



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

Final report by Aidenvironment

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

## **Final Report**

December 2020  
Project number 2943

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## Abbreviations

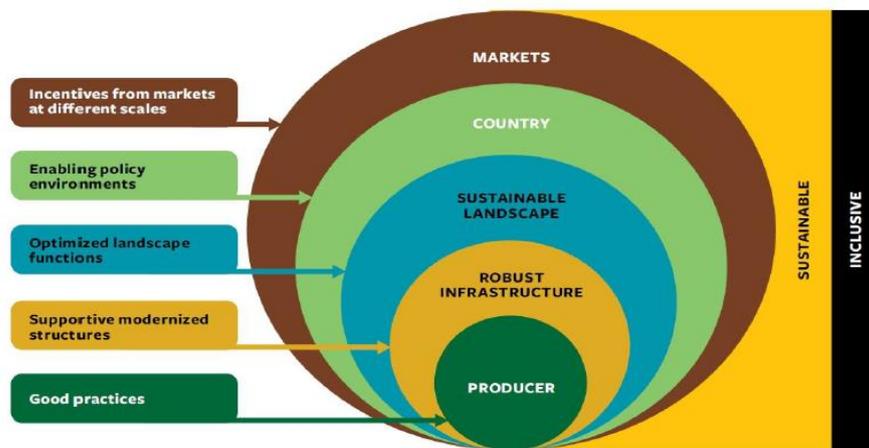
AfC	Advocacy for Change
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EPE	Enabling Policy Environment
F&V	Fruits and Vegetables
GP	Good Practices
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
L&A	Lobby and Advocacy
LI	Landscape Innovation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSP	Multi-Stakeholder Platform
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PfC	Practice for Change
PMEL	Planning Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
REC	Regional Expertise Centre
RI	Robust Infrastructure
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference

# Executive summary

## 1. Introduction on context and objectives of AfC

The AfC program has been developed in a context where it is clear that agricultural markets have to be regulated to produce more socially and ecologically desirable outcomes and ultimately to help sustain the planet for future generations. However, even where there is a clear business case for some markets and commodities, for example climate smart coffee, markets appear reluctant to move towards genuine sustainability. To ensure more socially and ecologically desirable outcomes, the voices of the South should be heard and taken into account. Too often vested interests and Western perspectives are dominating the debate and deciding on the course of action, compromising on the delivery of outcomes and the internalizing externalities. Governments and private companies can be important drivers of change but a strong civil society is needed to hold them both accountable. However, smallholders, landless, marginalised producers, women and youth are often underrepresented in policy dialogue, despite them being a central player in the transformation to sustainable agriculture. This leads to unequal and potentially negative trade-offs for one or more of these stakeholders groups. This is often based on arguably less effective policies or policy implementation.

The AfC program consists of a total of 29 projects in West Africa, East and Central Africa, Southern Africa, Asia, Central America, South America and Europe, of which 7 landscape innovation projects. The projects build strongly upon earlier experiences of Solidaridad in developing more sustainable and inclusive agricultural practices and related infrastructure (e.g. markets), which has generated a wealth of knowledge on local level solutions and strategies. Also, it builds upon the network of Solidaridad which has been built up since 2010, with Regional Expertise Centres (RECs) in 5 different regions, being local legally registered entities, which are well positioned to support capacity development.



Solidaridad acknowledges that focusing exclusively on the improvement of producer practices in a given sector is not enough to achieve genuine sustainability on a large scale. Rather, a holistic landscape approach and an

enabling policy environment that is open to change are key additional ingredients. Thus, the overall theory of change of Solidaridad has 4 pillars that can be considered as being embedded in each other (see figure from Solidaridad’s Multi-Annual Strategic Plan 2016-2020). The AfC program (financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ facility for Strategic Partnerships for Dialogue and Dissent) covers the result areas Sustainable Landscape Innovation (LI) and Enabling Policy Environment (EPE). These form the enabling context for result areas Good Practices (GP) and Robust Infrastructure (RI), being covered by the ‘Practice for Change’ (PfC) program. The objective of the Solidaridad AfC program, is to support the capacity development of southern CSOs in lobbying and advocating for sustainable and inclusive sectors and landscapes and to convene and mobilise key stakeholders to contribute to systemic changes.

