Solidaridad), and that Solidaridad will offer support for capacity building of auditing. Support for a GlobalGAP consultant has also been secured.

## Lessons and recommendations

**MSPs are a useful tool for policy influence in relation to standards** – particularly when policy-making processes – such as national standards development processes, rely on multistakeholder input. MSPs allow key stakeholders to develop a common message which is delivered to the relevant people making decisions – this message has a lot more weight and credibility when it is backed by multiple stakeholders (rather than Solidaridad going it alone). By including the voices of multiple stakeholders a policy is more likely to be realistic and effective. In relation to standards development, MSPs can make sure the standards developed are relevant to a broader section of stakeholders, to specific contexts and that they address all three aspects of sustainability. The role of CSOs and producer groups in making sure the standards are relevant to the local context appears important in the MSPs convened by Solidaridad. MSPs should also ensure they focus on outputs, not just top-level outcomes. Otherwise they just become “*talking-shops*” where nothing is actually achieved. The Tanzania platform worked well because while it looked at the overall change needed in a sector, it focussed on a very specific output to drive that change – the same applies to Mozambique. Uganda and Zambia are making attempts in this regard.

The case studies demonstrate **the importance of research, the presentation of facts and figures in early stages of MSP process to ensure others are brought into** Solidaridad’s vision/objectives, or at the very least agree with what the key issues in a sector are (the vision of a platform is already set before the MSP is established, as it is required to obtain funding, though Solidaridad staff acknowledge that they cannot move forward with an MSP without having stakeholders bought into the agenda).

In terms of sustainability, this **should be considered and built into the design/from the outset**. Establishing steering committees – a group of people/organisations who are passionate about the topic – to drive the platform can play an important role in ensuring sustainability by ensuring that there is buy-in and a sense of ownership within local institutions, ensuring longevity beyond Solidaridad’s project defined role. This can be done fairly and effectively using democratic processes by the wider platform (i.e. all platform members nominate and vote for steering committee members). Similarly, establishing clear roles and responsibilities among platform members at the outset can be a key means of ensuring work continues and as a mechanism for members to hold one another to account on their commitments.

### **Appropriateness, relevance of standards to drive sector transformation**

In general, there is a sense from some in-country staff that the vision and ToC for the AfC and Enabling Policy Environment projects in relation to MSPs and standards was something inherited (from the fundraising efforts of central management) and then applied in a more or less standardized manner to a number of different Southern and Eastern African countries with little prior consideration of the appropriateness of the intervention – either in general (i.e. are standards the best solution for a food safety issue in developing countries where capacities to meet standards and market demand may be lacking?) or for specific countries depending on their political and economic context (is a new standard needed? Is there likely to be a government mandate?). Though some adjustments have been made to many of the projects to ensure the standards entry point is more likely to have an impact i.e. through complementary capacity building and some consumer awareness raising this appears to have been an afterthought rather than a core consideration of the original proposal for work.

There is a sense that the standards development via MSP approach is somewhat a ‘cookie-cutter’ one – in that it has been applied similarly to a number of different countries – the choice of which appears at times to be a practical one (where do we have networks, existing work etc, which is logical) – without much consideration of what the real problems in that particular country and sector are, and what might be the best solution for those issues. And while research has been key in all countries to get in-country stakeholders on board in the platforms, one could question whether this is the correct sequencing of activities (the sequence appears to be: 1) submit a funding proposal, 2) obtain funding, 3) conduct research, to prove that the issues are in fact relevant, rather than research being carried out before

fundraising). Having said that the MSP processes in some countries have allowed for flexibility for the policy target to diverge from standards development where the mandate for this from government has not existed, and this is not to say that Solidaridad does not have any knowledge of issues in its countries of operation prior to the proposal drafting stage.

**Solidaridad staff argued that there is a need for full understanding of local contexts, and/or regional policy considerations before proposal submission/interventions, as well as the related dynamics between stakeholders.** This would likely have revealed, for example, that AfricaGAP was not an expressed need that was generated from the continent and hence wasn't feasible (it was too politically challenging, different trading blocs already had their preferred protocols and the national readiness for such a standard was lacking in many countries). In addition, prior research would have allowed staff to closely consider and interrogate the assumption of the proposal and work. For example, will a standard deliver any sustainability benefits where farmers lack the capacity to meet the standards and/or where market demand might be limited or where existing informal trading relationships are in fact preferable to formalisation (which may have tempered enthusiasm for standards being a clear route to sector transformation)?

Aside from the clear need to work on capacity building of producers to meet standards, as a key enabler of any new sustainability standard to deliver sustainability impacts or to catalyse sector transformation, Solidaridad, and its partners', **work on the ground is an important complement to the policymaking work**, by ensuring Solidaridad has the credibility to talk meaningfully about grassroots issues which is vital in ensuring the standard is appropriately designed and implemented for the local context. Thus, work on the ground and policy engagement through high level platforms can be very important complements to one another.

**Government mandate is very important for progress to be made if a national standard is being developed** (and is obviously essential if this standard is to be made mandatory, by ensuring the relevant broader regulatory frameworks are in place). In addition, government standards development processes can offer opportunities for Solidaridad convened-MSPs by requiring multistakeholder participation: the MSPs offer a source of manpower, expertise, and a cross-section of stakeholders to draw from in the formal standards development process (for example the process in Tanzania, led by TBS, which requires multistakeholder participation). Where governments are under-capacitated they may also welcome the efforts of an external body to drive the process (e.g. Mozambique).

But even where government mandate is given for a national standard to be developed, the political context can still be a key constraint. For example, elections or changes in staffing of ministries or of relevant decision-makers – can delay the passing or gazetting of standards (e.g. in Mozambique and Tanzania). COVID has been a challenge, by deprioritising these kinds of issues for the government and forcing a reallocation of budget which could have been used for co-funding of processes (e.g. in Uganda). Where national standards are being developed that require government approval, there needs to be **a clear route/strategy for influence** (who to influence, and how?) that is multipronged, and planned for/identified early on, including which government representatives are important to bring on board from the beginning (for example, are they decision-makers (not just 'implementers' e.g. extension staff)? (as was the case in Tanzania)). Where possible, it can be helpful to try and find allies within the relevant ministries, people who are passionate about sustainable production and also want to see change. They can help champion and "cheerlead" change. It could also be helpful to consider broader forms of lobbying. For example, Solidaridad in the Netherlands might be able to make use of the Embassy or Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to exert pressure on national governments.

There can also be risk of 'elite capture' when leveraging government processes and developing national standards. For example, a national standard may be owned by the government and governments can charge for stakeholders to access the standard. This can work against the original aims of standards development (i.e. improving safety of food for consumer health and for market opportunities for

producers, and is anti-poor) (Tanzania). The potential risk of this happening should be considered at the outset of such a process.

### **Resources, timing and capacities**

The establishment of MSPs and standards is typically very resource-intensive, and can be very time intensive depending on the political context. Success can be determined by adequate resource allocation (Mozambique had benefited from the same resource allocation as that given to South Africa, Zambia, Tanzania, and Uganda combined). Uganda, in particular, appeared to struggle with staffing and resource allocation relative to the scope of work (two MSPs in two sectors), which resulted in work in the tea sector being prioritised. **Resources need to be compared to the level of ambition and if they don't match up, adjustments should be made accordingly.**

In particular, **enough time needs to be dedicated to the inception phase of MSPs** and people's expectations need to be effectively managed (particularly CSOs and producer groups in relation to "benefits"), as well as in raising awareness to ensure people understand the key issues and the need for a standard. Factoring in sufficient time is particularly important where Solidaridad is new to a country, and for efficiency purposes, it may make more sense to **establish an MSP where Solidaridad has ongoing work, particularly complementary work on good practices**, for example, that helps to ensure Solidaridad's credibility and allows them to have full understanding of key issues, dynamics, etc that explain the situation on the ground (and that might demonstrate that standards are not necessarily the right entry point to transforming a sector as was the case in South Africa).

**Lobbying and advocacy skills of Solidaridad staff are very important**, but especially where Solidaridad is new to a country or where staff have not engaged or convened MSPs before. A large portion of in-country staff appear to lack these skills, and not just in East and Southern Africa. There are concerns that the new MASP (2021 to 2025) has many advocacy objectives but limited capacity to deliver on this. This is not to say that a lack of formal lobbying and advocacy skills precludes effective engagement with government, as the work in Uganda and South Africa show. The in-country manager for Uganda was very effective in this regard, having his own *"direct way of finding and meeting top people in government"*. In South Africa the existing ties and linkages helped to bring a very challenging sector together, which consisted of very different stakeholders with very different priorities. In addition, it is important that Solidaridad staff have a background in agriculture and sustainable production – even if they are not technical experts in every area. In addition, it can be helpful for staff to have existing political connections if possible as in the case of Mozambique.

**Staffing is a key determinant of success.** In Mozambique, the country manager felt that a large portion of their success comes down to the *"fact that we have the right staff – other organisations had the same vision but didn't have the right staff to meet the vision."* The work has been well supported by a passionate regional director who really cares about sustainable production and has experience in the FF&V sector – this has been a key enabler.

The use of local partners can be a critical success factor in Solidaridad's work, but if Solidaridad is *"to be serious about their partnerships and dedicated to their partners then need checks and balances to ensure the required amount of funding is passed through to partners."* This is relevant to Uganda, in particular.

**Enough time and resources also need to be given to work at the ground level** – capacity building and piloting of the standard – for possible future impact to be possible. Through work on the ground, women can also be encouraged to fulfil leadership positions, which can support women's participation in policymaking processes in the future. It remains a challenge to recruit women in the platform as representatives of organization since many do not already fill those positions.

## **Case study 2: . Linking advocacy at different levels in the Asian tea and palm oil portfolio**

### **Acknowledgements**

This evaluation has been unique because of the fact that it has been completely done at a distance, without any field visits, through video-calls. This implied that local Solidaridad staff has been intensively involved in organizing the long-distance calls, ensuring that stakeholders who we wanted to interview were available at the right time with the right means of communication, and sometimes also playing a role in local translation.

For this case study I would therefore especially like to thank Shatadru Chattopadhyay, Ranjan Circar, Rusong Li, Suresh Motwani, Kulbir Mehta, Nitin Rao from Solidaridad and Veronika Ratri from Business Watch Indonesia/ for facilitating this case study and the calls with the stakeholders that were selected.

## **Introduction**

As a major part of this end-evaluation of the Solidaridad AfC programme, 5 case studies were undertaken. Case studies are focused on a central theme, and usually encompass different projects falling within this theme, in different countries. This is case study 2, and focusses on Solidaridad's AfC portfolio on tea and palm oil in Asia .

The project evaluation was conducted by Jan Willem Molenaar, through review of individual project related documents and a series of on-distance interviews with project staff, project partners and selected stakeholders (Annex 1.2). The interviews were semi-structured, using a questionnaire which was specifically developed for this case study (Annex 2), which was aligned with the agreed evaluation questions and checklists in the inception report for this assignment. The aim has been to have a limited number of interviews with persons (men and women) that represent the diversity of stakeholders, from private, public, civil society and community levels.

A draft version of this case study report has been discussed with the local Solidaridad team, with adjustments being made based on feedback and leading to this final version.

## Basic information of the project/s of the case study

This case study refers to the following three projects:

<b>REC</b>	Solidaridad Asia
<b>Project title</b>	<b>Sustainable transformation of Indonesian tea industry through Lestari national standard</b>
<b>Country/ies</b>	Indonesia
<b>Plaza reference no.</b>	1472
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To assist and build capacity of CSOs and other tea industry stakeholders to develop, adopt and implement a sustainability road map (Vision 2025) that enhances the competitiveness of Indonesian tea industry.</li> <li>• To facilitate evidence based discussions between stakeholders (in particular smallholders) by convening a neutral national multi-stakeholder platform in order to link Indonesian Government incentives for tea sector (subsidies, finance, value addition) are linked to sustainability.</li> <li>• To build consensus for adopting Lestari sustainability standard as the national tea standard by 2020 and recognized by government.</li> <li>• To make the smallholder segment in Indonesia competitive and sustainable.</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Watch Indonesia (=implementing partner)</li> <li>• National Reference Group (= MSI)</li> <li>• Lestari Foundation</li> <li>• Indonesian Tea Marketing Association (ITMA)</li> <li>• Numerous producer associations, including Paguyuban Tani Lestari</li> </ul>
<b>Budget</b>	EUR 1,152,000

<b>REC</b>	Solidaridad Asia
<b>Project title</b>	<b>Tea Asia 2015</b>
<b>Country/ies</b>	Indonesia, India, China
<b>Plaza reference no.</b>	1469
<b>Specific Objectives</b>	<p>To align and coordinate efforts and investment by several Asian tea industry stakeholders towards a common agenda of securing an efficient, economic and regular supply of high quality sustainable tea to consumers, improved living and working conditions of tea workers and a fair return on investment for tea producers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To set up an international platform of Asian tea industry stakeholders which will shall focus on coordination and unification of the tea policies of member countries and the determine the best means for safeguarding the tea producers (in particular smallholders) interests, individually and collectively.</li> <li>• Devise ways and means of ensuring improvement of prices in international tea markets with a view to eliminating harmful and unnecessary race to the bottom.</li> <li>• To develop an aligned approach of different sustainability standards in Asian markets which is linked to the SDG targets.</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<p>Producer/ Industry associations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indian Tea Association (ITA)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United Planters Association of Southern India (UPASI)</li> <li>• China Tea Marketing Association (CTMA)</li> <li>• Indonesian Tea Marketing Association (ITMA)</li> </ul> <p>Smallholders associations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lestari Foundation and its members</li> <li>• CISTA and its members</li> </ul> <p>Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tea Board of India</li> <li>• Provincial Government of Yunnan</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Watch Indonesia (implementing partner)</li> <li>• Several tea companies in India and Indonesia</li> </ul>
<b>Budget</b>	EUR 500,000

<b>REC</b>	Solidaridad Asia
<b>Project title</b>	<b>ASPN (Asian Sustainable Palm Oil Network): Facilitating the Journey of Sustainable Palm Production and Trade in Asia</b>
<b>Country/ies</b>	Indonesia, Malaysia, India, China
<b>Plaza reference no.</b>	1469
<b>Specific Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To continuously increase the efficiency of ISPO and MSPO standards as well as its audit process to address global concerns on sustainable palm oil production.</li> <li>• To facilitate Indian and Chinese palm oil stakeholders to develop &amp; adopt their own framework on sustainable palm oil.</li> <li>• Pilot introduction of ISPO and MSPO certified palm oil produced by smallholders in Indian, Indonesian and Chinese markets</li> <li>• To set up an international platform of Asian palm oil industry stakeholders which shall focus on coordination and alignment of the Asian sustainability standards on palm oil production and trade in Asia</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB)</li> <li>• Indonesian Palm Oil Board (DMSI)</li> </ul> <p>Industry associations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solvent Extractors Association (SEA) of India</li> <li>• China National Vegetable Oil Association (CNVOA)</li> </ul> <p>Companies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Godrej Agrovet Limited, plus some others in India</li> </ul> <p>CSOs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Watch Indonesia (BWI)</li> <li>• Serikat Petani Kelapa Sawit (SPKS), Credit Union Keling Kumang (CUKK), GIMNI (Indonesian Vegetable Oil Industry Association). SOPOPRA (Society for Oil Palm Research and Development). The Dayak Oil Palm Planters Association (Doppa), Apkasindo (The Indonesian Oil Palm Farmers Association)</li> </ul>
<b>Budget</b>	EUR 500,000

## Context and origin

### The context

The geographical scope of the AfC projects, and related PfC projects, in the Asian tea and palm oil sector includes India, Indonesia, Malaysia (only palm oil) and China. In all these countries Solidaridad works at national level and local level (either state/ provinces or district).

The tea and palm oil sectors in these countries have similar characteristics:

- The production base consists of both large-scale estates and smallholders. Only in China, the tea sector is predominantly smallholder-based. In both sectors, smallholders are gaining in market share compared to the estates. There are millions of smallholders in both sectors.
- These countries represent the biggest producers, exporters and consumers in the world and there are important trade flows between them.
- In the past two decades, the sustainability agenda in both sectors has been dominated by European driven sustainability initiatives and EU based multi-nationals, particularly the voluntary sustainability standards.

There are also differences between the two sectors:

- Tea is a product with a direct consumer facing product and relatively short supply chain. It can be blended and sold as single origin. Palm oil is by nature a versatile product with a long supply chain. It is used as ingredient in food, cosmetic, industrial products and as biodiesel. In Asia it is a main source of cooking oil.
- The palm oil sector is generally more political than the tea sector due to its contribution to GDP and export earnings (Indonesia and Malaysia) and share in national imports (India).
- There is variability in the nature of how the sectors are governed. In China and India, there exist strong tea specific government institutions in tea, while in Indonesia these are absent. The governance of the Indonesian palm oil sector is a bit more coordinated than in Malaysia.
- The tea sector has a longer history than the palm oil sector with more 'traditional' institutions and a high cultural value (particularly in China and India).
- The attention for sustainability by Western stakeholders is much higher in palm oil than in tea.

### The origin

Solidaridad has over 15 years of involvement on both sectors in Asia. One could characterize this involvement roughly in three phases. In Phase 1, the strategy was to contribute to the development and promotion global voluntary sustainability standards (like RSPO and UTZ Certified) and to support (Western) companies in piloting these. While this strategy led to a respectable market share (e.g. 20% in palm oil), it became clear that further scaling is constrained by an absence of demand for certified products in the Asian markets where the highest consumption is. Scaling was also constrained by the high costs involved to certify smallholders (i.e. absent business case). While these standards were able to raise the bar and reach out to the better performing and resourced producers, they did not raise the floor for all producers, including smallholder and the worst performing large-scale producers. Meanwhile, governments and other stakeholders in Asia were opposed to get on board with these EU stakeholders initiatives, as they perceived them as foreign interference in domestic production systems.

These insights led to phase 2, where Solidaridad initiated or supported the development of national standards. The rationale behind these national standards was that they were better adapted to the local context and more cost-efficient, and therefore more applicable to smallholders. Because they were developed in close collaboration with national industry and authorities, they would also result in better ownership in producing countries than the international standards (even resulting in mandatory standards as with ISPO and MSPO). These national standards are very much based upon their international counterparts. Still there differences in terms of requirements and the robustness of their

verification and chain of custody systems. Solidaridad's expectation is that they will become more stringent over time. Solidaridad's role in this phase has been, and still is, to co-develop the standards and systems, strengthen the implementing bodies, and to pilot its implementation among smallholders. In tea, Solidaridad initiated Lestari in Indonesia, Trustea in India, and the national guideline for tea in China. In palm oil, it initiated IPOS in India and strengthens MSPO and ISPO in Malaysia and Indonesia.

In Phase 3, Solidaridad addresses systemic issues which require additional solutions than the implementation of above sustainability standards. This is particularly driven by the continuous declining business case for producers due to increased costs and low price environments. Standards are not providing a solution to these issues. Important causes for this situation include climate change, overproduction, the weak economic and political position of producers, particularly smallholders, inefficient value chains and the lack of consumer demand. Solidaridad tries to address these issues through a holistic approach of developing best practices (GP) in production and value chains, robust infrastructures (RI) (e.g. services) in support of these practices, an enabling policy environment (EPE) and landscape innovations (LI).

The AfC programme covers primarily interventions which are linked to phase 2 (national standards) and phase 3 (enabling policy environment). It has strong linkages to GP, RI and LI interventions (see below). Because of its historical involvement, several of the partners in the AfC programme were existing partners, while other partnerships have been developed as part of the AfC and PfC programme.

### **Analyses**

The AfC programme has been foremost informed by the years of experience of Solidaridad's staff in both sectors. They had experience in all of the sector-country combinations included in AfC. Hence, prior to the start of Solidaridad had already a deep knowledge and strong network. During the implementation of the AfC project, comprehensive sector studies in the Indonesian and Indian tea sector have informed more detailed strategies and policy objectives.

### **Other projects**

The three projects in this case study are managed by Solidaridad, but in the Lestari project in Indonesia it managed in partnership with Business Watch Indonesia (BWI). The two organizations started to collaborate in such way long before AfC.

The AfC programme has strong links with other Solidaridad programmes and projects. AfC's theory of change, effectiveness and possible lessons learned cannot be understood without considering these. The most prominent other programmes/projects referred to in this case study are:

- Trinitea in India: The PfC funded Trinitea project is implemented by ITA and Solidaridad and build capacities of smallholders to improve production practices and promotes several smallholder inclusive value chain models that uses digital technology for traceability and transparency.
- In Indonesia, Solidaridad has several field projects which focus on both RSPO and ISPO certification of smallholders and consumer forestry management in oil palm sheds.
- NISCOPS: This programme funded by the Dutch government is implemented by Solidaridad and IDH and promotes landscape approaches in Malaysian and Indonesian oil palm growing districts. It started implementation end of last year.

## Theory of change

The tea sector in Asia is confronted with systemic issues such as declining production due to increasing costs of production, a low and volatile price environment and increasing vulnerability to climate change. The sector also faces increasing competition in the consumer market from other beverages. The power in the value chain is also heavily with the (international) packers. For decades, their earning model was to sell more tea at a lower price. To maintain tea at a low price they push for higher tea yields and compromise on quality. This does not create an environment for producers to invest in sustainable practices or in production at all (e.g. in Indonesia the production area is declining). Meanwhile it is clear that voluntary standards are not the answer to all issues and that governments and industry tend to ignore smallholders despite that they represent an increasing share in production.

In palm oil, the financial returns for producers are much better, but the lack of effective regulatory and market incentives still limits the willingness to adopt sustainability practices by producers. The demand for RSPO palm oil is still confined to Western markets (representing approx. 20% of global consumption) with massive oversupply in producing countries (up to 70% sold as non-certified palm oil) and the implementation mechanisms of the mandatory standards are insufficiently effective in reaching out to smallholders.

In this context AfC and PfC have been developed with a clear ambition: to contribute to a transformation of the tea and palm oil sectors. Although not explicitly formulated like this, one can read throughout the project documentation that Solidaridad fundamentally pursued this through:

- Empowering producers, and notably smallholders, economically and politically
- Improving national sustainability and regulatory frameworks, as well as public investments in smallholder production systems
- Promoting international collaboration and alignment of stakeholders in most prominent production and consumption countries in Asia

The schematic ToCs of the two continental projects in tea and palm oil can be seen in Appendix 3. For the purpose of this evaluation, the evaluators have restructured the ToC of the palm and tea portfolio in 5 general objectives through which Solidaridad pursues sector transformation:

### ***1. Empower producers, particularly smallholders, economically by producing more sustainably and capturing more value (tea focus)***

This is the core objective in the ToC of the tea programme. In essence, Solidaridad tries to empower smallholders economically. This is pursued through more making them better farmers, but also to give them a better position in the value chain. Through AfC (Indonesia, ASPN in Malaysia) and PfC (India via Trinitea), it supports farmers in becoming more profitable through increased efficiency, productivity, product quality and, increasingly, resilience through diversification. Social and environmental practices are seen as both a condition and an outcome for this profitability: some sustainable practices are recommended to become more profitable (e.g. more efficient input use), while others practices can only be adopted when farmers become more profitable (e.g. improving certain wage conditions).

While farm performance is considered as one part of the equation, prices represents the other one. To promote value capture through better prices, Solidaridad promotes smallholders to invest in their own processing factories, branding and marketing channels (i.e. skipping the traditional factories and packers). This is driven by Solidaridad's conviction that producers need to become less dependent from the mainstream tea packers. These packers are held largely responsible to squeeze the value out of the value chain by selling cheap and bulked products. Solidaridad's ambition is to position tea as a healthy product which can be differentiated according to quality and origin (i.e. a good price for good tea). Promoting smallholder owned brands and using national sustainability frameworks as a strategy to

create more consumer value are central in Solidaridad's strategy (see objective 3). As it is unlikely that all tea will be marketed via these smallholder-owned initiatives, Solidaridad also pursues fairer trading relationships between factories and smallholders through the promotion of outgrower models and transparent sourcing models. Under this objective, digitalization plays an important role to facilitate farm advisory services, compliance mechanisms, Chain of Custody and direct marketing.

***2. Empower CSOs, particularly producer associations, politically to advocate for inclusive sector transformation and sustainable policies (tea focus)***

A better economic position of smallholders requires more balanced power relationships between them and other stakeholders. The AfC programme tries to give smallholders more influence over government and industry, as they have been traditionally neglected by these actors. Solidaridad pursues this through organizing and strengthening smallholder associations and support them in L&A activities. It also forges partnerships between these associations and powerful industry associations that can lobby on their behalf or by making use of existing multi-stakeholder platforms. Priority policy objectives being pursued include increased public budget allocation to smallholder production and value chains and tea pricing mechanisms.

***3. Improvement of the systems of the national sustainability frameworks in producing countries (tea and palm oil focus)***

Solidaridad considers national standards, ideally mandatory, as a key strategy to scale sustainable practices and making sustainability the norm. They are better suited for this than international standards as they have more local ownership, are better adapted to the local context and are more efficient to implement. They can also create value when they are used in consumer communication. The national standards are seen as a possible step before adopting international standards whenever there is a market for this. Within the AfC programme, Solidaridad has created (IPOS) and strengthened (Lestari, MSPO, ISPO) national standards systems. Important topics for improvement are standard content, accessibility to smallholders, the chain of custody system, and consumer communication. Solidaridad also pursues mutual recognition of national standards between different countries in order to promote the international trade of sustainable products (see objective 5).

In India, Solidaridad became less directly involved in Trustea as it feels that it has been hijacked by the packers. Instead it now promotes TRINITEA, which consists of a digital self-assessment tool tailor-made for smallholders in the Indian tea industry. The assessment is also used to give assurance to farmers, buying factories, the tea packers as well as consumers on social, agronomical and environmental aspects of tea production.

***4. Solidaridad mobilises brands & companies to adopt sustainable policies and good practices***

The key rationale behind this objective is to increase the uptake of the national standards and related sustainable practices and to promote a fair inclusion of smallholders in their supply base. This is pursued by direct engagement and capacity building of these companies.

***5. Facilitate international collaboration to promote increased trade and exchange for sustainable products (tea and palm oil focus)***

Given that more than 80% of the tea is consumed within Asia, the tea sector cannot be further transformed without involving the Indian, Chinese and Indonesian markets. It is therefore necessary to coordinate and align tea policies of these countries and to determine the best means for safeguarding the tea producers interests. For this reason Solidaridad initiated the creation of the Asian Tea Alliance (ATA). This alliance of tea producer associations works towards recognition of each other's sustainability frameworks, knowledge and technology exchange and the promotion of trade and consumption of sustainable tea in order to improve tea prices.

Like in tea, the main producers and consumers of palm oil are located in Asia. The ASPN project promotes mutual recognition of sustainability frameworks and international trade based upon these frameworks (in Asia but also to the EU). The rationale is that standard recognition, market promotion and consumer awareness should create a demand pull for sustainable palm oil.

In summary, the AfC projects in the Asian tea and palm oil sectors have a strong EPE focus (=objective 1, 2& 5), but also include GP and RI interventions (= objective 1 & 3). These are strengthened by complementary projects with PFC and other funding. More recently, the NISCOPS programme offered the opportunity to combine above objectives at district level in Indonesia and Malaysia. The entry point of NISCOPS is palm oil but it also looks at other crops, including tea. NISCOPS also offers opportunities to address sustainability issues which require a beyond palm oil look, such as deforestation and issues around land tenure.

#### **Changes over time**

The overall ToC did not change during implementation of the AfC projects. However, new insights and developments have changed specific objectives and strategies of the projects. For example, the original objective to achieve recognition of the Lestari standard by the BSN (National Standardization Agency of Indonesia) was abandoned after further assessment showed that such hand-over could affect the participatory nature in its governance and implementation strength.

## Results and effectiveness

### Results overview

The following table gives relevant output and outcome indicator results which is from the project's M&E system but adapted according to the findings of this evaluation.

Indicator	Results 2019	Target 2020	Remarks
# of CSOs/POs that are being trained or supported to effectively participate in decision making and dialogue	Tea: 68 Palm: 8	Tea: 32 Palm: 8	<i>Tea</i> CSOs: BWI, Lestari Foundation (Indonesia) Smallholder Associations: Indonesia: APTEHINDO, Paguyuban Tani Lestari, 51 local associations (Indonesia); India: NFSTGA, CISTA (India), 8 local smallholder associations Producer / marketing associations: ITA, UPASI, ITMA <i>Palm</i> CSOs: BWI Smallholder associations: CUKK, SPKS Producer / industry associations: SEA, SOPOPRAD, Apkasindo, GIMNI DOPPA
# MSPs & networks convened	Tea: 2 Palm: 1	Tea: 3 Palm: 1	Tea: Indonesian National Reference Group, Asia Tea Alliance plus various conferences and meetings Palm: Palm Oil Working Group plus various conferences and meetings
# of local, regional and global authorities (public partners) supported to increase capacity to monitor and enforce	Tea: 17 Palm: 2	Tea: 17 Palm: 3	Tea: CTMA, Tea Board of India, 5 Indonesian Ministries, 2 provincial and 8 districts offices Palm oil: Malaysian Palm Oil Board and Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs in Indonesia
# of brands and companies (private partners) supported to implement national level regulations/standards	Tea: 26 Palm: 10	Tea: ~207 Palm: 10	Tea: Target assumes all members of ITMA and ITA, but result shows only direct relationships
# policy options / proposals / recommendations submitted to relevant public or private decision makers	Tea: 7 Palm: 2	Tea: 7 Palm: 4	ASPEN: IPOS launched and IPOS, MSPO, ISPO equivalence
# of policies, mechanisms and regulations adopted by public or private decision makers	Tea: 11 Palm: 2	Tea: 10 Palm: 4	ASPEN: Signing of equivalence agreement between IPOS and MSPO, IPOS & IPOS certification by Godrej company

*The findings in this table are derived from Solidaridad's M&E framework. The last two policy related indicators are not fully in line with the results presented below. This is because the below results do either use a slightly different definition is what is a policy and how certain policy changes are aggregated into one.*

The results will be discussed in more detail per objective as formulated in the previous chapter.

### **1. Empower producers, particularly smallholders, economically by producing more sustainably and capturing more value (tea focus)**

**In both India and Indonesia, Solidaridad successfully supported the development of smallholder based tea supply chains with clear income benefits for farmers.** In Indonesia, the Lestari project has supported 26,530 tea smallholders, of which 24% women, to adopt good agricultural practices in line with the Lestari standard. These farmers also obtained Lestari Tea certification. Solidaridad has started a pilot to introduce tea cultivation in West-Kalimantan. The programme has contributed to the establishment of 5 smallholder owned tea factories on Java thanks to subsidized machinery the Ministry of Industry (see objective 2) acquired in China (see objective 5). The programme also supports tea smallholder associations to develop a local tea distribution network for tea from these factories (with government support thanks to objective 2). Part of this work has been the launch of the 'The nDeso' brand which is linked to Lestari certification. The brand will also be used to promote tea consumption in Kalimantan.

Interviewed farmers in Java reported a significant higher income from the processed dried tea, compared to their previous practice of selling green leaves to collectors.

In India, AfC activities strongly overlap with PfC activities of the Trinitea project, which covers now 45,000 farmers (of which 7% are women). As in Indonesia, Solidaridad promotes smallholder-owned factories, marketing and branding. It does this in collaboration with the national smallholder association CISTA. Interviews revealed that the programme clearly drives entrepreneurship among tea farmers and creates additional income.

**In India, pilots to build better trading relationships between smallholders and tea factors are in development or under implementation.** Solidaridad builds the capacity of ITA's zonal offices in Northern India to provide training to smallholder from member associations. Through the Trinitea project, Solidaridad works with tea estates and factories to pilot outgrower models and more transparent sourcing relationships with independent smallholders.

**Initial efforts to promote farm income diversification have been made, but the projects remains largely focused on single commodities.** In India, Solidaridad pilots a more diversified plantation model which introduces palm oil in tea plantations. This pilot is at still in a development phase. In collaboration with the government, an assessment is being done to plant 38.000 ha in existing tea gardens. The work with the women tea associations In Indonesia resulted in increased investments in home-gardening for food and income and household savings. Despite these efforts, one could argue that farm diversification as a strategy to become more resilient to market and climate risks has not yet fully materialized in the programme. The NISCOPS programme seems to give more emphasis to this.

## ***2. Empower CSOs, particularly producer associations, politically to advocate for inclusive sector transformation and sustainable policies (tea focus)***

**The AfC programme has contributed to increased L&A capacity and activity of Indonesian CSOs resulting in several policy changes.** In Indonesia, Solidaridad has strengthened the capacities of over 30 smallholder associations (local and national) to engage with public authorities and industry representatives. Interviews with Paguyuban Tani Lestari (PTL), representing 34,000 farmers organized in multiple associations, and representatives of three women associations revealed several positive outcomes:

- Increased knowledge exchange and solidarity between farmers
- Increased confidence and advocacy skills
- Increased awareness on the responsibility and opportunities to take a more active role in the development of the tea sector in their districts (particularly relevant for the women groups)
- Better connections and improved relationships with public decision-makers (for PTL from local till national, for the women associations primarily local)

The project also supports the Lestari Foundation and ITMA in lobby and advocacy. ITMA is an associations of producers (including smallholders), packers and marketers. It has gained considerably in strength and visibility in the course of these years with successful interventions in Java and Kalimantan as well internationally (see objective 5). Much of the lobby and advocacy is done through the National Reference Group (NRG), a multi-stakeholder group BWI and Solidaridad initiated in 2008 as part of the development of the Lestari standard. The project facilitates alignment between members on policy change goals and advocacy strategies. For example, ITMA generally takes the lead to influence the Ministry of Trade, while the Indonesian Tea Association and Paguyuban Tani Lestari focus on the Ministry of Agriculture. Solidaridad and BWI play an important coordinating and facilitating role in these L&A efforts.

**In India, the programme has succeeded in incorporating smallholders interests in the established tea producer associations.** In India, Solidaridad’s partners such as ITA and UPASI already had a strong lobby and advocacy track record before partnering with Solidaridad. However, these organizations traditionally represented the tea estates. As part of the AfC and Trinitea projects, Solidaridad facilitated better connections between ITA and UPAS and various smallholders associations and the inclusion of smallholder interests in their L&A agenda. ITA, UPASI are also supported in the international dialogue as part of the Asian Tea Alliance (see objective 5). Solidaridad does the same for ITMA from Indonesia and CTMA from China.

In palm oil, Solidaridad accompanies the most important industry association of India (SEA) in getting palm oil recognized as plantation crop in order to attract investments in new plantation development (i.e. India has a lot of land available where expansion won’t be at the cost of forests or communities). It also partnered with SEA to develop IPOS (see the next objective).

In Indonesia, Solidaridad has long established relationships with producer organizations and CSOs in the palm oil sector. Some of them have been engaged in the ASPN work. The L&A work in Indonesia will be intensified through the NISCOPS programme.

Some of the most prominent policy targets and progress in this objective are:

L&A policy target and background	Current status <sup>5</sup>
<i>Tea Indonesia:</i> The Government of Indonesia considers tea a priority crop and dedicates more budget to it.	Stage 2. Ongoing dialogue between partners and government. NRG developed a Vision document as basis for this discussion
<i>Tea Indonesia:</i> Proposal to support tea factories for smallholder groups to Ministry of Industry	Stage 6. In 2018, the national, provincial and local governments have subsidized for 5 factories and related infrastructure. In 2020 new proposals are being prepared.
<i>Tea Indonesia:</i> Proposal on the training for tea smallholders to Ministry of Cooperative and SME	Stage 6. The government has started to dedicate resources for training tea smallholders in AfC’s intervention areas
<i>Tea Indonesia:</i> Proposal to support smallholder tea distribution network	Stage 6. The Provincial Government has instructed each Regent in Central Java Province to facilitate BWI in establishing distribution networks for village products.
<i>Tea Indonesia:</i> West Kalimantan Government approving initiation of tea production by small tea growers	Stage 6. Pilots are being implemented and tea is also part of NISCOPS scope.
<i>Tea Indonesia:</i> Recommendation on minimum price of tea to Ministry of Trade and Ministry of Agriculture, Recommendation on smallholder tea auction to Ministry of Trade.	Stage 3. Dialogue with Ministries to explore strategies to promote more fair price formulation
<i>Tea India:</i> Policy recommendation to Indian Tea Board on Crisis in India Tea Plantations	Stage 1. Solidaridad and partners presented a comprehensive status report of the sector, but Tea Board gave it little follow-up
<i>Tea India:</i> Revision of auction system	Stage 3. Dialogue with Ministries to explore strategies to promote more fair price formulation.

<sup>5</sup> Stages for external policy influencing:

1. Public and corporate decision-makers have better knowledge on issues of sustainability and inclusiveness (awareness creation) – this could be based on policy reviews or position papers
2. Public and corporate decision-makers are willing to make use of knowledge to develop, implement and enforce better policies (agenda setting)
3. Public and corporate decision-makers undertake / request for policy recommendations
4. Decision-makers propose policy and legal changes
5. Proposed policy and legal changes are adopted
6. Improved policy implementation and enforcement

<i>Tea India:</i> Make the Indian Tea Association inclusive to smallholders	Stage 6. ITA has opened up membership to smallholders and created a department to train smallholders
<i>Palm oil in India:</i> Getting palm oil recognized as plantation crop to allow for smoother expansion	Stage 3-4. On-going dialogue with the Assam Province and other provinces. In Assam policy recommendations have been made.

### **3. Improvement of the systems of the national sustainability frameworks in producing countries (tea and palm oil focus)**

**The AfC projects have resulted in the development of IPOS and further strengthening of the MSPO and Lestari systems.** In India, Solidaridad has supported the development and piloting of the IPOS standard. The standard is developed in consultation with many stakeholders, including ISPO and MSPO representatives. The SEA-IPOS Council has been set-up to manage and facilitate IPOS day-to-day activities. It currently pursues formal recognition by the government and the development of a Chain of Custody model.

In Malaysia, Solidaridad supports the Malaysia Palm Oil Board (MPOB) resulted in the launch of a digital tool to facilitate MSPO implementation for smallholders. They also developed and pilot a cluster approach to support smallholders becoming MSPO certified (the current pilot consists of 3 clusters of 2000 smallholders). Solidaridad also provides input to the revision of the MSPO smallholder standard which is to be finalized end of this year. Solidaridad positions itself to become involved in the development of a Chain of Custody model for MSPO.

In Indonesia, the project is supporting the development of a consumer facing logo for Lestari certified tea and promotes its recognition by industry and government.

<b>L&amp;A policy target and background</b>	<b>Current status</b>
<i>Lestari:</i> Proposal on national logo on tea made in Indonesia to Ministry of Trade	Stage 4. Proposal has been submitted for approval
<i>MSPO:</i> Digital tool to support smallholders to become MSPO compliant	Stage 6. Tool developed and adopted by MSPO.
<i>MSPO:</i> An outreach approach to support smallholders to comply with MSPO	Stage 6. MPOB and Solidaridad pilot 3 clusters and commitment is made to expand to 7 clusters.
<i>MSPO:</i> Revision of MSPO Smallholder requirements	Stage 5. Revision process is close to finalization and the revised standard is expected to be approved end 2020.
<i>MSPO:</i> Improvement of MSPOs Chain of Custody system	Stage 1. Solidaridad is positioning itself to support this
<i>IPOS:</i> Development of the standard and Standard and system development	Stage 6. Standard is developed and adopted by SEA, Chain of Custody system is planned to be developed
<i>IPOS:</i> Government recognition of the ISPO standard	Stage 3. Proposal is made and government shows willingness but progress is slow.

### **4. Solidaridad mobilises brands & companies to adopt sustainable policies and good practices**

**The programme has supported several large-scale plantations to adopt national standards and to build supply chains inclusive to smallholders.** In Indonesia, 15 estates pursue Lestari certification of which until now two estates achieved this. In India, the project is influencing 5 companies to buy tea from the Trinitea supported farmers. It also supported India's leading palm oil company Godrej Agrovet Ltd to successfully implement as first company in India the newly developed IPOS standard.

### **5. Facilitate international collaboration to promote increased trade and exchange for sustainable products (tea and palm oil focus)**

**Solidaridad initiated the Asia Tea Alliance which has the potential to become a key initiative in improving regional collaboration based on a producer centered agenda.** Its members consists of CTMA (China, ITA (India) and ITMA (Indonesia), later joined by the Sri Lanka Tea Board and Central Tea Association of Japan. The ATA is based upon a MoU between these organizations and a Declaration which was signed in December 2018. CTMA has committed to establish the Secretariat, while the chairmanship will alternate between the members. The ATA has formulated objectives around:

- strengthening friendship between tea industries of the different countries
- promoting trade and consumption
- exchanging technology and aligning research
- promoting the sustainable development of the tea sector.

The collaboration at international level already resulted in technology exchange (e.g. the Chinese machinery provided to the Indonesian smallholder groups), new trade deals and foreign investments (e.g. Tata will invest in China). It also resulted in a mutual recognition of Trinitea, the National Tea Guidelines in China and Lestari. The collaboration is also influencing the trading relationships between China and India. This is highlighted by the intention made by the Tea Board of India to have a free trade agreement with China. These type of initiatives are remarkable in a context where many political tensions exist between these countries.

**In palm oil, ASPN facilitated the recognition between IPOS-MSPO and IPOS-ISPO and is working towards trade promotion for palm oil produced according to these standards.** It also facilitates discussion between the stakeholders of the 4 countries to remove trade barriers for sustainable palm oil between the countries. For example, a joint working committee for Indonesia - India palm oil has been created with the objectives to strengthen and deepen the trade relations between both the countries and to support and promote smallholders inclusive sustainable palm oil. The government of Indonesia already decided to 0,5 million euro in the promotion of Indonesian ISPO palm oil in India.

The objective to promote MSPO and/or ISPO palm oil in the EU has not been materialized. Although Solidaridad Europe has advocated to the Dutch government to further invest in these systems, any market promotion activities in the EU were always linked to RSPO certified palm oil.

L&A policy target and background	Current status
<i>Tea:</i> Formal collaboration between producer / industry associations of China, India and Indonesia	Stage 6. ATA has been established. Sri Lanka and Japan joined as well.
<i>Tea:</i> Mutual recognition of national tea standards of China, India and Indonesia	Stage 6. Achieved. The recognition has been signed by the Asian Tea Alliance membership in presence of government representatives.
<i>Tea:</i> Market promotion	Stage 6. First trade deals have been made.
<i>Palm oil:</i> Mutual recognition of national palm oil standards of Malaysia, Indonesia and India	Stage 6. Recognition between IPOS-ISPO and IPOS- MSPO has been formalized.
<i>Palm oil:</i> Market promotion between the three countries	Stage 5: Financial commitment to promote Indonesian palm oil in India has been made Stage 1-2: ASPN Working Groups are used to discuss import/export duty issues
<i>Palm oil.</i> Market promotion in the EU	Not materilized

### Gender inclusivity considerations

**In Indonesia tea, there is a strong emphasis on women livelihood development and empowerment.** The tea portfolio has a high relevance for women, as women form the majority of the tea farmers in Indonesia and of tea pickers in Indonesia and India. In both countries women are very active in post-

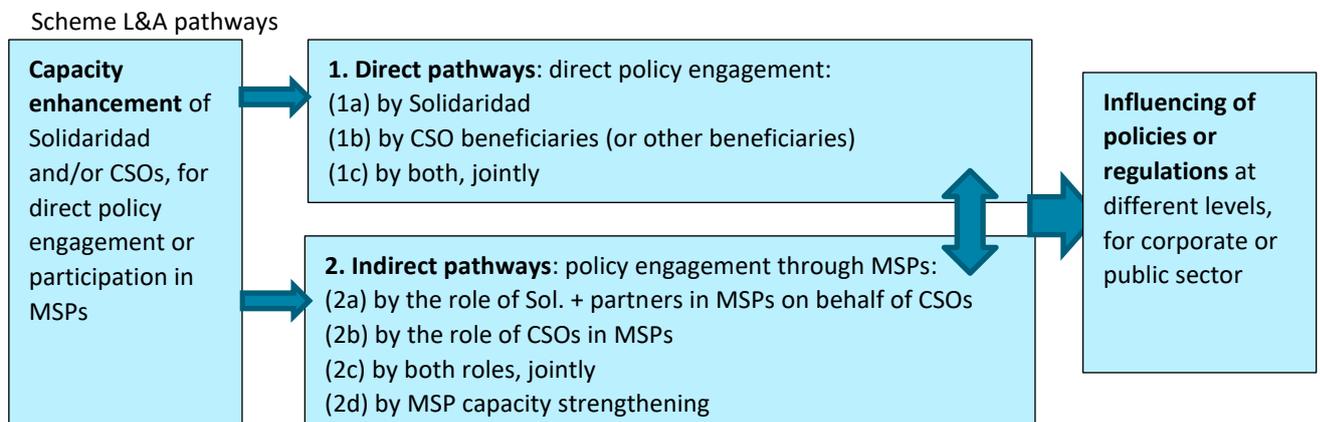
harvest value addition. As mentioned above, In Java women associations have been created and strengthened. Women have been trained to produce and market quality fresh tea leaves and fried tea collectively. Women farmer groups have benefited from the support of the government to build a small-scale tea processing factory. Tea female farmers and workers in Central Java are also assisted to build their network for expanding their market for farm products. Therefore, products can be marketed directly to the end-user, and it led to increasing income of female farmers and workers. Their network will be supported and more expanded by Lestari village network which established by Provincial Government of Central Java. Interviews with three women revealed that the project has empowered them both economically and politically. They refer to additional income, improved business skills, stronger cohesion amongst group members and better relationships with other stakeholders.

**In India tea and ASPN, women empowerment is less explicit target, though women working conditions at the farm are addressed.** In India, the Trinitea programme includes women farmers, but the Indian tea smallholder sector is more male dominated than in Indonesia. However, women do work on their husbands' farms and they are reached by giving attention to occupational health and safety and hygiene in tea gardens. Similarly, the smallholder outreach approach promoted by the MPOB in ASPN also addresses these aspects for palm oil plantations.

## L&A strategies and role of Solidaridad

### L&A pathways

Solidaridad has distinguished three L&A pathways which we further specified in the below figure.



Note: PI = Policy Influencing; CE = Capacity Enhancement

**Solidaridad pursues multiple L&A pathways.** The direct pathway is most often used. In most cases, this is implemented with or via partners. For example in India policy influencing happens through Solidaridad's well-recognized and powerful partners such as ITA, UPASI and SEA, who all have a long history of engaging with the public sector. While most L&A is done by these partners, Solidaridad also participates itself as it is increasingly invited as an expert by the public authorities. In China, a similar strategy is followed in collaboration with CTMA.

In Indonesia, Solidaridad plays a stronger influence in facilitating the policy influencing of its partners. These actors have less experience in L&A and strengthening their L&A capacities is an important activity. In Malaysia, Solidaridad has entered in a direct partnership with the MPOB. What is interesting about this approach is that it pursues L&A targets by directly building the capacities of the relevant authority.

Solidaridad also works through MSPs. The National Reference Group in the Indonesian tea sector plays an important role to coordinate the L&A strategies of its members. Solidaridad supported the creation of the Asia Tea Alliance, which is a platform of producer associations and with Solidaridad it has a CSO partner. In the Trinitea project, local MSPs are used to foster the relationships between smallholders and the ITA.

**The choice between different pathways (or a combination of them) is generally based upon Solidaridad's assessment of what strategy is most effective.** The presence of a strong tea producer and industry associations in India require less intensive involvement in L&A activities, but required a lot of effort to make these activities more inclusive to the smallholder agenda. In Indonesia, these associations have much less experience and resources in L&A making Solidaridad and BWIs more active role in this necessary. In Malaysia there are little other CSOs willing to collaborate constructively with the government, making it more logic to engage directly. Some of the current strategies are also a direct consequence of Solidaridad historical engagement in these sectors, such as the relationships with the NRG and CTMA.

**The programme has also known several changes in L&A strategy.** In Indonesia and India they have changed target partners once they saw that other organizations had more potential to be effective. In India, they abandoned the MSP which Solidaridad created around Trustea, once they felt it became too

packer dominated. Elections, political tensions between countries, new market developments and COVID-19 also forced many alterations in how strategies were implemented.

**The internal learning agenda on L&A strategies within REC Asia was based upon learning-by-doing and a lots of sharing between colleagues.** There have been no formal capacity building trajectories or task force to enhance L&A capacities. Solidaridad has a lot of experience in convening MSPs. It also had already experience with direct L&A strategies before the AfC programme. Through regular meetings in which project strategies, challenges and new developments were discussed, this experience was shared among colleagues. Furthermore, capacities have been built through learning-by-doing. Partners interviewed were generally satisfied by the L&A capacities of Solidaridad and BWI, although one Indonesian tea partner interviewed suggested that a more strategic approach in selecting who to target in policy influencing could increase the effectiveness.

## **Linking local to national L&A processes**

**Local, national and international policy targets are very much aligned.** For example in Indonesia, the Provincial government supports the establishment of smallholder owned tea factories, of which the equipment has been subsidized by the national government and came from China as a result of the international dialogue. Another example is the work on national standards which are implemented at local level, managed at promoted at national level, mutually recognized at international level.

**It is important to first create consensus at national level before aiming for consensus at international level.** Experience shows that national alignment helps to deal with competing national interests at international level, and also allows to better know the stakeholders and strengthen them before operating on the international level.

**Once active at international level, it takes time to align stakeholders.** This is particularly because of the existence of cultural differences and political sensitivities between countries. In general, the four countries do not like each other (e.g. a visit by a Chinese tea delegation as part of the project, raised questions in the Indian parliament on whether the Chinese want to overtake the sector). There are signs that the programme contributes to a change in attitude as the Indians talk about a free trade agreement with China on tea and Ministers from Indonesia and Malaysia discussed with each other on palm oil last year.

**Solidaridad builds the sustainability agenda upon an agenda of trade and economic empowerment.** Key drivers of stakeholders to engage in the international processes are the search for better markets and new technologies, as well as the realization that certain issues such as low prices and oversupply require international solutions. Solidaridad's strategy is to show the value that more sustainable production and trade practices can bring in realizing these goals and solutions. Sustainability is presented as a core component of product quality and product quality is the way to go to sell more and receive better prices. This also implies that more sensitive sustainability issues are introduced later in the dialogue and only after a certain level of trust and willingness has been created.

**Different strategies are applied to ensure the voices of smallholders are heard at different geographical levels.** The AfC projects support individual smallholder associations or indigenous groups in the dialogue with public and private decision-makers (through training, advice, hand-holding). At national level, the programme supports their APEX organisations such as CISTA, PTL and Lestari Foundation to become more effective in sector dialogue. This is done either as individual organizations or through existing platforms (e.g. the NRG in Indonesia). These APEX organizations operate at national level but can also support their members at local level. An alternative strategy is to make smallholder associations member of established and powerful producer/industry associations and ensure they advocate the smallholder interests. This happened in India with ITA and in Indonesia with ITMA. In India,

Solidaridad invested heavily in forging such bonds by facilitating dialogue within smallholder associations and between these associations and ITA. Having concrete activities such as training on GAP supported this process of trust-building (which was really needed as relationships have been traditionally quite hostile). Nowadays, ITA and ITMA represent their member smallholder associations nationally but also internationally in the Asia Tea Alliance. Solidaridad also defends smallholder interests at international level. This is possible as Solidaridad has created genuine partnerships with these smallholder associations and its staff operates from local to international level. The option to support grassroots organizations or Apex organizations to become active at international level is seen as less potential for the short-term, as it generally takes many years before these organizations have sufficient capacities to become effective.

**So far, the international packers such as Unilever and Tata are absent in most of the AfC dialogues at national and international level.** In India, this dialogue still exists in Trustea and the Indian Tea Board. In Indonesia the large packers have been invited to the National Reference Group but do not seem to be interested because of preference Rainforest Alliance certification over Lestari (apparently they are not aware/convinced about the beyond-certification agenda of the National Reference Group). In the Asian Tea Alliance it is a conscious choice not to include for the moment as this initiative is foremost about giving producers more power vis-à-vis these packers. Still, they may be invited in the future as collaboration will be needed to overcome some systemic issues.

## Roles played

**Solidaridad plays multiple roles, often combined and include convener, facilitator, expert, capacity builder, implementer and co-funder.** Which role they play is closely related to which L&A strategy they adopt and whether they also have Good Practice and Robust Infrastructure activities in those sectors.

**All interviewees are very positive about their collaboration with Solidaridad (and BWI in Indonesia).** Some partners work already with them for many years. Others became partner during this programme. During the interviews we spend considerable time to identify why organizations accepted to collaborate with Solidaridad, and how they perceive this collaboration. This resulted in the following list of success factors:

- **Local ownership:** Solidaridad is perceived as a local organization, particularly in India. They have Indian staff, an Indian Board and they are responsible for their strategies.. Business Watch Indonesia has a similar position in Indonesia. In India, they are also one of the few NGOs which have been recognized by successive governments in India, something companies like. On the same time, the government likes it that Solidaridad has good ties with companies (companies also promote Solidaridad within their networks). Similarly, their presence in China is of vital importance to be active there. A former Minister in Malaysia complemented Solidaridad with being a truly Malaysian organization.
- **Independency and neutrality with a purpose:** Their status as NGO gives them the status not to be tied to a particular actor. They are also not in the business of making money from what they offer. Both is important to be seen as neutral convenor. An important condition to have such positioning is to have sufficient and independent funding: independency requires to be paid by a donor who does not have an interest. Co-funding by companies in policy influencing programmes is a guarantee for failure. On the same time, Solidaridad is neutral with a purpose. It is there to improve the sector, but with a clear mission to improve the position of the smallholders. They can present this purpose as a win-win, e.g. from a sector transformation perspective. Its discourse also recognizes the national and local agendas. For example, Nico Roozen did this consistently by starting to say that palm oil is an important commodity for food security and has enormous potential for socio-economic development. Such discourse is possible when it is informed by national staff and based upon facts and scientific input.

- **Expertise and network:** All respondents praise Solidaridad's expertise. Many of their staff have had relevant positions in companies and institutions of the respective sectors and work for Solidaridad for many years. This gives them in-depth knowledge of the sector. Solidaridad also has a long-track record on standards, MSPs and working on smallholder relevant solutions. In addition, they have a good research capacity, allowing them to take a scientific approach rather than ideological approach. Most respondents also refer to their international presence and network with companies, public institutions, CSOs and experts. This gives them a lot of credibility, especially when partners saw Solidaridad's work in other countries with their own eyes. Solidaridad staff offer high-level expertise, can come up with new knowledge and create connections with new actors. A strength is that they can identify and address the right issues and solutions without overpromising. This profile also allows Solidaridad to be pro-active in for example agenda-setting and inviting experts and decision-makers to meetings.
- **Being active in field implementation:** Solidaridad's long-track record of field implementation projects shows commitment, expertise and gives them credibility. It also helps to know the local languages and customs, both important in L&A activities. Solidaridad's ability to bring in resources to pilot innovations or scale solutions is also making them an interesting partner. Whether private or public sector, most partners are confronted with limited resources, or do not have the required proof-of-concept which justifies to allocate more resources. Having a partner that can co-invest allows them to innovate deeper and reach more smallholders than they would do otherwise. In all countries, except for China, Solidaridad is engaged in field activities in the palm oil and tea sectors. The fact that Solidaridad has not the resources for field implementation in China, contrary to the past, does have a slightly negative effect on their relationship with CTMA. Fortunately, the relationships were solid before this change and the basis is good enough to continue.
- **Personal relationships and strong partnerships:** Solidaridad staff has developed close relationships with key decision-makers in the private and public sector. This often has been a process of years, but the resulting short-lines and trust is very much appreciated (e.g. partners regularly talk with Solidaridad' leadership). Partners do not see the partnership as a one-way stream of support. Various partners mentioned that they also support Solidaridad. For example, they help Solidaridad to reach out to smallholders or to other public sector decision-makers. Others refer to the technical or scientific inputs they share with Solidaridad. This shows that the collaboration is more based upon the principle of equality than of a traditional development project – beneficiary basis.

In addition, it should be noted that Solidaridad (and BWI in Indonesia) are one of the few CSOs active in the tea sector and one of the few CSO active in the palm oil sector in such constructive way.

#### **Role of Dutch Embassy**

Solidaridad has good relationship with the local Dutch Embassy in India. The organisation has been invited from time to time in the consultations organised by Dutch embassy with the Government of India. Solidaridad is the only NGO representative in this forum along with other Dutch private sector institutes. The Dutch Embassy has played an important role over time to provide Solidaridad its legitimacy. It has also contributed to establish contacts with relevant stakeholders. Support by the Dutch government in general is also considered to contribute to the legitimacy of Solidaridad across stakeholders.

## Scaling, systemic change and sustainability

The most important outputs and outcomes have been presented in chapter 4. The projects in this case study do not monitor any of the overall impact indicators from the M&E framework. This is a pity because several of the indicators could be relevant to certain interventions in the three projects.

**The desk review and interviews generate some insights on scaling.** For example, Sri Lanka and Japan have joined the Asia Tea Alliance. This has been primarily the result of intensive lobbying by the CTMA. Some members of the ATA also shared the intention to scale this initiative to Africa in the future. Another example is that a project related exchange visit between Indian and Chinese tea companies contributed to Tata's decision to invest in China. There is also the impression that commercial relationships between tea companies from both countries increase. Another example is that both ATA and SEA have started new programmes which build upon the current projects (e.g. ATA on smallholder climate change adaptation and SEA on applying certain approaches to other oil seeds). The Lestari standard and dynamics are nowadays also promoted in coffee and cocoa (although Lestari's origin lies far before AfC started).

**The AfC programme is contributing to several systemic changes.** In the following table we check to what extent systemic changes have taken place.

Systemic issue	Change *	remark
Trust and dialogue between stakeholders		All three projects clearly contributed to this at local, national and international level
Coordination and alignment between stakeholders / shared vision		Coordination and alignment has improved significantly, though not necessarily on an institutional level. Alignment is not necessarily based upon a shared vision (see below).
Change power dynamics between stakeholders		Particularly in tea, the projects contribute to a stronger position of producers and particularly smallholders in the tea value chain. This will however require a more time to change substantially.
Strengthening of civic space (civic empowerment, both men and women)		Tea smallholder associations in Indonesia and India have been clearly empowered and there is more dialogue between CSOs and public/private decision-makers
Increased transparency / accountability of stakeholders		This is due to a more open dialogue
Shift mindsets and norms? Of MSP participants? Of targeted decision / policy makers		Several examples are found (see below).
Improved service delivery		AfC (and PFC) promote this in all countries except China (due to lack of funding)
Improved access to markets		This is certainly the case for smallholder tea and increasingly for tea and palm oil produced under the national standards (but not there yet)
Increased investment in the sector		Evidence of increased investment by public sector and companies available, but not yet at desired level.

Increased monitoring and learning at sector level		There is learning through the dialogue, but no consistent monitoring at sector level.
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\*) yes = green; no = yellow; moderate = blue

Some further comments on the above table:

- Shared vision: In tea India and Indonesia there have been attempts to align stakeholders behind a common vision. In Indonesia this has been more successful than in India. In India, Solidaridad ended up with the view not to confuse stakeholders with too many new things. They are conservative and it is difficult to introduce a far-fetching and comprehensive vision. Therefore they prioritize issues in which stakeholders see an immediate value. They take it step by step. In Indonesia, a vision document has a more active role in guiding the discussion within the NRG and as basis for L&A activities towards the government.
- Shift in mind-set: There are several examples where a clear shift in mind-set has been achieved:
  - ITA's shift to represent smallholders and allow them in their association. This fits well in the overall tendency among decision-makers to give more importance to smallholders when it comes to the future of the tea sector.
  - Increased awareness about the relevance of social and environmental sustainability among private and public sector. In general one can say that there is an emergence of a more authentic sustainability agenda in the target countries.
  - Increased ownership and entrepreneurship among tea smallholders. For example, women tea farmers and workers in Indonesia taking more ownership in their own destiny and role in tea sector.
  - More openness by private and public actors to engage with stakeholders from other countries.

**Several of the outcomes are likely to sustain, but a lot of the initiatives and potential future impacts still heavily depends on Solidaridad.** Examples of what appears to be sustainable outcomes are the smallholder orientation of ATA, the sustainability ambition of the Indian palm oil company Godre Jotgrovet or the smallholder tea processing factories in India and Indonesia. However, Solidaridad is still indispensable for many of the higher level processes. Initiatives such as ASPN and ATA are at this stage too fragile to survive. But also the National Reference Group in Indonesia, which exists for more than a decade, is still largely depending on the support from Solidaridad and BWI (strategically, technically and financially). Solidaridad and BWI are really at the heart of the sector and they are involved one way or another in most of the sustainability initiatives in the Indonesian tea sector. While they try to find ways to make the NRG financially more sustainable, all respondents shared the opinion that the sector is far from the desired state which would justify a withdrawal from Solidaridad's and BWI's. A lot of facilitation, technical input and hand-holding is still needed.

**Most policy require much more time than 4 years.** Examples include objectives such as an effective MSPO, more public investment in smallholder tea production, price protection mechanisms and reduced trade barriers for sustainable products. Some of the actual L&A processes have just begun as it took already a several years to create the partnerships and trust which are needed to start discussing policy issues. According to Solidaridad staff, it requires a 10 year engagement to change a policy landscape. And this process won't be straightforward and will need many adaptations to changing contexts and new opportunities. In parallel, it is important to create national and local institutions with are self-sufficient. For example, having IPOS seated within SEA and Trinitea seated within ITA is an example to create a more sustainable model.

**Solidaridad's strong position and potential to influence much more policies in the future questions the need for an exit strategy.** Solidaridad (and BWI) are civil society and still one of the few organizations taking up this role in these sectors. They are in a unique position to influence many processes. AfC has enabled them to seriously engage on policy influencing. Although some initial success have been made, the programme has laid down the foundation for much larger changes if it is able to continue.

## External influencing factors

From the above overview of activities, results and the role of Solidaridad, it is certain that Solidaridad has played a key role in most of the changes that were observed. This was supported by most stakeholder opinions during interviews. This evaluation identified several external factors which contributed positively or negatively to the progress made.

### Positive external factors include:

- **Changing economic dynamics.** This can promote the awareness that structural change is needed and improves the willingness of stakeholders to partner with Solidaridad. In this case study economic factors which positively contributed to this include structural low prices, consistent shifts in market share from large-scale to small-scale producers, falling product quality and the increasing visibility of effects of climate change on profitability. There is increasing awareness that collaboration is needed to solve common issues such as climate change, low prices and oversupply.
- **Policy developments:** the Chinese Road and Belt Initiative is pushing the Chinese initiative create alliances with other countries to promote trade (e.g. China also has massively increased production in the past decades for which they need a market and they want to take a leadership role). Another factor (though not China related) is that there is a decline in neo-liberal thinking and growing awareness about the need for government interventions.

### Negative external factors:

- **Excessive bureaucracy:** There are several examples where bureaucracy has delayed progress in moving through the policy change stages
- **Change in decision-makers:** Whether through elections or organizational reforms, this seems to be a consistent constraint. Most of times a decision-maker is being replaced, a lot of the L&A efforts needs to be redone and intentions by previous decision-makers risk to be put off the table
- **Competing policy objectives:** For example opposing interests on poverty alleviation, processing, trade, food security, competitiveness can create barriers for alignment and can divert the focus on sustainability within the dialogue. Palm oil is also very political in most of these countries, while tea is very political in China.
- **Political tensions:** The hostility between India and Malaysia, Malaysia and Indonesia or India and China can delay progress and force to take steps back. For example, due to the political tensions between India and Malaysia, especially in palm oil trade, some of the targeted activities could not be implemented as planned.
- **COVID-19:** This obviously has forced to postpone many project related activities as travelling was not allowed. It also caused a drop in palm oil prices (because of a drop in biofuel and food consumption) and a drop in tea harvesting in India (because harvesting and processing was not allowed). In Indonesia, this crises is also considered an opportunity for tea from smallholders as the some of the large factories have shut down and Indonesians drink tea at home. In India, Solidaridad supported its partners to distribute masks and other emergency good to thousands of farmers.

**Cultural differences between countries, regions within a country and sectors also influence.** For example, there is a clear difference in culture between the tea and palm oil sector in India and Indonesia. Tea is an old sector and very formal. Tea people in India even speak a different English. The palm oil sector is more recently established and less formal. This also has consequences of communication strategies. For example, a WhatsApp group between stakeholders works better in the palm oil sector than the tea sector.

**Civic space does influence the type of L&A strategies.** Countries like India and China have a respectively repressed and closed civic space. This is an important factor to consider and does influence the type of

strategies Solidaridad can employ in these countries. What really helped in both countries was that Solidaridad refrained from policy influencing in early years of its presence. This helped to build a local presence, credibility and, very importantly, the relationships which are indispensable to engage in policy influencing. The Solidaridad team is of the opinion that if they would have engaged in policy influencing from the start, this would have jeopardized their ability to even engage in field-level interventions. The support by the Dutch Embassy also helped to become more credible and hence better positioned to be more active on in policy influencing.

## Lessons and recommendations

### Lessons learned

**Social capital is a key success factor for effective L&A strategies.** This social capital consists of local ownership, expertise and networks. Two important strategies have contributed to social capital. First there is the decentralization of Solidaridad into a network organizations with Regional Expertise Centres (RECs) in different continents. The purpose was to strengthen Solidaridad teams in the global south, enabling them to take control of supervisory tasks and to manage programming themselves. In Asia this resulted in REC-based governance and decision-making, something which enhances the effectiveness and credibility of Solidaridad. They are considered as national NGOs with an international network. The second strategy is to be first active in field implementation before engaging in policy-influencing. Solidaridad's long track record of field implementation projects shows commitment and gives them the needed expertise, networks and credibility towards decision-makers. Social capital is further enhanced by hiring experienced people from reputed organizations and by investments in research, relationship and partnership building. Finally, having a funding source not attached to the industry or governments engaged or targeted in the L&A process, also supports a positioning as neutral facilitator.

**L&A requires flexibility in approach, partners and adaptive management.** The Asia portfolio implements a variety of L&A strategies ranging from working through MSPs, lobbying via partners and building capacities of decision-makers. The choice between different pathways (or a combination of them) is generally based upon Solidaridad's assessment of what strategy is most effective depending on its own positioning and the presence of strong partners. They can also change partners or strategy once more potential options emerge. Influencing policies also requires a lot of adaptation to unfolding circumstances. Facilitating a sector transformation process requires a form of policy entrepreneurship.

**It is more effective to first create consensus within individual countries before creating alignment between countries.** This lesson has been learned in the tea, palm oil, soy work prior to AfC. National alignment helps to deal with competing national interests at international level, and also allows to better know the stakeholders and strengthen them before operating on the international level. In creating national alignment it is important to acknowledge national priorities and sensitivities. Solidaridad acknowledgement that palm oil is foremost crop important for food security and economic development has opened the door to discuss other more sensible sustainability issues.

The engagement of vulnerable groups such as smallholders or women in L&A processes changes according to the geographical scope. In case there are no strong grassroots organisations it takes time get them to a level where they can become effective in L&A at different levels. In Indonesia, Solidaridad empowered grassroots organizations in L&A efforts towards local public and private stakeholders, while they supported their APEX organizations to become more effective at local and national level. At international level, Solidaridad included the more established industry associations in the dialogue as they consider them to be more capable and credible to operate at this level. Solidaridad made these associations to represent the voices of the smallholders by making them member and by ensuring their agenda points and positions were included in the dialogue. Solidaridad can bring in smallholder perspectives as facilitator and expert, directly informed by the close partnerships they have with grassroots organizations.

**The importance of genuine partnerships.** "We also support Solidaridad", was often said by respondents. It shows that the partnerships Solidaridad develops are based upon a principle of equality. It recognizes co-investment towards common goals. To emphasise this, Solidaridad has also learned to avoid training for certain CSOs and large producer organisations. Training in Asia is associated to

teachers and several partners are very reluctant to see Solidaridad as teacher. Hence, Solidaridad use other means like joint analysis, research and action. In many cases, policy influencing is not really much about capacity building but more about consensus creation through dialogue and research.

**L&A and CSO strengthening need to be combined with field implementation.** As mentioned in the first lesson, field implementation needs to come before engaging in L&A activities. However, once L&A activities have started it is important to continue to invest in field implementation to show you ‘walk the talk’ and to develop proof of concepts which can provide the evidence base needed for policy change. This does however require sufficient funding as implementation projects are often more expensive than L&A activities. However, co-funding arrangements are more suitable for field implementation activities than for L&A activities.

**Policy change takes time.** This case study shows that quick-wins in policy influencing are possible, but that a four year timeframe is way too short to change public and private policy environment to a degree that one can claim sectors have been transformed. One could argue that in the years prior to AfC Solidaridad has prepared the ground for L&A activities, that the AfC programme has allowed to sow, but that the harvest requires several more years.

## Recommendations

The respondents external to Solidaridad came with the following recommendations towards Solidaridad:

- In terms of L&A activities, there is a firm and shared recommendation to continue the facilitation, hand-holding and expert input. This is valid for the NRG, ATA and ASPN.
- A common recommendation was to continue and even upscale support in field implementation activities (also via joint fund-raising and technical support). This has a simple rationale: with more support more can be achieved, more farmers can be reached, more factories established, etc. Both ITA and Lestari Foundation recommended more attention to farm diversification.
- Further support in export marketing is desired. CISTA emphasizes this for its smallholder tea and MPOB for the promotion MSPO in the EU market (an objective which in the original ASPN proposal, but did not mature and is now repeated in the NICOPS work).
- There were also recommendations to broaden the scope of collaboration. CTMA would welcome Solidaridad’s advice on its future strategy and SEA would like to engage with them in other oil seed crops.
- There were also technical questions, for example by MPON would like to receive advice how it can create more transparency to pricing among smallholders and Lestari Foundation more training on business skills.

As evaluators we make the following recommendations:

**Increase the focus on sector governance.** AfC contributed to changes of specific policies and increased dialogue between stakeholders. It makes use of existing institutions and creates new coalitions. High performing national sectors do however also require strong governing institutions and clarity in mandates between them. These are not present in all countries in which Solidaridad operates. So far, it seems that whenever this is insufficiently present, Solidaridad has not explicitly put this issue on the agenda. This may be because of political sensitivities and the sheer complexity of the issue. However, it is worthwhile to assess whether Solidaridad is nowadays in a position to address this. On the long-term a good institutional set-up is a key success factor in transforming sectors.

Linked to the topic of governance, more attention is needed to the capacity of national sectors to collect their own revenues for strategic re-investments. For example, how can the implementation capacity of

the MPOB be supported from revenues generated from within the palm oil sector? What revenue generation strategies can be introduced in the various sectors across countries to invest in the massive needs for research, market promotion or support to smallholder production and value chain systems? These questions become increasingly relevant as the ambition is to transform whole sectors and not just individual value chains.

**Invest in macro-economic knowledge.** Solidaridad is increasingly engaged in national and international policy design processes. This makes macro-economic topics such as supply-demand balance, price formulation, trade policies and trade balances, GDP and employment creation increasingly relevant. Solidaridad staff has strong knowledge about business development and supply chain dynamics (micro-economics). As it increasingly engages on international trade questions, more profound knowledge on macro-economic dynamics could be valuable in determining the right policy objectives. Such deep knowledge does not necessarily be developed within Solidaridad, as it could also be brought in the L&A process by external specialized knowledge partners.

**Invest in marketing knowledge.** Building smallholder-based supply chains next to the established packer dominated supply chains requires very good marketing skills. Solidaridad has a decent knowledge and network to provide relevant input to this domain. However, demands will become increasingly sophisticated with increasing digitalization of marketing channels and partners desiring to sell within Asia as well as EU and Middle-East markets. As above, such expertise does not have to be build up within the organization and it is recommended to create a network with companies which are strong in this space.

**Mainstream farm diversification across projects.** Solidaridad's ToC is seeing the farmer increasingly as an entrepreneur who reacts to new opportunities. This thinking is not always compatible with a single commodity focus. To truly promote this, different production models, farmer capacities, supportive services and value chain constellations are needed. While diversification is already promoted in this programme, it appears to be more an add-on than a key element in the strategy. If Solidaridad truly believes that farmers should be entrepreneurs responding to market dynamics, than it will have to better combine the single commodity focus (and the need to resolve systemic issues in that commodity) with a farm diversification perspective. Landscape initiatives are one way to create this link. However more sophisticated strategies will need to be identified to create an enabling service, market and policy environment to accommodate farm diversification.

**Create more alignment on policy objectives between RECs.** As Solidaridad is increasingly engaged at international policy issues, it will become more and more important to strategically align between RECs on policy objectives. The Asia team has a clear Asian agenda, which is its strength. However, this agenda has different perspectives on certain issues than the European agenda. This is probably most prominent on the topic of RSPO versus national standards. While the narrative of REC Europe and India are not necessarily in contradiction with each other, there has been very little complementary action between the teams. In Europe Solidaridad promotes RSPO, while acknowledging that ISPO, MSPO and IPOS are worthwhile to further invest in as basis for sustainability. There has however not been an attempt to promote access to the EU market as was foreseen in the ASPN project (and now repeated in NISCOPS). Meanwhile, Asia's whole ToC is built upon the notion that international standards like RSPO have failed to transform sectors. Still they clearly build upon the legacy of the systems that RSPO and the likes have developed and are still developing.

Solidaridad global presence and ambition to tackle important policy issues would need sufficient time for strategic alignment and collaboration between RECs. This was somewhat lacking under the current MASP but fortunately is considered in the new MASP in the formation of the Global Action Teams.

## Case study 3: Insights, lessons and recommendations on the Solidaridad landscape approach

This brief is based on 4 case studies (on landscape projects of Ganga, PASOS (Honduras and Nicaragua combined) and Kilimanjaro), for the AfC programme evaluation. It also draws some information from various strategic and learning documents on the landscape approach by Solidaridad, as well as recent overview studies on the landscape approach.

### Main insights and recommendations (further details below)

1. Landscapes can be approached from different angles, depending upon the background and expertise of the organisations involved.<sup>6</sup> For Solidaridad the expertise and entry point is typically commodity value chains and markets. There is potential of creating sustainable impact at scale by developing more landscape projects as these show the evidence of the synergy of integrating the 3 pillars of the Solidaridad theory of change (GP, RI, EPE). This potential can be most fully realised if landscape projects take an integrated approach, which deals with the (positive and negative) interactions between different sectors and between economic and conservation or protection objectives.
2. There is scope for further developing the role and responsibilities of MSPs in landscape governance, with the aim to develop just, inclusive and equitable landscape governance systems, including underlying policies and regulations. Local pilots could test which governance models will work out in practice in the local political context.<sup>7</sup> Working on this can be very much in line with objectives of strengthening civic space.
3. There also appears to be potential for Solidaridad to build up experiences at landscape level of (i) creating access to finance through landscape level investment opportunities, and (ii) influencing policy and systemic changes for a more enabling context for integrated and sustainable landscape management. Solidaridad could further develop expertise on these two additional angles as these are critical for an integrated landscape approach.
4. As a spin-off from the decentralization of Solidaridad into a network organizations with Regional Expertise Centres (RECs) in different continents, RECs are increasingly seen as national NGOs, with national staff, decision-making and strategies, yet also with the added value of an international network. This means there is potential for Solidaridad to remain engaged as a national NGO in landscape projects, as a member of the MSP, as an advisor to MSPs, and/or for occasional capacity building. This will not require a high intensity presence or much resources, but is needed to ensure the MSPs remain effective and ensure the voice of the underprivileged. This could be part of an approach to 'adopt' a number of landscapes through a continuous yet low intensity presence.
5. There is need to set up a learning community to share experiences and address new challenges and unpredictable events within the selected landscapes, in the first place with the aim to improve learning within MSPs and their effectiveness. The learning should be evidence-based, thus well defined learning / research questions and M&E are important. The learning community should be within Solidaridad, with regional / landscape hubs and MSPs involving local stakeholders.

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<sup>6</sup> See van Oosten et al., 2020. Doing different things – or doing things differently? There are four angles:

1. Biodiversity and nature conservation entry point
2. Commodity chain and trade entry point
3. Community development and human rights entry point
4. Multifunctional and spatial planning entry point

<sup>7</sup> there are examples, e.g. in Ghana, see for instance <https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/publication/touton-the-business-case-for-a-landscape-approach-to-sustainable-cocoa-production-in-ghana/>

## Detailed insights, lessons and recommendations

### Relevance

The landscape approach is in line with Solidaridad's overall theory of change, building on Solidaridad's role in supply chains and sectors to contribute to practical solutions for perceived problems, and including L&A activities to improve the enabling context (policies and systemic issues). Landscape projects show the potential synergy between the 4 strategies of GP, RI, EPE and CI.

For Solidaridad the relevance for a landscape approach has arisen as a reaction to emerging challenges and opportunities, of which the most important ones are:

- inclusive economic development (creating opportunities, especially for smallholders, within the wider landscape),
- creating more resilient livelihoods (responding to climate change), including food security /diversification beyond the single- commodity approach
- resolving conflicts between land-users, as emerging from competition of the commodity with other land-uses and land-users, as well as from increasing resource scarcity and degradation (water, land, forest) in the production landscape.
- addressing ecosystem protection and sustainable management objectives, considering local dependency and vulnerability of producers and communities as well as increased attention for sustainable production in the global market through sustainability standards and supported by consumer awareness in both export and domestic markets.

The case study landscape projects build on previous projects and other work experience of Solidaridad in commodity sectors. These experiences have been mainly at national or sub-national level, working with key companies and public agencies. In the Ganga landscape project experiences in the leather sector were limited, but were built up quickly based on experiences and networks with public actors in the sugarcane and other sectors. Both past and ongoing PfC projects are key to the success of the landscape approach, while landscape projects also provide inputs to PfC projects by capacity development and creating enabling conditions for certification processes. While the commodity focus has been the main entry point of an emerging landscape approach, with some variation between the 4 different case study projects (see table below), the integrated landscape approach shows evidence of creating synergy between result areas of Solidaridad's theory of change (GP, RI and EPE).

Country	Commodity entry point	Sector level experience	Emerging landscape approach
India	Sugarcane, leather	Sector (sub-national), companies, smallholders	Multi-sectoral, based on an integrated analysis of water pollution in the Ganga river
Tanzania	Coffee, livestock	Smallholders, SMEs (local)	Integrated / multi-sectoral at local / community level
Honduras	Oil palm, cocoa	Sector (national), companies	Integrated / multi-sectoral aimed at management and protection of landscapes
Nicaragua	Livestock, oil palm	Sector (national), companies	Integrated / multi-sectoral aimed at management and protection of landscapes

*Recommendation: There is potential of creating sustainable impact at scale by developing more landscape projects as these show the evidence of the synergy of integrating the 3 pillars of the Solidaridad theory of change (GP, RI, EPE). This potential can be most fully realised if landscape projects take an integrated approach, which deals with the (positive and negative) interactions between different sectors and between economic and conservation or protection objectives. At least in one other case study (soy Argentina) there was a demand for the landscape approach in order to address multiple sectors as root causes of degradation within the landscape.*

**The landscape projects build on firm experiences of Solidaridad in supply chains and sectors that have contributed to build up trust and networks with private and public sector actors.**

Building up trust, finding good partner organisations, and dealing with power relations are critical success factors for landscape projects, and will take much time if one has to start from scratch.<sup>8</sup> The evaluation has shown that Solidaridad landscape projects have been relatively quick in establishing MSPs and realising significant results. This is largely because trust and relations were established with the private sector and government agencies in previous projects and other work experience of Solidaridad in the respective commodity sectors which stretched over several years.

*Recommendation: For a successful landscape approach knowledge and relations of trust with private actors and broader networks in the dominant sector/s and landscape is a critical success factor. If such relations have not yet been established, sufficient time should be taken to build these up.*

**All landscape projects have carried out in the design phase extensive preparatory studies to understand the situation in the landscape. However, what has not been strongly developed is an analysis of relevant policies and systemic issues, in order to set clear L&A targets and strategies.**

The preparatory studies for the landscape projects included land use trends, the role of stakeholders, policies and institutions and (future) risks related to climate change. A variety of methods and tools was used including working with specialist consultants and partners (see below overview). For instance, the Kilimanjaro project used the tool called “Landscape governance assessment”. This is a useful analytical tool to inform pilots with communities, but it does not allow understanding underlying policies and politics which are needed to define effective L&A targets and strategies. A positive example is the Ganga project of which the inception report includes some political-economy analysis and insights in stakeholder power and influencing relations, which has guided the design of the project. In general projects have limited understanding of relevant systemic issues that form root causes for poor performance (e.g. legal aspects, relationships, norms and cultural values), and the strategies of how these can best be addressed in an effective way. This type of understanding is important for the design of landscape projects, especially to formulate L&A targets and strategies.