## 2. ToC and strategies

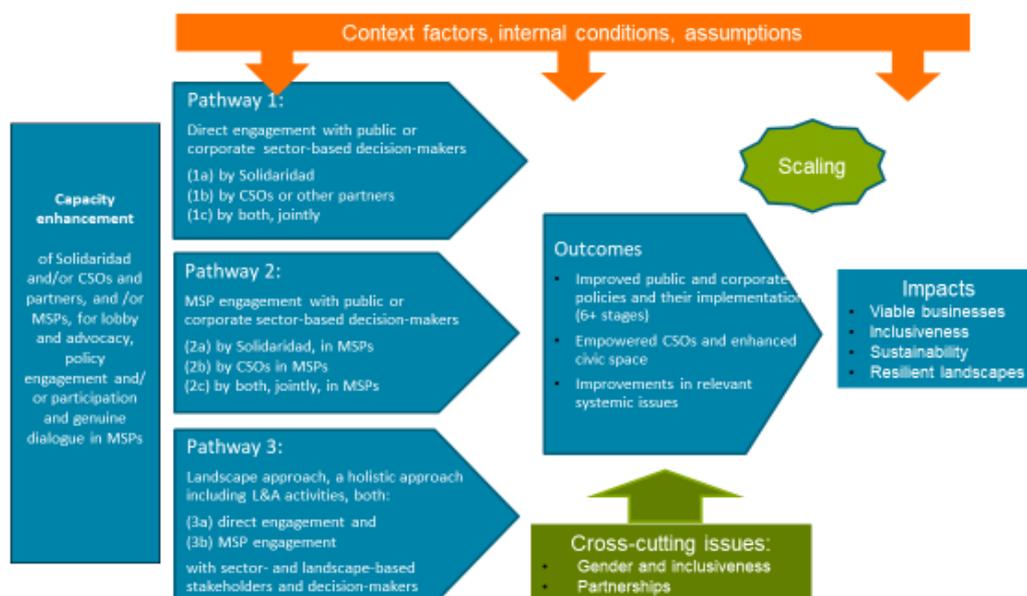
The AfC program aims to organise producers and workers, men and women, grassroots organisations and civil society, to understand their interests and empower them to join in policy dialogue. To overcome barriers to genuine and meaningful participation in policy development of civil society and particularly vulnerable groups, three lobby and advocacy (L&A) 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.

As a result of this evaluation and in collaboration with Solidaridad, the L&A strategies were restructured. This brings us to the following theory of change with three distinct L&A pathways or strategies:

1. Direct policy influencing (1A) by Solidaridad, or (1B) by CSOs
2. Policy influencing through MSPs
3. The landscape approach

These pathways are strongly interconnected, i.e. are commonly used in a combined and flexible way. The choice of the most relevant L&A pathway largely depends upon contextual factors and roles & capacities, as will be demonstrated in the following sections with lessons per L&A pathway.



## 3. Set-up of the AfC evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation has been to learn which elements of its key lobby and advocacy interventions it should continue, improve, or discontinue and what new elements or interventions it should commence within the period after 2020.

The overarching evaluation question can be formulated as:

*How have L&A activities, within specific strategies or pathways, contributed to changes in capabilities, policies and specific systemic issues, with positive impacts (in terms of viable businesses, inclusiveness, sustainability or resilient landscapes).*

This question has been broken down in several sub-questions, within the following three categories:

- Strategy and interventions: the selection of L&A strategies within the given socio-political context to influence (public and private) policies
- Outcomes: the contribution by L&A strategies to policy changes and other systemic changes
- Impact: the (contribution by) policy changes to sustainable and inclusive sectors and sustainable landscapes

Three main evaluation methods were used, which rely on different information sources, as follows.

1. *Portfolio level survey and desk review.* A fast track desk study and survey were developed in close collaboration with Solidaridad, with joint responsibilities. They provided an overview of capacity building results, policy change results and MSP strengthening as well as information on policy targets, systemic issues, scaling and sustainability and gender aspects.
2. *Selected case studies.* Five case studies were selected each with a central theme, and usually encompass different projects falling within this theme, in different countries to cover a range of relevant themes and issues as emerged from the desk study of all projects.
  - Case study 1: Comparative study on MSP functionality in South and East Africa, in Fruit & Vegetable sectors, at national and regional level
  - Case study 2: Building an authentic Asian sustainability agenda through complementary L&A activities at local, national and continental level in the tea sector
  - Case study 3: Evaluating strategies to combine and integrate objectives of increasing productivity and enhancing ecosystem protection and restoration, with landscape projects in Asia, Africa and Latin America
  - Case study 4: Linking national no-deforestation MSP and direct advocacy initiatives to emerging markets, with a case study on soy in South America
  - Case study 5: Developing effective and safe L&A strategies in a context of limited or repressed civic space, with a case study on social dialogue in the garment sector in Asia and Africa.
3. *Efficiency assessment.* Parallel to the case studies we carried out a qualitative assessment of the resources required for specific L&A activities, in order to be able to say something about their cost effectiveness.

All draft case study reports were discussed and validated with relevant project teams and Solidaridad REC representatives, before coming to a final version.

#### **4. Main conclusions of the evaluation**

##### *Relevance*

**The AfC program has shown to be relevant, in most cases building upon earlier Good Practices (GP) and Robust Infrastructure (RI) projects, working on improvement of the policy context for these projects. However, the understanding of this policy context could have been improved.** When building upon earlier experiences, Solidaridad already had a good knowledge of a sector and/or landscape which contributed to the definition of relevant lobby and advocacy policy objectives and strategies, such as for the tea sector in Indonesia. In some new project contexts, the lack of proper diagnostics compromised the relevance of original policy objectives and L&A strategies, though this was often improved during the project implementation period as knowledge and experience grew. A general observation is that only few projects made explicit and operational how they aim to contribute to the overall AfC goal and ambition of sector transformation.

##### *Effectiveness*

**The majority of the projects has been effective, showing evidence of positive policy changes that were achieved by Solidaridad and its partners. Also, CSOs involved in the program have strongly benefitted from capacity building, but the subject of policy analysis remains weak.** Of the 24 projects executed beyond Europe, 63% contributed to significant changes in policy targets, which was defined as policies moving from phase 1 (agenda setting) or phase 2 (recommendations formulated) to phase 5 or 6 (adoption, implementation). Examples of realized policy changes include the adoption of national

standards (F&V in Tanzania, palm oil in India), the mutual recognition between countries of national standards (tea and palm oil in Asia), amendments in labour laws (garment in Ethiopia) and the addition of a zero-deforestation policy on palm, coffee and livestock (Honduras). There are no significant differences in successful scores for private or public sector policies. However, for several projects L&A policy objectives were not well defined beforehand, but emerged along the way. Policy objectives could be related to the development of new policies or ways of implementing existing policies. We observe that the phase of policy implementation (phase 6) is not well defined; it seems that in most cases many hurdles still need to be taken for full policy implementation and law enforcement. This implies there is a need for follow-up activities to make policies work. At least in 5 projects where no significant policy changes were noted, we did observe 'small wins', being defined as 'concrete, completed, implemented outcomes of moderate importance'. Small wins can be relevant in situations of wicked or complex problems, where pathways of change may not be so clear. A series of small wins may finally result in real policy change.

As projects often combine different lobby and advocacy strategies it is hard to disentangle the effectiveness of individual strategies. This will be further elaborated in the next section.