Tools tested	Country
Landscape Investment & Finance Tool	Honduras
Landscape Governance Assessment	Kilimanjaro Tanzania
Capacity Building and Assessment Tool	Paraguay and Kilimanjaro Tanzania
Landscape Scenario Planning	Honduras
Meso American Landscape Accelerator	Honduras and Nicaragua
Landscape Documentation Workshop	Zambia
Land and Water Resource Management research	Zambia
MSP assessment	Zambia
LandScale Monitoring	pilot in Guatemala

*Recommendation: Each landscape project should carry out in the design phase a diagnostic study that also includes a political-economy angle that helps to understand relevant policies and systemic issues, as well as the power balance between government, private sector and civil society. This will contribute to the identification of priority issues and the design of effective L&A strategies including which actors can be instrumental to drive necessary change. Given the changing dynamics of landscapes, the diagnostics should be revisited annually as part of a process of ‘progressive contextualisation’ (i.e. adjusting project strategies to a changing context).*

## **Effectiveness**

<sup>8</sup> See van Oosten et al., 2020. Doing different things – or doing things differently?

**The process of establishing MSPs (in each landscape project) has contributed to build relations of cooperation between stakeholders and the adoption of good practices. MSPs at multiple levels (e.g. community, District, national) can be useful if their interaction is strong. It remains a challenge to engage members of the government with the ability and mandate to commit support, realize uptake of lessons and scale interventions.**

In all landscape projects MSPs were established, at different levels (see table below). Where MSPs have been established these have benefitted members to better understand each other’s interests, improve the exchange of experiences, learning, adoption of good practices (e.g. emerging from pilots). This is a major contribution by Solidaridad recognized by all stakeholders. Working on MSPs at landscape level can turn conflicting relations into cooperation and joint actions. This is the case of Nicaragua, where relations of conflict between palm oil producers and communities were turned into cooperation. In addition to landscape-level MSPs, technical multi-stakeholder groups have been formed, e.g. on zero deforestation, which are more focused and time-bound (Honduras, Nicaragua). Experiences show that MSPs at local (landscape, or community) level are easier to manage than MSPs at national level, as the level of exchange is more active and there are less problems with bureaucracy. For landscape MSPs, a lesson is to not only engage with local stakeholders but also with key decision-makers at relevant administrative layers (e.g. national) from the beginning. If taken on board in the right way, national government will then play an important role in scaling the approach to other landscapes, or other sectors, or even other countries. However, it remains a challenge to actively involve members of the government with the ability and role to decide, and to formalize synergies between different actors. It seems that the Embassy can support Solidaridad to build up relations with national level decision-makers, as the example of the Ganga project in India shows.

Country	MSP focus (sector or integrated)	Subject focus	MSP level
India	sugarcane	Water pollution issues	District level
	Leather	Water pollution issues	Landscape level
Tanzania	integrated	Environmental protection	village
	integrated	Environmental protection	District
	integrated	Environmental protection	landscape
Honduras	integrated	Environmental protection	landscape
	Palm oil	Zero deforestation	national
Nicaragua	integrated	Environmental protection	landscape
	Palm oil	RSPO national interpretation	National
	Livestock	Zero deforestation	national

*Recommendation: Alongside or as part of a multi-level landscape approach, it remains important that Solidaridad includes engagement with high level decision-makers, if possible at national level. These can also play an important role in scaling the approach to other landscapes, or other sectors, or even other countries. For doing so, the Embassy could also play an important role.*

**Capacity building of MSPs and its members has been effective in building up CSO and MSP level management and technical skills. There is potential for enhancing skills for MSPs to be actively involved in landscape governance and related civic space improvements.**

The MSP members have benefitted from capacity building, especially on the integrated landscape approach, technical expertise, meaningful dialogue, gender and knowledge sharing skills. There is evidence of practices being shared and adopted between MSP members. There has also been training on lobby & advocacy skills. However, in various cases, Solidaridad took the lead in lobbying key decision-makers, especially at national level. If MSP members were involved in L&A activities, this was at local level. For instance, in Honduras, the MSP has resulted in a request for social services by local government, which was accepted.

We believe that there is potential for working on the role of MSPs in landscape governance. While some would argue that this is already being done, others argue this is something new. This depends upon how landscape governance is defined (see box). Landscape governance has been defined as the process of multi-sector, multi-actor and multi-level interaction and spatial decision making at the landscape level.<sup>9</sup> This assumes that landscapes provide the ideal space for stakeholders to negotiate options and work on collective decisions about the organization of their space. It is in this context that a set of design principles was developed to guide landscape level decision-making processes in a democratic, transparent and informed way, taking into account the interests of the various stakeholders involved (see below box). These principles have been widely accepted and adopted as being the basis for landscape governance.

**The Ten Principles for a Landscape Approach<sup>10</sup>:**

1. The dynamic nature of landscapes forms the basis for continual learning and adaptive Management;
2. Intervention strategies are built on common concerns and shared negotiation;
3. Landscape processes are shaped by influences from multiple scales;
4. Landscapes are multifunctional by nature, which requires choices and trade-offs;
5. Multiple stakeholders frame objectives differently, hence all stakeholders need to be engaged;
6. Trust among stakeholders is crucial to build up a negotiated and transparent change logic;
7. Clarification of rights and responsibilities, especially regarding land and resource use, is a necessity;
8. Monitoring of progress has to be done in a participatory and user-friendly manner;
9. System-wide resilience is to be achieved through recognizing threats and vulnerabilities, and the capacity to resist and respond;
10. The complexity of landscape processes requires strong capabilities of all stakeholders involved.

Others have emphasised in landscape governance the set of rules (policies and cultural norms) and the decision- making processes of public, private and civic sector actors with stakes in the landscape that affect actions in the landscape.<sup>11</sup> Landscape governance covers elements of good governance by promoting clear and secure land and resource tenure, and by advancing sound, participatory, and transparent land use policies, planning, management, as well as monitoring and enforcing compliance with agreed policies and regulations, i.e. their role and responsibilities in implementing policies and regulations for sustainable management of landscapes.

In the landscapes of the different case study projects, governance in terms of spatial policies, plans and regulations mainly remains the responsibility of the formal public agencies. However, this is problematic because often governance is not equitable and law enforcement is weak. Landscape governance would ideally be a co-responsibility with shared roles and responsibilities between the MSP and public agencies (see governance principles 7 and 8). The PASOS project intends to set steps towards developing landscape governance systems that are participatory, accountable, transparent and equitable for example by delivering on the commitment on zero deforestation with a multi-sector coalition, with strong commitment from private sector. This would be an interesting next step in further developing the landscape approach, with potential contribution to civic space and new frontiers to be explored. It is also an ambitious and long-term process, which requires profoundly shifting mindsets.

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<sup>9</sup> Theorising conditions for landscape governance – what can we learn from Environmental Policy Integration? Cora van Oosten and Hens Runhaar. WUR, Wageningen

<sup>10</sup> Sayer J., Sunderland T., Ghazoul J., Pfund J., Sheil D., Meijaard E., Ventera M., Beodhihartono, A.K., Day M., Garcia C., Van Oosten, C., Buck, L., 2013. Ten principles for a landscape approach to reconciling agriculture, conservation, and other competing land uses. *PNAS* 110(21):8345–48.

<sup>11</sup> In line with the Landscape governance assessment approach (by Tropenbos and EcoAgriculture partners, 2017), and the Landscape approach (LandScale Assessment Framework and Guidelines, A New Approach for Assessing and Communicating Sustainability Performance at Landscape Scale, August 2019).

*Recommendation: There is scope for further developing the role and responsibilities of MSPs in landscape governance, with the aim to develop just and equitable landscape governance systems, including underlying policies and regulations. Local pilots could test which governance models will work out in practice in the local political context.<sup>12</sup> Working on this can be very much in line with objectives of strengthening civic space.*

**Undertaking pilot activities to test good practices is an essential element of the landscape approach. Pilots could be improved in terms of understanding relevant issues in the enabling context (policies, regulations, systemic issues) and followed by targeted L&A activities, to improve the identified issues as part of making a pilot activity successful and to enhance further scaling.**

Pilot activities as part of the landscape approach aim to test and demonstrate solutions, which can then be scaled. Several pilots have been finalized and are being scaled in the landscape projects. Pilots will be most useful if these are well designed with full engagement of and ownership by the MSP. It will also require proper monitoring (including quantitative data on costs and benefits, to support a clear business case). To enhance scaling, they should be accompanied by lobby for an enabling policy context. The pilot activities have often led to the identification of new L&A targets. Working on specific pilot-related policy targets could be seen as part of the policy influencing objectives, and requires L&A skills.

Country	No. of pilots	No. with associated policy targets realised	
		Local	national
India	11	7	-
Tanzania	9	1	-
Honduras	6	2	2
Nicaragua	4	-	-

*Recommendation: There is need to undertake pilot activities within landscape projects that show innovative multi-sector and multi-scale solutions to landscape problems. To be able to draw firm conclusions on the effectiveness of the pilot activities being tested, there is need for a good monitoring protocol including identification of success factors and mechanisms to enhance scaling.*

**Landscape projects aim to achieve, production, protection and restoration objectives. The assumption is that increased productivity will reduce pressure on natural resources. The current monitoring is not sufficient to know whether this assumption is correct.**

Based on the commodity entry point, landscape projects focus on increasing productivity in one or more commodities. Increased productivity is accompanied with practices to ensure sustainability at farm or plantation level (e.g. inter-cropping, biodiversity corridors etc.). In addition, more sustainable land use practices (e.g. agroforestry) can contribute to land restoration. An important assumption is that increased productivity at farm or plantation level will contribute to the willingness to limit expansion of land-use and thus reduce the risk of further deforestation or ecosystem degradation. The evidence from research literature shows that the inverse may also happen: increased productivity increases the profitability of a commodity and enhances risk of investments in unsustainable intensification practices and expansion of production area. Proper land-use planning and law enforcement would normally avoid this, but are often lacking. Knowing whether the above assumption is correct requires good monitoring at landscape level. We have not come across good monitoring systems at landscape level that would allow to draw firm conclusions on this assumption. It should be noted that the investment proposals that were developed by PASOS have excellent monitoring indicators proposed, which will hopefully be measured.<sup>13</sup> Good monitoring at landscape level should be part of landscape governance functions, whereby MSPs also play a role.

<sup>12</sup> There are examples, e.g. in Ghana, see for instance <https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/publication/touton-the-business-case-for-a-landscape-approach-to-sustainable-cocoa-production-in-ghana/>

<sup>13</sup> Solidaridad, 2019. Impact Investment Lessons Learnt Cases (PASOS Honduras and Nicaragua)

*Recommendation: As part of strengthening landscape governance, Solidaridad should provide support to build capacities for landscape level monitoring. Ideally this is done by building upon existing monitoring systems and ensuring shared responsibilities (between government, research institutes, MSPs) as one principle of landscape governance. Good monitoring is critical for knowing whether the expected positive relation of increasing productivity and enhancing protection + restoration is valid, and to support law enforcement (as another key element of landscape governance).*

**The landscape projects have contributed to policy changes as well as the improved implementation of existing policies. However, the phases that were defined to capture progress in policy influencing should be revised, especially to also capture the various phases of policy implementation.**

Most landscape projects have contributed to policy changes that support the transition to more inclusive and sustainable use of resources and small-scale producers. Several of these policy changes are a result of the pilots (see above), others are related to national policies such as the zero-deforestation policy in Honduras (being scaled to other countries in the region). There remains some confusion on the differentiation between policy changes and pilots, as some relevant policy influencing results are actually part of ‘pilot studies’ and not mentioned as policy influencing. There is also need to clarify and expand the different stages in influencing policies, especially because once policies have been approved there is still a long process of making these policies work (implementation), which should also be captured. In many cases the policies are there but the implementation is weak, and the project has not contributed to (new or redefined) policies, but rather to measures to implement existing policies.

Country	No. of policy changes	No. of policy changes associated with pilots	No. reported as policy changes
India	8	7	1
Tanzania	1	1	0
Honduras	6	4	2
Nicaragua	3	1	2

*Recommendation: There is need to redefine the phases of policy development and expand phases of policy implementation, including indication of which level is concerned (local or national government), in order to better know when policies are fully effective. This should particularly include the practices that are required to implement the policies, and the knowledge and incentives required to do so.*

**Developing good business plans and investment proposals is critical for acquiring finance to undertake and scale pilots. There are some promising experiences and lessons. There is also need to look at ways of profitable sectors making reinvestments into the landscape upon which they depend.**

There is general recognition within landscape projects to move from donor funded activities to investment proposals and business plans. The experiences between the 4 landscape projects vary greatly. Most investment proposals are on making existing production systems more sustainable and inclusive, or proposing more sustainable alternative investment opportunities. In the PASOS projects so far 6 investment proposals have been developed, of which two are in the negotiation phase and the due diligence process started. A range of valuable lessons have been learned from these experiences. An important one is the need for a reliable data evidence base of the business case. Others include the importance of engaging key decision makers within the company and the need to be transparent about the expected degree of smallholder inclusion. In the Ganga project, well-defined and documented business cases have been developed for both the sugarcane and leather industries, with a positive cost benefit outcome due to reduced water use and/or chemical inputs. The business case for small tanners includes reduced costs or subsidies for small tanners to be able to acquire improved technologies. In the Kilimanjaro project no viable business proposals have been developed and it was concluded that for most SMEs the conditions for business performance were not yet met. So far the business cases did not include ecosystem benefits, such as improved biodiversity values or improved water quality, or incomes from ecosystem services, such as carbon credits.

*Recommendation: There is need to further develop investment proposals and make these work, and continue to note and share the lessons and conditions for investment proposals to be successful.*

## **Impacts, scaling, sustainability, systemic changes**

**The landscape project show several examples of scaling, some quite impressive. Yet, there is need to learn from experiences in order to further enhance scaling to achieve impact at landscape scale.**

Both the PASOS projects and the Ganga project show evidence of scaling, in several dimensions

- Scaling (or rather adoption) among different members of the MSP, e.g. among small tanners in India
- Scaling to other countries, e.g. no deforestation policies in Nicaragua and Guatemala
- Scaling to other sectors, e.g. coffee in Honduras, possibly also livestock and shrimps

Country	No. with evidence of scaling			
	Within MSP	Local policies	National policies	sectors
India	-	6	-	2
Tanzania	?	1	-	-
Honduras	?	3	2	2
Nicaragua	?	1	-	-

The zero deforestation agreement in palm oil in Honduras is a good example of scaling a successful initiative. The first Zero Deforestation Declaration of Mesoamerica was negotiated by Solidaridad and signed by the complete palm oil sector, local CSOs, and national-level government actors in Honduras. The agreement moved into validation with an agreed action plan for monitoring and scaling up. Solidaridad brought the Nicaragua palm oil sector into initial dialogue sessions for Deforestation Free Livestock in Nicaragua. Within weeks, the Guatemalan palm oil sector declared their intention to move to Zero Deforestation commitments. Solidaridad began initial discussions with the Honduran Minister of the Institute for Conservation and Biodiversity to expand the Zero Deforestation agreement to include coffee in the Lago Yojoa landscape, and potentially livestock. Another good example of scaling is the biodiversity pilot with palm oil companies. Several palm oil companies now want to join ('crowding in'), thanks to the sharing of initial results through the MSP. The biodiversity monitoring is now being replicated in Guatemala.

In the Ganga project, The Central Pollution Control Board and National Mission for Clean Ganges acknowledges Solidaridad as its sustainability partner, and has requested Solidaridad to undertake initiatives with other sectors like textiles and pulp & paper in the year 2020.

Success factors for scaling seem to be that pilots show convincing results, results are in line with public priorities or policies (implementation of existing policies), are owned by the MSP or multiple stakeholders, and are being supported by changes in supportive policies, legislation or systemic issues.

*Recommendation: To achieve impact at scale, there is need to better identify and understand the success factors and mechanisms for scaling of successful pilots and policy changes.*

**The landscape projects show several examples of contributing to systemic changes, which is positive. Achieving systemic changes would merit more attention, as systemic changes can greatly contribute to scaling and sustaining results.**

In the landscape projects, we observe several changes at a systems level, which could enhance scaling by a more enabling policy context. The scheme provides an overview.

*Figure 4: Overview of findings systemic changes and contributions by Solidaridad*

Systemic issue	Landscapes		
	Ganga India	PASOS HON + NIC	Kilimanjaro Tanzania
<b>Policies, practices and resource flows</b>			
Improved access to markets	1-2	0-2	0
Improved service delivery	2	2	0-1
Land tenure security	1	1	1
Landscape governance	0	0	0-1
Integrating no-deforestation in supply-chain	-	2	1
Social sustainability issues in supply chain	1	0-1	0
Increased investment in the sector	1-2	1-2	0
<b>Capacities and relationships</b>			
Trust and dialogue between stakeholders	2	2	1
Coordination, vision alignment stakeholders	2	2	1
Strengthening of civic space	2	2	0-1
Change power dynamics between stakeholders	0	1	0
More transparency / accountability	1-2	1-2	1
Improved monitoring and learning	2	1	1
<b>Mental models</b>			
Shift mindsets and norms	2	2	1

0 = no progress / yellow, 1 = moderate/white, 2 = good / green; - = not relevant; ? = relevant but unclear

Weaknesses seem to occur in the following systemic issues:

- Domestic markets consumer demands, thus the sustainability of the value chains being addressed remains fully dependent upon export markets
- Landscape governance system, including monitoring and law enforcement, which is now dependent upon national and local government agencies, without a role by the MSP
- Social sustainability issues in supply chains
- Law enforcement and monitoring to ensure that protection agreements are complied with, no leaching effects occur and productivity gains do not stimulate further encroachment

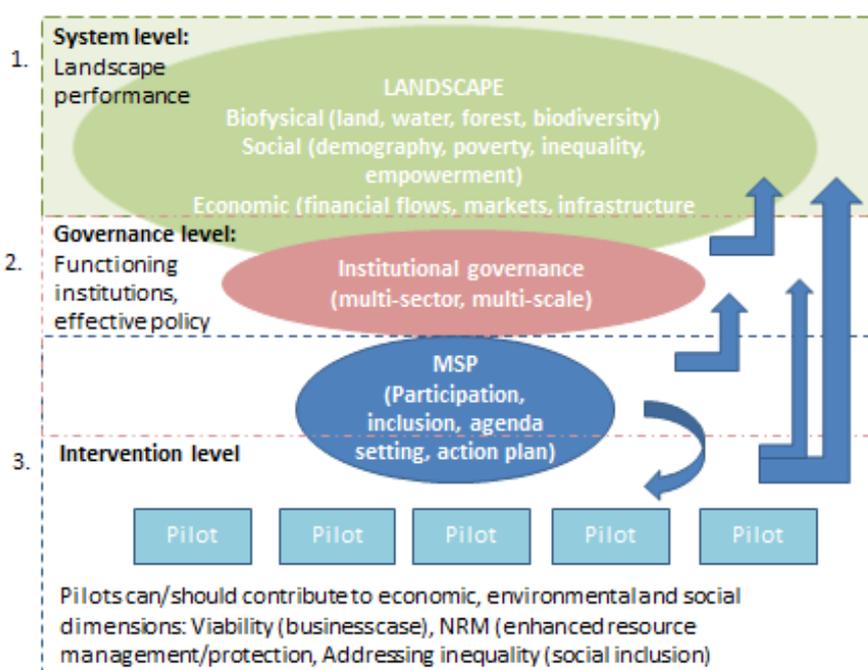
*Recommendation: Systemic changes can greatly support effectiveness of landscape approaches and subsequent scaling and sustainability. To contribute to systemic changes at the three levels of (1) policies & practices, (2) relationships and power dynamics, and (3) mental models, these should be identified in the diagnostic phase or during project implementation. Targeting systemic issues can be part of the L&A agenda.*

**Monitoring of progress within the landscape projects should be improved, to realise landscapes that are managed in a just and sustainable way. The results can contribute to the wider debate on the ten principles of the landscape approach.**

The current monitoring framework by Solidaridad does not allow to capture the various dimensions of progress within the landscape approach, including aspects of productivity, social relations, sustainability and equitable governance. Monitoring of progress in a participatory and user-friendly way is actually one of the 10 principles of the landscape approach. Pilots to do so are being conducted in Honduras.

*Recommendation: there is need to redefine a protocol for monitoring the outcomes of landscape projects, including targets to influence policies or their implementation. There are existing landscape monitoring frameworks that could be used, such as the LandScale one. The following three levels are proposed, with proposed role of Solidaridad:*

<b>Level</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Role of Solidaridad</b>	Coordination and ensuring that information flows between these three levels
1. Landscape performance – impact level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental indicators such as forest cover / deforestation, land degradation, water pollution;</li> <li>social indicators such as number of conflicts, livelihood security</li> <li>economic indicators such as productivity and value of main commodity</li> </ul>	Capacity building and support, not implementation	
2. Systems level including landscapes, governance, value chains – outcomes level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>governance institutions,</li> <li>policies and formal and informal rules,</li> <li>landscape monitoring,</li> <li>functionality of MSPs,</li> <li>structures for participation and accountability, etc</li> <li>markets and value chain relations</li> </ul>	Coordination, as much as possible monitoring by partners, create learning hubs	
3. Intervention level – outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the set up and facilitation of MSP</li> <li>the coordination and implementation of pilots</li> </ul>	Monitoring by Solidaridad	



**To realise the full potential of landscape projects a long time span is required. All the landscape projects evaluated require at least 3 more years of support by Solidaridad, which could be very light in intensity.**

There are several reasons why landscape projects require longer support. For one, to sustain governance of landscapes over time, without dependency on external sources of funding, there is need

for support services to remain available to provide knowledge and resources. Resources could originate from the revenues generated by commodities from the landscape through commodities, through ecosystem payment schemes, taxes raised that can be used for re-investing in landscape governance. Second, most MSP members have mentioned that they need support by Solidaridad to keep getting issues on the public agenda. Third, L&A capacities are still under development, and support by Solidaridad, for instance to prepare policy recommendations, remains a clear demand.

*Recommendation: Given the secured presence of Solidaridad as a national NGO in several countries, there is potential for Solidaridad to remain engaged as a national NGO in landscape projects, as a member of the MSP, as an advisor to MSPs, and/or for occasional capacity building, to ensure the MSPs remain effective and ensure the voice of the underprivileged. This will not require a high intensity presence or much resources. This could be part of an approach to 'adopt' a number of landscapes through a continuous yet low intensity presence*

*Recommendation: there is need to undertake pilots of developing systems to collect revenues for re-investments in landscape management, for instance by ecosystem payment schemes, taxes or fixed contributions to a landscape governance board, as part of a strategy to develop effective landscape governance systems.*

**Given the potential of the landscape approach to contribute to Solidaridad's ToC and goals of the new Reclaim Sustainability programme, there is need to establish a strong knowledge management system (learning agenda + related monitoring) to generate convincing insights and lessons.**

The landscape approach in Solidaridad is supported by a task force and several well defined strategic documents, including a well structured Discussion paper on the Sustainable Landscape Innovation theme for the Task Force Meeting, including a Portfolio Analysis and Identification of Research themes for the Learning Agenda. For each of the following building blocks research themes were defined:

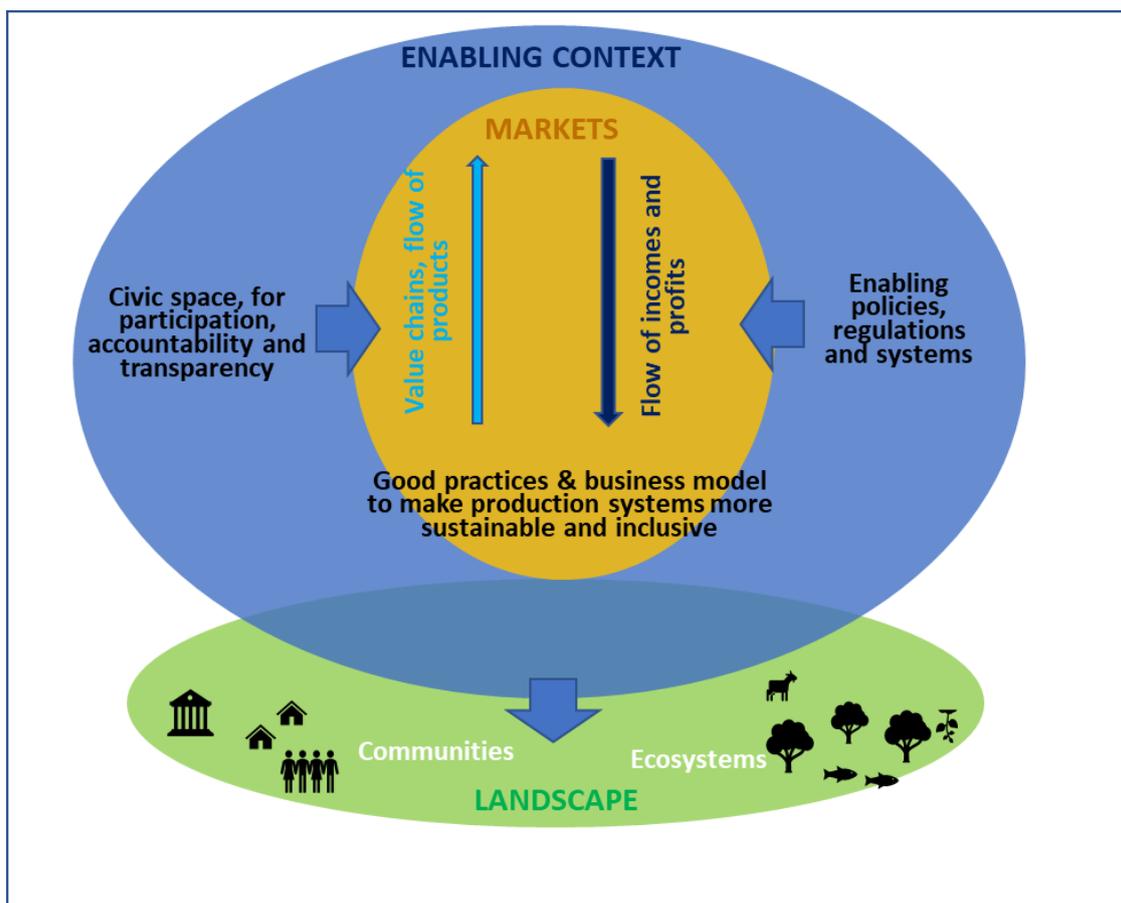
1. Multistakeholder Platform: connecting stakeholders and create space for dialogue
2. Landscape Knowledge: pooling information and build a collective body of landscape knowledge
3. Private sector Engagement: developing and testing viable business models which work for people and fit the landscape
4. Landscape Governance: bridging the gap between policy and practice contributing to effective landscape governance
5. Landscape Finance: unlocking finance for sustainable development and landscape management

It seems that this learning initiative was not sufficiently supported and backed up by robust monitoring data, so that so far no clear insights and lessons could be drawn. This could also be due to the fact that the research questions were rather broadly defined. We believe that from the experiences so far, including some of the insights in this overview document, more specific research questions could be formulated, and monitoring systems could be agreed upon to acquire convincing evidence. This could be linked to working out a new M&E system for the landscape projects.

*Recommendation: work out a new learning agenda and well defined research questions for further development of the landscape approach within Solidaridad.*

**There has been a diversity of landscape projects with variable results and lessons. There is need to consolidate the current state of the Solidaridad landscape approach by a theory of change and key elements, and a learning agenda.**

A new strategic positioning of the landscape approach within Solidaridad identifies four core catalyzers that are closely linked to the four strategic pillars in which Solidaridad's operates, being Enabling policies; Finance; Markets and Good/Best practices, and a central role for MSPs.<sup>14</sup> We believe it would be good to also show how these pillars interact in the dynamics between value chains (as Solidaridad's entry point) and landscapes, and include the linkages to civic space. Showing the interactions is expected to enable more effective design and planning of the different components in their interactions and synergy. It could also help to develop a typology and a set of criteria for successful landscape projects. The following scheme is an attempt to draw a theory of change, and a start for a typology with the main characteristics of a landscape programme, with a preliminary scoring.



<sup>14</sup> Solidaridad landscape approach december 2019

Criteria	Ganga India	PASOS HON	PASOS NIC	Kilimanjaro TAN
Practical solutions for landscape problems are available	2	2	2	1
Commodity with access to markets for sustainable products	2	2	2	1
Viable business plans and investment opportunities	2	2	2	0-1
Landscape MSP with all landscape level stakeholders represented	1	2	2	2
Functional MSP based on trust and good stakeholder relations	1-2	2	2	2
Landscape governance including good law enforcement	1	1	0-1	0-1
Inter-sectoral / integrated landscape planning and management	0	2	2	1
no blockers in enabling policy and systemic functions	1	1	1	0

0 = not met / yellow, 1 = partly met/white , 2 = fully met / green

## **Case study 3.1: Landscape approaches: Ganges India**

### **Acknowledgements**

This evaluation has been unique because of the fact that it has been completely done at a distance, without any field visits, through long-distance calls (skype, whatsapp, or other means). This implied that local Solidaridad staff has been intensively involved in organizing the long-distance calls, ensuring that stakeholders who we wanted to interview were available at the right time with the right means of communication, and sometimes also playing a role in local translation.

For this case study I would therefore especially like to thank Nitin Rao, Shatadru Chattopadhyay, Tatheer Zaidi and Alok Pandey for facilitating this case study and the calls with the stakeholders that were selected.

## Introduction

As a major part of this end-evaluation of the Solidaridad AfC programme, 5 case studies were undertaken. Case studies are focused on a central theme, and usually encompass different project/s falling within this theme, in different countries. This is case study 3.1, being one of the selected projects for the Landscape approach: the Ganges landscape project in India.

The project evaluation was conducted by Jan Joost Kessler, through review of documents on the landscape approach and the selected projects (Annex 1.1) and a series of on-distance interviews with project staff, project partners and selected stakeholders (Annex 1.2). The interviews were semi-structured, using a questionnaire which was specifically developed for this case study (Annex 2), which was aligned with the agreed evaluation questions and checklists in the inception report for this assignment. The aim has been to have a limited number of interviews with persons (men and women) that represent the diversity of stakeholders, from private, public, civil society and community levels.

A draft version of this case study report has been discussed with the local Solidaridad team, with adjustments being made based on feedback and leading to this final version.

The aim has been to develop short and to-the-point case study reports. The structure is as follows:

- Section 1: basic information of the project or projects being part of the case study (1 page)
- Section 2: origin, context and relevance (max 2 pages)
- Section 3: theory of change (1 page)
- Section 4: results and effectiveness (max 4 pages)
- Section 5: role and strategies by Solidaridad (max 3 pages)
- Section 6: impacts, sustainability and systemic change (max 2 pages)
- Section 7: contribution by Solidaridad and external factors (max 1 page)
- Section 8: lessons and recommendations (max 1 page)

## Basic information of the project/s of the case study

<b>REC</b>	Solidaridad Asia
<b>Project title</b>	AFC Ganga Landscape
<b>Country/ies</b>	India
<b>Plaza reference no.</b>	1462
<b>Overall Objective</b>	To promote sustainable land and water management in the Ganga basin for inclusive economic and environmental benefits.
<b>Specific Objectives</b>	<p>Transforming sugar and leather sector through sustainable land and water management in Ganga basin for inclusive economic and environmental benefits through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Multi stakeholder platform actively engaged in landscape planning and development of Gangetic plain</li> <li>2. Capacity of sugar &amp; leather actors built on water and land use planning and management</li> <li>3. Creating enabling policy and research environment on landscape development in collaboration with leading public institutes and Dutch companies</li> <li>4. Engaging brands and businesses for developing sustainable landscaping and financing</li> </ol>
<b>Partners</b>	<p><i>Sugarcane sector:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private sector: International Finance Cooperation (IFC), DCM Shriram, Coca Cola</li> <li>• Research: Indian Institute of Sugarcane Research (IISR)</li> <li>• CSOs Agriculture Finance Corporation (AFC), Social Action for Knowledge Building and Awareness Raising (SAKAR) and Uttar Pradesh Voluntary Action Network (UPVAN)</li> </ul> <p><i>Leather sector:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private: Tanning companies (Micro, Small and Medium)</li> <li>• Public: National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology- Kanpur</li> <li>• Research: Central Leather Research Institute (CLRI), Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board (UPPCB), PUM, and Stahl.</li> <li>• CSOs: none</li> <li>• Industry associations registered as not for profit entities: UP Leather Industries Association, Small Tanners Association (STA)</li> </ul>
<b>Project time period</b>	January 2016 to 2020
<b>Budget</b>	€3,414,408

## Origin, context and relevance

### Locality and context

#### *Main points*

1. Ganga basin is a hub of bio-diversity, and the main source of water for millions of people, supports agriculture for thousands of kilometers.
2. Most of the water pollution of the river and extreme water withdrawals happens in the mid Gangetic plains
3. Efforts to curtail pollution are largely regulated by law and is top down, but compliance is poor. Water use efficiency so far has no systemic solutions, it is left to the farmers.
4. The Ganga landscape project of Solidaridad therefore looks at land and water issues in the mid Gangetic plains for environment, economic and social benefits.
5. It focusses on two key industry clusters, being leather, being the biggest polluter, and sugarcane, being the largest water consumption sector.

#### *More detail*

The Ganga landscape project focuses on the part of the Middle Ganga Plain of the Ganga river basin in the State of Uttar Pradesh. It addresses two sectors that are the main polluters. Agriculture in India has been a sector where farmers have limited incentive to conserve water, that is supposed to be a 'public good'. Also, with the slogan of 'Grow more food' farmers have been using huge amounts of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. These two activities together are posing challenges on sustainability and biodiversity. The sugarcane sector is primarily located in the upstream side of the basin and affects the Ganga basin through excessive water withdrawal, surface run-off as well as groundwater, discharge of effluents from the industry, poor land and water use management at community level, and absence of resource governance.

The leather sector is located downstream of the sugarcane sector, particularly in the Kanpur region, and consists of around 400 micro, small and medium sized tanneries which are heavily polluting the river water by the release of untreated effluents and poor compliance with pollution and environmental norms. Thus, the project includes the sector with highest water use (sugarcane) and highest water pollution (tanneries).

The Ganga landscape project is aligned with the National Mission for Clean Ganga, Ministry of Water Resources and Ganga Rejuvenation; Government of India which mandates civil society participation. There is high and increasing awareness of the need to reduce water pollution, supported by pollution and environmental norms and policies. The government has put stringent norms and orders on the industry to adopt eco-friendly technologies in order to continue their operations. This action has led to huge loss of the industry and the workers dependent on the same for their livelihood. On the other hand, this has created a need in the tanneries to adopt new technologies.

Both sugarcane and leather are profitable industries, creating much employment for local people / smallholders. While women are directly involved in sugarcane production, they are indirectly involved in the leather sector, by processing leather to a variety of products (e.g. horse saddles).

Ganga is of great environmental, social, cultural and religious significance. Recently, in lieu of the Kumbh Mela (religious festival where devotees take a dip in Ganges) in Allahabad, many industrial clusters were shut down. Kanpur-Unnao Leather cluster was also temporarily shut down for the same reason. The tanneries opened for a short while, but again shut due to the post monsoon repairs of the channels. This closure continued for almost 9 months across the year of 2019. However, the tanneries are now operational, but especially small and medium size tanneries have been severely affected.

The record production of sugarcane meant that the sugar prices crashed in the market. Government of India allowed blending of cane juice in ethanol production to balance the production and supply and this has led to investments by private companies in distilleries. The companies are coaxing farmers to increase the area under sugarcane production. This would mean higher water extraction for the cane production. Solidaridad through its proven business cases, evidence and advocacy efforts with the local government, looks at the current developments to further the cause of sustainable production.

### **Origin**

The project component focusing on the sugarcane sector is based on strong previous work experience of Solidaridad in this sector in India, starting in 2013. This has resulted in concrete improvements in the sugarcane sector, both economic (sugarcane yields have doubled, incomes of smallholders have doubled), social (e.g. women empowerment, income generating activities), and environmental (water conservation, water efficiency, Bonsucro certification). These improvements have been widely adopted. This project focuses on further water efficiency aspects, which is in line with Government priorities. The leather sector component was newly introduced with this project. Solidaridad was engaging with Ministry of Water consultations and participating in consultations organised through the Dutch embassy in the leather sector.

### **Other projects and partners**

There are several other relevant projects or initiatives:

- Stahl, which is leading chemical supplier to the leather industry is introducing sustainable and environment friendly products, has strongly participated in this project
- GIZ and Water Aid are working on activities closely associated with the activities of Ganga Landscape project.
- PFC programmes are ongoing with sugar mills in nearby districts
- CLRI, a pioneer research institute for leather in India working on eco-friendly technologies and processes, this project formulated an MOU with this institute and there has been good collaboration.
- Solidaridad, has a RVO funded project under FDW 2016 called Pollution Prevention and Efficient Water Use in Kanpur-Unnao Leather Cluster which is focused particularly on improving the tanning processes, working with 100 tanning units on implementation of efficient eco-friendly technologies.
- Solidaridad collaborated with Agriculture Finance Corporation (AFC) and supported the Gram Panchayats to develop their capacities on water conservation and soil health.

## Theory of change

The project does not have a schematic theory of change but rather a long narrative (in the inception report), which is in line with the Solidaridad MASP on landscape development. A summary and interpretation is as follows.

The project aims to reduce water extracted for agriculture and discharge of polluted water into the river. Replacing sugarcane by alternative crops that require less water is not acceptable, as it provides much employment. Similarly, the leather industry in Kanpur provides livelihoods to many workers and forex to government. In a partnership with the corporates, industries and government, Solidaridad intends to both support capacity development of CSOs in the Ganga Landscape (including industry associations) in lobbying and advocating for sustainability as well as to mobilise and convene key stakeholders to advocate systemic changes for sustainable Ganga Basin. The focus is on evidence based advocacy. To do so there is collaboration with research organisations.

To change practices the approach taken is to work on the basis of self-interest of farmers and tanning units based on a clear business case to switch to improved techniques and practices. To demonstrate the benefits, two pilots should generate lessons on sugarcane and leather that will also be used within other sectors such as Paper and Pulp, Dying and Cement Industries. The pilots will be conducted in an inclusive way. The central government has set policy priorities for river clean up, but agriculture and industries are state subject, thus there is need for close coordination between various departments. The project will create an MSP for the governance and management of the Ganga Basin. It aims to bring together state and central government departments. The success of this strategy will depend on the involvement of a range of stakeholders and partners at all levels.

A three-stage approach was proposed in the inception report:

1. Participatory Problem identification through information collection and dissemination
2. Identifying capacity needs of each stakeholder and develop a decision-making paradigm for the development of sustainable basin.
3. Joint implementation of pilots.

Later on, the following more detailed approach emerged after having identified sugarcane and leather as the two main sectors:

- Sugarcane: Crop dominated and controlled by government for prices and private sector for contracting farmers. Practices heavily influenced by companies. On the other hand, water use regulations absent at local level. It is voluntary. Hence two key actors for advocacy: Sugar companies and local government.
- Leather: Industry heavily dominated by government regulations. Industry association not a force. Hence identified 2 critical players: government regulators and industry associations for advocacy.
- At the same time, in both sectors pilots are necessary to showcase business case and to generate evidence-based advocacy. Hence work with farmers and tanners on technology and adoption of practices.

## Results and effectiveness

### Results overview

A complete overview of results from the project M&E system is provided in Annex 3. The following table gives relevant output and outcome indicator results.