Various activities have been successful in strengthening smallholder and indigenous people associations to participate in MSPs and L&A activities and in liaising between smallholder associations and powerful industry associations. For example, in Indonesia local smallholder associations obtained better advocacy skills and improved relationships with public decision-makers which resulted in various policy changes at local level. Solidaridad staff also defends the interests of these groups in different fora (either as expert or convener). While various projects target women in livelihood improvements, there are only a few examples where significant results are shown in terms of enhanced female voice. On the latter it seems that there are no specific strategies to address the underlying root causes. The Solidaridad gender inclusivity bucket book does contain tools to improve women's voice and address underlying systemic issues, such as leadership, policies and land rights, but in practice the focus has been on improving on women's livelihoods rather than (the more complex issue of) improving women's voice.

According to Solidaridad's reporting, CSOs have benefitted from capacity building, in terms of capacity to meaningfully participate in dialogue (91% of CSOs reviewed in the portfolio), capacity to analyse, monitor and learn (76%), and capacity to plan and execute (72%). The case studies found an emphasis of capacity building on technical issues and capacities to effectively participate in MSPs and dialogues (whether at landscape, national or regional level). Subjects that should receive more attention are: policy analysis and defining policy goals, defining and implementing L&A strategies, and business skills.

### *Efficiency*

**Cost-effectiveness was difficult to determine but appears to be highest for establishing MSPs and field level pilot activities, and very variable for L&A activities.** Carrying out an efficiency analysis has been a specific component of this evaluation. A methodology was developed and tested, but proved difficult to apply for two main reasons:

1. The data that were requested are not readily available in current budget categories
2. The RECs did not want to spend time to restructure expenses in a way to extract the data that we requested, also because the timing interfered with preparing the new programme document.

Thus, the following insights are based on only few case studies with cost indications, and our own interpretations of effectiveness. First, it appears that the costs to establish MSPs are high (150-500 K EUR) but are considered cost-effective and in fact essential. Costs will decline (40-60 K EUR per year) once the MSP is functional, for convening and supporting. Costs for field level pilot activities vary much but are also essential and often highly effective. Costs for lobby, policy advocacy and stakeholder engagement activities vary greatly, and effectiveness also varies greatly because policy change also depends upon external factors.

### *Impact*

**The AfC program has made an important contribution to the potential for sector transformation, especially when seen in combination with GP and RI projects.** Despite that, in nearly all projects many issues still need to improve for sectors to be fully transformed (to an inclusive, sustainable and competitive sector). While quick-wins in policy influencing are possible, a five-year timeframe is generally too short to change public and private policy environments and address systemic issues to a degree that one can claim sectors have been transformed.

Apart from policy changes or improved policy implementation, AfC projects have contributed to several other systemic changes (even if these were not defined or targeted as such). Most noteworthy are:

- Improved service delivery, by public or private sector
- Trust and dialogue between stakeholders
- Coordination of and alignment between stakeholders
- Strengthening of civic space, largely related to capacity building of CSOs and MSPs
- More transparency / accountability of stakeholders, as well as reduced corruption
- Shift of mindsets and norms

In the AfC portfolio there are no or weak contributions to the following systemic issues, although – as indicated - some of these issues are being addressed by complementary Good Practices (GP) and Robust Infrastructure (RI) projects:

- Improved access to markets – sometimes addressed by GP and RI projects
- Change in power dynamics between stakeholders - not explicitly addressed in any project
- Sector and/or landscape governance - not addressed in any landscape project
- Social sustainability issues in supply chains - sometimes addressed by GP and RI projects, e.g. garment in Ethiopia
- Increased re-investment in the sector, e.g. based on levies and taxes – not addressed in any project

### *Scaling*

**Within the AfC program there is evidence of scaling through mechanisms of copying, crowding-in or expansion of good practices. These processes are poorly captured in project documentation.** Some projects, especially the landscape projects, are working on piloting which, if success can be demonstrated, is expected to lead to replication and widespread application. In other cases, scaling happens in ways that were not foreseen by a project. Evidence of the following dimensions of scaling was found in the case studies of this evaluation (but could not be traced in the entire AfC portfolio):

- Scaling within a landscape or sector, e.g. adoption of sustainable practices among MSP members
- Scaling related to MSPs, new members or new or emerging issues such as biotechnology or land tenure
- Scaling to other landscapes and countries, e.g. zero-deforestation agreement from Honduras to Nicaragua and Guatemala
- Scaling to other sectors within a country or landscape, e.g. the Ganga landscape project will apply its approach to the textiles sector, the Lestari system has informed current processes in the Indonesian coffee and cocoa sector (this is an example of unexpected scaling).

### *Sustainability*

**Most of the MSPs supported indicated that they would require support from Solidaridad, especially in terms of finance, but also leadership or facilitation, to function well over the coming years.** EPE and LI interventions clearly need a long-term commitment by Solidaridad and/or its local partners. Solidaridad seems to be aware of this and is committed to find the resources to do this. In some projects, exit strategies are in place as local stakeholders would be able to pursue the functions of an MSP or standard system without future Solidaridad involvement.

## **5. Lessons learned and recommendations on strategic choices**

**The insights and networks from Good Practices (GP) and Robust Infrastructure (RI) interventions contribute to the success of EPE and LI interventions.** The Enabling Policy Environment (EPE) and Landscape Innovations (LI) result areas in the AfC portfolio contribute to an enabling environment for Good Practices (GP) and Robust Infrastructure (RI) interventions. This can also support successful GP and RI interventions to sustain and scale. In turn, lobby and advocacy strategies are most effective when they are built upon or combined with concrete field activities (i.e. GP / RI interventions). Note that in landscape projects this integration takes place within one project. Field activities help to identify policy gaps, yield evidence, and build expertise, networks, credibility and motivation of stakeholders to remain engaged. Having field projects aimed at developing demand-driven solutions shows commitment and builds up expertise, networks and credibility needed for evidence-based lobby and advocacy. Therefore, as a pathway to sector transformation, in a country, region or landscape, the best sequence seems to be by starting with GP&RI interventions that work on concrete solutions for perceived problems, followed by EPE and LI interventions. Policy objectives on social issues are also important, but may need to be preceded by or implemented in parallel with working on practical solutions for less sensitive issues such as environmental management systems for companies (e.g. waste management, reduced emissions).

**The potential for Solidaridad to contribute to sector transformation, and thus to have sustained impact at scale, can be improved by an improved identification and focus on the underlying systemic drivers.** The projects show several examples of contributing to systemic changes. However, a more explicit understanding of which systemic changes, including policy changes, are needed for sector transformation, would lead to better design of L&A strategies to contribute to such changes. Enhancing civic space is also an important systemic change. Through improvement of the enabling context, achieving systemic changes will contribute to scaling and sustaining results. Focusing on systemic changes requires a shift from a focus on field level solutions to a focus at governance, relationships and power dynamics, and the change of mindsets. While Solidaridad has focused on influencing policies, there are remaining challenges of implementing improved policies and addressing the underlying governance issues required to do so. So far, the projects that were evaluated did not specifically address sector or landscape governance including law enforcement. This may be because of political sensitivities and the complexity of the issue, or because Solidaridad had not yet built up sufficient capacities and local trust and credibility to address this topic.

**Based on the experiences with EPE and LI activities there is good potential for Solidaridad to expand the field of expertise to new themes.** In terms of setting goals and defining strategies, this evaluation suggests there is potential to reflect on how to further develop the strengths of Solidaridad. We found Solidaridad to have strong knowledge about business development, supply chain dynamics and increasingly also landscape approaches. EPE activities have put Solidaridad in a position where it can contribute to national and international policy design processes. This makes knowledge on macroeconomic topics such as supply-demand balance, price formulation, trade policies and trade balances, and employment creation increasingly relevant. There is also an increasing demand for more knowledge such as how to make use of digitalized marketing channels for smallholder-based supply chains (e.g. in tea and coffee) and diversify export markets (e.g. to the Middle-East). Concerning landscape innovations, there is scope to expand the integrated landscape focus towards including governance aspects, investment opportunities, and influencing policy and systemic changes for a more enabling context, and the role of landscape level MSPs in doing so.