Indicator	Results 2019	Target 2020	Remarks
# of CSOs/POs that are being trained or supported to effectively participate in decision making and dialogue	12	12	
# and kind of stakeholders (CSOs, public sector, private sector, research institutions) that participate in MSPs on landscape	40	42	3 CSOs 12 Private (DCM Shriram Ltd., Stahl and 10 several large and small tanneries) 2 Research Institutes 21 Public (20 panchayats and 1 government), Dutch Embassy, State and Central Government, Chemical Companies,
# with sufficient expertise in SLM tools/solutions	67	108	75 tanneries + UPLIA + STA + CLRI + CLCTA + 25 panchayats + 4 mills
Specification: # of farmers trained on land and water management	38494	44750	75 tanneries * 50 workers each = 3750 Sugarcane farmers: 37000 Rupapur + 4000 from 4 other
Project specific: # and kind of private partners committing to invest in Landscape / Water in Ganga basin	38	80	Leather: 75 Tanning companies; STAHL, Sugarcane: DSCL, Dhampur
Specification: # of farmers and workers adopting identified and recommended GP and water efficient practices	40250	36750	75 tanneries*50 workers each = 3750 Sugarcane farmers: 80% of the trained farmers
Specification: # of industrial units that adopt good practices	38	79	75 tanneries + 4 mills

### MSPs

For sugarcane, under the agriculture sector, in 2018 multi stakeholder dialogues were organized in the five districts falling within this landscape. Participants are farmers (women and men), other key stakeholders including local government and their departments (Agriculture, Rural Development, Irrigation, Panchayati Raj, State Livelihood Mission, etc.), representatives of sugar mills (DSCL and Dalmia), civil society organisations, Sugarcane Research institutes and media. Officials of Central Ground Water Board, an agency of National government, attended in district level programmes. The MSPs were organized by district government and the Dept. of Agriculture took the lead, which enhanced local ownership. On the basis of the District level dialogues a State Level Consultation was organized and a ten-point Charter on land and water management was drafted. This charter was submitted to the State Government of Uttar Pradesh to bring necessary changes in state Policies and Laws.

In the leather sector, in 2019 the project brought together various stakeholders in the landscape on a common platform, under the chairmanship of the National Mission for Clean Ganga, to collaboratively address the central theme of the platform: 'Sustainable Way Forward of Kanpur-Unnao Leather Cluster'. This has helped to voice the opinions, needs and challenges of the voiceless stakeholders (small tanners, downstream farming communities). The project facilitated various consultations and dialog platforms where all stakeholders could voice their concern and this particularly helped the smaller tanners. The small tanners association expressed that they had a bad reputation (of being heavily polluting) but thanks to this initiative could communicate their struggles and find solutions on the subject. Thus, this MSP also helps to strengthen the position of the tanneries in front of the national and international market and policy makers. The MSP meets on a quarterly basis, to plan and design the roadmap for initiatives in the leather cluster, monitor progress and discuss challenges.

The MSPs have been instrumental in improving the adoption and uptake of technologies, using the results of pilots. Also, the positive response of the cluster towards positive change has given confidence to the relevant government departments.

### Pilots

A range of pilots were implemented and supported by the project. The below overview gives progress.

Pilot [name]	Focus	Purpose and landscape solution to be tested	Progress to present *
Installing process water meter on drums	5 small scale tanneries in Jajmau	Optimizing the use of water and chemicals in the tanning operations	E The pilot has been showcased, is upscaled to 23 small tanneries
Installing desalting machines	12 small, medium and large scale tanneries in Jajmau	Removal of salt from raw hide to reduce TDS in the waste water	B The machine reduces approx.. 33% of TDS at soaking stage.
Bio-remediation of waste water	Farmer's field near the waste water canal	Bio-remediation based treatment improves sugarcane yield and quality	B Pilots under process
Zero waste discharge through electro-oxidation	Kings International, Unnao	Treatment and complete reuse of waste water into the tanning operations, leading to zero discharge.	D Pilot trial successfully completed. No objection certificate received for a full capacity plant.
Occupational Health and Safety trainings	14 tanneries in Jajmau, Banthar and Unnao	Providing trainings to the tannery labor force on health and safety aspects	B Implementation continued to 29 tanneries
Waterless Chrome Tanning	3 small scale tanneries in Jajmau	Improves chromium uptake in leather, thereby reducing its discharge	B Implementation continued to 15 tanneries
Upgradation of Primary Effluent Treatment Plants	5 PETPs in small scale tanneries in Jajmau	Technical assistance to upgrade the existing PETP facility.	B Implementation continued to 15 tanneries
Conversion of solid waste into value added products	3 different pilots established	Conversion of dried sludge to paver tiles; of leather trimmings to belts; of fleshing waste into tallow oil	C Pilots have been established. Testing is in process.
Bio Village	Pandeypur, Hardoi	Reduce the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides	B See details below
Water Trials	Rupapur	Water use avoidance	D
Drip and Solar	Rupapur	Green Energy and water avoidance	B

\*) A: start; B: implementation; C: closed: conclusions shared; D: business case developed; E: scaling up

To test various points of the Charter a training module on Land and Water management for Sustainable agricultural production in Ganga Basin has been developed. This module is being experimented, in 2019, in 25 Gram Panchayats (75 villages, approx.). Support is being given to Bio villages. Pandeypur is the village where the pilot was started. Farmers of this village are promoting nearby villages to adopt bio-

fertilisers and compost to replace chemical fertilisers. The fertiliser application has reduced by almost 40-45% during the last two years in this village.

### **Perceived benefits**

Based on our interviews, the small tanners association mentions several benefits from this project:

1. Good practices.
  - a. They introduced water meters, which has increased awareness and has reduced water use. The water meters were subsidized by 50% by Solidaridad in the pilot (for 50 tanneries), later on they were adopted by all at own cost (but the cost is low, around €250).
  - b. They demonstrated desalting machines, with 20 tanneries, which were more widely adopted later on
2. Raising the voice of small tanners on their concerns. In general Solidaridad has helped small tanners become more visible to government. More concrete, there are some examples:
  - a. The cost of technology to remove chrome and reduce water use. Due to involvement of Solidaridad a 75% cost reduction was achieved
  - b. Some pollution parameters were not realistic to achieve by small tanners. On chrome pollution levels the norm has therefore been adjusted
  - c. A small tannery was closed down because it could not meet the set standards. It was supported by Solidaridad to adjust its practices and advocate for its opening up
  - d. The contribution by small tanners to the costs of upgrading the effluent plant was reduced significantly due to negotiations by Solidaridad.

### **Sustainability frameworks**

The project developed a tool (mobile app; Indian Sustainable Sugar Smallholder Framework or I3SF) that promotes sustainability – this framework covers most of the control points of Bonsucro and can give results of other standards (e.g. SAGP of Coca Cola, Global Supplier Code of PepsiCo and SDG). The tool covers four components, i.e. Better Farm Management, Energy and Water, Environment and Eco System, and Labour and Community Right. Farmers can use this tool and do a self-assessment about their practices. This tool could be effective for various stakeholders. For example, a farmer can use the data to improve practices, government can use the data for making effective policies, training and research institutes can use the data to design training programmes, CSOs can use the data to design their interventions or advocacy. In total 49,000 sugarcane farmers have been assessed on this tool. It is too early to know whether this has led to concrete change of practices. It will take another 6-9 months for sugarcane producers to be certified on the or I3SF standard based on Bonsucro.

A sustainability framework on leather is under development. Solidaridad has collaborated with the sectoral experts for developing a code which entails best management practices, best available technologies and chemical management system for the tanning industry. Also, an E-learning platform/mobile application is underway. The primary objective of this application is information dissemination of various global and national learnings on eco-friendly technologies in the leather industry. Also, it is a one-stop information source for all financial schemes of the government for leather industry stakeholders.

### **Business cases and uptake**

During the project, it has been realized that businesses only show interest in adopting a technology if it has a well-defined business case with a positive cost benefit. The business case does not include intangible aspects, such as improved reputation, less conflicts, better relationships. Also, the push from governing bodies and CSOs helps to bring about a positive change.

The Indian Sugar Mill association states that there is emphasis on reducing water use and on integrated soil management using more organic manure. Sugarcane producers are receptive to these improvements because it reduces costs (less water, fertilizer use), and thus supports the business case.

Well-defined business cases have been developed for the leather industries. Also, a “compendium of Business cases of interventions demonstrated in Kanpur-Unnao Leather cluster” has been prepared. This captures the detailed business cases for each of the technological intervention that has been pilot tested in the cluster. This also reflects the environmental and social value attached to these interventions and how it contributes towards the larger objective of water stewardship in Ganga Basin.

### **Policy changes and role of Solidaridad**

In collaboration with the project, the following overview of policy changes and the role of the project was developed.

#### ***Sugarcane***

Advocacy has been done, under the programme, at various levels and with different institutions/agencies, as follows:

1. Advocacy at the village (Gram Panchayat Level). This included sharing of information related to good agriculture practices, training and capacity building including training on negotiation and consensus building and developing Gram Panchayat Development Plans. Subjects of social dialogue were not included.
2. Formulation and promotion of advocacy agenda with stakeholders. On the basis of the block and district level consultations a ten-point agenda was developed and that was shared at the state level meeting with the state officials of the department of Agriculture, government of Uttar Pradesh. To advocate the ten points’ agenda and to make them implementable, a signature campaign was organized. More than 3790 Villagers gave their support and signed a pledge.
3. The project initiated dialogue with communities from 5 districts to promote water use efficiency and implemented 6 pilots to demonstrate water use reduction and waste management. 35 tanneries and 4 mills adopted the recommendations. A pledge by around 100 gram panchayat (local governance system) was signed and submitted to the District Collectorate that emphasised the need to have government regulated monitoring mechanisms for water use efficiency in agriculture.

<b>L&amp;A policy target and purpose</b>	<b>Role &amp; L&amp;A strategy by Solidaridad</b>	<b>Current status</b>
Formulation of standard operating procedures for promotion of water use efficiency	In association with IISR and sugar mills Solidaridad has been informing farmers to use good agriculture practices, from land preparation to harvesting.	Stage D Farmers have already adopted some of the practices, based on their feasibility and size of land holding
Formulation of local plans on land and water management Local governments draft their annual development plans. However, most of the plans talks about construction of roads, building, etc	With the help CSOs in the area, Solidaridad has been able to negotiate with the department of Panchayat and Rural Development, to ensure earmarking of 50% resources of the total GDP for Land and Water Management.	Stage C Panchayats are practicing it. However, handholding would be needed as after every 5 years a set of new representatives is elected.

#### ***Leather***

As regards the leather sector, the project has worked on the following policy influencing goals:

- Formulation of an action oriented group of stakeholders to work on reduction of TDS;
- Electro-oxidation based treatment as an alternative to zero liquid discharge;
- Revision of Chromium discharge limits in Jajmau.

The project also played an important role in upgrading of a common effluent waste water treatment plant, from 9 million to 20 million liters of water per day. This was necessary since from 1994 onwards the number of tanneries had increased from 175 to 400. The project has contributed in ensuring the financing becoming available, from Government and industry.

These policy influencing goals have been facilitated by the following strategies:

- bilateral engagements with relevant government authorities
- strategic presentations at various forums and the MSP formulated under the project.
- meetings with Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and a TDS action committee that was formed to identify and evaluate potential solutions for TDS reduction in the tanneries and slaughterhouses in Kanpur-Unnao cluster.

In all above strategies, facilitation was primarily done by Solidaridad, whereby at times other stakeholders such as CLRI, UPLIA, STA representatives also participated. The following overview provides some details.

L&A policy target and background	Role & L&A strategy by Solidaridad	Current status
Formulation of TDS Action Committee by Central Pollution Control Board, Government of India. The aim is to formulate an action plan for reducing TDS.	Solidaridad is the convener, of the platform, thus to set up the agenda, organize meetings and ensure proper follow ups. Solidaridad technical experts also meet Industry and Government separately on pollution related aspects and to present the ongoing efforts.	Stage 1. Slaughterhouses have come on board. An action plan with one-year duration is prepared where different technological options will be demonstrated to reduce the TDS load and a new policy from CPCB should be issued.
Upgradation of the Common Effluent Treatment Plan (CETP)  The CETP in Jajmau was built long back in 1994 by an Indo-Dutch program. For the effective functioning of the CETP, its upgradation is inevitable.	Solidaridad, engaged with the relevant government departments for speeding up the process of the upgradation of the CETP for the improvement of waste water quality going to the Ganga basin. Solidaridad participated in multiple meetings and voiced the concerns of the industry.	Stage 6 The CETP's capacity is being upgraded and construction of another 20 MLD plant has started in Jajmau. National Mission for Clean Ganges sanctioned a subsidy grant of more than EUR 50 Million
Implementation of Electro-Oxidation based Zero Waste Discharge  In tanneries, the effluent after treatment from the PETP goes to the CETP for secondary treatment. However, there is a huge potential to treat this water and re-use into the operations.	Solidaridad along with CSIR-CLRI pilot tested a technology called Electro-oxidation. The water after treatment can be reused in the operations and the tannery can therefore, stop sending any waste water to the CETP.	Stage 6 The results of this technology were proven and showcased to the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board, which has given a no objection certificate to build full scale plant using this technology and cut off the supply of waste water to the CETP. The construction is initiated.
Revision of Chromium discharge limits in Jajmau  Meeting the defined chromium discharge of 2mg/l chromium at the PETP level is a struggle for the tanners. However, this parameter can never be met without the secondary treatment.	Before the project, the access of Industry stakeholders to the Government was not easy and the perception was not positive. Solidaridad's interactions with Government improved the rapport of the Industry towards Government entities.	Stage 4 The tannery associations voiced their concerns and could finally get a relaxation in the particular norm. The current discharge norm for chromium is 10 mg/l.

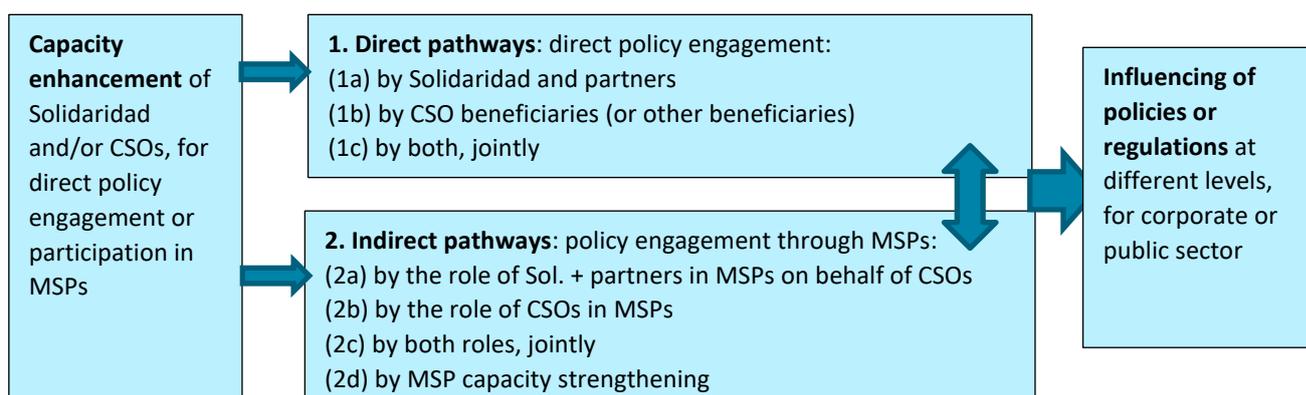
### Capacity development support

Capacity building has focused on technical issues related to eco efficiency, including the sugarcane MSPs, tannery Associations, Local governance mechanisms, tanners and farmers. In addition, training has been given on water and land use planning and management. This was supported by our interviews:

- The Central Pollution Control Board emphasized the technical capacities that had been strengthened.
- The village Panchayat head mentioned a range of new practices that he and his fellow community members have implemented in sugarcane, including trench making, a sugarcane planter, a thresh mulcher, installment of a drip irrigation system, compost making, reduced and more targeted use of fertilizers based on soil analyses.

It seems that Solidaridad has not specifically built local capacities on subjects of lobby & advocacy. Rather, this is done by Solidaridad. For example, Solidaridad advocated for subsidies for sugarcane producers and tanneries to receive subsidies or reduced prices for new machines and technologies. Examples are the thresh mulcher (50% subsidy), the drip irrigation system (70% subsidy), Waterless Chrome Tanning (76% subsidy). Solidaridad did most of the activities in close alignment with local Industry Associations viz. UPLIA and STA. Both organisations mentioned in the interviews that they now feel more empowered to directly speak to the key Government authorities. This is mainly because of the improved relations and more underlying knowledge and evidence.

## Strategies and role by Solidaridad



Note: PI = Policy Influencing; CE = Capacity Enhancement

In this project, the main pathways have been that of (1a) and (2a), implying that Solidaridad always plays a leading role, either on its own, or with support by partners, being organised in an MSP or not. MSPs are mainly there for exchange of experiences and to agree on new actions or advocacy targets.

To work on policy changes, Solidaridad took the lead along with some other members of the MSP primarily the Industry Associations viz. UP Leather Industries Association, Small Tanners Association. Solidaridad regularly highlighted and facilitated genuine concerns of tanning units (small, medium, large) to relevant Government entities viz. UP Pollution Control Board, Central Pollution Control Board and National Mission for Clean Ganges, Government of India. As these Government entities acknowledged the efforts made by Solidaridad, they also engage Solidaridad to fulfill the pollution agenda therefore Solidaridad is acting as a bridge between Government and Industries to fulfill the pollution agenda in a balanced manner.

**Role of Solidaridad: policy makers are impressed by the commitment and expertise of Solidaridad to demonstrate concrete improvement practices. The strategy is one of evidence-based advocacy: if**

**policy makers have observed / know there is an alternative that works well they will ensure that the policy context is enabling.**

The leather sector provides an example of how Solidaridad operates in a new sector. Especially small tanneries had a bad reputation and a non-cooperative mindset. Before bringing together any stakeholders, Solidaridad had various consultations with tanneries, making them aware that they had to adopt better practices, otherwise they would have to close down and perish. In parallel, new technologies were proposed to reduce the use of salt and remove chrome from waste water, both not being very costly. This helped to build up mutual trust, and showed that in practice improvements can be made, and would also be cost effective. Most importantly, this showed to other stakeholders that tanneries are not conservative and are committed to reduced water pollution.

The MSP formulated in the project provides a platform to the industry stakeholders to present their key challenges and participate in decision making. Solidaridad created awareness among the small tanners about the locally available technologies, globally proven eco-friendly solutions, financial schemes. It organized experts visits at the shop floors, established pilot demonstrations and also facilitated to upscale those interventions. Various stakeholders of the MSP such as CLRI, government departments, etc. have also supported in the capacity building program. Such efforts boosted the moral of small tanners to represent themselves effectively at such platforms.

The Central Pollution Control Board clearly expressed as the main role of Solidaridad to help them implement existing policies and regulations, by training, technology development and by facilitating dialogue. Also, Solidaridad has helped to prepare concrete guidelines for implementing the regulations, either by drafting these guidelines or by reviewing them. Solidaridad is especially appreciated as a partner because of a number of qualities: being punctual, dedicated, having good technical expertise and having good relations with industries. These capacities cannot be replaced by a local organisation. In terms of expertise, it should be noted that Solidaridad has brought in highly qualified technical experts.

The best indication of the appreciation of Solidaridad by the government is the fact that Solidaridad has been asked to convene a new Green Ganga MSP on demand of the central Control Board, with the aim to reduce the amount of Total Dissolved Salt in the Ganga river, which will start in 2020. It is unique that an originally foreign organization (now locally registered) is requested for such a role, and if successful this forum is expected to be a demonstration for the rest of India.

The village Panchayat head also sees Solidaridad mainly as a partner to implement state policies, which are difficult to implement. Solidaridad gives hands-on support to implement new technologies. Solidaridad is available if he needs any assistance. Specifically mentioned is also women's engagement in sugarcane production, which Solidaridad helped to strengthen.

According to the Dutch Embassy, Solidaridad is especially good at operating at the field level, i.e. interaction with sugarcane producers and small tanneries. The Dutch Embassy particularly appreciates the showcases developed by Solidaridad which is essential for engaging with the India Government, showing what can be done. Solidaridad is especially appreciated because of a number of qualities: being dedicated, reliable and committed, being open to collaborate and form partnerships, communicating in the right way. sincere, being punctual, dedicated, having good technical expertise and having good relations with industries.

The MTR concluded that through field presence, technical knowhow, a focus on innovation and neutrality, Solidaridad is able to take on a role as a trusted facilitator in multi stakeholder initiatives. Important is also the fact that the results of pilots are widely demonstrated. After successful completion of any pilot, Solidaridad shares a formal mail with all relevant stakeholders on the pilot. They then organize a consultation at the pilot location where the stakeholders can come and see the results of the pilots.

If senior Government officials do not participate in multi stakeholder roundtable, they are briefed on a regular basis by visiting them and submitting various documents to them. Even if Panchayati Raj and municipalities (Rural and urban local governance bodies) priorities lies in domestic water supply and sanitation, they recognize that water is an important factor for them so they developed some plans around water conservation.

### **Gender strategies**

During the year Solidaridad organized several advocacy programme where women participants were invited. Women participants not only attended the programme but also contributed in those programmes meaningfully by stating their perspective of water use efficiency.

In the sugarcane sector, a group of 23 women farmers visited Uttar Pradesh Council for Sugarcane Research (UPCSR) and attended a two days programme where they shared about the practices that they are doing in their fields to save water and to earn alternative livelihood. During this programme the women farmers also learnt about the new techniques of sugarcane farming, nursery growing and vermi composting. In the downstream villages of Kanpur, protocols on Good Agriculture practices of the main crops like paddy, vegetables etc. have been developed to increase the income of farmers. This also ensured the increase in the production aligned with the livelihood upgradation of the downstream farmers. The project has also undertaken support to involve more women in the dairy sector. As 70% of the farming community in the downstream villages are engaged in dairy farming, many trainings have been organized in dairy. Also, an MoU with Tasty Dairy (a leading dairy company in the vicinity) is in the final stages. This will ensure the collection of milk from the farmers under the project and therefore ensure market linkages for milk produced and livelihood upgradation primarily for the women farmers. Alternative employment for women is being visualized where they can learn skill and earn extra income for better living, such as in nursery growing in sugarcane sector. While this is being developed, both stakeholders that were interviewed emphasized that the involvement of women in the sector, should be further developed. Women do not yet have sufficient employment opportunities.

To promote the inclusion of women with sugarcane farmers a separate module was drafted in collaboration with SAKAR. In 2019, this module was rolled out. After that women farmers are attending other programmes (but with limitation like feudal society, caste based constraints, etc.). Women members have been included in team to address these issues at the ground level. This evaluation did not have the opportunity to discuss this with SAKAR.

In the leather sector, women are not involved in tanneries as work is heavy. However, using leather to develop leather goods (such as bags, horse saddles) is very common,

**Role of Dutch Embassy:** Solidaridad has good relationship with the local Dutch Embassy in India. The organisation has been invited from time to time in the consultations organised by Dutch embassy with Government of India. Solidaridad is the only NGO representative in this forum along with other Dutch private sector institutes. The Dutch Embassy has played an important role in this project. First, it has assisted in conceptualizing the project, with a central focus on water pollution. Then, it has contributed to establish contacts with the tanneries sector, which was new to Solidaridad. Solidaridad along with Dutch embassy has also engaged with state pollution control authorities, to lift the ban on the close down of the tanneries. Further, they are facilitating the partnership to leverage private sector engagement including leading private Banks.

## Impacts, sustainability and systemic change

### Impacts

The following overview from the project M&E system provides an overview.

Indicator	Results 2019	Target 2020	Remarks
# of ha under better management practices (new mechanisms)	49.500	60.800	Sugarcane: (425 villages*250ha each)*50% that grow sugarcane intensity Leather : The average land size of each farmer in our downstream area is 0.81 Ha,
# of companies or producers that meet existing national, international or sector specific sustainability standards or Good Practices	39	79	75 Tanneries (including Kolkata) + 4 sugar mills
Project specific: # of billion litres of water saved in demand side agriculture	60	100	Includes Sugarcane farmers adopting GAP on water use avoidance (80% under GAP) and tanneries adopting Waterless Chrome Tanning.

According to the baseline report, the tannery cluster in Kanpur produced about 400 tonnes of solid waste daily, full of toxins from the leather making process which is disposed off in the river. In tanneries located in Ganga basin, only 2 (out of 400) are certified with any framework of sustainability. This has increased to 39 and will further increase to 79 (see above table).

According to a study conducted by ISSR (Apex research institute for sugarcane) in one of the mill areas farmers have been able to save nearly 14 billion liters of water during 2017-18. The above table indicates that by now at least 40 billion liters of water are being saved from both sectors.

The Central Pollution Control Board has the opinion that the water pollution level has strongly decreased, and will further reduce in the future.

Due to drip irrigation system the village Panchayat head is using 60% less water.

In sugarcane, during harvesting improved health & safety measures are being implemented, which will reduce the risk of incidents. According to Solidaridad the number of cases related to snake bite, cut from knife, tetanus, etc. have reduced significantly (almost nil). People are now also using safety gears during activities related to sugarcane farming.

In leather/tanneries, it is difficult to draw conclusions on any change in incomes, as the recent period (of close down) has been a significant external factor influencing the sector.

### Landscape approach

The stakeholders interviewed in both sectors did not refer to any exchange between the sugarcane and leather sectors. According to each of them there are actually two separate workstreams. There does not appear to be a joint vision on a 'clean Ganga' to which each sector contributes, and thus also a joint commitment. Thus, as long as there is a positive business case, all will go well. This does raise the question of what will happen if there are too many tanneries, or too many sugarcane producers to enable a clean Ganga river. How will decisions be taken? Solidaridad stated there was a plan to organize a joint event of Sugarcane and Leather in the presence of senior Government officials in April 2020 with an announcement to come up with a joint platform to address the issues at landscape level. However, this was cancelled because of the COVID crisis but will be taken up in future.

### Scaling

Data are missing as to what extent the sector as a whole within the landscape has by now been covered, but scaling is ongoing. For the tanneries, it seems that 75 out of 400 tanneries have adopted new technologies (=19%). But the project has a wider outreach through its multiple technical trainings, workshops and tailor-made solutions being provided by Solidaridad. In sugarcane widespread impact had already been achieved thanks to earlier involvement in the sector. In both sectors, further scaling is still required. Scaling is possible at different levels.

At the local level all sugarcane farmers or tanneries should adopt the improved practices. The village Panchayat head stated that in his panchayat so far 20% of the 90 families producing sugarcane had implemented the new practices, the others participated and will probably implement the practices later on. He sees Solidaridad mainly as a partner that brings in new technologies and helps implement these. Solidaridad is always available if he needs any assistance. Specifically mentioned is also women's engagement in sugarcane production, which Solidaridad helped to strengthen.

At local level there is also need to take a more holistic view on livelihoods and landuse, to diversify production from sugarcane and be more inclusive to gender and different social groups. This has been at the basis of developing a more 'sustainable village-based' approach including Gram Panchayat development and landuse plans. Pilots on bio-villages are being developed, with landuse plans that include water conservation using barren / fallow lands, and empowerment of women in the dairy sector. Bio village is one of the components under sustainable village approach.

The Central Pollution Control Board emphasized that progress is only half way, pilots should now be scaled, for uptake by the whole sector, and to do so there is need for Solidaridad to remain active. Currently 50 of 400 small tanners have implemented the new technologies, so there is still a way to go.

In 2019, the project expanded to the Kolkata leather cluster, where the basin is heavily affected by huge water withdrawals, highly polluting effluent and toxic gases in the surroundings. Solidaridad, began its engagement with key stakeholders such as Calcutta Leather Complex Tanners Association; Indian Leather Technologists Association; Government College of Engineering and Leather Technology; Department of MSME, Kolkata etc. Proven business cases of various eco-friendly technologies from the Kanpur Leather cluster were replicated in the new cluster, to improve their processes and help to reduce pollution and water extraction. This will have overall positive impact on the river.

The Central Pollution Control Board and National Mission for Clean Ganges acknowledges Solidaridad as its sustainability partner, and has requested Solidaridad to undertake initiatives with other sectors like textiles and pulp & paper in the year 2020. In 2020, the project will include sectors like textiles and paper in the project and collaborate with the Central Pollution Control Board on addressing pollution across the landscape of mid Gangetic plains.

### Systemic changes

In the following table we check to what extent systemic changes have taken place.

Systemic issue	Change *	remark
trust and dialogue between stakeholders		Yes, especially between small tanners and government agencies
coordination and alignment between stakeholders / shared vision		Both sugarcane and leather have a common vision to reduce pollution, even if a joint platform is still missing
change power dynamics between stakeholders		Collaboration is based on win-win business cases and law enforcement
strengthening of civic space (civic empowerment, both men and women)		In terms of reputation and improved technical know-how

shift mindsets and norms? Of MSP participants? Of targeted decision / policy makers	Blue	Yes, likely, but also the business case is positive and changes are mandatory
Improved service delivery	Blue	Has improved in both sectors, but uncertain to what extent this is being delivered by service providers
increased investment in the sector	Green	Includes government subsidies and in kind and financial support provided by private companies
Landscape governance	Yellow	There is a government agency responsible for the Ganga watershed, but no governance system
increased transparency / accountability of stakeholders	Green	Due to the more open dialogue
Increased monitoring and learning at sector level	Green	To a large extent, could be further improved at landscape level
Improved access to markets	Green	The markets of the products have always been there, but there are new markets for efficient technologies

\*) yes = green; no = yellow; moderate = blue

Some further comments on the above table:

- Good M&E. Tanneries of different sizes are chosen to evaluate effectiveness of the pilot. All necessary data (such as, waste water samples, tannery production, fresh water withdrawal data, leather quality etc.) is collected before, during and after the pilots to monitor effectiveness of the pilot.
- Service delivery. Some farmers in the sugarcane sector were supported to acquire machines, for instance for land leveling, and the owners become service providers for other farmers. Also, each of the tannery implemented in the tannery is supported by a group of technical experts who tailor make the intervention to integrate in the existing tanning process. Services are being provided in collaboration with Sugar mill, and CSOs that will remain there in longer run.
- Solidaridad is trying to create awareness on the financial schemes and soft-loans available by government and other financial institutes to help the tanners avail the losses from the close down.
- A change in mindset is uncertain because there is an urgency of complying with stringent pollution norms and there are technical alternatives that are cost-effective (positive business case).

### **Small tanners**

So far Solidaridad has played a leading role in technical innovations and advocacy activities. Both UPLIA and STA representatives have been able to better raise their voice in the interactions to senior regulatory authorities. The associations have a better access to the highest authority and feel empowered.

There are small, medium and large tanners. The future for small tanners has been uncertain, given the recent Covid-19 crisis and the close down to avoid pollution, which has affected small tanners in particular. The Government has stiff norms which was indeed a challenge for the survival of the small tanners but this project played an important role to put forward the genuine concerns of the industry to the highest regulatory authority. As Government is going to spend more than EUR 50 Million for the upgradation of the CETP, it will ensure the sustainability of the industry including the small tanners.

### **Sugarcane**

The CEO and ED of DCM Shriram (sugars), being one of the important stakeholders of this project, is also a chair at one of the Committees of Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA). During the representations and meetings DCM has always been sharing the practices adopted by farmers in their command areas,

especially saving of water during irrigation. The promotion of drip irrigation has been one of the issues that has been raised considerably by DCM.

## **Sustainability**

### ***MSP***

At District level the MSP meetings in sugarcane will continue, being convened by the District Cane Officer, with representatives of Solidaridad, Sugar mills, farmers, etc. attending.

The MSP in leather sector is functional and holds meeting in presence of all the regulatory authorities. The National Mission for Clean Ganges is interested to scale up the successful template of Leather to other Industrial sectors/ clusters at Ganga basin justifying the scaling up of the approach in the Industrial Landscape.

### ***Social issues***

The focus has been on environmental issues, which is justified because apparently there are no problems in the social issues. The small tanners association mentioned that the working relations with large tanneries (of which they are auxiliary) is good and they are well paid. Also, Solidaridad identified Occupational Health and Safety as a looming threat, thus, capacity building workshops on Occupational Health and Safety, medical camps are being organized in the cluster.

## **Contribution by Solidaridad and external factors**

From the above overview of activities, results and the role of Solidaridad, it is certain that Solidaridad has played a key role in most of the changes that were observed. This was supported by most stakeholder opinions during interviews.

Following are external factors considered to have positively contributed to the success of this project:

- The strong existing policy framework (on water pollution of the Ganga)
- The sense of urgency for change (for small tanneries in particular)
- The very high level of existing water pollution, which allowed for significant improvements
- Relatively good sectoral coordination
- The availability of relatively cheap technologies that can save resources

Following are external factors considered to have negatively contributed to the success of this project:

- The long closure of tanneries due to the Kumbh Mela religious festival
- Followed by the long closure of tanneries due to the Covid-19 crisis

### **Complementarity / synergy between national, regional and global initiatives**

There is evidence of scaling the good practices within the larger landscape, and of additional activities at the landscape level that will further enhance scaling. The programme has raised interest at national level.

### **Complementarity and integration of the innovation themes Gender Inclusivity, Sustainable Landscape Innovation, and Climate Innovations**

This is core of the project.

### **Complementarity and synergy between L&A projects and GP and RI projects**

Past and ongoing PfC projects on sugarcane has been at the basis of this programme, and there is still important interaction. In the leather sector there were no earlier or ongoing PfC projects. approach.

However, depending upon the definition of a landscape project, one could argue that most the activities conducted in this programme could also be classified as a PFC project, as it is mainly sector oriented and aimed at reducing pollution in the two sectors.

Coca Cola supported the programme by promoting good agriculture practices (PFC project) and by supporting the water trail reports.

## Key issues and lessons

### Main insights from this programme

#### *The landscape approach*

The approach the project has taken is to work on two sectors with one agenda of reduced water pollution. To know whether the advocacy actions have worked, key questions could be :

1. Have sugar companies and leather companies adopted water use efficient and reduced water pollution practices in their practices?
2. Have the local governance institutions developed capacities on water use efficiency and reduced water pollution and are they taking the lead in ensuring that large scale adoption happens?
3. Have the tanners and the sugarcane producers found a voice and a place on the table for discussions and negotiations with the government?
4. Has the government taken steps and created an enabling policy environment?

We believe the answers to the above questions are YES, thus, the approaches has worked.

#### *Relevance*

- This project builds onto strong previous work experience of Solidaridad in the sugarcane sector in India, starting in 2013, leading to concrete improvements and good relations with government agencies. There have been no previous projects in the leather sector.
- This project focuses on further water efficiency aspects, which is in line with Government priorities. The leather sector component was newly introduced with this project. Solidaridad was engaging with Ministry of Water consultations and participating in consultations organised through the Dutch embassy in the leather sector.
- The selection of the leather and sugarcane sectors to reduce pollution of the river Ganga was based on a thorough mapping, diagnosis and needs assessment (most polluting and most water consuming sectors).

#### *Effective MSPs*

- For sugarcane, in 2018 multi stakeholder dialogues were organized in the five districts falling within this landscape. The MSPs were organized by district government and the Dept. of Agriculture took the lead, which enhanced local ownership. On the basis of the District level dialogues a State Level Consultation was organized and a ten-point Charter on land and water management was drafted. This charter was submitted to the State Government of Uttar Pradesh to bring necessary changes in state Policies and Laws.
- In the leather sector, in 2019 the project brought together various stakeholders in the landscape on a common platform, under the chairmanship of the National Mission for Clean Ganga, to collaboratively address the central theme of the platform: 'Sustainable Way Forward of Kanpur-Unnao Leather Cluster'. This has helped to voice the opinions, needs and challenges of the voiceless stakeholders (small tanners, downstream farming communities).

- The MSPs in both sectors have been instrumental in improving the adoption and uptake of technologies, using the results of pilots. Also, the MSPs have created confidence among the stakeholders involved and in the relations with relevant government departments.
- National and local research institutes have been involved in both sectors, and have played an important role in advancing and supporting technical solutions to the problems of water pollution.
- In most cases the technical solutions are win-win options, because the solutions contribute to less pollution, less water and / or less chemical use, thus less risks and less costs.

#### *Effectiveness*

- A total of 11 pilot activities have been supported by the programme, and are all well under way, with some in the process of being more widely scaled.
- The small tanners were a particularly vulnerable group and were specifically supported by the programme. They listed several important benefits from the programme. The small tanners association had a bad reputation (of being heavily polluting) but thanks to this programme could communicate their struggles and find solutions on the subject. The project has strengthened the position of the tanneries in front of the national and international market and policy makers.
- The project developed a tool (mobile app; Indian Sustainable Sugar Smallholder Framework or I3SF) that promotes sustainability in the sugarcane sector. A sustainability framework on leather is in development.
- Well-defined and documented business cases have been developed for both the sugarcane and leather industries, with as positive cost benefit due to reduced water use and/or chemical inputs. The business case does not include intangible aspects, such as improved reputation, less conflicts, better relationships.
- Both in the sugarcane and the leather sectors, the project has contributed to a number of concrete policy changes that are supportive of a transition to more inclusive and sustainable use of resources in the Ganga landscape, and supportive to small scale sugarcane producers and tanneries.
- The project has played an important role in upgrading of a common effluent waste water treatment plant, from 9 million to 20 million liters of water per day. The project has contributed in ensuring the financing becoming available, from Government and industry.
- Much has been done in order to engage women in families within the sugarcane sector. The activities have focused on the dairy sector, which is a women's job and because 70% of the farming community in the downstream villages are engaged in dairy farming.

#### *Role of Solidaridad*

- In this project, Solidaridad always plays a leading role, either on its own, or with support by partners, being organised in an MSP or not. MSPs are mainly there for exchange of experiences and to agree on new actions or advocacy targets. Solidaridad is acting as a bridge between Government and Industries to fulfill the pollution agenda in a balanced manner.
- Policy makers are impressed by the commitment and expertise of Solidaridad to demonstrate concrete improvement practices. The strategy is one of evidence-based advocacy: if policy makers have observed / know there is an alternative that works well they will ensure that the policy context is enabling.
- The Central Pollution Control Board and National Mission for Clean Ganges acknowledges Solidaridad as its sustainability partner, and has requested Solidaridad to undertake initiatives with other sectors like textiles and pulp & paper in the year 2020. The Central Pollution Control Board clearly expressed as the main role of Solidaridad to help them implement existing policies and regulations, by training, technology development and by facilitating dialogue. The best indication of the appreciation of Solidaridad by the government is the fact that Solidaridad has been asked to convene a new Green Ganga MSP on demand of the central Control Board, with the aim to reduce the amount of Total Dissolved Salt in the Ganga river.

#### *Impacts and systemic changes*

- According to a study conducted by ISSR (Apex research institute for sugarcane) in one of the mill areas farmers have been able to save nearly 14 billion liters of water during 2017-18. The Central Pollution Control Board has the opinion that the water pollution level has strongly decreased, and will further reduce in the future.
- In sugarcane, as a result of improved health & safety measures according to Solidaridad the number of cases related to snake bite, cut from knife, tetanus, etc. have reduced significantly. In leather/tanneries, it is difficult to draw conclusions on any change in incomes, as the recent period (of close down) has been a significant external factor influencing the sector.
- The stakeholders interviewed in both sectors did not refer to any exchange between the sugarcane and leather sectors. According to them there are actually two separate workstreams. Although both sectors have a vision on a 'clean Ganga', there does not appear to be a joint vision to which each sector contributes. Solidaridad has planned a joint event of Sugarcane and Leather to come up with a joint platform to address the issues at landscape level. This would complete the 'landscape' approach of this programme.
- So far Solidaridad has played a leading role in technical innovations and advocacy activities. Both UPLIA and STA representatives have been able to better raise their voice in the interactions to senior regulatory authorities. The associations have a better access to the highest authority and thus feel empowered. The future for small tanners has been uncertain, given the recent Covid-19 crisis and the close down to avoid pollution, which has affected small tanners in particular. This project has played an important role to put forward the genuine concerns of the industry to the highest regulatory authority, which will help ensure the sustainability of the industry including the small tanners.

Following are external factors considered to have positively contributed to the success of this project:

- The strong existing policy framework (on water pollution of the Ganga)
- The sense of urgency for change (for small tanneries in particular)
- The very high level of existing water pollution, which allowed for significant improvements
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Following are external factors considered to have negatively contributed to the success of this project:

- The long closure of tanneries due to the Kumbh Mela religious festival
- Followed by the long closure of tanneries due to the Covid-19 crisis

As regards complementarity / synergy between national, regional and global initiatives, there is evidence of scaling the good practices within the larger landscape, and of additional activities at the landscape level that will further enhance scaling. The programme has raised interest at national level.

As regards complementarity and synergy between L&A projects and GP and RI projects, Past and ongoing PfC projects on sugarcane has been at the basis of this programme, and there is still important interaction. In the leather sector there were no earlier projects. approach.

Depending upon the definition of a landscape project, one could argue that most the activities conducted in this programme could also be classified as a PfC project, as it is mainly sector oriented and aimed at reducing pollution in the two sectors.

## Lessons

The strategy and the role of Solidaridad can be summarised as the following process, in the following steps – it may be referred to as '*evidence-based advocacy*':

1. Raise awareness on a problem that needs to be solved and at the same time bring in experts with a new solution / technology that is available

2. Start out by bilateral dialogue and then within MSP to build up trust and raise commitment to pilot test the solution / technology, after adjusting it to the local context and target groups
3. Apart from building bridges between different stakeholders, Solidaridad will engage research institutes, higher level authorities as well as local stakeholders right from the beginning
4. Conduct the pilot with capacity building focused on on-the-ground technical knowledge and exchange of experiences
5. Ensure close monitoring to generate concrete evidence, and make adjustments to the solution / technology until there is convincing evidence that it is effective
6. Showcase the new solution / technology to policy makers, thus motivating them to adjust policies and laws, and make available subsidies for wider adoption
7. Negotiate / lobby for incentives (e.g. reduced norms) and cost reductions to make the solution / technology realistic and cost-effective and thus has a positive business case, representing smallholders for whom the business case is less obvious
8. Embed the solution / technology within the MSP and the sector, thus supporting wider adoption and impact

In general the policies and regulations are in place, but all stakeholders have difficulties in implementing these. In addition in most cases the regulations need to be made more specific and applicable for different types of users. Thus, there is need to establish pilots, test the applicability of regulations and propose adjustments, e.g. in terms of specific norms, technologies, subsidies etc.

#### **Specific lessons**

- Active engagement of all partners, especially with government, is very important to ensure success of the MSPs.
- There is a need to use technology to monitor the progress and adoption of good practices.
- Regular hand holding support is required to community and farmers to sustain their good practices

## **Case study 3.2: Landscape approaches: PASOS project in Honduras and Nicaragua, including strategy in repressed states**

### **Acknowledgements**

This evaluation has been unique because of the fact that it has been completely done at a distance, without any field visits, through long-distance calls (skype, whatsapp, or other means). This implied that local Solidaridad staff has been intensively involved in organizing the long-distance calls, ensuring that stakeholders who we wanted to interview were available at the right time with the right means of communication, and sometimes also playing a role in local translation.

For this case study I would therefore especially like to thank the Solidaridad teams from both Nicaragua and Honduras, and especially Patricia Gomez who has organised the various stakeholder interviews and also provided useful documentation and completed formats, as well as Flor Tejada for some excellent translations.

## Introduction

As a major part of this end-evaluation of the Solidaridad AfC programme, 5 case studies were undertaken. Case studies are focused on a central theme, and usually encompass different project/s falling within this theme, in different countries. This is case study 3.2, being one of the selected projects for the Landscape approach: the Paisajes Sostenibles (PASOS) (sustainable landscapes) programme, in both Honduras and Nicaragua. The comparison between the two countries is expected to be interesting. This case study also contributes to theme number 5, which is on the lobby and advocacy strategy in a repressed state (especially Nicaragua having gone through a difficult period and still having limited civic space).

The project evaluation was conducted by Jan Joost Kessler, through review of documents on the landscape approach and the selected projects (Annex 1.1) and a series of on-distance interviews with project staff, project partners and selected stakeholders (Annex 1.2). The interviews were semi-structured, using a questionnaire which was specifically developed for this case study (Annex 2), which was aligned with the agreed evaluation questions and checklists in the inception report for this assignment. The aim has been to have a limited number of interviews with persons (men and women) that represent the diversity of stakeholders, from private, public, civil society and community levels.

A draft version of this case study report has been discussed with the local Solidaridad teams, with adjustments being made based on feedback and leading to this final version.

The aim has been to develop short and to-the-point case study reports. The structure is as follows:

- Section 1: basic information of the project or projects being part of the case study
- Section 2: origin, context and relevance
- Section 3: theory of change
- Section 4: results and effectiveness
- Section 5: role and strategies by Solidaridad
- Section 6: impacts, sustainability and systemic change
- Section 7: contribution by Solidaridad and external factors
- Section 8: insights, lessons and recommendations

## Basic information of the project/s of the case study

<b>REC</b>	Solidaridad Central America
<b>Project title</b>	PASOS Honduras - Zona Litoral del Norte PASOS Nicaragua - South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region (RACCS)
<b>Country/ies</b>	Honduras and Nicaragua
<b>Plaza reference no.</b>	1464 and 1437
<b>Overall Objective</b>	Honduras: Integrated and sustainable landscape management in northern Honduras to promote a healthy natural resource base, increased food security and climate change resilience for future generations Nicaragua: An integrated sustainable landscape management approach and regulatory framework in the Region Autonoma del Caribe Sur (RACS), promotes and protects a healthy resource base for future generations.
<b>Specific Objectives (at inception)</b>	<i>Honduras:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strengthened landscape resilience to the effects of climate change</li> <li>• Contributions to inclusive policy framework development with focus on SLM</li> </ul> <i>Nicaragua:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved socially inclusive (gender sensitive) policy framework and knowledge for sustainable sector transformation and sustainable landscape management</li> <li>• Research organizations publish results on pilot projects that contribute to knowledge on sustainable landscapes</li> <li>• Deforestation is avoided through vertical increases in productivity</li> </ul> <i>Both:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved balance between large-scale commodity production and smallholder livelihood security</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<i>Both projects present a range of different partners, including research institutes, private sector companies, public agencies and civil society organisations, which has also increased along the way.</i>
<b>Budget</b>	Honduras: YYY Nicaragua: ZZZ

## Origin, context and relevance

### Locality and context

**Honduras** is the second-largest producer of palm oil in Central America, with over 16,000 smallholder producers. While providing livelihoods for over 100,000 people, palm drives deforestation, the spread of palm plantations also leads to a decline of crop diversification and is entering into suboptimal areas in terms of crop suitability such as steep slopes, wetlands and other fragile natural ecosystems, protected areas and areas of high conservation value. Pressure from local and international CSOs as well as the EU have forced palm oil companies to take action.

Before starting the AfC project, Solidaridad worked with the Honduran palm oil industry to increase the adoption of sustainable environmental, social, labour and agricultural best practices and to achieve RSPO certification. One of the outcomes has been the establishment of the Honduran PASH multi-stakeholder consortium, with a highly active membership that comprises over 90% of the Honduran palm oil industry as well as local and international CSOs, the national Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, and local municipal authorities from palm oil producing areas. By now, there are 4 companies RSPO Certified and 8 companies ISCC certified (4 companies with both standards) in Honduras. However, a shared perception of lack of trust between palm oil companies and other stakeholders, and risk among industry actors has led to an articulation of the need to develop policy regarding responsible expansion of oil palm plantations and related environmental impacts. This led to a holistic landscape programme including an enabling policy environment that is open to sustainable sector innovations. The approach would ensure stakeholder engagement and guarantee the inclusiveness of women, youth as well as the socially and economically disadvantaged.

Foreseen sustainable landscape interventions included:

- Mapping of the landscape for risk assessment, spatial planning and monitoring land use changes
- Cost effective identification and management of HCV areas and biological corridors
- Large-scale substitution of oil palm cultivation on steep slopes with cacao-centric agroforestry systems
- Compensation for land-use conversion to oil palm production that contributes to deforestation
- Securing of land titles of smallholder oil palm
- Strengthening local government to enforce regulations and improve environmental management
- Co-design and implementation of conservation activities of Aguan, Chamelecon and Ulua watersheds
- Support the process of smallholder RSPO certification
- Gender diagnostics with 3 palm oil companies: Jaremar, Coop. Salamá and Hondupalma
- Build knowledge and experience on an eventual RSPO jurisdictional certification that will lower the cost barrier for smallholder certification and strengthen overall sustainable landscape management.

Likewise, in **Nicaragua**, rapid expansion of oil palm and livestock production systems are driving deforestation, and contribute to causing tensions and conflicts around land use between different stakeholders. Within the past 50 years the landscape has changed dramatically for a variety of reasons, including the expansion of agricultural areas and the introduction of new crops, the growth of urban areas, and the devastation caused by hurricanes in 1988 and 1998. Together with neighbouring forests in Honduras, the autonomous regions of Nicaragua—the Northern Caribbean Autonomous Region (RACN) and the Southern Caribbean Autonomous Region (RACCS)—lies within an important biological corridor. This area is rather isolated due to a historical development lag and a fragile institutional framework. Since the RACCS department represents good conditions for oil palm production there is potential for palm oil expansion, especially by occupying exhausted livestock production areas, and thus contributing further conflicting interests. For this area, the aim was to pilot efforts for the development of a jurisdictional certification for RSPO, to avoid further deforestation and establish cacao-centric agroforestry systems. This requires transformation of the very extensive livestock production systems (2-3 ha per cow) into a sustainable and intensive system.

In 2014 Solidaridad started a project that focused on creating incentive mechanisms to develop value chains for dairy and beef in order to increase competitiveness and improve the sustainability of livestock production systems. This AfC programme focuses on developing sustainable silvopastoral systems that increase productivity while improving resilience to climate change and reducing GHG emissions per unit of production. The project will also address land-use diversification among smallholder production systems and develop a cattle hub, a dairy quality management and intensification initiative, as one element of sustainable landscape management in RACCS. Also, Nicaragua has good potential for cacao production and exports, being dominated by smallholder production systems. Cacao grown in a mixed lowland agroforestry system and integrated into spatial planning and diversification efforts in RACCS can contribute to long-term resilience of smallholder producers in the region.

Foreseen sustainable landscape interventions included:

- Strengthen and partner with multiple stakeholders to build capacities, technical skills, develop policy recommendations and advocate for inclusive sector transformation
- Gap analysis benchmarked against RSPO Standard to create base for sustainable practices
- Build the capacity of palm oil, livestock and cacao producer organizations in methods of intensified productivity to avoid deforestation caused by expansion
- Convene and lead technical committee of the of RSPO Standard National Interpretation

#### **Linkages to relevant projects and partners**

In **Honduras**, there are several linkages to existing and new initiatives:

- The PASOS initiative is closely linked to sustainable production initiatives of companies (palm oil, also sugarcane + cacao) and actions of CSOs to protect national parks. The Ministry of Environment is implementing a program of restoration of productive landscapes and a private initiative is on restoration of timber forests in protected areas.
- The PASOS platform experience served for the promotion of good management practices in crops such as palm driven by MAPA (Meso American Palm Oil Alliance) or Coffee. Through PASOS, companies continue to be updated on RSPO standard tools. Through MAPA companies also keep the challenge to certify smallholders under low international price scheme that limit invest for RSPO Process.
- Linkages are with Pfc MAPA, and with AfC-funded ADVOCAFE in Honduras. Also to climate smart Pfc STIR UP (coffee) initiative in Mexico, linked to PASOS in 2018 as a conceptual framework was built for a coffee landscape in partnership with Olam, to replicate the Climate Smart approach of STIR UP.

In **Nicaragua**, there are several linkages to existing and new initiatives:

- Linkages to two Pfc projects: Mesoamerican Palm Oil Alliance- MAPA and Integrated RACCS. MAPA interventions in Nicaragua are co- financed by Henkel and link to the larger regional MAPA platform for learning and exchange. Integrated RACCS furthers best practice interventions for cacao and palm oil and is complementary to AfCs partner CIAT's interventions for best practices particularly in livestock.
- Solidaridad will seek additional funding for a pilot project of plantation establishment for a number of smallholders, thus linking this AfC landscape pilot to Pfc Farmer Field Schools.

## Theory of change

### Honduras

Solidaridad ToC will facilitate a stepwise approach to sustainable landscape knowledge acquisition and the use of landscape assessment tools; facilitate the organization of sector-based platforms or interest groups at community (such as women's groups) and CSO levels; build capacity for dialogue, leadership, policy influencing and development of intervention proposals; and implement landscape-level interventions to test the concept. The articulated need for policy regarding responsible expansion of oil palm plantations as well as the complementary relationships between oil palm and cacao production systems provide a solid basis for a sustainable landscape initiative that will tap into the existing structure, practices, visibility and interests of PASH with the potential to ripple into other sectors, CSOs, communities and government actors with shared concerns regarding the resilience and sustainable future of their productive enterprises, the stability of natural resource bases, and the well-being of future generations. One intervention area is that Solidaridad engages CSOs to advocate and facilitate SLM and enabling policy environments in northern Honduras. Another is that Solidaridad leverages resources and relationships to mobilize multiple stakeholders to build capacity, design and implement interventions, tools and solutions for SLM.

Note that the sub-objectives 2020-2025 have changed (as compared to those at inception) to:

1. Development of sector-wide sustainability positions and policy recommendations
2. Improved spatial planning for responsible expansion of oil palm plantations
3. Increased access to blended finance and impact investments at landscape level
4. Strengthened multi-stakeholder platform(s) as spaces of dialogue and intervention
5. Increased capacity in dialogue, conflict resolution, lobbying and advocacy.

### Nicaragua

Lessons learned in the past have indicated that focusing exclusively on the improvement of producer practices within a sector is insufficient for achieving sustainability on a large scale. A holistic landscape approach and an enabling policy environment that is open to sustainable sector innovations are key additional ingredients for achieving this. Ultimately, sustainable landscape management and policy influencing efforts are rooted in the capacity of multiple stakeholders via processes that guarantee the inclusion of women, youth, and the disadvantaged. The Theory of Change is rooted in the existing threats of rapid oil palm and livestock expansion due to low productivity, as well as displacement of traditional smallholder production by oil palm plantations. In parallel there is need to create regulatory frameworks, through the National Interpretation of RSPO that addresses issues of responsible expansion, social inclusiveness, reduction of environmental and social impacts, remediation and compensation for deforestation and to vertically increase production of oil palm as well as livestock and cacao, utilizing sustainable landscape management concepts and tools. The development and strengthening of inclusive multi-stakeholder platforms as spaces for dialogue, development of policy recommendations, and participatory design of sustainable landscape interventions, create both the foundation for success as well as the long-term sustainability of the interventions.

## Results and effectiveness

### Results overview

The following table gives an overview of relevant output and outcome indicator results (see Annex 3 for complete M&E data format).

#### Honduras

Indicator	Baseline 2016	cumulative results as of 2019	Clarifications	Cumulative target 2020
# and kind of stakeholders (CSOs) with <b>strengthened capacities to effectively participate</b> in dialogue/ MSP	2	13: 9 CSOs 4 POs		20
# and name of stakeholders with <b>capacities</b> to develop and implement sustainable landscape solutions	13	23: 11 CSOs 2 POs 10 Private Sector		28
# of mechanisms, policies and regulations <b>implemented</b> by multi stakeholders for landscape level management solutions	0	5 (refers to the 5 different pilots)		6
# and kind of stakeholders <b>investing</b> in sustainable landscape solutions.	0	6 stakeholders Total Euro 140K 1 Producer Organizations EUR 24K 2 CSO's EUR 17K 3 Private sector EUR 99K		4 investing Eur 1,418 K
# of CSOs/POs that are being <b>trained or supported to effectively participate</b> in decision making and dialogue	0	13 3 CSOs 10 POs		28
# and name of <b>MSPs, partnerships and/or dialogues</b> to resolve issues in landscapes initiated or participated in	1 Palm Platform	1) PASOS (with 3 dialogue groups: Palm Biodiversity + Eco-Agroturism + Cacao) 2) Technical commission for AVCD (Zero Deforestation Voluntary Agreement for Palm Oil companies)		1
# and kind of <b>stakeholders</b> that participate in MSPs on landscape	13	35 7 CSOs, 7 Government, 10 Private Sector. 9 POs, 2 University		28
# of <b>pilots developed</b> to test landscape solutions	0	6 in total 3 implemented 3 completed		2

#### Nicaragua

Indicator	Baseline 2016	cumulative results as of 2019	Clarifications	Target 2020
# and kind of stakeholders (CSOs) with <b>strengthened capacities to effectively participate</b> in dialogue/ MSP	0	8 CSOs (see details below)		8
# of mechanisms, policies and regulations <b>implemented</b> by government bodies for landscape level management solutions		0		1

# and name of <b>MSPs, partnerships and/or dialogues</b> to resolve issues in landscapes	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3</li> <li>• MSP PASOS Conforme</li> <li>• Zero Deforestation Livestock Platform</li> <li>• Technical Committee for the National Interpretation RSPO</li> </ul>	1
# of <b>stakeholders</b> that participate in MSPs and have capacities to implement sustainable landscape solutions	0	Total: 47 19 CSOs, 10 government agencies, 7 Private sector, 1 ACADEMIA, 10 producers	20
# of <b>pilots developed</b> to test landscape solutions	0	5	4
# of stakeholders <b>investing</b> in sustainable landscape solutions.	0	Total : 13 stakeholders, EUR 59 K Palm EUR 23K; Livestock: EUR 27K; Cacao: EUR 9K	9 stake
# of CSOs/POs that are being trained or supported to effectively participate in decision making and dialogue	5	23 CSO 20, POs 3	8
# and name of stakeholders with capacities to develop and implement sustainable landscape solutions	0	38 11 private company, 3 POs, 6 Government, 15 CSO, 3 University	25

## MSPs

### Honduras

In Honduras there are basically two types of MSPs (or 5 if sub-groups are included):

1. PASOS landscape as a whole, composed of local organizations such as water boards, cooperatives, small producer organizations/companies (palm (12), cacao (6), exotic fruits (rambutan (1), mangosteen (1), allspice (1), chocolate companies (12), and the private sector. There are also 3 sub-groups organized by sector: Palm, Eco-Agrotourism, Cacao. The composition of the subgroups is:
  - Cacao is represented by REDMUCH and its 12 partner companies;
  - Ecoagrotourism with 22 participants from private companies, 3 CSOs (Choose Honduras, Ecologic and La Ceiba Tourism Chamber), local governments and UNAH-CURLA.
2. Comité Técnico AVCD (zero deforestation), with members Members for Technical commission for AVCD (Zero Deforestation Voluntary Agreement for Palm Oil companies): 2 Private sector (HONDUPALMA, ASAPALSA), 1 POs ( FENAPALMAH) 1 Government Agency (ICF), 2 CSO (Solidaridad, Prolansate) and 1 Research&knowledge partner (FUCSA)

In 2019 there was an advancement in formalizing relationships with national-level ministries and offices (MiAmbiente, ICF, the newly formed Clima+, and the Oficina Presidencial de la Economía Verde (OPEV), which is slated to become operational in early 2020. In early 2020, MoUs have been signed with all Ministries.

In addition, a multi-stakeholder water alliance anchored in the municipality of El Progreso and stretching into the upper watershed of Mico Quemada was formulated and approved.

### Nicaragua

In Nicaragua Solidaridad has worked on 3 MSPs.

1. The landscape level MSP to develop and implement sustainable landscape solutions, for dialogue and consensus-building on landscape-level interventions, composed of 26 stakeholders, including: 8 CSOs (4 organizations of small producers: 1 palm, 1 livestock and 2 cacao), 1 research center (CIAT), 2 trade-unions (national cacao commission and palm chamber), 1 NGO (FADCANIC); 5 Government institutions at national and local level; 1 climate service provider; 5 private sector companies; 1 Academic institution.

2. The “Livestock Growth with Zero Deforestation” Initiative with participation of 9 CSOs, 2 Financial Institutions; 8 government institutions, 2 Academics.
3. Technical Committee (TC) for the National Interpretation of RSPO, with 9 private sector companies; 4 independent producers; 8 Government agencies.

Within the MSPs, the aim is to involve both national and local government agencies. Due to a hostile political environment, it remains a challenge to actively involve members of the government with the ability and role to decide, and to formalize synergies between different actors. In Nicaragua, it was noted that local actions have been carried out due to government coercion of its employees, which obviously is not a sustainable approach.

In Nicaragua, the PASOS platform is the only space at the local level (RACCs), and the Zero Deforestation Initiative and the TC are among the few at the national level that allow exchange and dialogue through the implementation of agreed work plans. Note that FADCANIC also represents the indigenous communities in the area.

In both countries, Solidaridad has successfully pulled the palm oil sector into the discussion on Zero Deforestation. In Nicaragua this could be done building on the success of the Zero Deforestation commitment and verification in Honduras.

In both countries the MSP at landscape level developed a joint action plan, and were at the basis of formulating the pilot projects to be implemented. Within the MSPs decision making is by consensus.

In Nicaragua the action plan includes the following components:

- Diversification of farms and silvopastoral system establishments
- Intersectoral collaboration to stop the invasion of protected areas
- Harmonization and synergies with other initiatives and sectors
- Financial mechanisms and sources of financing

These components mirror Solidaridad’s PASOS design, approach and Theory of Change. In Nicaragua the initiative was joined by the eco.business Fund, an investment fund created by KfW together with Conservation International and Finance in Motion. The fund provides financing and technical assistance to financial institutions and companies committed to environmental practices and conservation.

### **Landscape governance and monitoring**

The MSPs have an internal governance structure, and have received support by Solidaridad to develop this. However, a landscape governance or management system has not yet been developed. Current landscape governance is different in each country. While landscape governance and management lies with the respective authorities, in both countries law enforcement is weak. There is the general expectation that law enforcement will improve if companies improve their traceability systems, smallholders are also certified, and monitoring systems will improve. The PASOS approach adheres to the ‘10 principles for a landscape approach to reconciling agriculture, conservation, and other competing land uses’,<sup>15</sup> which emphasizes the need for learning & adaptive management, participation and transparency in roles and responsibilities. The aim is to create a self-governing and resilient governance system, of which the MSP could be the central node. The development of a landscape governance mechanism is in the sights of Solidaridad for future development; progress has been impeded by the COVID outbreak. This will be an ambitious and long-term process, as adherence to the ten principles requires profoundly shifting mindsets.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.pnas.org/content/110/21/8349>

On the monitoring at landscape level, FUNIDES has the opinion that this is currently below standards and requires additional funding. It has been simply set up as ‘sightings of cattle in the forest’, which is not scientific and unreliable. Funding for good M&E has been missing. FUNIDES has suggested that the MSP would be responsible to monitor deforestation (forest cover) associated with livestock production using satellite images. The successful negotiation of a Zero Deforestation agreement in Nicaragua would include the selection of the monitoring methodology and agency that best meets local conditions and requirements. It is expected that improved monitoring will also be part of an improved landscape governance system, being one of the 10 principles. There are existing landscape monitoring frameworks that could be used, such as the LandScale one.<sup>16</sup>

## Pilots

As a major component of the PASOS programmes in both countries, several pilots were implemented and supported by the programme. The partners involved in these pilots vary. Solidaridad coordinates all the pilots. The below tables provide an overview and an indication of progress.

### Honduras

Pilot + scale	Purpose	Partners	Progress by Dec 2019 *
1. Biological connectivity between palm oil plantations and protected areas - in Colón.	Seeks to verify that species of fauna use sustainably-managed palm farms as corridors of biological connectivity.	Cooperativa Salamá, ACEYDESA, PALMASA, Corporación DINANT, UNAH, Centro Universitario Regional del Litoral Atlántico “CURLA”	<i>E. Scaling up</i> There is interest by private sector partners, and a proposal in the pipeline for further support by GEF 7 in Honduras
2. SDG-linked Landscape Modelling - In Zona Litoral del Norte Landscape	Scenario modeling comparing current trends and alternative options as a mechanism for high-level actors to make positive decisions for the target landscape.	13 palm, 6 cacao and 3 rambutan companies, 10 Livestock associations, 40 municipalities, 4 universities, 2 ministries and 15 producer organizations	<i>C. Closed</i> Modelling is proposed as a key and fundamental activity for a number of landscapes under development in Nicaragua (1), Honduras (3), Guatemala (2) and Mexico (1)
3. Mapping - WWF - National	To understand the dynamics of oil palm production, including incursion into protected or fragile areas and slopes.	HONDUPALMA, PALMASA, CORAPSA, HONDUCARIBE y Coop. Salamá Fundación Ecologista Cuero y Salado, FUCSA Fundación Ambientalista PROLANSATE	<i>C. Closed</i> , with potential for expansion and replication.
4. Smallholder Oil Palm Producer Land Titling - local	Land-titling for 400 producers, which is a requirement for ILM	HONDUPALMA, PALCASA, CORAPSA, HONDUCARIBE, PALMASA, COAPALMA y Cooperativa Salamá.	<i>B. Implementation</i> , with potential for scaling and replication in other sectors (e.g coffee).

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.landscape.org/>

5. Women-led cacao agroforestry systems). - local	Pilot good practices of cultivation and administration to the cultivation of cacao agroforestry systems.	REDMUCH Women's Network of Honduran Chocolate and Cacao growers, with 5 of their associate businesses	<i>B. Implementation</i>
6. Renewable Energy with Palm Oil biomass & effluent management - local	Develop a renewable energy proposal for investors interested in this topic.	100% HN Palm Oil Companies	<i>D. Business case developed</i> but currently stalled due to 1. low palm oil prices, 2. priority companies are overstretched.

\*) A: start; B: implementation; C: closed: conclusions shared; D: business case developed; E: scaling up

As an example of the approach and progress being made, we take the biodiversity pilot in Honduras:

- The pilot was developed for palm oil companies to provide concrete contributions to biodiversity conservation, and to validate that well-managed palm oil plantations can serve as biological corridors.
- At first education was provided on different stakeholders, including communities and at schools, to achieve a mindshift that palm oil company is not a major driver of deforestation
- Joint actions were established to protect biodiversity, with joint funding by Solidaridad and the palm oil companies, supported by research / University
- By now the pilot has been completed and the results have been integrated in the business propositions being developed
- In the mean time several palm oil companies have joined the monitoring program.
- Link to policies and laws for implementation

#### Nicaragua

Pilot + scale	Purpose and landscape solution to be tested	Progress by Dec 2019 *
1. HCV Assessments - RACCS (El Rama, Kukra Hill y Río San Juan)	Identify HCV areas and create knowledge base and consensus for interventions on biological connectivity and restoration	<i>B Implementation</i> Scoping study and work plan developed to be implemented in 2019
2. National Interpretation RSPO		<i>B Implementation</i> Draft National Interpretation prepared for public consultation.
3. Inclusive smallholder business model for palm oil sector - RACCS (El Rama)	Avoid aggressive oil palm expansion by validating a smallholder inclusive model that optimizes mixed production systems of oil palm, cacao agroforestry, livestock, basic grains and other crops.	<i>B Implementation</i> Established 200 ha of palm with 10 small producers. Investment of the company San José of USD 126K and producers with USD 50K. An investor showed interest in expanding the project
4. Farmer Field Schools for vertical productivity and quality improvement	Promote the adoption of good practices: see main text.	<i>C closed</i> Increased capacity of the FFS members. Farmers have adopted several practices (see main text)

- RACCS (El Rama y Kukra Hill)		
5. "Livestock growth with zero deforestation"	Define a joint position on the role of livestock in deforestation. Explore mechanisms to finance these actions	<i>A start</i> An action plan was drawn up and proposals were made to finance the change of the national livestock system towards a more sustainable approach

\*) A: start; B: implementation; C: closed: conclusions shared; D: business case developed; E: scaling up

One other pilot project is being prepared, being a joint compensation project of the palm companies in the Indio Maíz reserve Solidaridad in conjunction with FUNIDES, GWC and indigenous communities. This will strengthen indigenous community participation in the palm oil supply chain. In the joint work, the participation of indigenous people in the livestock value chain has also been encouraged.

Farmer field schools were also developed as a pilot activity. Several new practices were introduced, many of these were adopted (total 876 ha): livestock - establishment of improved grasses, division of pastures, electric fences, use of multi-nutritional blocks and mineral salts as supplements to animal feed, improved animal health management, improved input use, abolishment of burning pastures, natural regeneration of pastures, cacao - pruning, management of pests and diseases, soil conservation, best practices in crops increase of productivity and income. As a result of the pilots, milk production has increased with 21% (4.6 lt/cow/day), cacao production has decreased with 112 kg/ha, and farmers income with 14% (414 USD).

Local government has adopted the farmer field school approach in cacao and reforestation, which was due to local leaders that were trained by Solidaridad.

#### **Production-protection relations**

It is well known that the relation between production and protection is complex. Increasing productivity may lead to increased encroachment in forests because of attractive yields and incomes, thus there is need to agree on conditionalities or legislation to ensure protection goals are respected (CIAT). We do not see this featured in the PASOS programme. Rather, there is reference to the general assumption that productivity increase leads to less pressure on resources (which is not supported by international literature). It links up to questions of who monitors compliance, and who can sanction those who do not comply? This is further discussed in the following sections.

#### **Perceived benefits**

In interviews with local stakeholders, the following benefits of their involvement in the programme were highlighted, in both countries:

- Capacity building on improved production practices, e.g. in dairy, on diversification, which has lead to improved incomes
- Capacity building on protection measures, e.g. the regulations on slash and burn practices. FUNIDES refers to support provided to forest guards to monitor the landscape
- Opportunity to participate in training workshops
- Opportunity to ask for support at any time, and receive rapid response (from Solidaridad)

As the benefits of the MSP are mainly mentioned:

- To get to know each other better, gain mutual trust
- To share lessons
- To coordinate demands and requests for this e.g. from local government – the example was given of a community asking for a new road, a school and electricity which were provided. Note that in these requests, it appears that Solidaridad always played a role.

The situation in Nicaragua was characterized by conflicting relations between different stakeholders. Palm oil producers initially did not want to join the dialogue. Now they are willing to interact and collaborate. Likewise, smallholders saw palm oil companies as a threat, which has changed to a willingness to collaborate and to explore opportunities for sustainable palm oil production under an agroecological production strategy.

In both countries, the palm oil companies mentioned that as a main result of the programme (the MSP in particular) their reputation has improved. They also benefitted from knowledge on alternative land use options (e.g. cacao for land restoration), and the exchange of knowledge, e.g. on watershed protection. They also benefitted from options to improve the collaboration with smallholders as part of the supply chain and enhancing traceability including compliance with zero deforestation criteria.

There has been more progress in the palm oil sector than the livestock sector. This can be explained by the fact that the livestock sector is less organized, remote and thus more difficult to build up good relations and achieve efficiencies related to interventions implementation .

REDMUCH, women's group on cacao and chocolate, remarked that this programme has been much more effective than earlier USAID support. This was due to:

- More training activities, including administration, financial management, cacao processing
- Support to diversify production
- Support to make chocolate – they are very proud of this – but the export market is still weak
- Solidaridad and other stakeholders are always available to provide support if needed - FHIA stated that they support REDMUCH in branding chocolate for export.
- The MSP meetings are very useful, mainly for exchange and exposure, although in 2019 less so because the Solidaridad Program Manager left his position, and there was a leadership gap of several months.

It has been mentioned by several stakeholders that an MSP at local (landscape) level is more effective than at national level. The level of exchange is more active and the decision-making more proactive. FUNIDES mentions as an important development and benefit of the MSPs as compared to previous years that working with local government and local organisations is more effective. Working with national organisations was often slow and ineffective due to high levels of bureaucracy. However, national agencies should be involved / informed in MSP meetings and decisions. Another advantage is that financing organisations are involved, which used not to be the case.

### **From conflict to cooperation**

Especially in Nicaragua there was a situation of conflicting relations between different stakeholders, especially between palm oil companies and communities. This has changed to a situation of cooperation based on dialogue and recognition of mutual interests and opportunities for collaboration. In the interview with Prolansate (HON) it was asked what caused this change. The response was three factors:

- International market pressure on sustainable practices and need for credibility
- Training of palm oil technicians on the options to improve sustainability
- The creation of the MSP and the possibility of dialogue

### **Investment plans, business cases and uptake**

So far, a limited amount of co-funding has been realized (see summary table results), being 140 K in Honduras (expected 1400 K in 2020), and 59K in Nicaragua (expectations not clear). Co-funding is not a requirement for Advocacy for change. However, there has been significant match-funding harnessed through MAPA (Practice for Change) and the palm oil private sector, which is embedded within the landscape strategies and objectives of PASOS Honduras and Nicaragua.

There has been the recognition within the PASOS programme to move from donor funded programmes to investment proposals. Thus, with support by a full-time investment expert in the team, 6 investment proposals have been developed so far, of which two are in the negotiation phase. The proposals are on cacao, palm oil, teak. A promising impact investment proposal for the Nicaraguan livestock sector was

put on hold due to political unrest that erupted in April 2018. Thus, so far no investment proposition has fully materialized, however in Q4 2019, Althelia and FMO developed interest in the proposals under development, and several are moving to early due diligence phases at the time of this report.

At the start, investment proposals were developed, but these are not attractive for investors, often because of small scale or lack of capacities. Two decisions were taken to overcome this weakness:

1. Focus the investment proposal on larger organisations or companies, who can then engage smaller groups (short-term) – example is the palm oil company Dinant who then provides services to smallholders as part of an outgrowers scheme
2. Build up capacities of local producer groups to deliver good products, especially smallholders and women (medium + long term)

In a general sense, there are relatively good investment opportunities in the PASOS landscapes in both Honduras and Nicaragua, due to the following factors:

- There is public and political agreement on the need to stop deforestation and restore degraded land, especially in Honduras but increasingly so in Nicaragua as well
- There are good agroecological conditions for a range of crops, esp. cacao, coffee, palm oil, teak, livestock, other tree crops
- Thus, even land restoration can be profitable if tree crops with good markets are used
- Landholders often have vast areas available
- Carbon credits could improve the business case – but this remains to be seen - Comments:
- Plans about benefitting from carbon credits – not yet received or further developed.

One risk in both countries is the level of criminality and political instability. On the other hand, a landscape approach can be viewed as an approach that strengthens CSO voice, influence and action in the absence of political stability.

On another angle, global prices for palm oil, coffee and sugar greatly impacted the private sector's ability to invest in sustainable improvements. Despite the slow-down in activities, the market conditions accentuated the need to increase supply chain resilience, to invest in cost-saving efficiencies, to increase vertical productivity, and to diversify income streams.

Based on the interviews and the document entitled 'Case studies REC CAM impact investment lessons', the following main roles of Solidaridad in developing investment proposals emerge:

- Identify potential companies with a development and sustainability vision that aligns with Solidaridad's
- Help co-design an investment opportunity and model, so that it meets expectations of the company, the investor and Solidaridad
- Act as a service provider pre and post investment services, as well as provision of relevant digital solutions
- Organise and incorporate smallholders in an inclusive business model with a structure that will allow the company to engage easily with the farmers and increase access to social, environmental and economic benefits
- Negotiate the agreement between company and smallholders
- Identify potential investors and link the implementing organisations to potential investors
- Support impact measurement for the company and the investor

A range of interesting lessons was identified in the document cited above. We note in particular:

- Getting access to the correct information from companies and cooperatives is a time-consuming process. Data either did not exist, was not consolidated, or was not shared in a timely fashion
- The engagement of the key decision maker within the company has been crucial in the process
- Solidaridad needs to work closely with organizations to modify their business model in a way that will generate value for all stakeholders and restore landscapes at the same time.
- There is a mismatch between the timeline for land restoration and the finance available

- There is need to be transparent about the expected degree of smallholder inclusion: even though the investment proposition to impact investors was initially centred on smallholder inclusion, along the way, a significant part of the business expansion shifted to working with large landowners instead
- In order to engage the company, spending time on explaining the business case for landscape investments that also benefit smallholders is key. It takes time to switch the mindset from: minimizing costs and maximizing profit to ensure long term social impact and buy-in of communities.
- There is a need to make it clear to companies to which Solidaridad provides support that we don't offer free money. Since we are an NGO, we are associated with access to free money.

### Policy changes

The following schemes provide an overview of the main policy changes being addressed by the programme, and their stage of progress according to an adjusted format (see Annex 3).

#### Honduras

L&A policy target and purpose	Current stage and status
Strengthen the landscape level MSP as spaces of dialogue and intervention	Stage 3
Influence policy through the RSPO certification in palm sector	Stage 6 Adoption by Salamá Coop, contributed to ISCC Certification
Strengthen the Voluntary Zero Deforestation of Palm Oil sector	Stage 6: Proposed policy and legal changes are adopted

#### Nicaragua

L&A policy target and background	Current stage and status
Strengthen the landscape level MSP as spaces of dialogue and intervention	Stage 2
Support for the national reforestation plan.	Stage 5 Production of 99,275 plants, 876 ha of silvopastoral systems and 3791 ha reforested.
Improved curriculum of Universities and education centers on ILM topics	Stage 2 Proposal for a postgraduate degree in sustainable livestock farming.
Applied research at the community level	Stage 1
Empowerment and participation of women and youth in decision-making.	Stage 1

The project documentation on policy changes that were addressed or realised is quite meagre and does not provide much details. Maybe this is due to what is meant by 'policy changes'? The current KPIs lack adequate definition of how policy influencing occurs along a spectrum (from awareness raising to new policy and improved enforcement) and at different points among the multi-stakeholders. In addition, identifying policy targets is difficult because we are working in a complex system with a constantly changing policy context. It is difficult to know in advance which policy issues will be relevant to address.

In another way, the focus of the programme on defined policy changes has strong limitations. In many cases the policies are there but the implementation is weak. For example, an agreement has been signed on zero deforestation in palm oil, and the next step would be to make this work. This is taken up the project and initial steps are promising (transparency of georeferenced shapes by the private sector),

but more is needed to make this work in practice. In my interview with ICF this was discussed. The follow-up steps are ongoing:

- Agree on a mechanism to make the zero deforestation agreement work, integration in the existing SIGMO monitoring system was decided
- Establish a technical committee to guide testing this mechanism
- Develop remplates to identify private palm oil states, to identify fresh fruit traceability to avoid buying fruits from ilegal areas, and to identify fruit collection centers and intermediaries
- Work with 5 palm oil companies to test its functionality
- Draw conclusions and roll it out (next steps were not discussed)

The process to register palm oil plantations in the SIGMOF System will take 3 years for all private states (this includes independent farmers with more than 50 ha). The challenge is to register smallholders who have problems with land titles or land possession documents

During 2019, the private sector, through the Nicaraguan Foundation for Economic and Social Development - FUNIDES, has set up working groups to prepare the National Plan, in order to achieve greater economic growth. Solidaridad has actively participated in the working groups, promoting a change in policies regarding sustainable production and zero deforestation in livestock and palm value chains. FUNIDES mentions as the most important change in the past years that a declaration has been achieved at national level not to allow further encroachment into the forest, and the chamber of commerce has declared it will not buy livestock from forest pastures. FUNIDES has proposed to push the industry to give preferred access to meat producers who comply with no-deforestation.

The promotion of zero deforestation in value chains is aligned with the agenda of CCAD / SICA to avoid deforestation and the association agreement of Central America with the European Union that seeks a "low carbon" chain of livestock and palm, as well as with the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

### **Capacity building support**

In both countries, capacity building support can be split into what has been done at organizational level, and what has been done at MSP level.

#### ***Organisational level***

Most commonly mentioned were:

- Training good practices, including diversification and processing opportunities
- Training on finding market opportunities
- Support for participation in national and international events
- Training on administration, financial management, management plans, funding plans
- Training on integrated landscape management

#### ***MSPs***

Most commonly mentioned were:

- Training on integrated landscape management
- Training on technical subjects (e.g. on sustainable agriculture, RSPO and other voluntary standards, High Conservation Value Assessments, etc)
- Training on dialogue, participation and leadership
- Training on conflict resolution

Farmer cooperatives were strengthened, mainly on the aspect of leadership, governance, financial management and providing good services to their members. Farmers were also organized as a result of having the farmer field schools. Collaboration with Solidaridad is irrespective of the MSP.