The following recommendations are made:

1. Make strategic choices on how EPE and GP&RI interventions can reinforce each other, e.g. by a well planned sequencing and coordinated integration. In contexts where Solidaridad is new and strong partners are absent, GP&RI interventions can help build up relations, generate in-depth knowledge, a reputation and a network. While EPE activities require independent funding to remain neutral (i.e.

independent from actors with a direct interest in the L&A targets), field pilots can be co-financed by public and private sector actors. The landscape approach has high potential as it is intrinsically holistic, typically including at least pilots that are in fact GP and/or RI activities.

2. Depending upon Solidaridad’s capacities and local trust and credibility, consider building up capacities on new themes of expertise, as mentioned above.
3. Better anticipate and define how scaling is expected to take place in its different dimensions (by copying, crowding in, expansion to other landscapes, countries or regions, and/or through systemic changes), monitor scaling, and strengthen processes of scaling where possible.
4. In addition to influencing policies, identify and address the root causes for poor implementation of policies by focusing more on governance structures and processes at the sector and landscape level.
5. The more Solidaridad operates with an international policy agenda, the more important it becomes to ensure strategic alignment between RECs in order to achieve effective engagement at international policy level. This means that national dialogues, campaigns, and linking and learning activities feed into global level activities and vice versa, reinforcing each other reciprocally towards systemic change at different levels.

### **6. Lessons learned & recommendations on L&A strategies**

Three different L&A strategies were identified (see section 2). While these have been used in combination and complementarity, this evaluation found that projects make deliberate and strategic choices which strategy to adopt. We have tried to better understand the underlying reasoning and logic. The following overview on common enabling and disabling conditions across the L&A strategies, emerging from the evaluation, has been helpful for such understanding.

Disabling conditions	Enabling conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excessive bureaucracy: this hampers progress although a proactive role of Solidaridad was noted to speed up the process.</li> <li>• Competing policy objectives: this can create barriers for alignment between stakeholders</li> <li>• Political tensions within and between countries, e.g. political tensions between India and Malaysia affected project activities.</li> <li>• Change in decision-makers: The change of decision makers often causes delays, but it can also result in the introduction of more capable and willing decision-makers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supportive existing policy frameworks: Where good policies are in place and are aligned with Solidaridad’s objectives.</li> <li>• Strong national / local institutions, coordination and networks: This facilitates the choice of who to target and facilitates policy implementation.</li> <li>• Sense of urgency: This helps to raise awareness for the need to change through collaborative action, for instance climate change, water pollution, food safety concerns and deforestation.</li> </ul>

The following tabular overview shows how both contextual conditions and internal position, role and capacities have influenced the L&A strategies that were adopted.

*The influence of context factors and Solidaridad position, role & capacities on decision-making for 4 different L&A strategies*

	1a. Direct policy influencing by Solidaridad	1b. Direct policy influencing by CSOs	2. Policy influencing through MSPs	3. Landscape approach
<b>Context factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong institutions &amp; policies, including law enforcement, are supportive to each L&amp;A strategy, while weak institutions &amp; policies always constitute a challenge. This factor is not discriminating between L&amp;A strategies.</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rigid bureaucracies and slow policy changes</li> <li>Open civic space</li> <li>High level decision-makers open to dialogue</li> <li>Sense of urgency to find solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scenario 1: open civic space and strong CSOs are present and have good contacts with decision-makers</li> <li>Scenario 2: Repressed civic space with Solidaridad or MSPs not accepted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open civic space</li> <li>Stakeholders see value in collaborative action</li> <li>No stakeholder conflicts</li> <li>Local decision-makers and private sector willing to participate in MSPs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competing interests between different ecosystem users</li> <li>Sectors causing urgent landscape degradation</li> <li>Openness to bottom-up / decentralized policy dialogue</li> </ul>
<b>Position, role and capacities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good relations with public and private sector decision-makers                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence-based knowledge of solutions</li> </ul> </li> <li>Understanding of policy processes, good L&amp;A skills</li> <li>Ability to create or make use of policy windows</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solidaridad / CSO has solid reputation</li> <li>Trustworthy relations between Solidaridad &amp; CSOs</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MSP has mandate from public/private decision-makers</li> <li>MSP members include decision-makers</li> <li>Experienced facilitator with neutral position</li> <li>Good governance within MSP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solidaridad has social capital (e.g. expertise, networks, reputation) in landscape</li> <li>Good governance within landscape level MSPs</li> </ul>