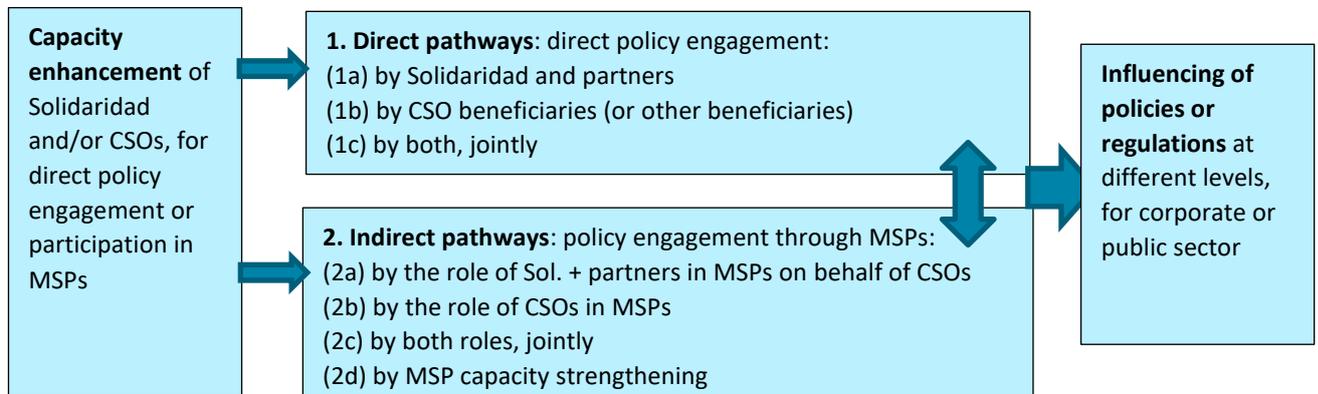
In no interview training on lobby & advocacy was mentioned (which does not mean it was not provided, but at least not considered a priority).

Research institutes were involved from the beginning (CATIE, CIAT), to provide training on good agricultural practices, and making use of a local tool / approach (the production-consumption-trade system). This includes linkages to trade policies and taxation. A concrete result of these efforts was the development (in a participatory way) of a landscape level action plan.

Need for additional capacity building was mentioned by PROLANSANTE only, need for training on conflict resolution.

To identify private sector investment opportunities, the Landscape Investment and Finance Tool (LIFT), developed by EcoAgriculture Partners and IUCN Netherlands, was used to develop investment ideas, assess their financing needs, scope potential sources of financing, and devise a finance mobilization strategy. While the tool is interesting, the PASOS initiative and methodology, and Solidaridad's internal capacity, actually exceeded LIFT's function and it was not utilized beyond the initial workshop. This resulted in two propositions for private sector engagement, being the finance for smallholder involvement in palm oil, and teak plantations for land restoration. The role of Solidaridad was matchmaking to identify companies willing to be involved and linking these to financial investors and smallholders. According to smallholders, Solidaridad is there to ensure this is a fair deal for them.

## Strategies and role by Solidaridad



Note: PI = Policy Influencing; CE = Capacity Enhancement

In this project, the main pathways have been that of (2a), and (2c), but Solidaridad also operates on its own, for instance to develop the investment propositions with key actors. Regarding pathway 2b, rather than CSOs, private sector has played a role in policy engagement. It seems that in far most cases Solidaridad plays at least a coordinating role, in the context of an MSP and its members.

In earlier interventions in Honduras prior to 2013, Solidaridad was initially seen mainly as a donor, not as an implementing organization. The FSP, organized around round tables / sectors, emphasized its role in implementation, establishing good relations with the private sector, and facilitating multi-stakeholder platforms. Solidaridad has played an important role in solving a major land conflict between a large palm oil company and communities, this contributed to build trust among different stakeholders.

In general the current roles of Solidaridad can be summarized as follows:

- Launch of the MSP or platform, preceded by numerous bilateral interactions
- Convener and facilitator of the platform, sets the agenda, organizes meetings, ensures follow-up, manages competing interests and perspectives.
- Organises capacity building, summons experts to provide specialised training
- Facilitate workshops, events and exchanges
- Mediation in case of disagreement or conflicts
- Brings in knowledge especially also from international fora
- Provides a digital tools (a Landscape Impact and Investment Dashboard is under development).

Following are some more detailed specifications from the interviews:

- Solidaridad is particularly appreciated by its knowledge of value chains, i.e. being able to integrate good practices in a value chain perspective, and by its good relations with the private sector. As such, it is unique when compared with NGOs or CSOs (CIAT).
- In Nicaragua Solidaridad is seen as the most neutral foreign organization as one can get (FUNIDES). This is due to the relationships they have built up with government agencies during the livestock project. Now they work mainly at local MSP level, which is more effective, while national level is always involved or at least informed.
- Solidaridad started out the MSP through a co-facilitated (with EcoAgriculture Partners) Intensive Integrate Landscape Management course, for local actors to discuss the threats facing the region and their vision for the future, share activities and projects already being implemented and generate ideas for new solutions. The relations with the actors brought together were dependent upon earlier established bilateral relations with Solidaridad. Thus, even palm oil companies and local governments were open to discuss issues and work together, which had not been tried before.

- Solidaridad keeps some pressure on the processes of change, without Solidaridad doing so the processes of change tend to be very slow due to bureaucracy.

### **Lobby & advocacy Strategies**

Rather than Solidaridad doing the lobbying of the government, they train farmers to adopt GAPs and companies to adopt improved practices as well as improve internal policies, so that they know what they want to improve and perceive what are the hindrances at policy levels, and discuss this at MSP level. The participants of MSPs are also trained on civic participation, basic rights and leadership, so that they can advocate for their own rights and make policy recommendations. The trainings are always open to participation by government officials, so that they do not feel threatened and also increase their capacities for policy development and dialogue. The MSP mainly serves the purpose of sharing experiences, building consensus and co-designing solutions.

Solidaridad plays a central role in lobbying for changes among government agencies. To do so, it is critical they are perceived as neutral. Neutrality with Solidaridad is ensured by focusing on 'technical' issues of integrated landscape management and developing more sustainable solutions for a common problem. Solutions are developed with producers and the private sector, on the basis of their interest. *Neutral convener >> problem identification, potential solutions >> piloting >> influence policies*

As success factors of a neutral dialogue by Solidaridad interviewees mentioned:

- Is consistent in its approach
- Spends a lot of time in building up bilateral relations with companies on supporting them on practical issues, which is very different from environmental NGOs who do not have this relationship
- Helps build new relationships, organise a lot of events bringing together different stakeholders
- Helps build new leaders - mindset changes towards being more inclusive instead of competitive, and of being more sustainable rather than production oriented only.
- Willing to take the lead in convening and mediating dialogue.

According to the former secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture in HON, the reason Solidaridad is trusted and can get together an MSP is due to:

- Their ability to understand the interests of different stakeholders
- Their broad scope of technical knowledge, or capacity to engage experts with good knowledge

A good example is working on the use of biomass from the palm oil sector to generate energy for the national grid. This is a win-win for the private sector and the national government as well as rural communities, and thus creates trust of a 'neutral' convener. A related policy change could be to ensure that palm oil biomass is used as bio-energy, and is not wasted (or burned).

In Nicaragua it is impossible to influence government policies directly. This should be done through other organisations, and bottom-up. Generating evidence for these organisations to effectively lobby would be a major role for Solidaridad and the partner organization CIAT. To demonstrate how lobby may take place, the following examples were given.

1. In the palm oil sector, the government wanted to raise an additional tax from farmers based on the number of palm oil trees, which was not based on existing law. The farmers raised the issue and asked Solidaridad to facilitate a meeting between the farmers and government. This helped to achieve a solution. Solidaridad is accepted in this role because they work with farmers on productive aspects, which is seen as helpful and not as a threat.
2. The community complained about a palm oil company producing compost which attracted a lot of insects. Solidaridad helped to create a space to resolve the conflict. Role as mediator.

### **Inclusiveness and gender aspects**

Several stakeholders interviewed specifically mentioned the focus on gender and inclusivity as a key quality of Solidaridad. The support to REDMUCH, a women's group working on cacao production and

processing chocolate, is a specific case. A second example of gender inclusion is the work done to review policies, form a gender committee, develop a training plan, KPIs and gender inclusion target for the Honduran palm oil company in Honduras. This program is now being replicated with other palm companies across the region.

We refer to the reporting on gender inclusivity in the 2019 reports, including:

- Support, advice and training to companies of the Jaremar Group (partner of PASOS HN) in compliance with RSPO Principle 6; Criterion 6.1; Indicator 6.1.5 on the gender committee, its training and functions. 180 people were trained in ABC issues of gender and masculinities.
- The training of Solidaridad staff on gender inclusion and masculinity
- Training on economic empowerment and gender to 148 entrepreneurial participants of the PASOS HN program
- 112 women and men from the 14 companies of the Cacao and Chocolate Women Network of Honduras (REDMUCH) were strengthened with training and technical assistance in terms of good productive practices and transformation of cacao and chocolate. The production capacities of chocolates and marketing were strengthened through a training and exchange tour in Netherlands.
- Dialogue and decision-making spaces were facilitated spaces for 59 women and men of the multi-stakeholder Eco-agritourism and cacao platforms of PASOS Honduras
- The design and implementation of the gender policy in the coffee commodity at the level of the national platform and authorities of the country was approved (link to AfC programme ADVOCAFE Honduras).

The results of these trainings can be differentiated in terms of improved livelihoods and improved voice, the latter being more structural.

#### *Improved livelihoods*

1. 112 families led by women have increased their cocoa production area in mahogany agroforestry systems, improving the landscape by replacing this area of abandoned land, deforested agroforestry systems with cocoa.
2. 342 ha under good agricultural practices with women and mixed companies
3. 5 companies have diversified their production incorporating other crops such as rambutan and fat pepper
4. 46 new cocoa and chocolate products were developed with 8 REDMUCH women's companies and put on the market.
5. Obtain funds (US \$ 42,997) to support women in the marketing of cocoa and chocolate products from the United States Department of State.

#### *Improved voice*

6. 31 new leaders in gender inclusiveness have been trained in the working groups of PASOS Hn (26) and PASOS Ni (5) of: Cocoa, Palm Oil, Eco-agrotourism, livestock and Water / Sanitation; The leaders represent companies that indirectly join and benefit some 6,900 families (4,300 in palm, 2,500 in cocoa and 100 in agro-tourism and water)
7. 15 new quality cocoa tasters have been formed and are supporting their companies to improve cocoa quality, in Honduras 13 and 2 in Nicaragua. In Honduras, 5 women tasters from REDMUCH participate in the National Panel of Cocoa Tasting.
8. 210 Men have received training on gender and masculinities and are supporting gender inclusion through training and work plans.
9. There are reports of at least 20% increase in the participation of women in positions of the boards of directors of cocoa companies.
10. In REDMUCH 80% of cocoa and chocolate processing companies are led by women.

#### **Role of Dutch Embassy**

The Dutch Embassy for Central America is located in San Jose, Costa Rica. REC CAM staff participates in annual meetings convened by the Embassy in support of regional partners in the Dialogue and Dissent

program. Unfortunately, the embassy has limited funding (approximately 50,000 euros per year) to support any direct actions in the region. Despite that limitation, the relationship is positive. During this evaluation we have not come across a significant role of the Embassy and also have not had an interview with any Embassy staff.

## Impacts, sustainability and systemic change

### Impacts

The following tables provide an overview of available and relevant M&E data at impact level.

#### Honduras

Indicator	Baseline 2016	cumulative results as of 2019	Clarifications	Target 2020
# of ha under better management practices (including pastures)	105.441	Cacao: 3492 ha Palm Oil: 159,755 ha Total: 163,247 ha	Palm Oil: 77951 ha companies 81,804 ha smallholders	163,492 (160,000 Palm Oil and 3,492 Cacao)
Volume commodity produced that meet sustainability standards or Good Practices		cacao: 1,507 TM Palm Oil: 580,000 TM Total: 581,507 TM		650,000 TM CPO 1,700 TM cacao
# of companies or producers that meet sustainability standards or Good Practices	10	9 companies cacao 13 companies Palm Oil Total: 22 companies		20

#### Nicaragua

Indicator	Baseline 2016	cumulative results as of 2019	Clarifications	Target 2020
# of ha under better management practices (including pastures)		Total: 29,212 ha	875 (LIVESTOCK) 76 (CACAO) 28,261 ha (palm)	36,042
# of companies or producers that meet sustainability standards or Good Practices	6	128 Livestock 60; Cacao 68 5 palm companies	In 2019 the company NICAIVISTA closed its operations	120 livestock and cacao producers and 5 palm oil companies
Volume commodity produced that meet sustainability standards or Good Practices	320,835 lt of milk /year 3544 qq cacao/yr	446,760 lt of milk / yr 12.47 TM de cacao 111,893 TM CPO		385,002 lt of milk/yr 4607 qq cacao/year 119,000 TM CPO
# of <b>direct jobs</b> provided to local people as a result of the project		Total: 5,349 60 livestock; 34 cacao; 5,255 palm		4100
# of ha where soil fertility is improved or maintained		Total 24,791 ha 875 livestock; 76 cacao; 23,840 ha palm	In 2019 the company NICAIVISTA closed its operations	36,042

Thus, in Honduras by now 163,247 ha is under better management practices, mostly from palmoil, and 22 companies meet sustainability standards or Good Practices. In Nicaragua 29,212 ha is under better management practices, mostly from palmoil, and 128 companies meet sustainability standards or Good Practices.

The following additional impact indicators have been proposed:

- The incidence of violence and conflicts with casualties (which according to FUNIDES has strongly declined)
- The level of deforestation (idem)

It would be too early to expect income changes as in many cases tree crops were planted, which take time to mature and generate concrete benefits. REDMUCH stated that models are needed that combine

benefits at the medium-long term (such as due to cacao agroforestry gardens) which take 3-4 years to mature, with short term benefits through diversification with bananas, plantains, papaya and other crops with short production cycles, thereby generating income while the cacao trees mature.

### **Scaling**

There are growing expressions of interest to join the program, and the approach has led to Solidaridad being strongly positioned for other opportunities, such as GEF 7 and a palm oil NAMA in Honduras. International agencies and donors such as the American Development Bank and UNDP have shown interest. In total 8 project proposals have been submitted, in Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico and Guatemala.

It was commented that PASOS is basically like an incubator to start a dialogue, that can also be used in other areas / landscapes. We believe this is a simple truth, but the success of the approach also depends upon concrete activities that generate evidence of solutions that can work.

There are already several examples of scaling. The zero deforestation agreement in palm oil in Honduras is probably the best example of scaling a successful initiative. The first Zero Deforestation Declaration of Mesoamerica was negotiated by Solidaridad and signed by the complete palm oil sector, local CSOs, and national-level government actors. The agreement rapidly moved into validation with an agreed action plan for monitoring and scaling up. Solidaridad seized this momentous development and brought the Nicaragua palm oil sector into initial dialogue sessions for Deforestation Free Livestock in Nicaragua. Within weeks, the Guatemalan palm oil sector declared their intention to move to Zero Deforestation commitments. Solidaridad began initial discussions with the Honduran Minister of the Institute for Conservation and Biodiversity (ICF) to expand the bilateral Zero Deforestation agreement to include coffee in the Lago Yojoa landscape, and potentially livestock.

Thus, it can be concluded that scaling is taking place, or will take place, in several dimensions:

- Scaling (or rather adoption) among different members of the MSP
- Scaling to other countries, being Nicaragua and Guatemala
- Scaling to other sectors, e.g. coffee in Honduras, possibly also livestock and shrimps

Another good example of scaling is the biodiversity pilot with palm oil companies. Several palm oil companies now want to join ('crowding in'). This was achieved thanks to the sharing of initial results through the MSP. The biodiversity monitoring is now being replicated in Guatemala.

The PASOS approach has attracted interest for new donor and impact investment proposals, and has opened up a new landscape of initiatives in Honduras and across Mesoamerica. To this end, Solidaridad has been asked to implement several GEF 6 projects in the Lago Yojoa landscape in Honduras. Solidaridad has also advanced in discussions with Olam to validate its Living Landscape Policy in relation to its coffee supply base in the region. Additionally, Solidaridad is positioned as a lead partner in GEF 7 and NAMA proposals in the pipeline for the Zona Litoral del Norte, building on our PASOS pilots, and UNDP has requested Solidaridad to design a PES Water Fund for the ADAPTARC+ restoration initiative in the forest corridor which provides water to 14 municipalities, including Tegucigalpa.

### **RSPO jurisdictional certification**

RSPO is still interested, but in order to continue with the jurisdictional certification in Nicaragua it is necessary to obtain an expression of interest at the highest level of the country. Given the current conditions of the country it is difficult to obtain that expression of interest.

### **Systemic changes**

The mid-term evaluation concluded that certain activities seem inherently difficult to scale due to the degree of tailor-made support that is being provided by Solidaridad. In this evaluation we therefore

looked in particular to what extent systemic changes have also taken place, as these could enhance scaling by a more enabling policy context.

This was discussed with several interviewees. Here are some inputs:

1. The methodological approach of farmer field schools is practical, efficient and motivates producers to adopt technologies; however, other enabling elements are required for its implementation, such as access to credit, better prices of products as an incentive for production with good practices, service delivery to support adoption of improved practices.
2. According to the former Secretary of the ministry of Agriculture there are good policies and laws on sustainable production, social issues, gender issues, but many of these are not implemented. For good implementation, he mentioned the following generalised 'systemic issues':
  - No knowledge on the existing legislation
  - Bureaucracy barriers to implement the policies
  - Lack of law enforcement

A well functioning MSP can help to address systemic issues. Interviewees mentioned examples of how lobby for implementation of policies or laws has helped to implement these, e.g. in cacao, in coffee, e.g. to get special lines of credit for women (these are not related to the PASOS project only but also to Pfc projects).

In the following table we noted to what extent systemic changes have taken place, in either Honduras (HON), or Nicaragua (NIC), or both (PASOS).

Systemic issue	Change *	remark
trust and dialogue between stakeholders		PASOS MSPs
coordination and alignment between stakeholders / shared vision		PASOS, based on common interests
change power dynamics between stakeholders		Probably this has changed as well
strengthening of civic space (civic empowerment, both men and women)		Mainly through the collaboration within the MSP, getting a unified voice, however lobby seems to remain dependent upon support by Solidaridad [PASOS]
shift mindsets and norms? Of MSP participants? Of targeted decision / policy makers		Yes, in many respects: attitude towards palm oil, cacao production, livestock owners, and others [PASOS]
Improved service delivery		By companies if they have a partnership with smallholder producers [PASOS]
Land tenure security		Is being worked on by the programme, at a small scale pilot [HON]
Landscape governance system		Depends upon the national and local public agencies; complicated by COVID
Increased investment in the sector		Investment proposals are made, and FIs are engaged, no concrete funding yet achieved. No public incentive mechanisms targeted [PASOS]
increased transparency / accountability of stakeholders		There are strong interrelations between MSP members, training is being provided on improved administration
Increased monitoring and learning at landscape level		Most MSP members have mentioned this as one benefit, but landscape wide has not been developed yet

Improved access to markets	Export	Export markets have consumer demand for inclusiveness and sustainability, but domestic markets do not. The programs are working on domestic markets for cacao / chocolate, as well as national and regional markets for sustainable livestock.
	Domestic	

\*) yes = green; no = yellow; moderate = blue

The above table shows that PASOS is contributing to quite a few systemic changes, which is in line with the new way of looking at landscape as a new governance system. However, the above mentioned systemic changes have not been specifically mentioned as requiring need for change. However, there are also some clear gaps.

Some further comments on the above table:

- There is public and political agreement on the need to stop deforestation and restore degraded land. Underlying systemic issues that have been identified, and which are being addressed by the programme, are land tenure and investment proposals, but not public incentive mechanisms.
- The drive for more inclusive and sustainable production practices is strongly driven by Western consumer markets. However, domestic markets do not have this awareness. For example REDMUCH makes chocolate for export markets, before having any domestic market, which is a risk, REDMUCH has a contract to sell chocolate to the cruise line industry that stops over in Roatan..
- Local government has adopted the farmer field school approach in cacao and reforestation, which was due to local leaders that were trained by Solidaridad.

## Sustainability

### **Technical support**

Both palm oil companies would appreciate if Solidaridad remains present, because they bring in new technical knowledge and support.

### **MSP**

Most stakeholders interviewed state that the MSP will continue to exist after the project, but Solidaridad needs to be there for at least another 3 years to lead and facilitate the meetings. REDMUCH stated that if Solidaridad would leave they would not anymore come to the MSP meetings. The former Secretary of the ministry of Agriculture stated that Solidaridad should continue to lead the MSP, although others could take turns to take over the lead.

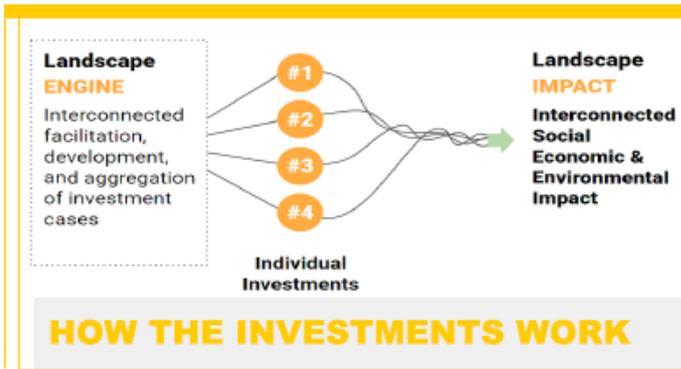
PROLANSATE believes that the presence of Solidaridad is critical to keep the MSP functional. However, alternative leadership should be created. Also, they believe that more high level representation is needed.

### **Social issues**

In some interviews the question was asked whether social sustainability aspects, such as labour conditions and good payment, are an issue. It was stated by different stakeholders that companies comply with the government labour laws. There seems to be no need for Solidaridad to work on this.

### **The MESA approach of accelerating living landscapes**

The theory of change has moved from sustainable (or integrated) landscape management to the MESA approach of 'accelerating living landscapes in Mesoamerica', which is now being promoted in the region. The emphasis has moved to the development of business propositions for a new breed of asset investments in sustainable agribusinesses and forestry initiatives, facilitated by landscape investments,



to generate long-term win-win benefits for people and the landscape. It is an inclusive approach that supports national development priorities and the climate change agenda.

Although ambitious and encouraging, promoting this approach should be done with care, as so far no investment proposition has been realised, nor is the evidence available

that these investments contribute to both production and protection objectives, nor have the conditions and success factors been identified that should be in place. However, it is worth noting that in early 2020 several investment proposals are moving to the initial due diligence phase, and deals may close at the end of the project.

## Contribution by Solidaridad and external factors

From the above overview of activities, results and the role of Solidaridad, it is certain that Solidaridad has played a key role in most of the changes at landscape level and among the MSP members that were observed and discussed. This was supported by most stakeholder opinions during interviews. Especially mentioned are the following:

- For the palm oil sector in Honduras Solidaridad has played a critical role, to acquire RSPO certification (training, interpretation of RSPO norms, ...). Through PASOS Solidaridad has played a key role in bringing the palm oil sector out of its isolated position and linking it to other stakeholders
- Solidaridad played a critical role in agreement on the zero deforestation agreement in palm oil (Honduras), mainly by bringing the stakeholders together – this role could not have been taken up by any other organisation, due to the difficult political situation in Honduras. Also in the follow-up for implementing the agreement, Solidaridad coordinates the technical team to guide this.

Following are external factors considered to have positively contributed to the success of this project:

- The increasing international awareness on the need for sustainability and inclusiveness in the palm oil sector, and the push from RSPO to comply with its standard globally
- The high level of deforestation and land degradation and the increasing national and international awareness to do something about this.
- The high biodiversity values of the remaining forests in the PASOS landscapes, and thus the support from international NGOs
- The fact that national palm oil companies in Honduras are not ‘sisters’ of large international companies, but are companies that have developed from local cooperatives and thus have at least some feeling with the local landscape
- The availability of alternative land use options that can also generate revenues

Following are external factors which may have negatively contributed the programme:

- The civil unrest in Nicaragua, although this has also emphasized the need for the MSP and its members to focus on their internal resilience and focus on local solutions
- The Honduran political crisis continued into 2019, with *numerous structural changes at Ministry level*. This slowed down certain opportunities in the pipeline (GEF 6, Zero Deforestation, land titling efforts)
- The decline of global prices for palm oil, coffee and sugar which affected the private sector’s ability to invest in sustainable improvements. However, despite the slow-down in activities, the market conditions accentuated the need to increase supply chain resilience, to invest in cost-saving efficiencies, to increase vertical productivity, and to diversify income streams.

### **Complementarity / synergy between national, regional and global initiatives**

There is evidence of scaling the good practices from specific landscapes to other countries in the region. There remains dependency on global export markets for the commodities to be sustainably produced.

### **Complementarity and integration of the innovation themes Gender Inclusivity, Sustainable Landscape Innovation, and Climate Innovations**

This is core of the PASOS approach

### **Complementarity and synergy between L&A projects and GP and RI projects**

- Both past and ongoing Pfc projects and the practical solutions being generated are key to the success of the PASOS approach. Also, one could argue that several PASOS activities are rather Pfc type of projects rather than AfC or landscape type of projects. On the other hand, PASOS contributes to the Pfc projects by validating tools such as Manual of Good Practices in Farming adapted for small producers, capacity development and support to establishment of legal status of POs and land titling as enabling conditions for certification processes.
- There could be an argument for agreement on landscape projects as a separate category of Solidaridad projects.

## Main insights and lessons

### *Relevance*

In both countries Solidaridad has a FSP track record of working with companies: palm oil in Honduras (leading to palm oil platform PASH) and livestock in Nicaragua. The relations of trust with these sectors whereby concrete solutions were developed in good collaboration forms the basis for the PASOS landscape programmes.

### *Effective MSPs*

In both countries MSPs have been established at landscape level, bringing together stakeholders that did not trust each other, or even had conflicts. This is a major contribution by Solidaridad recognized by all stakeholders. Apart from that technical multi-stakeholder groups have been formed, e.g. on zero deforestation, which are more focused and time-bound. These platforms are all functional and effective.

MSPs at local (landscape) level are more effective than MSPs at national level, as the level of exchange is more active and the decision-making more proactive, and there are less problems with bureaucracy. However, apart from the involvement of local government agencies, national government agencies should at least be informed, or even better participate in the MSP.

The MSPs are recognized by stakeholders mainly as a platform for capacity building and exchange of experiences on technical solutions that generate benefits. Also, it is a platform for forming a common agenda for change towards more sustainable landscape management, including the design and involvement in pilot projects. In some cases the MSP resulted in a request for social services by local government, which were realised.

It remains a challenge to actively involve members of the government with the ability and role to decide, and to formalize synergies between different actors. This is especially the case in Nicaragua, where it was also mentioned that local actions have been carried out due to government coercion of its employees, which obviously is not a sustainable approach.

### *Effectiveness,*

Several policy-related targets have been identified and are being addressed, in Honduras 2 have reached stage 6 which is adoption, including the zero-deforestation agreement in palm oil in Honduras, being replicated in Nicaragua. Pilots are now underway to implement the zero-deforestation agreement. There is still a route to go to ensure its implementation.

A lot of training / capacity building was provided, both at organizational level and for the MSP as a whole. This was greatly appreciated by all stakeholders, especially training on practical solutions.

Undertaking pilot activities is an essential element of the PASOS approach, to test and demonstrate solution strategies, which can then be scaled. Some pilots have been finalized and are being scaled.

There has been the recognition within the PASOS programme to move from donor funded programmes to investment proposals. So far 6 investment proposals have been developed, of which two are in the negotiation phase and the due diligence process is being started. No investment proposition has so far fully materialized.

A landscape governance or management system has not yet been developed. While landscape governance and management lies with the respective authorities, in both countries law enforcement is weak. There is the general expectation that law enforcement will improve if companies improve their traceability systems, smallholders are also certified, and monitoring systems will improve. The

development of a landscape governance mechanism is in the sights of Solidaridad for future development. This will be an ambitious and long-term process, as adherence to the ten principles requires profoundly shifting mindsets. It is expected that improved monitoring will also be part of an improved landscape governance system, being one of the 10 principles. There are existing landscape monitoring frameworks that could be used, such as the LandScale one.

The results according to the quantitative impact indicators are not impressive, but there are several indications that successful pilots are being scaled and there are other potentials for scaling. Also, we observe several changes at a systems level, which could enhance scaling by a more enabling policy context. Most noteworthy are:

- trust and dialogue between stakeholders
- coordination and alignment between stakeholders / shared vision
- strengthening of civic space mainly through collaboration within the MSP, getting a unified voice, and then lobbying for change, however the role of Solidaridad remains essential

#### *Role of Solidaridad*

The role of Solidaridad in the establishment and functioning of the MSPs has been and still remains essential. Most lobby and advocacy activities are aligned with the MSPs, but it seems that investment propositions are mainly negotiated in a bilateral way. Also, bilateral consultations have been the basis of creating the MSPs.

Solidaridad is particularly appreciated by its knowledge of value chains, its good relations with private sector, and its neutral role. It seems that the neutral role can be attributed largely to the fact that the focus has always been at practical solutions and in doing so building up good relations with companies and government agencies. Its engagement of national research institutes also contributes to this 'neutral' image.

#### *Impacts and systemic changes*

Especially in Nicaragua there was a situation of conflicting relations between different stakeholders, especially between palm oil companies and communities. This has changed to a situation of cooperation based on dialogue and recognition of mutual interests and opportunities for collaboration. This is a remarkable transformation, largely due to the PASOS programme.

Weaknesses seem to occur in the following systemic issues:

- Landscape governance system, including monitoring and law enforcement, which is now dependent upon national and local government agencies, without a role by the MSP
- Domestic markets consumer demands, thus the sustainability of the value chains being addressed remains fully dependent upon export markets
- Law enforcement and monitoring to ensure that protection agreements are complied with, no leaching effects occur and productivity gains do not stimulate further encroachment

Following are external factors considered to have positively contributed to the success of this project:

- The increasing international awareness on the need for sustainability and inclusiveness in the palm oil sector, and the push from RSPO to comply with its standard globally
- The high level of deforestation and land degradation and the increasing national and international awareness to do something about this.
- The high biodiversity values of the remaining forests in the PASOS landscapes, and thus the support from international NGOs
- The fact that national palm oil companies are not 'sisters' of large international companies, but are companies that have developed from local cooperatives and thus have at least some feeling with the local landscape
- The availability of alternative land use options that can also generate revenues

Following are external factors which may have negatively contributed the programme:

- The civil unrest in Nicaragua, although this has also emphasized the need for the MSP and its members to focus on their internal resilience and focus on local solutions
- The Honduran political crisis continued into 2019, with *numerous structural changes at Ministry level*. This slowed down certain opportunities in the pipeline (GEF 6, Zero Deforestation, land titling efforts) and in general created confusion.
- The decline of global prices for palm oil, coffee and sugar which affected the private sector's ability to invest in sustainable improvements. However, despite the slow-down in activities, the market conditions accentuated the need to increase supply chain resilience, to invest in cost-saving efficiencies, to increase vertical productivity, and to diversify income streams.

On the complementarity / synergy between national, regional and global initiatives, there is evidence of scaling the good practices from specific landscapes to other countries in the region. There remains dependency on global export markets for the commodities to be sustainably produced.

On the complementarity and integration of the innovation themes Gender Inclusivity, Sustainable Landscape Innovation, and Climate Innovations, this is core of the PASOS approach

On the complementarity and synergy between L&A projects and GP and RI projects, there is evidence of mutual synergy and relations. Both past and ongoing PFC projects and the practical solutions being generated are key to the success of the PASOS approach. On the other hand, PASOS contributes to the PFC projects by capacity development and creating enabling conditions for certification processes. It seems that the good practices and robust infrastructure impact pathways are in practice embedded in the sustainable landscapes impact pathway.

This programme shows the potential synergy of Good Practices, Robust Infrastructure and Enabling Policy Environment to contribute to achievement of social and environmental impacts and the delivery of multiple benefits for multiple actors. Well-designed, viable and sustainable integrated landscape management offers a promising approach for the integration of sustainable value chain solutions, landscape protection, impact investment, gender & social inclusion and climate innovations areas.

## Case study 3.3: Key findings on the Kilimanjaro landscape project

### Background and context conditions

- The Kilimanjaro project originated from work by Solidaridad in the coffee sector. Coffee production in the Kilimanjaro region, as well as other land use options, is operating in a low external input context with difficult market access due to state control. There are also problems of conflicting land use. The region has high biodiversity values and is attractive for tourism, which is a very important source of income and needed for protection purposes. The policy context does not favour foreign investments, while SMEs are used to receiving donor grants and have weak entrepreneurial skills.

### Main results

- Using the “SLI smart village model” two smart villages were established, one in Longido and one in Meru. Several pilots were undertaken in these two areas, as listed below.

	Longido	Meru	State of progress
1. Land use planning	x	x	3 villages in Longido, but unclear to what extent land use plans are being implemented and lead to improved production and/or protection
2. Agroforestry	X	x	Support to communities to establish and run nurseries
3. Beekeeping		x	Honey has been sold, production on going
4. Livestock keeping	x		Cooperatives were supported with 10 boron species, crossbreeding with local breeds of cow is on going
5. Rangeland management	x		Village grazing committees formed, 4 pasture plots established, production and learning continuing
6. Water management	x		Village water management committees strengthened
7. Alternative energy sources	X		Briquette making established
8. Aquaculture		x	A pond constructed, trainings rolled out and production ongoing
9. Community forests		x	Community forest established, Land use planning for the community forest undertaken, bylaws for managing the forest developed and a management committee formed and capacitated

- A total of 2,071 ha were under climate management practices, of which 894 ha of a community forest, 53 ha from 2 climate smart villages and 1,173 under coffee GAP. In total of 56,418 ha in three villages land use planning was done.
- It seems that for these pilots no data have been collected / monitored that can be used to demonstrate the feasibility of the pilot activities and thus develop a concrete business case, based on evidence of the benefits and costs involved. It seems that concrete follow-up plans have so far not been developed. On the landuse planning, communities were capacitated to do ‘the right things on

the right locations', but so far no funding was received to make any real investments to improve productivity and/or protection.

### **Capacity building**

- There has been much capacity building of CSOs, especially at local / village level, on technical subjects associated with the various pilots (e.g. rangeland management, tree planting) and on subjects related to MSP functionality, e.g. facilitating dialogues, showing leadership. Solidaridad has facilitated dialogues regarding SLI smart solutions in the mentioned villages. MSP group members can now successfully facilitate village dialogues by themselves. There have been various learning trips.
- The project has facilitated understanding and implementation of existing policies e.g. the land policy requires villages to have Land use plans so the project facilitated land use plans and capacity building to communities to understand policies and guidelines.
- Village authorities have been able to participate, discuss, agree and decide on relevant areas of dialogues. They have also been able to support the dialogues to reach consensus specifically on supporting of planning land uses in their villages. Also, some have made available land for conducting the pilots. For instance, four wards have provided 2.5 acres of land each for piloting improved rangelands where community members learn and are expected to practise at their households, Kittenden village set aside 10 acres for beekeeping, Lerang'wa provided 4 acres for beekeeping, Irkaswa 1 acre for agroforestry.
- There is no reference to real L&A activities, and it seems that MSP members have not learned such skills.
- There has been a valuable conference leading to the publication entitled "Balancing productivity and conservation in high value ecosystems - The Kilimanjaro Landscape Solutions Publication". The document lists 6 solutions and 15 cases. However, in spite of promising initiatives, studies, pilots and opportunities, there is a general lack of concrete implementation of land use plans, enabling policy changes and concrete investments. The 'calls for action' are all very true and valid, and also show what remains to be done.

### **On the choice and implementation of L&A strategies to influence (public and private) policies**

- There are MSPs established at three different levels, being village, District and regional / landscape. These are all MSPs established by Solidaridad.
- The purpose of the MSPs has been mainly to generate dialogue, share knowledge and build capacity on sustainable land management, especially the MSPs at local/village level (through trainings or expert advice, joint conduct of pilots and analysis, exchange of knowledge and technologies).
- Solidaridad has undertaken L&A activities on influencing the national land use commission. Indirectly, Solidaridad through its capacity building of MSP members, has also influenced local Government agencies, during the pilots being executed and in supporting MSPs, to make available land for conducting the pilots (see above). Solidaridad has facilitated dialogues on mainstreaming SLI into district development plans and budget for 2019/2020, however, it remains unclear if the funding and implementation of these plans will materialise.
- The MSPs have not performed any L&A activities by itself. There has been some engagement with private companies, and with SMEs.

### **Which policy issues have been targeted, and how are these related to systemic issues?**

- The project aimed to create an enabling policy environment for mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management (SLM) into sectoral policies and planning, and more specifically develop the Kilimanjaro Sustainable Land Management Investment Framework. This investment framework has materialized and gives a general overview of investment opportunities, but no reference to concrete business plans or best practices.
- In terms of policy influencing, the project has worked on implementing policies to develop land use plans, dating from some decades ago. It has conducted land use planning for 3 villages (Leremeta,

Ildonyo and Endonyoemali), as a basis for sound planning of production and protection measures in the landscape, with capacity building to community members on understanding policies and guidelines on land use planning. The land use plans were supported by local by-laws and approved by village assemblies and local government. After the land use planning was carried out, the process has largely stopped because funding is missing for implementing the land use plans.

- In the Enduimet WMA land use plans seem to be implemented, but it is not clear at what scale and with what level of success. Here, the project succeeded in developing local community-based land use plans contributing to the protection of a wildlife management core zone.
- Note that for this project the scoring on influencing policies is rated 5 (meaning policy changes have been adopted) which can be debated.

#### **How effective has been the strategy of developing investment proposals?**

- So far, no sound investment proposals have been developed. The investment expert found that as one underlying reason causing reluctance of investors to invest in local companies is the poor book keeping (meaning that finances and records on sales etc. are not accurate), and the inability of SMEs to develop good business plans. There is also the set habit by donors to provide grants that has spoiled the attitude of SMEs to make their own investments based on sound business plans. There is a plan to establish a platform where potential companies are profiled and selected on the basis of some clear criteria to qualify for crowdfunding – currently about 25% of SMEs qualify. This seems to be a good initiative.
- Also, entrepreneurial skills and developing a sound business case were mentioned as remaining weaknesses in spite of some training being provided on this.

#### **The voices of smallholders, landless, marginalised producers, women and youth**

- There has been quite some attention to capacity building on gender issues. As a result, CSOs and producer organisations have developed plans on how to include gender into their activities. Also, as a result of capacity building women groups have been formed around activities such as managing nurseries and supplying seedlings for additional incomes. Also, there are more women taking leading positions in CSOs and cooperative societies.
- While a range of trainings were given to women on both livelihoods and voice, it was concluded that “due to the strong cultural beliefs of indigenous communities and that behavior change process, the project has not achieved much in ensuring inclusion.”

#### **Sustainability of the results**

- The MSPs will most likely not function well or not even survive without Solidaridad after AfC support. The role of Solidaridad cannot yet be missed.

#### **Factors that formed a constraint to effective L&A strategies**

- There is a remaining weakness in terms of the local mindset that is used to getting grants from donors, thus making local SMEs not accustomed to achieve change based on a sound business approach.
- The landownership situation: many local communities or organisations have rather large land holdings and therefore do not feel inclined to make most efficient use of the land i.e. increase productivity
- The political context whereby the coffee and other commodity markets are fully state controlled.

## What is the contribution of targeted or realised policy changes to sector transformation?

Systemic issue	
Trust and dialogue between stakeholders	1
Coordination, shared vision alignment between stakeholders	1
Change power dynamics between stakeholders	0
Strengthening of civic space	0-1
Shift mindsets and norms	1
Improved service delivery	0-1
Land tenure security	1
Landscape governance	0-1
Integrating no-deforestation in the supply-chain	1
Social sustainability issues in supply chain	0
Increased investment in the sector	0
More transparency / accountability of stakeholders	1
Improved monitoring and learning	1
Improved access to markets	0

0 = no progress, 1 = moderate , 2 = good; - = not relevant; ? = relevant but unclear

The above overview shows that there are few concrete contributions to any systemic changes.

### Examples of scaling

- It seems that for some of the above pilots there is interest in scaling them up, which might be related to the fact that the project has made investments that other villages would also like to receive.
- Further scaling does not appear to take place due to lack of funding mainly.

### Theory of change and M&E

- The ToC for the Kilimanjaro project is in fact mainly a logframe. The process of change from pilots, to the use of information for evidence based L&A, to L&A targets, to expected changes, is not so clear.
- On M&E, there is a lack of concrete data on the benefits and costs of the various pilots, which makes it difficult to develop concrete business plans.