**Lessons learned and recommendations on L&A strategy 1: Direct policy influencing (a) by Solidaridad or (b) by partners / CSOs**

**Direct policy influencing has been an L&A strategy in many projects and serves many purposes.** It is effective to raise awareness and create willingness to collaborate at higher levels of public or private sector actors, who are open to dialogue with Solidaridad or CSOs. Where Solidaridad has a good reputation this strategy has been effective to unlock complex bureaucracies and thus speed up processes of policy formulation or implementation, after which CSOs or MSPs can take over.

**In countries with a repressed or closed civic space, especially when new to a country, it appeared better for Solidaridad to keep a low profile and empower local CSOs.** In such contexts, direct policy influencing is not the best option to pursue and it makes more sense to empower CSOs to create a shared voice. Empowerment of CSOs may include training on basic skills (administration, communication) and providing ICT equipment for connections with national and international NGOs. However, in doing so, Solidaridad's role of providing support behind the scenes will be important. Even if relationships with key decision-makers already exist, it is still recommended to start collaboration on field implementation projects (e.g. GP&RI) before engaging in direct L&A activities. The collaboration

with and role of the Dutch Embassy proved to be important especially in countries with a repressed civic space, to establish contacts with high level decision-makers.

**Solidaridad's role in this strategy is highly dependent upon its credibility, capacities and the type of partners.** Direct policy influencing is done by Solidaridad staff, or primarily by partners, being CSOs or others, or jointly. A long standing presence in a country with field level experience facilitates a more active role by Solidaridad. In this strategy, Solidaridad has supported CSO partners on L&A skills particularly by supporting and accompanying them in direct L&A activities and sometimes through training. In situations with strong partners and CSOs with L&A experience Solidaridad's role will be more in the background.

**For direct policy influencing it is key to invest in personal relationships and strong partnerships with the target private and public decision-makers.** This is often a lengthy process, but the resulting relations and trust are key to long-term success. It is also important to understand the political economy context and the opportunities, and be aware of windows for policy change. This requires a continuous assessment of the context and the flexibility and adaptive management to respond to opportunities and changes.

**This evaluation shows there has been little capacity building of Solidaridad staff on policy analysis or L&A skills.** Some RECs facilitate internal learning on L&A strategies by organizing regular staff meetings to discuss challenges and opportunities related to project implementation. Having experienced staff who share knowledge and experience with new recruits is a key enabler. Whereas actual direct policy influencing activities are relatively cheap, to become successful additional human resources and investments may be needed for intelligence, in research and field pilots. L&A skills should include how to create or benefit from policy windows (moments in policy-making processes when decision-makers are more open to change).

*Recommendations:*

6. There is need to invest in the capacity needed to perform policy analysis, understanding key policies and regulations associated with the problems in a sector, ensure full understanding of the associated stakeholders, the underlying power dynamics, the enabling and disabling factors, and how to create or benefit from policy windows to influence policies, and plan advocacy strategies accordingly. This should be complemented with continued support of CSOs in their L&A activities (notably by repeated joint lobbying).
7. In countries with a repressed or closed civic space, especially when new to a country, it is better for Solidaridad to keep a low profile and empower local CSOs in stead of direct policy influencing To empower CSOs and create a shared voice useful support is securing ICT infrastructure, building up communication skills, and establishing linkages with the international network are important.