## Case study 4: Linking zero-deforestation to emerging markets

### Acknowledgements

Initially, a field work trip to the focus countries in South America was planned as part of the evaluation activities of this case study. Due to the Coronavirus outbreak that started in early March, this trip needed to be suspended and all the evaluation work was done through long-distance calls. For this, local Solidaridad staff played a crucial role in introducing our team to local key-actors and ensuring that stakeholders who were planned to be interviewed were aware of the evaluation process and stimulated to collaborate.

For this case study, we would like to especially thanks Alejandra Carvajal (Solidaridad Impact and Quality Coordinator for South America), Agustín Mascotena (Solidaridad Programme Manager Argentina) and Milagros Menna (Solidaridad Project Officer, Argentina) for connecting us, first, to Solidaridad Projects' and program's staff, and second to key-actors and stakeholders. We also would like to thank Solidaridad local staff for giving the context of origin and current scenario of both projects that are part of this case study. Finally, we would also like to thank all the 19 interviewed people for the time they dedicated to open conversations about their vision on the projects. We hope that this "collective" exercise of evaluation contributes to improvements not only through the strengths but also through lessons learned though weaknesses and faced challenges.

## Introduction

This end-evaluation of the Solidaridad AfC Program is structured in 5 case studies. Each of these case studies is focused on a central theme and usually encompassed different projects in different countries falling within this theme. This report presents the results of the evaluation of the case study 4, which has as a central theme: “Linking zero-deforestation to emerging markets”. This case study included the evaluation of two projects:

- Project 1421 - Feeding the World: Conducive Policies for Lower Deforestation linked to Soy Production in South America
- Project 1424 - Improving Policy Design in Territorial Organization and Land Use in the Soy Sector in Bolivia as a Means to Increase Productivity

This case study was conducted by Joana Faggin and involved a preparation phase of revision of the projects’ main documents (listed in the Annex 1.1) and 19 on-distance interviews with projects’ staff, partners and selected stakeholders (listed in Annex 1.2), in Bolivia, Argentina, Paraguay and China. The interviews aimed to understand the projects’ implementation challenges, successes, failures and lessons through a limited number of key-actors that could represent the diversity of stakeholders involved in the projects, from the private and public sectors, and from civil society organizations. The interviews were semi-structured, using a questionnaire which was specifically developed for this case study (see Annex 2) and aligned with the agreed evaluation questions and checklists in the inception report for the evaluation of the Solidaridad AfC Program.

A draft version of this case study report was shared with the local Solidaridad staff and adjusted according to their feedback resulting in this final version of the case study evaluation report.

The aim has been to develop short and to-the-point case study reports. The structure is as follows:

- Section 1: basic information of the project or projects being part of the case study
- Section 2: origin, context, and relevance
- Section 3: theory of change
- Section 4: results and effectiveness
- Section 5: role and strategies by Solidaridad
- Section 6: impacts, sustainability, and systemic change
- Section 7: contribution by Solidaridad and external factors
- Section 8: lessons and recommendations

## Basic information of the projects of the case study

### Project 1424

REC	Solidaridad South America
Project title	Improving Policy Design in Territorial Organization and Land Use in the Soy Sector in Bolivia as a Means to Increase Productivity
Countries	Bolivia
Plaza ref.	1424
Overall Objective	Strengthen the abilities of public organizations and civil society for implementing policies related to the Use of Land and Territorial Organization as a means of proving (through a pilot test) that enhancing the interpretation and application of the relevant legal framework shall enable soy producers to improve their production abilities, resources and decision-making.
Specific Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve government capacities and tools for law implementation and enforcement.</li> <li>2. Improve law content regarding environmental performance, reduce first illegal deforestation and then legal as consequence of ordering the whole legal frame (regulations and enforcement) and being able to level up all stakeholders' awareness on environmental care.</li> <li>3. Implement at ground level (producers) together with partners plans to increase legal compliance.</li> </ol>
Partners / Platform members	<p><i>Civil Society Organisations</i></p> <p>Fundación AVINA Fundación Amigos de la Naturaleza (FAN)</p> <p><i>Private Sector/Producers Associations</i></p> <p>Asociación de Productores de Oleaginosas y Trigo (ANAPO) [partner] Cámara Agropecuaria de Oriente (CAO) Cargill</p> <p><i>Governmental Institutions</i></p> <p>Autoridad de Fiscalización y Control Social de Bosques y Tierra de Santa Cruz (ABT)</p>
Project time period	January 2016 – December 2020
Budget	€ 108,289 (2020)

## Project 1421

REC	Solidaridad South America
Project title	Feeding the World: Conducive Policies for Lower Deforestation linked to Soy Production in South America
Countries	Argentina, Paraguay, and China
Plaza ref	1421
Overall Objective	Empower local organizations to work with local governments in evaluating and assessing the effectiveness of different policies designed to manage deforestation, and, where possible, in improving the design of the policies itself.
Specific Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthen and develop the governance mechanisms with ad-hoc multi-stakeholder platforms including organizations from the public, private and civil society sectors.</li> <li>2. Capacity building and knowledge exchange between Chinese and South American soy organizations to understand the depths and complexities linked to soy and define potential solutions for sustainability.</li> </ol>
Platform members	<p><i>Argentina</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Society Organisations</li> <li>• ProYungas</li> <li>• The Nature Conservancy (TNC)</li> <li>• Private Sector/Producers' Associations</li> <li>• Cooperativa Agropecuaria de Acopiadores Federados (CAAF)</li> <li>• Cámara de la Industria Aceitera de la República Argentina (CIARA)</li> <li>• Asociación Argentina de Productores en Siembra Directa (AAPRESID)</li> <li>• Sociedad Rural Salteña</li> <li>• Governmental Institutions</li> <li>• Secretaría de Ambiente de Salta</li> </ul> <p><i>Paraguay</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Society Organizations</li> <li>• Instituto de Biotecnología Agrícola (INBIO)</li> <li>• Private Sector/Producers Associations</li> <li>• Central Nacional de Cooperativas (UNICOOP)</li> <li>• Governmental Institutions</li> <li>• Comisión de Ecología, Recursos Naturales y Medio Ambiente de la Honorable Cámara de Diputados del Paraguay</li> </ul> <p><i>China</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Soy Trade Platform (SSTP), including Chinese traders and in partnership with WWF China, the Nature Conservancy and Paulson Institute</li> </ul>
Project time period	January 2017 – December 2021
Budget	€ 94,000 (2020)

## Origin, context, and relevance

Both projects that are part of this case study focus on the soy sector and have similar contexts. The projects aim to link no-deforestation within soy production systems in producer countries to the demand for sustainable soy by emerging international markets. The chosen strategy is improving policy implementation tools for monitoring and control of deforestation in the soy sector, for better compliance with national legal frameworks. This case study involves two projects focused on Bolivia, Argentina, Paraguay, and China.

Following the definition of the Roundtable on Responsible Soy (RTRS) standards, in 2011, different strategies to promote sustainability within the soy sector adopted a similar mechanism: the producer should give information certifying that the soy is not produced on a recently deforested area. However, the impact of certification has not achieved the expected results so far in decreasing deforestation within the soy supply chain. Nowadays, a maximum of 2% of the soy traded globally is certified. One of the main obstacles for the certification strategy is the fact that most of the standards have a cut-off date (e.g. not allowing deforestation after 2009) that is frequently in conflict with national legal frameworks of the producers' countries. Currently, most of the legal frameworks in producer countries allow deforestation after the cut-off dates of the certification standards. If producers follow standards beyond a legal framework, for instance, not clearing an area even if this is allowed by law, it creates an expectation for compensation on the costs of not clearing an area, and consequently not increasing its production. These costs are not being absorbed by the market, even if current debates create expectations around the implementation of such compensation mechanisms by the private sector.

Solidaridad's projects aim to address the deforestation problem from a bottom-up approach, connecting an efficient policy implementation strategy in producer countries to the demand for sustainable soy by the international market, considering the barriers and lack of results from the top-down certification. The European market, which in 2018 represented 12% of the global soy imports, has been at the forefront of sustainability debates within the soy supply chain in the last decade. In contrast, the Asian market that represented 70% of the global soy imports in 2018, is now being the focus of most strategies to promote sustainability and no-deforestation debates within the soy chain. The expectation is that the Asian market will continue to increase its demand for soy linked to the continuous increase of animal protein consumption. Consequently, the pressure on forests in soy producer countries is continuing to rise in the next decade.

Solidaridad's strategy linked to the two projects has two main steps. First, strengthen policy frameworks towards effective monitoring and control of illegal deforestation in soy producer countries. Second, once illegal deforestation is monitored and controlled by effective implementation of policy frameworks, strategies focused on zero-deforestation can gain force in the debates in producer and consumer countries. The goal is to strengthen the legal framework by proposing necessary improvements for its linked implementation tools through the engagement with stakeholders and key actors. It is necessary to highlight, however, that each country where the projects are focused has a specific context linked either to the type and roles of stakeholders that are part of the soy sector or to policy frameworks and implementation challenges.

### **Bolivia**

In Bolivia, the Oilseed and Wheat Producers Association (*Asociación de Productores de Oleaginosas y Trigo* - ANAPO) was the local partner of Solidaridad for the implementation of best practices linked to the RTRS standards for soy production (Farmer Support Program - FSP, implemented between 2013 and 2015). In the national context, however, the implementation of RTRS standards was challenging due to the land distribution policy. While the national strategy is promoting access to land, it also stimulates land clearing for agriculture focused on immediate income generation as a prerequisite to comply with the concept of the "social function" of the land. The chosen strategy in Bolivia is to strengthen

governmental land use planning monitoring and control tools. With a reliable implementation of deforestation monitoring and control policies, it will be possible to enhance the sustainable use of natural resources articulated to the national definition of the “social function” of the land. The project focuses on the Department of Santa Cruz (Chaco biome), which concentrates almost 90% of the soy production in Bolivia. However, Bolivia does not play a central role in the Asian or European soy market, being the 10<sup>th</sup> in soy production and the 17<sup>th</sup> in global soy exports. In 2018, Bolivia exported 93% of the produced soy to South American countries (Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador).

### **Argentina**

Argentina was one of the focus countries of the Fast Track Fund (2011-2016) to promote soy certification according to the RTRS standards and because of that Solidaridad has previous connections to APRESID (National Association No-till Plantation Systems - Asociación Argentina de Productores en Siembra Directa and CAAF (Cooperative of the owners of Warehouses - Cooperativa Agropecuaria de Acopiadores Federados). Both organizations are part of the project’s MSP. The project that includes Argentina, Paraguay, and China was proposed based on the successful results achieved by the project implemented in Bolivia. Other criteria for including Argentina came from the fact that Solidaridad was leading the Sustainable Soy Transparency Platform (SSTP), in China, a relevant soy market to Argentina. In 2018, Argentina exported 45% of its soy production to the Asian market (14% to China), and 22% to the European Union market. Argentina is the 3<sup>rd</sup> soy producer and exporter country in the world; however, its export data also includes soy produced in Paraguay and Bolivia as these countries depend on Argentina for export logistics.

### **Paraguay**

Paraguay was one of the focus countries of the Fast Track Fund (2011-2016) to promote soy certification according to the RTRS standards. Solidaridad also supported the development of a Sustainability Risk Framework for the financial sector as part of the Roundtable on Sustainable Finance in Paraguay. Paraguay is a country divided into two biomes: Atlantic Forest (East) and Chaco (West). Agriculture is currently concentrated in East Paraguay, where a zero-deforestation Law is in place since 2014 to protect the remaining Atlantic forest cover, currently around 17% of the original cover. The Chaco biome, in West Paraguay, clearance of native vegetation is allowed by the legal framework. Even if livestock is currently the main driver of deforestation in West Paraguay, soy production is expected to grow due to the development of a new soybean variety resistant to drought. This expansion is largely connected to large-scale agriculture focused on soy exportation. In 2018, Paraguay exported 37% of its soy production to Argentina and 16% directly to the European Union market. Paraguay does not export soy directly to China because it has a trading agreement with Taiwan. Paraguay is the 5<sup>th</sup> soy producer country and the 4<sup>th</sup> soy exporter in the world.

### **China (& India)**

The Asian market is the largest global consumer of soy but is still not at the forefront of sustainability and climate change debates. However, in the last years, China is the focus of initiatives that aim to promote sustainability debates within the soy supply chain through engagements with stakeholders and key actors. In the last decade, there was a significant increase in the consumption of meat protein in China and India, either directly linked to their development strategies or the promotion of food security. Solidaridad’s soy initiatives in Asia aim to bring these other realities into sustainability discussions of the soy supply chain while respecting their different positions, priorities, or strategies. The Chinese market is the focus of the most recent activities of Solidaridad that aims to create a market demand for more sustainable soy. Solidaridad pointed out the intention to include India in its Global Soy initiatives due to the connection to Argentina, as 90% of the soybean oil consumed in India comes from Argentina. In China, as mentioned before, Solidaridad leads the Sustainable Soy Transparency Platform (SSTP) in a partnership with TNC, WWF, and Paulson Institute. The platform aims to promote sustainability debate within the consumer side of the supply chain and has already developed the Sustainable Soy Sourcing

Guidelines, and the Chinese traders aim to apply these in South American countries, its major soy sourcing region.

## Theory of change

The Theories of Change of the projects analysed in this case study have a similar approach. They have short and long-term goals. The long-term goal is to detach agricultural expansion in South American countries from deforestation (clearing of native vegetation). Currently, legal frameworks in South America do allow the clearing of native vegetation for agricultural production. This long-term goal aims to achieve an optimal balance between environmental conservation and agriculture through sustainable production systems. Even if these countries have robust forest governance legal frameworks, its linked implementation strategies are not efficient enough to guarantee that the soy supply chain is free of illegal (not authorized) deforestation.

The short-term goal focuses on the removal of the illegal deforestation from the soy supply chain. Only when there are reliable and transparent instruments able to control and monitor deforestation within the supply chain that a zero-deforestation, for instance, can be included in the debate. To remove illegal deforestation from the soy supply chain, the theory of change focused on policy influencing aimed at strengthening policy implementation tools towards more efficient monitoring and control of land use change in the countries' specific contexts. The innovation proposed is to include governmental institutions as a crucial stakeholder to be part of the debate and as the implementer of the changes needed. For this, the central goal of the Lobby & Advocacy (L&A) strategy is to improve policy implementation through the establishment of Multi Stakeholders Platforms (MSP) or the inclusion of such agenda in already existing dialogue spaces between different stakeholders linked to the soy supply chain.

The goal of the MSPs is to work within the specific context and challenges of each country towards the improvement of the policy implementation tools to consolidate a more transparent and consistent accessible system to monitor and control deforestation within the soy supply chain. The Theories of Change includes, as the first step, the assessment of how the already existent and robust forest policy frameworks have been implemented by governmental agencies. The projects did not propose changes on the legal frameworks, but on its linked implementation tools (licenses, monitoring systems, etc....). The MSPs work, then, as dialogue space to promote a common understanding between civil society, private sector, and government towards the actions needed for improving the policy implementation tools linked to deforestation monitoring and control.

The two projects Theories of change are structured on three main elements:

- *Knowledge and Innovation Interventions (or Know-how and Innovation)*: develop innovative instruments for the improvement of policy implementation tools linked to deforestation monitoring and control; promote transparency within the soy supply chain; facilitate research on alternative productive models for fragile ecosystems; research for improved ecosystem preservation and native forest management; promote transparency within the supply chain.
- *Lobby and Advocacy Interventions (or Political Impact)*: improve deforestation policy design or implementation; influence key stakeholders for the compliance of existing deforestation policies and to commit to sustainable sourcing strategies; assure value chain and public sector alignment via policy influencing at an intercontinental level (producers and consumers countries).
- *Capacity Development Intervention (or Capacity Building)*: improve governmental capacities to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of policy implementation linked deforestation within the soy production systems; consolidate dialogue amongst different stakeholders within the soy supply chain; promote knowledge exchange between private sector, civil society and government and between different countries.

## Results and effectiveness

### Outcomes

As this case study includes two projects with a similar theory of change based on a L&A for policy influencing through the establishment of MSPs, the following analysis explores general achieved results and specific results by country. A complete overview of results from the projects' M&E system is provided in Annex 3.1 (Project 1424) and 3.2 (Project 1421).

The table below presents the projects' outcomes. In the following sub-sections, we describe the results by country into two main themes: **(1)** results linked to the MSPs origin, inclusive dialogue, and capacity building; and **(2)** the policy influencing strategy.

Outcome	Indicator	Achieved Results	Target	Remarks
		2019	2020	
Bolivia (project 1424)				
Agendas are set up: public and private sectors agree to make decisions for developing measures and regulations for enhancement of policies of the Use of Land and for making joint recommendations to the State	# CSOs/POs that are being trained or supported to effectively participate in decision making and dialogue	3	3	MSP has active members from the Civil Society, private sector, and government (ABT - Land Use and Forest Regulatory Agency). The MSP agreed on a proposal for the improvement of 2 policy implementation tools: land use planning and land clearing licenses, which are respectively approved and issued by ABT
National and departmental bodies, together with organizations of the soybean industry, enhance mechanisms, policies and regulations related to the Use of Land and Territorial Organization	# of policies, mechanisms and regulations of targeted public or private decision makers improved (disaggregated by kind of decision makers) as a result of the stakeholder dialogue	7	4	In total 7 policy implementation tools are improved, of which 5 are implemented by the government. All implementation tools are linked to procedures for analysing and issuing land use plans and land clearing (deforestation) licenses. The adoption of the improved tools is institutionalized and will continue to after the project closure.
	# of policies, mechanisms and regulations adopted by public or private decision makers	5	4	
Argentina, Paraguay, and China (project 1421)				
Agendas set: Private and public sector decision-makers agree to develop pilots to test the effectiveness of measures and regulations for eliminating deforestation or achieving zero-net deforestation within the soy value chain.	# CSOs/POs that are being trained or supported to effectively participate in decision making and dialogue	10	5	In Argentina, the MSP has active members from civil society and the private sector. Only recently, the local government environmental agency was engaged. In Paraguay, there is no MSP established, still in an articulation phase, close contact with the Environmental Commission of the National Deputy Chamber. In China, there is the Sustainable Soy Trade Platform (SSTP), a Solidaridad initiative in partnership with WWF, TNC, and Paulson Institute,

National & State bodies together with Private Soy Sector organizations successfully test the effectiveness and identify improvements of mechanisms, policies, regulations, and incentives linked to reducing / eliminating deforestation or deforestation rates related to soy production.	# of policies, mechanisms and regulations of targeted public or private decision makers improved (disaggregated by kind of decision makers) as a result of the stakeholder dialogue	2	3	In Argentina, a diagnostic of the current policy implementation tools and a proposal for improvements was elaborated by consultants and agreed by the MSP. Still, it is in a dialogue phase with the government for the implementation of the proposed improvements. In Paraguay, there was no progress.
	# of policies, mechanisms and regulations adopted by public or private decision makers	2	3	In China, the Sustainable Soy Trade Platform (SSTP) agreed on Guidelines for Sustainable Sourcing, which will be tested by the soy traders.

## Multi Stakeholder Platform - origin, inclusive dialogue, and capacity building

Analysed Results (Intermediate Outcomes)
<p><i>MSP initiating and strengthening:</i></p> <p>Stakeholders / MSP have better knowledge on sustainable solutions and how to implement no-deforestation policies in the soy supply-chain</p> <p>Capacity of CSOs, governments and private actors are strengthened to engage in no-deforestation policies implementation strategies in the soy supply-chain</p> <p>MSPs are willing to set these issues on their internal agenda</p> <p><i>MSP or direct policy influencing:</i></p> <p>Create awareness</p> <p>Influence policy agenda of decision-makers</p>

### General results linked to capacity building and knowledge exchange in both projects:

- The projects made possible that different actors with previous conflicting relations, such as civil society organizations, the private sector, and government, are now able to discuss common strategies and develop joint proposals for improving policy implementation tools. The MSPs broke an institutional barrier between these different sectors and created spaces that promote a more balanced dialogue between key actors around production and environmental issues.
- MSP members from Bolivia, Argentina, Paraguay, and traders from China participated in the International Seminar of Soy Trading in Brazil and visited soy producers in the Brazilian Pará state. A group of representatives of Chinese soy traders also visited soy producers in the region of Salta in Argentina. Although there were no concrete results from these trips (agreements, joined proposals, etc.), all the stakeholders mentioned them as relevant experiences of knowledge exchanging and as a stimulus to create a network and strengthen connections between the different actors and countries.

The specific results linked to capacity building are presented below by country.

### Bolivia - MSP implemented by the project in 2016

takeholder	Name	Role / status
Private Sector / Producers Associations	Asociación de Productores de Oleaginosas y Trigo (ANAPO) - national	Coordinator and Member
	Cámara Agropecuaria de Oriente (CAO) – national	Active
	Cargill	Recently committed to join
Civil Society Organisations	Solidaridad	Facilitator
	Fundación AVINA - national	Active member
	Fundación Amigos de la Naturaleza (FAN) - national	Active member

<i>Governmental Institution</i>	Autoridad de Fiscalización y Control Social de Bosques y Tierra de Santa Cruz (ABT) - national	Active member
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The project in Bolivia focuses on the Department of Santa Cruz (Chaco biome), which concentrates almost 90% of the soy production in Bolivia. The project's goal is to propose and engage with the government for the implementation of necessary improvements in policy implementation tools to better monitor and control deforestation. The engagement with the government and other key actors for the development and agreement on a proposal to improve policy implementation tools happen through a dialogue space, the Multi Stakeholders Platform (MSP).

In Bolivia, the coordination of the MSP (setting the agenda, organizing the meetings, etc.) is delegated to ANAPO, a former local partner of Solidaridad. ANAPO receives part of the project's budget for developing these activities. The MSP meetings take place in Santa Cruz four times per year. The next meeting is in June 2020, but due to the Coronavirus situation, it will be a meeting by distance, a challenge in the Bolivian unstable internet connection.

All the stakeholders cited as an initial background of the MSP the presence of previous tensions between the different actors from the private sector, civil society organizations, and government. Nowadays, all the stakeholders recognize that the establishment of a dialogue space within the MSP, which discussed and agreed on a proposal for improving policy implementation tools, is one of the central positive results of the project. However, at the beginning of the project, government and civil society organizations had doubt or were reluctant to participate in the MSP due to the fact of being coordinated by ANAPO, an association of soy producers. The involvement of the civil society organizations linked to social and environmental issues, for instance, was cited as a strategic decision expecting the inclusion of other sensitive themes in the debate, such as good practices in the production sector integrated with conservation and social impacts.

Regarding the involvement of the government, the political scenario is a central issue. In the deforestation context in Bolivia, both governmental organizations are central: the National Institute for Agrarian Reform (*Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria* - INRA) and the Forest Regulatory Agency (*Autoridad de Fiscalización y Control Social de Bosques y Tierra de Santa Cruz* - ABT). INRA is responsible for the implementation of the National Program of Agrarian Reform, a social policy through which land is granted to "landless" population, especially marginalised communities, or individuals with lack of resources to access land. Additionally, INRA is in charge of assuring that the "social function" of land is being complied with by the land beneficiaries. While the national strategy is promoting access to land, it also stimulates land clearing for agriculture focused on immediate income generation as a prerequisite to comply with the concept of "social function" of the land. Currently, debates on income generation through the sustainable use of natural resources, such as sustainable forest management or forest-agriculture integrated systems are not in place, so an indirect effect of the agrarian reform program is increasing deforestation. Although INRA demonstrated previous interest to participate in the project, which is still not crystalized, there is a current resurgence of this interest represented by an imminent signature of an MoU between INRA and Solidaridad. All the stakeholders highlighted that the absence of INRA in the MSP weakened the discussion on deforestation in a broader sense, such as deforestation linked to the current definition of the "social function" of the land and more transparency necessary on the implementation of the National Program of Agrarian Reform (access to land).

Contrary to INRA, ABT is involved in the MSP, and some interviewees reported that this involvement was possible because ABT is a technical governmental agency not so inserted in the national political context. All the stakeholders evaluated that the involvement of ABT is one of the main successes of the project. ABT is a Regulatory Agency that analyses, approves, and monitors the implementation of Land Use Plans and Deforestation permits. The improvement of such monitoring and control tools was a central strategy of the project to promote the removal of illegal deforestation from the soy supply chain.

Due to a lack of policy implementation, some producers still are clearing native vegetation without proper authorization even if they risk receiving fines for illegal practices. From the producers' perspective, the simplification of the procedures for the approval of Land Use Plans and Deforestation Licenses at a farm level is the most important result achieved by the project and increases soy producers' compliance with the policy framework.

According to some interviewees, in the national context, the MSP is an example that improvements can be achieved through balanced and open dialogue between stakeholders with different interests. The absence of traders in the MSP was, although, evaluated as one of the weaknesses. Recently, Cargill signed an agreement for its participation in the MSP being already part of one of its meetings, which is an opportunity to involve the private sector on the use of policy implementation tools to monitor their supply chain. Finally, with the recent changes in the political scenario, with the current transition government, there is an expectation that the soy production increases its connection to the European and Asian markets.

The project implementation included trainings on management and specific subjects involving MSP members. The exchange and learning trips to Brazil and Argentina resulted in the incorporation of knowledge regarding the improvement and implementation of best practices in the Bolivian context. The MSP members shared common tools and procedures to monitor and evaluate different aspects of policy implementation linked to monitoring land use change and deforestation, aligning the analysis and inputs of all stakeholders. ANAPO, the MSP coordinator acquired skills and tools to manage and report on Projects to current and potential donors and partners.

The project achieved a common ground among the MSP members in understanding on different subjects and promoted equal discussions and proposals for improvement of best practices to reduce illegal deforestation in the Bolivian context. After the participation on the project activities and the exchange of point of views at the MSP meetings, the members broaden and enriched its portfolio of potential solutions and proposals to the specific challenges of the Bolivian context. It is expected that the MSP will continue as a dialogue space independent of the project and that it will include a broader debate around sustainability and good practices in the production sector integrating other production systems, such as cattle and other crops, and relevant environmental and social issues.

#### **Argentina - MSP implemented by the project in 2017**

takeholder group	Name	Role / status
<i>Private Sector / Producers Associations</i>	Cooperativa Agropecuaria de Acopiadores Federados (CAAF) – national	Active member
	Cámara de la Industria Aceitera de la República Argentina (CIARA) – national	Active member
	Asociación Argentina de Productores en Siembra Directa (AAPRESID) - national	Active member
	Sociedad Rural Salteña - local	Active member

<i>Civil Society Organisations</i>	Solidaridad	Coordinator
	ProYungas - local	Active member
	The Nature Conservancy (TNC) - national/international	Active member
<i>Governmental Institution</i>	Secretaría de Ambiente de Salta - local	Active member

The MSP focuses on the region of Salta, an isolated area when compared to other productive areas of Argentina. Salta is one of the eight Argentinian provinces that are in the Chaco biome, the biome under the highest deforestation pressure in the country. In Argentina, the MSP was established by the project in 2017 with representatives of producers, intermediates (warehouses owners), soy traders, and civil society organizations. The focus of the MSP is enhancing policy implementation tools linked to an already existing policy framework, which stakeholders see as a concrete action that can directly contribute to removing illegal deforestation from the soy supply chain.

Regarding the capacity building of MSP members, the project promoted a meaningful participation in the dialogue among different stakeholders. The private sector actors reported to have an increased understanding capacity about governmental procedures and regulations regarding soy production. The members of the MSP collaborated on planning and on the implementation of the proposed interventions. The stakeholder's participation was relevant in detecting improvements opportunities and proposing changes. Different than in the Bolivian context, most of the actors are already part of other Multi Stakeholders Platforms and did not mention the possibility of the MSP linked to the project being a permanent dialogue space. Instead, the actors mentioned that it is already possible to understand that the acquired knowledge and lessons learned in the project's MSP are being transferred to other dialogue spaces through these actors.

Even though the engagement process with the local government in Salta province took more time than expected, frustrating MSP members regarding the project's progress, the MSP was able to engage the local government at the end of 2018. The stakeholders expect that the local environmental agency of Salta will be more present in the MSP from now on as they are already working for the implementation of the proposed improvements.

Some interviewees cited that the local government's resistance to participating in the MSP at the beginning of the project was linked to the positions of two different groups of the local environmental agency. One group is open for dialogue and does not see conflicts in the fact that an external group, such as the MSP, is proposing improvements in internal procedures. Another group is resistant to changes and do not feel comfortable following a proposal made by an external group. In general, the local government sees the MSP as a positive opportunity for the public sector to be closer to civil society organizations and private actors through associations and sectoral organizations. As the MSP is mainly focused on improving the implementation of the Forest Law, stakeholders do not see the necessity of other government sectors to be part of the MSP besides the Secretary of the Environment.

There are other dialogue platforms active in the region of Salta, such as the Agroideal, part of the Collaboration for Forest and Agriculture (CFA) a partnership between TNC, WWF and NWF; the socio-economic council of the Salta province; and the governmental commission for the sustainable expansion

of the cattle sector (MBGI - Manejo de Bosques con Ganadería Integrada). The project decided for the establishment of a new MSP due to difficulties in integrating its agenda into already existing dialogue platforms. Stakeholders highlighted that there is a lack of integration between the MSP agenda and action plans of these other spaces even if most of the MSP members are also part of these other platforms. However, according to the coordinator of the CFA in Argentina, both initiatives, the MSP and the CFA are broadly complementary as strengthening policy implementation is a fundamental piece for the implementation of no-deforestation agreements by soy traders, the focus of CFA. The MSP is supporting policies that might help or facilitate their implementation.

Finally, stakeholders also highlighted the need to consider other conservation strategies besides combating illegal deforestation and the need to see soy as a productive activity integrated into other production activities, such as cattle. In the Argentinian portion of the Chaco biome, forests are classified under the “green” category by the National Forest law, allowing the land conversion for agriculture, and under the “yellow” category, which allows sustainable use of forest resources. Currently, the soy sector is not the main driver of deforestation in Chaco, as most of the area under the “green” forest category is already cleared and occupied by consolidated agriculture. However, stakeholders highlighted the fact that the soy sector might be “transferring” deforestation to other sectors, such as cattle production that is expanding in the “yellow” forest category without a proper monitoring and control system. The “yellow” forest category allows sustainable use or integrated forest-productive systems.

### **Paraguay**

In Paraguay, there is no MSP established directly linked to the project. However, Solidaridad is part of other already existent multi-stakeholder platforms. One of these platforms is the UNDP Green Commodity Platform (since 2013), which includes NGOs, financial actors, and other stakeholders. Another one is the Roundtable on Sustainable Finance, where Solidaridad supported the development of a Sustainability Risk Framework for the financial sector. Finally, another platform is the Sustainable Production working group for the Paraguayan Chaco (2017) that, although not linked to the soy sector, includes discussions on joint solutions to productive problems and for the sustainable use of natural resources (climate change problems). The main project’s strategy in Paraguay is then to integrate the debate on the improvement of policy implementation into these already existing national platforms.

In parallel, the central strategy of the project has been enhancing the relationship established with the Environmental Commission of the National Chamber of Deputies, and a joint representative of the National Producers’ Cooperatives (UNICOOP) and the Biotechnology Institute (INBIO). With the National Chamber of Deputies, Solidaridad is supporting the development of a national regulation linked to forest fires. Solidaridad sees this as an entrance door for starting the debate on improvements of policy implementation linked to land use and deforestation. In Paraguay, the unsolved land ownership structure is a root cause of weak environmental governance policy implementation.

### **China (& India)**

In China, the project integrates its agenda in the already existent Sustainable Soy Trade Platform (SSTP), a partnership between Solidaridad, TNC, WWF, and Paulson Institute. The SSTP, with the participation of international civil society organizations and Chinese traders’ representatives, elaborated and agreed on Guidelines for Sustainable Soy Sourcing. Chinese traders plan to test the SSTP guidelines in the Brazilian market. The inclusion of India in the scope of the project will follow a similar strategy of agreeing on guidelines for sustainable soy sourcing. The guidelines for the Indian market could be tested in Argentina, an important soy sourcing for India. Paraguay does not have direct trading links to China and does not play a relevant role in the Indian market. Bolivia does not play a relevant role in the Chinese and Indian markets.

## Policies, norms, frameworks, and mechanisms improved / changed

Analysed Results (Final Outcomes)
<p><i>MSP strengthening:</i> MSPs propose and adopt changes to their own L&amp;A strategy/goals and way of working</p> <p><i>MSP or direct policy influencing:</i> Proposing policy and legal changes to decision-makers Lobbying for policy and legal changes Decision-makers adopt policy / legal changes Supporting / ensuring policy implementation and legal enforcement</p>

The stages of policy change are classified according to the following stages:

1. Public and corporate decision-makers have better knowledge on issues of sustainability and inclusiveness (awareness creation) – this could be based on policy reviews or position papers
2. Public and corporate decision-makers are willing to make use of knowledge to develop, implement and enforce better policies (agenda setting)
3. Public and corporate decision-makers undertake / request for policy recommendations
4. Decision-makers propose policy and legal changes
5. Proposed policy and legal changes are adopted
6. Improved policy implementation and enforcement

The table below presents a summary of the stages of policy change by country, and after we present a more descriptive analysis of these results.

L&A policy target and background		L&A strategy by MSP	Current status
Formulating needed improvements of governmental monitoring tools linked to land use change and deforestation in a property level	Bolivia	Lobby and capacity building with ABT (Forest Regulatory Agency) for the digitalization of the internal procedures, monitoring and control systems linked to deforestation within the soy supply chain	Stage 6 - Improved policy implementation and development of guidelines for Land Use Plan and Deforestation Permission (POP & PDM). Improvement of the deforestation and fires monitoring systems, development of a Satellite Image Web Bank, a diagnosis of environmental regulations for production systems, and improvement of the internal quality and control system (ABT).
		Lobby and capacity building with INRA for transparency on land distribution and the social function of the land	Stage 1 - Agenda setting, the engagement process restarted several times due to the political position of INRA regarding the productive sector and political instability with very often changes of directors
	Argentina	Lobby and capacity building of the Environment Secretary of Salta province for the digitalization and automatization of the licensing process for land use and deforestation permissions	Stage 4 - Development of guides and manuals with the description of the analysis internal procedures and processes for the issuing of licenses for deforestation integrated in land use plans. Decision-makers started to be engaged on the implementation of proposed improvements
	Paraguay	Strengthen the implementation tools of the already existent environmental policy framework focused on monitoring and control deforestation within the soy supply chain	Stage 1 - Agenda setting

Developing sustainable sourcing guidelines to be used by traders	China	Make use of the already existing Sustainable Soy Trading Platform (SSTP) to implement pilots to test sustainable sourcing guidelines	N.A.
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**Bolivia**

The policy influencing strategy in Bolivia focused on strengthening governmental land use planning monitoring and control tools implemented by the Forest Regulatory Agency (ABT). ANAPO, the MSP coordinator, had already worked with ABT developing studies to identify the weaknesses of the licensing processes from the producers’ perspective. As a first step, and considering the previous studies, a consultancy elaborated a diagnostic on how ABT internal analysis procedures and monitoring systems were being implemented and proposed an improvement strategy. The MSP discussed the proposal and the stakeholders agreed on the improvement of four implementation tools linked to forest governance that are under the scope of ABT: Property Land Use Plan (*Plano de Ordenamiento Predial* - POP) and Authorization for Deforestation (*Permisos de Desmonte* - PDM), the deforestation monitoring system and the development of a satellite image web bank to support the internal analysis. These two policy implementation tools were paper-based processes following not clear procedures. The internal ABT procedures have now a guideline that clarifies each step and tasks on the analysis, audit, and monitoring processes.

ABT institutionalized the improvements proposed by the MSP, and these instruments are currently being implemented through digital processes, which significantly reduced the time between the request and the final analysis from months to days. The digitalization of the policy implementation tools (POP and PDM) also followed the ISO9001 standard. The audit and control of both permissions are now made through remote systems and satellite images. ABT implemented better mapping systems for monitoring strategies, avoiding human errors, and with a significant reduction of time between the land use change and when it is detected and processed - before it was taking around 20 days and now it takes 7 days. Governmental authorities can check if a deforestation event is illegal or legal (authorized deforestation). However, this is not a publicly available system and, therefore, is not yet possible to link the status of deforestation (legal or illegal) within the soy supply chain.

**Argentina**

In Argentina, the National Forest Law classifies forest cover by colour: “red” for strict forest conservation; “yellow” that allows sustainable forest management or integrated production systems, and; “green” where forest conversion is allowed only through an approved land use plan and deforestation permission. The project focuses on improving policy implementation tools linked to the land use plan and deforestation permissions in the areas under the “green” category. However, the expansion of cattle production in areas under the “yellow” category is currently the main driver of deforestation in the region of Salta.

The analysis of land use plans and deforestation permissions by the local government takes more than a year, even if the law determines a maximum of 60 days. The digitalization of the procedures would make the analysis processes possible in a much shorter time. The MSP analysed and agreed on a proposal resulted from a consultancy that developed guidelines and protocols describing all the procedures through standards for an improvement strategy. A capacity building plan is being developed to involve local government staff that is directly linked to these internal analyses and procedures.

However, the digitalization of the request’s analysis and processes for the approval of Land Use Plans and Authorizations for Deforestation is not yet tested and implemented by the local government. The problem faced by the local government is the need to adopt a new IT system and to integrate it with already existing databases and systems. The new system will need to integrate data from at least the previous 5 years to be able to implement the proposed improvements. A digitalized monitoring system

based in satellite images is already in place and was not part of the MSP proposed improvements. It is not clear, however, if this monitoring system is efficient in classifying illegal and legal deforestation from the detected alerts.

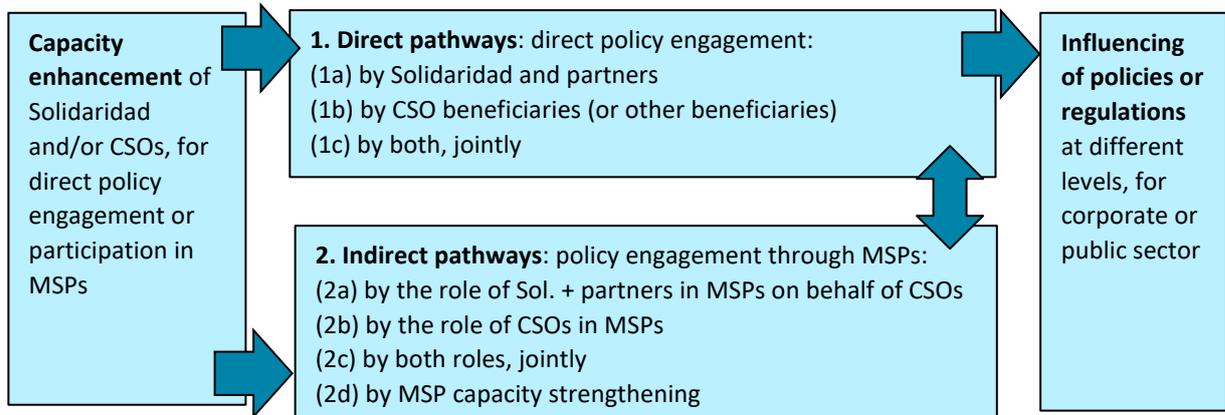
### **Paraguay**

In Paraguay, the lack of a consolidated land tenure system is the main issue for the implementation of a forest governance policy framework, which is well developed but hardly implemented. In the national governance context in Paraguay, there is more than one governmental institution linked to land use change and deforestation, so it is hard to map which are the priorities in improving policy implementation tools. Other civil society organizations are active in supporting the government on monitoring deforestation in protected areas making use of tools developed by civil society organizations, such as the Global Forest Watch.

There was no progress made by the project linked to the improvement of deforestation monitoring and control policy implementation tools. However, the project implemented a consultancy work in 2018/2019 that described all the problems within the regulation of the soy sector in Paraguay.

## Role and strategies by Solidaridad

### L&A pathways



Note: PI = Policy Influencing; CE = Capacity Enhancement

The pathway of influence of the two projects included in this case study are slightly different in each of the focus countries:

- **Bolivia:** indirect pathways (**2b and 2d**) by the Solidaridad role of facilitator while a local organization (ANAPO) coordinates the MSP, by the members of the MSP and by strengthening their capacities;
- **Argentina:** indirect pathways of influence (**2a and 2d**) through the leading role of Solidaridad in the MSP added to the role of partners that are part of the MSP;
- **Paraguay:** as there is no MSP established in Paraguay, the pathway for policy influencing is a direct pathway (**1a**) by Solidaridad and partners; and
- **China:** mostly an indirect pathway (**2a**) through the Sustainable Soy Trade Platform (SSTP) linked to complementary initiatives.

In India, it was not possible to identify the pathway of influence as the project is still in a scoping phase for expanding its activities in the country. Probably, it could be a similar pathway as the one adopted in China. The only context in which a direct pathway could be identified is the case of Paraguay, where there is no MSP directly linked to the project and, consequently, where Solidaridad directly engaged with the government as a strategy to strengthen policy implementation.

Both projects aim to improve policy implementation tools through the establishment of MSPs and networks between the stakeholders in the countries. Policy implementation improvement will lead to the effective removal of illegal deforestation from the soy supply-chain (short-term goal), and consequently, strengthen its transparency (long-term goal). Through the short-term goal, Solidaridad's vision is that civil society organizations and government are capacitated, first, for the dialogue to agree on necessary improvements, and second, for the implementation and institutionalized maintenance of these improvements. The private sector is then able to integrate the benefits from efficient policy implementation in their supplying monitoring systems as a reliable and public available tool, pushing the sector towards transparency linked to the long-term goal of removing deforestation from the soy supply chain.

### Solidaridad's role in the MSPs

In Bolivia, ANAPO, a local partner of Solidaridad, coordinates the MSP and Solidaridad plays a facilitator and mediator role. As there were previous tensions between producers, civil society organizations, and government, Solidaridad is also recognized as an external actor that engaged with each of the stakeholders. In this sense, Solidaridad's role in Bolivia was also central considering the previous stakeholders' doubts and uncertainties about being linked to each other in a dialogue space.

In Argentina, Solidaridad is the MSP coordinator and leads the engagement with all the stakeholders. Solidaridad has previous connections to all the organizations that are now members of the MSP through initiatives for the development of RTRS certification standards. Solidaridad is seen as a good coordinator and facilitator of the work within the MSP. Stakeholders also highlighted the relevance of the Solidaridad's engagement with key-actors in the soy sector, such as: the Cooperative of Warehouses owners (CAAF), that plays a crucial role in the stock and transport of soy playing an intermediary role between producers and traders within the soy supply chain, and; the National Chamber of Oil Industry and Grain Exporters (CIARA), which has 35 associated trading companies that represent 95% of the soy exported from Argentina.

### **Government as an actor and the target of policy influencing**

The engagement with governmental bodies has two perspectives, the government as a target and the government as an actor. In Solidaridad's policy influencing strategy, the government is seen as a target and as an instrument to promote changes while it plays an active role as an actor part of the MSPs. In this sense, the balance between the different roles of the government within the MSP, a target, or an active member, is directly shaped by the political context of each country. If the government sees its participation in the MSP and the proposed improvements of its policy implementation tools as a way to gain political benefits, it is easily involved in the debate. On the opposite, when the government sees its involvement as a way to lose political power, the resistance of being part of the MSP as an actor is higher.

In Bolivia, it was possible to identify two different situations linked to the involvement of the government in the MSP. First, ABT was easily involved in the process because, as a Regulatory agency it has no political power in the national context and saw the opportunity to increase it through the improvements of its Regulatory policy implementation tools. In contrast, INRA, responsible for the land tenure system in the country, having a central role in the national political context, resisted to participate in the debate. The engagement process with INRA needed also to restart several times during the process due to the political instability and the constant changes of directors.

### **Gender engagement strategies**

In the scope of the projects' proposals, gender strategies were not mentioned or part of the projects' central activities. The interviews with the MSP members gave us some elements. First, the MSP in Argentina has only two women in a group of representatives of eight organizations in total. In Bolivia, we found a better gender balance between the MSP members, two women in a group of representatives of five organizations in total. Second, some of the stakeholders pointed out that Solidaridad brought the gender debate into the MSP in Bolivia, which had some reflections in the internal environment of the MSP members' organizations. An example is an internal discussion in ANAPO around the fact that it never had any of its director's positions occupied by women. Another example is linked to the formulation of a call for scholarships focused on supporting the study of sons of producers associated with ANAPO. The discussion about the inclusion of the term "daughter" in the call brought some good reflections on the need to explicitly mention the gender inclusion in the organizational documents.

**Role of Dutch Embassy:** the projects in Bolivia, Argentina, Paraguay, and China do not have any links to the local Dutch Embassies.

## Impacts, sustainability, and systemic change

### Impacts

Even though the countries' different legal frameworks and political contexts somehow challenged a unique engagement strategy, Solidaridad achieved positive results and promoted policy implementation tools linked to deforestation monitoring and control at a property level. However, the projects did not define clear expected impacts or how they would be measured by the projects' monitoring and evaluation frameworks. The only mentioned expected impact by one of the projects (project 1421) was reducing the number of hectares of deforestation and deforestation rates linked to soy activities. To measure this kind of impact, the project needs to rely on external deforestation monitoring systems, either those from other organizations' initiatives, such as Global Forest Watch (WRI) and Agroideal (TNC, WWF, and NWF), or those implemented by the governmental regulatory agencies. This will be very useful even if changes in deforested hectares and deforestation rates will be difficult to attribute to Solidaridad projects' results and the soy supply chain – at least an indication of contribution can be provided through qualitative assessments.

### Pilots and scaling

The projects do not work with pilot studies, but some of the stakeholders highlighted that pilots could give a better understanding of the potential project impacts and lead to scaling-up. According to some interviewees, the implementation of pilot studies in specific regions could be a strategy to test and measure how the adopted policy implementation tools could effectively improve soy production. The pilot studies could also contribute to checking the quality of the Land Use Plans on the ground, being a bridge for the integration of other environmental issues, such as biodiversity and ecosystem services conservation, and the promotion of good practices towards sustainable production.

The scaling-up elements from the projects are listed below:

- The stakeholders see the possibility to maintain the MSPs as continuous dialogue spaces. The continuation of the MSP could bring other issues into the discussion, such as those linked to the sustainability of production systems, including biotechnology (transgenic), agriculture expansion, and its social and environmental impacts.
- MSP members understand that to continue the dialogue space it will be necessary to include other productive sectors, such as cattle (beef and dairy), which is currently the main driver of deforestation in Chaco biome.
- In Bolivia, Cargill has recently committed to join the MSP seeing it as an opportunity to improve the monitoring strategy of their suppliers. Although there were several attempts to integrate soy traders into the MSP (i.e. ADM in Bolivia and Argentina, Cargill in Argentina, and Caniob and Alicorp in Bolivia), the traders were not part of the MSP during the discussion, agreement, and implementation of the proposed improvements of the policy implementation tools. However, the recent Cargill demonstration of interest in being engaged with the project shows that soon soy traders might be making use of the government monitoring system to monitor deforestation in their supply chain.
- The implementation of the project that includes activities in Argentina, Paraguay, and China (project 1421) is a scaling-up from the project implemented in Bolivia (project 1424). The engagement with the government and the implementation of the proposed improvements of policy implementation tools in Bolivia generated lessons and inspired the implementation of a similar project in a different region/country.

### Sustainability

A good exit strategy already adopted by the projects is the development of guidelines and protocols for the internal procedures of policy implementation tools that can support the institutionalization of the proposed and achieved improvements in the Land Use Plan tools and Authorizations for Deforestation in Argentina and Bolivia, and the guidelines for Sustainable Soy Sourcing in China. These guidelines can also be a support to avoid the loss of the capacity built once the government changes and in unstable

political scenarios. Another possible exit strategy is building a monitoring strategy focusing on the civil society capacity to monitor the consolidation and the adoption of the improved policy implementation tools by local governments.

For the continuation of the projects it is important, first, to build a strategy to understand the projects' impacts "on the ground" once the policy implementation tools start to be in place. This strategy could be focused on testing the projects' innovations on a specific region in each country, at a producer level. The pilots would lead to not only to improvements on the existing developments but to new potential innovations from the producers' perspective and to the integration of conservation with the production strategies in a farm level management strategy. With this, it would be possible to also consider a monitoring strategy to assess the effectiveness of the promoted changes in the policy implementation. Additionally, another relevant issue moving forward would be able to engage with INRA in Bolivia and with this address land use planning to enhance and maximize both conservation and production simultaneously.

Due to the increasing number of different multi stakeholders' platforms, a good exit strategy would be to consider either integrating the projects' agenda into already existing platforms or structuring a continuity strategy including other relevant agenda in the projects' established MSPs. However, the integration of the project's goals in already existing platforms could result in the risk of diluting the focus of the projects on deforestation linked issues, and the flexibility and manoeuvrability capacity of the MSP members. In the perspective of the consolidation of the established MSPs as a dialogue space, some members indicated the wish to consider a broader debate including other production sectors and other sustainability issues besides deforestation, such as good practices for climate change mitigation and adaptation, benefits and harms from the adoption of biotechnology (transgenic), and a better consideration of social and cultural local impacts linked to commodities supply-chains. However, broadening the scope of the current MSP could risk to a weaken decision-taken capacity as well as losing the focus on addressing deforestation specific issues on a short term perspective.

Finally, it is important to consider the promotion of the public access to the information generated by the improved monitoring and control systems. The public availability of the information linked to the status of deforestation (legal or illegal) would increase the exclusion of illegal deforestation from the soy supply chain. And linked to the strategy of turning the information available, the exit strategy could focus on the potential integration of the public monitoring and control system with already existing platforms, such as in Argentina the Agroideal (coordinated by TNC in partnership with WWF and NWF, but in Argentina focus on soy production in Chaco biome) or the Trase platform (implemented by Global Canopy and Stockholm Environment Institute) and promoting transparency within different supply chain in South America, such as soy, beef, corn and others. Although the integration of information from the improved policy implementation tools and public monitoring systems with other supply chain information platforms is a potential outcome from the project, technically and strategically this would demand more time and planning as these platforms (i.e. Agroideal and Trase) have different goals within the soy supply chain such as increasing the monitoring capacity and modelling future impact risks.

## Systemic Changes

In the following table we check to what extent systemic changes have taken place.

Systemic issue	Change *	Remark
Trust and dialogue between stakeholders	Green	Realised, the MSPs are trustful dialogue spaces between stakeholders in Bolivia and Argentina, but not in Paraguay.
Coordination and alignment between stakeholders / shared vision	Blue	In Bolivia, there is a good alignment between the stakeholders. In Argentina, the government still is more passive but improving its participation, and in Paraguay still, the opportunity is in place.
Change in power dynamics	Yellow	Despite improved trust and dialogue in Bolivia and Argentina, whether there is a change in power dynamics is doubtful
Strengthening of civic space (civic empowerment, both men and women)	Yellow	Mostly internally, but externally doubtful.
Shift mindsets and norms of targeted decision / policy makers	Blue	Policy makers changed. In Bolivia, a previous engagement between Anapo and ABT made the changes sustainable than in Argentina. In Argentina there have been shifts in the political engagement but not necessarily linked to the project. In both countries as the achieved changes are still subject to changes in the governmental structure and representatives
Integrating no-deforestation in the soy supply-chain	Blue	Even if it is not possible to link the improvement of policy implementation tools to the integration of no-deforestation in the soy supply-chain, there is a starting point in terms of a better understanding of the legal status of deforestation events, which can contribute to less deforestation in a long-term perspective
Increased transparency / accountability of stakeholders	Blue	There is a short term expectative to turn the information generated by the policy implementation tools improved publicly available. In addition, the improvement towards an automatization and digitalization of deforestation licensing and monitoring tools achieved more transparent procedures within the governmental structures and have an indirect effect of helping to decrease corruption in the public systems in general.
Social and environmental sustainability within the soy supply-chain	Blue	While advances have been made on environmental sustainability issues, there is little work done on social issues, which are not the in scope of the projects. The continuation strategy could focus on the maintenance of the MSP as a dialogue space to discuss other environmental and social issues within the soy supply chain.
Increased monitoring and learning at sector level	Blue	In Bolivia, monitoring the strategy of the government is a policy goal. In Arg. there is a monitoring system, which is good, but it is more about how they link to the new tools to be introduced. Responsibilities are clear.
Improved access to markets	Yellow	No, but still is an opportunity considering the long-term goals of the projects: the removal of illegal deforestation from the soy supply chain will open space for discussing zero-deforestation strategies that can give more access to markets that are increasing the demand for sustainable sources.

(\*) yes = 0 / green; moderate = 1 / blue; no = 2 / yellow.

## Contribution by Solidaridad and external factors

The previously presented overview of the projects' results, strategies, and impacts showed that Solidaridad played a central role in the project implementation, either being the MSP coordinator, a facilitator of the dialogue, or the promoter of engagement of different stakeholders in the process. The projects also promoted capacity building through the MSPs and knowledge exchange events among the different countries. The projects are well integrated into the Global Soy Initiative of Solidaridad in China and Brazil and have the potential to be linked to India soon.

Following are external factors considered to have positively or negatively contributed the two projects that are part of this case study:

- *The Coronavirus outbreak* was mentioned as a negative external factor because, with social distance measures, long-distance meetings are challenging in some contexts. However, the Coronavirus outbreak was also surprisingly described as having a positive influence on the project. The consequences of the Coronavirus crises highlighted and validated the importance and relevance of remote monitoring systems and the digitalization of procedures.
- In Bolivia, *the political instability* in the last years also influenced the outcomes of the project. The governmental institution directly involved in the project, the Forest Regulatory Agency (ABT), had its director changed three times since the beginning of the project. In 2019, ABT replaced all its staff after the resignation of the elected president. The political instability also influenced the absence of the National Institute for Agrarian Reform (INRA) in the project. Finally, some stakeholders pointed out that there is an expectation for a better dialogue between the private sector, civil society, and government after the transition government.
- In Argentina, *political and economic instabilities* negatively affected the project progress. Because of the election process last year, there were replacements in a series of high-level positions of the Ministry of the Environment. The director of the local environmental agency of Salta was replaced in December 2019 and is promoting the government engagement in the MSP and internal discussions for the implementation of the proposed improvements of the policy implementation tools.
- *Swine flu & US/China trade war* caused a decrease in the prices of soy in the last years. With less economic margins for profit, improvements towards sustainability lost space in the supply chain debates. After these contextual events and some internal changes in the managing structure of Solidaridad in China, a new approach is starting to be implemented. The aim is to bring the Chinese political environment into the discussion. However, it is not possible to understand yet how fast sustainability debates are going to evolve from this new approach.

## Insights, lessons, and recommendations

### Key insights & lessons learned

- The engagement with multiple stakeholders within the soy commodity supply chain and the adoption of the L&A strategy focused on policy influencing was based on previous experiences by Solidaridad through its initiatives for the promotion of certification schemes within the soy supply chain, in Bolivia, Argentina as well as Paraguay. Yet, the results in these three countries have differed widely. In Bolivia progress has been achieved with ABT but much less so with INRA. In Argentina mainly local government has been involved, but only after considerable efforts. In Paraguay not much policy engagement has been achieved. From a consumer country perspective, in China, Solidaridad has been focusing on engagement with the soy traders and consumer companies. These differences are linked to the political and economic contexts in at least two of the countries. In Bolivia, the project faced an unstable political transition period, and in this context, it was easier to engage with a more technical government institution (ABT) than with a more political government institution (INRA). In Argentina, the project faced the economic and social national crises together with a period of national and regional elections, which made the engagement with public actors slower than in Bolivia. Finally, in Paraguay, the centralized governmental decisions and the context of interactions between governmental institutions, private sectors and civil society organizations seems to be a barrier for the establishment of an MSP and the project is still exploring other engagement strategies, such as being part of other platforms and opening a direct dialogue with the government.
- The type of MSPs established, the L&A strategy having been adopted, and the role played by Solidaridad also varied by country. This variation is essential for adapting to the local conditions, not only from a legal framework perspective but also considering geographical / environmental priorities, sector dynamics, cultural diversity, and power structures between organizations. While in Bolivia Solidaridad played a more indirect role, leaving the initiative to the MSP leading organization (Anapo), in Argentina Solidaridad played a more direct role. This difference is linked either to previous relationships between Solidaridad and other private sector and civil society actors or to the presence of other multi stakeholder platforms and the choice between building a new platform or integrating the project goals into already existing platforms. In general, the projects made use of different strategies to adapt to different national contexts. It seems that where Solidaridad could link up to existing platforms, potentially the case of Paraguay, this will not necessarily be more effective.
- In Bolivia, it is plausible, given the improvement of implementation tools linked to forest governance that are under the scope of ABT, that there is a decline in illegal deforestation and a contribution by the project. However, deforestation rates have not been monitored nor has there been a qualitative assessment of changes and the contribution by the project, so this contribution remains uncertain and would need to be checked in a long-term perspective. In Argentina, any contribution by the project to reduced deforestation remains more uncertain.
- As far as we can judge, apart from positive responses to one exchange visit, there have been no concrete results linked to the inclusion of China as one consumer market into the projects' target countries. The direct link between China and some of the target countries is not present as Bolivia, for instance, does not play a relevant role in the Chinese soy consumer market and Paraguay is not a direct supplier to China due to trading agreements restrictions. However, positive development from complementary Solidaridad's initiatives are the establishment of the Sustainable Soy Sourcing Platform in China and the linked agreement on Sustainable Soy Sourcing Guidelines, which are going to be tested in the Brazilian context. Even if the target countries do not play a relevant role in the Chinese soy consumer market, raising awareness on the sustainability issues, specially deforestation risks, is crucial to align the global soy demand sector towards a transition to a more sustainable soy sector. The influence of China in this process is key due to its global role and, as for the time being, EU is the only major player assuming the sustainability debate from the consumer side. The decision to include India in the project as a target consumer market is going to expand the projects' strategies

into the Argentina soy exports, as more than 90% of the soy oil consumed in India comes from Argentina.

- The projects did not work with pilot studies, for instance pilot areas where improved policies would be tested, and results monitored. Some of the stakeholders highlighted that pilots could have provided a better understanding of the potential project impacts and lead to scaling-up of impacts. Pilots could have been part of the policy improvement process, for instance, as a strategy to test the policy tools before being adopted by the implementor (governmental institutions). However, the projects focused on, first, promoting policy changes which could be later tested through pilots for further improvements considering on-the-ground evidences.
- While advances have been made on environmental sustainability issues, there is little work done on social issues, which is indeed out of the scope of the projects. For the maintenance of the MSP as a dialogue space, some of its members indicated the necessity of inclusion of other environmental and social issues linked to soy supply chain, which would request a broader projects' scope, timeframe, and budget.
- There is potential for scaling-up in different ways, in terms of new issues brought into dialogue by the MSPs, the inclusion of other sectors to combat deforestation, or the inclusion of new stakeholders. However, it seems that broadening the MSPs scopes would not lead to concrete actions in a short-term perspective, either due to the complexity of social linked contexts in each country or to the limited timespan of the projects.
- Implementation risks of projects involving different stakeholders are difficult to determine in advance. Noteworthy are the trade war between China and USA, the Swine flu, the Coronavirus pandemic, the worsening of the economic crises and elections in Argentina, and political conflicts, government transitions, and fire events in Bolivia. Within these relatively unstable contexts (especially political context when including governmental bodies), the projects have shown flexibility in timing, methods, and use of resources, especially those linked to the engagement with local governmental bodies.
- Political instability is the main factor to be considered while engaging with the government. A strategy to mitigate the political instability adopted by the project in Bolivia and Argentina is organizing the results in manuals and guides that can serve as a capacity building tool and be easily adopted by the government staff in constant change. It is easier to engage with the government if the project can create value for the governmental work (e.g. improving the quality of their work). The ideal for replicating the projects' policy influencing strategy is to have a previous consolidated relationship, ideally with the government, but also with the private sector and civil society organizations, and use the MSP as a space to socially legitimise the improvements needed and to bring into the government attention the interests from different stakeholders.

## **Recommendations**

- For the continuation of the projects it is important, first, to bring key-actors that are more locally active to include an "on the ground" perspective showing the impact of policy implementation tools. This suggests that pilot activities on the ground are important to demonstrate impact. With this, it would be possible to also consider a monitoring strategy to assess the effectiveness of the promoted changes in the policy implementation, albeit at a local scale. Additionally, it would be interesting to implement a monitoring strategy able to capture changes in actors' interrelation and behaviour changes (i.e. in Bolivia actors that were not used to be part of the same platform are now able to build on future work together; soy traders are open to increase the use information generated by policy implementation for their own monitoring systems).
- In the perspective of the consolidation of the established MSPs as a dialogue space, there is an indication that such space would need to consider a broader debate including other production sectors and other sustainability issues besides deforestation, such as good practices for climate change mitigation and adaptation, benefits and harms from the adoption of biotechnology (transgenic), and a better consideration of social and cultural local impacts linked to commodities supply-chains. Although the inclusion of different themes and stakeholders is not part of the projects'

scope, and could change the impact scale, in a long-term perspective, this would attract the interest of different production sectors and stakeholders linked to deforestation consolidating the impact of the MSP as a policy change strategy. An alternative is either broadening the MSP by the inclusion of different stakeholders directly linked to deforestation issues maintaining the goal of improvement policy implementation tools in the national contexts, or the establishment of smaller MSPs focused on a specific geography/region able to include other issues and scopes such as social and sustainable production issues.

- While it is a long-term process for improving the implementation of the policy framework, it will be very useful to monitor deforested hectares and deforestation rates in order to acquire at least an indication of the contribution by the soy value chain and a contribution by this project to the observed changes. Failing to do so implies that the impact of proposed policy changes remains unclear. A monitoring strategy could be strengthened by monitoring changes in the relative rates between legal (authorized) and illegal deforestation to understand if the improvements of the policy implementation tools led, for instance, to more authorized deforestation and less illegal practices in the sector
- Considering the past 20 years, soy has been the main driver of deforestation in South America. However, in recent years mainly because of changes in the economic margins for soy production, livestock also became a relevant driver of deforestation in South America. The L&A policy influencing strategy adopted by Solidaridad could be expanded with the engagement of stakeholders from the agriculture productive sector in general, and not only those linked to soy. In this sense, the strategy would integrate the changes by the dynamic shifting of the main driver of deforestation, increasing its long-term goal of promoting zero-deforestation in commodity supply chains.
- One recommendation is integrating the projects with other initiatives focused on the Chaco biome, especially because the improvements of implementation tools promoted by the project has the potential to decrease deforestation linked to other production sectors. This integration could be done through a landscape approach.
- In order to successfully promote more sustainable production by market demand for sustainable soy, as has been one objective of this project by including China, and later on India, there is need for a strong coordination unit at global level. It appears that this is too weak on a bilateral basis. It seems a good decision to include India as a market link as this country is an important market for soy from Argentina.

## Case study 5: Key findings on the repressed state case study

### Project “Supporting Social Dialogue in Emerging Garment Producers”, and inputs from other country cases (Nicaragua, Honduras, China)

#### Introduction

The case study on L&A strategies in a repressed state were mainly obtained from the ‘Supporting Social Dialogue in Emerging Garment Producers’ (in short ‘garment’) project in Myanmar and Ethiopia, due to the fact that both Myanmar and Ethiopia are characterized by a repressed state. The following insights are therefore mainly from this project. Only in the conclusions and recommendations on working in a repressed state some insights are integrated from case studies that included Nicaragua, Honduras and China, which also have repressed state characteristics.

#### Background and context conditions ‘garment’ project

- The ‘garment’ project originally included Bangladesh and Myanmar, but when Bangladesh dropped out due to travel restrictions Ethiopia was included more or less at the last minute (as required to give the project a global dimension). In Bangladesh experience had been built up on the subject of social dialogue and a partnership was built up with the labour union. Unfortunately there are not lessons documented on this.
- In Myanmar the strategy is complimentary to Solidaridad’s engagement on the environmental aspects of the sector. Here, Solidaridad has gained influence in setting the agenda for the sector, leading a working group on the growth of sustainable wet processing endorsed by the MGMA (Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association), and being a key member of a cross-industry environmental taskforce. Relationships with key stakeholders and public policy makers have been formed as part of this work, and will be leveraged under this project to adopt a similar position of influence on social issues. In 2015 the PMU unit of the MGMA produced a 10-year strategy for the development of the industry. One key aspect identified was to “*Ensure that full social compliance and social dialogue is practiced at all levels of the Industry*”. A Multi Stakeholder Group (MSG) was convened at regular intervals to support the implementation of the strategy through discussions around specific topics, including discussions that focused on the training and educational aspects of the strategy, including supporting social dialogue.
- In Ethiopia Solidaridad has worked through the implementation of the Better Mills Initiative (BMI) at the supplier level. This ‘social dialogue’ program aims to draw from experiences in the practical work under BMI to inform the strategy for policy-level support to improve and promote social dialogue in the sector.
- In both countries the space for collective bargaining remains highly constrained - or even non-existent - historically, and accordingly there is little culture of capacity of social dialog as a means of promoting improvements to labour conditions. Labour relations are often fractious, with strikes erupting quickly in cases of disputes and channels for worker representation at all levels often proving to be hollow.
- Especially in Ethiopia it was mentioned by interviewees that the budget for this project has been very limited (just € 30K for activities in Ethiopia).

## Capacity building results

### *Myanmar*

- CSOs benefitted from training on various issues, including basic skills (e.g. on administration), participation in dialogue, as well as provision of new ICT equipment. Following the trainings CTUM is beginning to delegate representation at events and fora to other individuals within the organization.
- The Labour Alliance (an alliance of 14 labour organisations) receives indirect support from this project (through CTUM), by funding mainly. In 2019 Solidaridad worked with CTUM on two domestic fora in Myanmar.

### *Ethiopia*

- Textile factories trade union leaders got basic training about leadership, dispute management and how to achieve collective bargaining agreements (CBA) with management, women empowerment and leadership and financial management.
- Also, skills to negotiate increased, the dispute management improved and disagreement were settled by trade union leaders and management while before there were also court cases.
- There are no MSP's in this sector in Ethiopia, but there has been participation with multiple stakeholders (including ILO, FNV Mondial, Industries and CTUM) two times but this was not continued due to different reasons.

### *Exchange between Myanmar and Ethiopia*

- Solidaridad facilitated a formal international exchange between key industry stakeholders from Myanmar and Ethiopia for the first time in 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The exchange led to increased understanding and gave an impetus to the work in both countries – as based on interviews with participants from both countries. A critical remark by the IWFM (Industry Workers Federation Manufacturing) was that open discussions with other labour unions were difficult because of the presence of government agencies. Direct interactions and exchange visits between labour unions only would be more effective. It seems that the lessons from this exchange were not documented, nor the actions taken by participants based on the exchange.
- A second event was planned for Yangon in late 2019, but was subsequently postponed when a key proposed partner (MGMA) refused to support. Plans are in development for 2 fora in 2020 (one in Myanmar, one in Ethiopia). It is possible that participation will be widened to include stakeholders from other global/regional producer countries.

## Policy influencing results

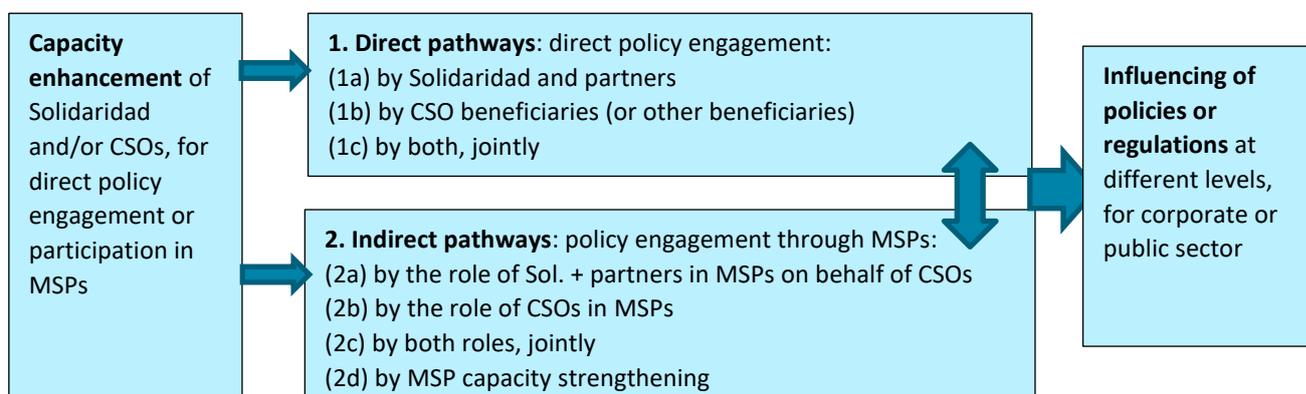
### *Myanmar*

- CTUM has been supported to recruit legal counsel to develop a policy paper on ratification of ILO C.144 as well as advise on an advocacy strategy for engagement with key policy makers. Support has also been provided for missions from Yangon to Nay Pyi Taw for engagement with Union-level officials. Solidaridad has also engaged with ILO to develop a joint strategy to promote ratification as a priority in 2020.
- Solidaridad worked with local partners to engage the National Skills Standards Authority (NSSA) on inclusion of content relating to social dialogue and gender sensitisation in National Occupational Competency Standards (NOCS) for key skills in the garment industry. As per law, a Technical Advisory Group was then formed that included Ministry of Labour, Immigration & Population (MOLIP) and MGMA. Though initially supportive, the attitude of the MGMA has since turned hostile and throughout 2019 they refused to approve the NOCS without revisions to water down social content.

### *Ethiopia*

- In Ethiopia, the ‘social dialogue’ project contributed to two amendments in labour laws, being (i) Increase of Maternity Leave Provisions within Labour Law, and (ii) Limited increase of Probation Period within Labour Law.
- In both cases Solidaridad provided inputs and advice to assist CETU prepare a policy paper of recommendations for labour law amendments. This included data and case studies to support recommendations that resulted from Solidaridad's Better Mills program. CETU submitted the paper to the Women, Youth & Social Affairs Committee, who recommended various points to be included in amendments to the Labour Law.
- There had been a knowledge exchange session between local factories on social dialogue best practices.

## L&A strategies and added value of Solidaridad



In this project, the main strategy has been to ‘go back to basics’, i.e. provide capacity building at the basic organisational level. The main pathways have been that of (1b) and (2b + 2d), implying that Solidaridad has focused on building up capacities of CSOs, eventually leading to CSOs being able to carry out the policy engagement by themselves. In Myanmar there has been capacity building of the MSP and support for policy engagement by MSP partners. In both cases Solidaridad has provided inputs and advice to assist preparation of policy recommendations. This strategy is necessary also because the legitimacy of Solidaridad in these countries is questionable, and it cannot interact directly with public actors if not it will risk to lose its NGO certificate. In Myanmar, partly as a result of this project, CTUM now has access to routine legal counsel, allowing for advocacy to be more strategically targeted.

Another strategy has been to engage directly with industries such as H&M in Myanmar, whilst these sit on national fora or possibly MSPs, and expecting them to influence policies.

CTUM started its activities in 2012, with 37 local member organisations, and was registered in 2015, having received substantial support from international organisations like FNV and ILO. Solidaridad came in 3 years ago. According to CTUM Solidaridad’s added value has been mainly to support CTUM in their negotiations with the government, by funding, consultations of law firms, and capacity building. Also, it is a flexible organisation, able to understand local demands and not impose anything.

There seems to be consensus that ILO has the strongest background and experience in working on social issues, and the added value of Solidaridad depends upon the context / situation. The ILO interviewee mentioned that Solidaridad keeps a lower profile, which in some instances is good because it allows to build bridges where ILO could not do so. Also, they are good at convening and matchmaking between stakeholders, especially with companies.

One comment is that working on social dialogue requires to have much staff, as there is need for a lot of capacity building and support to labour unions and interaction with factories. This makes Solidaridad in Myanmar, with just two staff, little effective as compared to many other organisations.

### Scaling of results

There is limited evidence of scaling taking place. However there is scope for scaling in two ways:

- There is scope for more capacity building as currently from CETU factories less than 20% has organized labour unions.
- There is scope for more exchange visits, according to CTUM this would be more useful to do within the region (Bangladesh, Indonesia), as there are more similarities with these countries.

### Sustainability of the results

In both countries international brands increasingly buy from foreign owned industries (Chinese, Korean, Turkish) in countries like Myanmar and Ethiopia, and have their own industry associations. National associations (like MGMA in Myanmar and ETGAMA in Ethiopia) just represent domestic industries. Thus there is an increasing disconnect between brands and national associations, with larger proportions of the labour force not being able to benefit from a project like this one. While the project has attempted in Myanmar to engage foreign associations (Chinese, Korean) but they did not succeed to do so.

### Factors that formed a constraint to effective L&A strategies

- There is a perception among public agencies mainly that social dialogue and strengthened labour associations will increase the demand by workers for higher wages, and thus reduce competitiveness of the country's sector industries. This is especially a strong perception in countries like Myanmar and Ethiopia which depend upon rather low labour wages to have export markets. In other words, there is the perception of a negative business case for social dialogue. This is in contrast to most environmental improvement programmes, that do have a positive business case (as more efficient technologies often reduce both inputs and pollution). All interviewees agreed that there is a stronger business case and more willingness by organisations such as MGMA in Myanmar and ministries in Ethiopia for working on environmental issues.
- There is a lack of coordination between donors in Myanmar, leading to different views of what is considered to be the correct way of dealing with social dialogue.
- There are still many factories that do not have organizational labour unions (in Ethiopia only 20% have labour unions). This means the majority of factories cannot be approached.

### Contribution of the project to systemic changes and sector transformation

Relevant systemic issue	
Trust and dialogue between stakeholders	1
Coordination, shared vision alignment between stakeholders	0
Change power dynamics between stakeholders	0
Strengthening of civic space	1-2
Shift mindsets and norms	0
Social sustainability issues in supply chain	0
Increased investment in the sector	0
More transparency / accountability of stakeholders	1
Improved monitoring and learning within sector	0

0 = no progress, 1 = moderate, 2 = good; - = not relevant; ? = relevant but unclear

Overall, the project has not contributed much to improvements of systemic issues that can be considered as components of sector transformation. There is one exception, being that on civic space,

where we believe a significant contribution has been made by providing capacity building on basic skills, which has contributed to improved skills of labour organisations to engage with policy makers. For example, supporting CSOs / labour unions to digitalise their meetings can be considered as one element to improve civic space.

It was mentioned that in countries like Myanmar, several donors consider the existence of an MSP as a condition or essential starting point for any support, but tend to see this as a ticking boxes element rather than looking how MSPs perform. For instance, there is need to better capture how MSPs have contributed to improve civic space.

Overall, while in both countries, policy space has in recent years allowed for unionisation and provided some mechanisms and platforms to promote social dialogue, there remain gaps in the enabling policy environment that would help facilitate the actual processes of social dialogue, as well as help the workers representatives elaborate their interests in policy-relevant fora in a meaningful manner.

## **Theory of change and M&E**

Originally, the theory of change and objectives of the 'garment' project centred around the following 5 L&A intervention strategies:

1. Convene & Support International Multi-Stakeholder Workshops
2. Advocacy and Engagement to Support Public Policy Measures that Mainstream Social Dialogue in Professional Skills Training
3. Integration of Social Dialogue / Grievance Handling in National Training Curriculum
4. Advocacy and engagement to support public policy measures that mainstream social dialogue in professional skills training
5. Develop and Disseminate Communications on Best Practices for Social Dialogue

These strategies and expected results have been considerably adjusted during the course of the project, leading to the results as summarised above. We would have expected in the last 2019 report to see an overview of the original interventions strategies and a brief explanation why these have changed.

The majority of the indicators of the mandatory M&E framework for the L&A programme are not applicable to this project, reason why there are no data provided. This shows the difficulty and limitations of designing an M&E framework for a variety of L&A projects in variable contexts.

## **Conclusions**

### **On 'social dialogue' as a L&A programme focus**

- Both in Myanmar and in Ethiopia, Solidaridad works on social dialogues as well as directly with factories on issues of environmental sustainability. In Ethiopia this has led to experiences and evidence that was used to generate inputs for legal amendments on social issues; in Myanmar such connections have not (yet) been made.
- There seems to be consensus that Solidaridad is less equipped to work on social issues at producer (organization) level, especially if not clearly linked to work on practical solutions for first tier companies and brands, such as environmental management systems. An other underlying reason is the absence of much local staff for training and hands-on support on social issues of labour organisations.
- On the contrary, Solidaridad is well equipped to work on:
  1. Social issues related to concrete practices or environmental issues – e.g. on health & safety

2. Social issues directly related to value chains
  3. Social and environmental issues and management issues at first tier level
  4. Local standards that include social issues
- Social dialogue initiatives in garment have contributed relatively much to civic space improvements, because of the capacity building on societal aspects with strong linkages to accountability, transparency, inclusiveness and equality.
  - Solidaridad in its work on social issues has played a useful role as a partner with other organisations, with an added value mainly in terms of concrete L&A activities.

#### **On L&A initiatives in a repressed state**

- Several L&A projects have achieved results while working in a difficult repressed civic space context, e.g. Myanmar (garment), Nicaragua (PASOS), Ethiopia (garment, now improved), or China (tea, palm oil, soy). The following insights and lessons may be more widely applicable as in several countries civic space tends to decline.
- In situations of a repressed state, Solidaridad keeps a low profile, cannot directly engage with decision-/policy-makers but provides support behind the screens. In China and India, the Solidaridad team is of the opinion that if they would have engaged in policy influencing from the start, this would have jeopardized their ability to even engage in field-level interventions. This low profile approach helped to build a local presence, credibility and the relationships which are indispensable to engage in policy influencing. The support by the Dutch Embassy also helped to become more credible and hence better positioned to be more active in policy influencing.
- This means that the following two strategies are most commonly applied in situations of a repressed state:
  - *Direct strategies - Partners lobby without Solidaridad:* In certain cases (e.g. tea India, PASOS Honduras, increasingly CTUM in Myanmar), partners have sufficient capacities to L&A themselves. In that case, Solidaridad builds capacities and provides support to specify evidence or define policy options. Empowering CSOs can include: basic skills training, ICT equipment, convening, generating convincing evidence for L&A statements, financing meetings.
  - *MSP strategies - L&A by MSP members with Solidaridad support:* The MSP, or a selection of its members, approach decision-makers with Solidaridad as background supporter. This has been done for example in Nicaragua. Solidaridad has built capacity of the MSP and its members. However, even establishing or supporting MSPs may be too visible in a repressed state context.
- In the 'garment' project, another strategy has been to engage directly with industries such H&M in Myanmar, whilst these sit on national fora or possibly MSPs, and expecting them to influence policies.
- Even in repressed states, where Solidaridad cannot visibly be involved in policy engagement, there is need to have strong linkages with realities on the ground, through pilots and/or field level projects. This might be even more important in a repressed state context as here social issues tend to be more sensitive.
- Where MSPs are present, such as in PASOS Nicaragua, it is a challenge to actively involve government members with the ability and role to decide, and to formalize synergies between different actors. A risk is that in a hostile political context local action may not be genuine and sustainable but the result of national government coercion of its employees.

#### **Recommendations**

- The coordinator from IPC Textiles observed that the 'garment project' has been a relatively isolated project not sufficiently integrated in the IPC Europe programme on textiles. Most likely the impact could have been greater if linkages were made with international brands and companies.
- The experience in Myanmar shows that working on environmental management technologies remains more acceptable than working on social dialogue issues. One subject that could form a potential integration between the social and environmental dimensions, being occupational health & safety, which has also become more urgent following the Covid pandemic.

- It seems that the lessons from the experiences on social dialogue in Bangladesh were not documented. Also, the lessons from the Myanmar-Ethiopia exchange visit could have been documented, as well as the actions taken by participants based on the exchange.
- In countries with a repressed or closed civic space, especially when new to a country or sector, it is better to keep a low profile and easier to work on field implementation projects (e.g. GP/RI) before engaging in L&A activities. At least to build up relations with government actors, it may be effective to work on solutions that generate concrete benefits.
- Working on concrete field-level solutions with joint benefits can also bring together actors with conflicting relations and lead to collaboration, as the PASOS experience in Nicaragua has shown.
- The next step would be either a direct L&A strategy, if the relationships are strong (as in China), or an indirect L&A strategy by bottom-up, local capacity building including basic needs and empowering CSOs to share and join voices.
- The collaboration with and role of the embassy can be important especially in countries with a repressed state situation.
- While participants much appreciated international exchange on social issues, a critical remark by the IWFM (Industry Workers Federation Manufacturing) was that open discussions between labour unions were difficult because of the presence of government agencies. Direct interactions and exchange visits between labour unions only would be more effective.

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