***Lessons learned and recommendations on L&A strategy 2: Policy influencing through multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs)***

**MSPs serve many purposes and give L&A activities more weight than individual actions.** In all evaluated AfC projects, Solidaridad has established or strengthened MSPs as part of their L&A strategy. MSPs often fill a gap, in terms of moderate institutions and policies, and often poor law enforcement. MSPs have been operational at national, landscape and occasionally at international level. MSPs contribute to co-creation of knowledge, capacity building, match-making & networking, shared agenda setting, conflict resolution & trust building, shared L&A activities, and joint inputs to standard development. MSPs give policy messages more weight and credibility than actions by individual CSOs. In relation to standards development, MSPs ensure the standards being developed address all aspects of sustainability, are approved by and are relevant to a broader section of stakeholders. In repressed states, MSPs are generally unacceptable, though more informal collaborations are still a valid strategy. As part of establishing MSPs, Solidaridad has successfully supported initiatives of conflict resolution

between CSOs and other stakeholders, and enhance cooperation with local stakeholders. The establishment of MSPs and their capacity building contributes to building up civic space.

**International multi-stakeholder processes are particularly relevant in contexts where the options to create change within countries or landscapes are limited and/or are strongly dependent on international trade dynamics and political relationships between key trading nations.** The international initiatives contributed to market and trade promotion, aligning and recognizing national sustainability standards and enhancing technology exchange and knowledge development.

**The functions of an MSP show changes over time.** MSPs can also become redundant, for instance once national standards have been developed and are managed by the appropriate institutions, or if conflicts are solved and relations of trust built up leading to partnerships or bilateral relations that take over the roles of the MSP.

**Several internal conditions and capacities were found to be important for MSPs to be successful.** They include: getting key stakeholders to participate and managing their expectations from the onset, feeding the dialogue with fact-based data to agree on key issues, supporting the vision for the sector or landscape with agreed interventions, and finding a balance between concrete short-term outputs and more strategic longer-term outcomes. It is also good to ensure a government mandate for a MSP, define clear roles between members with possible separate committees or working groups assigned with a specific time-bound task. When operating at international level, it is usually more effective to first ensure there is consensus within each country before starting to create alignment between countries. For example, the AfricaGAP ambition in the F&V projects was discontinued once it became clear that many countries lack the national standards necessary to serve as building blocks for the regional standard. However, the reverse can also be valid, where international action drives national action. For example, the international ASPN network was a key driver in the creation of a national Indian palm oil initiative.

**Capacity building has focused on CSO capacities to participate in MSPs and contributing to an effective dialogue, as well as internal capacities of leadership and governance.** Solidaridad often plays a role as a convener or is part of the MSP leadership. Solidaridad's experience, not-for-profit status, independence, understanding of the private sector, sector knowledge and facilitation skills are important in this. Solidaridad supports CSOs to participate in MSPs. The building up of a relation of trust between different stakeholders and creating a safe space for multi-stakeholder dialogue is sometimes enough to empower CSOs to participate effectively.

**Establishing an MSP is costly, but costs generally reduce over time.** We found that all MSPs established by Solidaridad are dependent upon Solidaridad and/or other external funding. Establishing an MSP is often the most costly activity of the AfC project, mainly because of the required staff time. Over time, these costs tend to reduce considerably.

#### *Recommendations*

8. Define the purpose of the MSPs being established, ensure its alignment with L&A strategies, and evaluate the relevance over time or whether the MSP has become redundant.
9. Solidaridad's role in MSPs should be mainly a combination of the expert and neutral convening role.
10. Support MSPs in understanding policy processes and developing L&A skills on how policies can be influenced, and how to create or benefit from policy windows to influence policies. Involve (national level) government agencies in the leadership of an MSP for direct linkages to policy changes and law enforcement, or alternatively keep national agencies well informed.

#### ***Lessons learned and recommendations on L&A strategy 3: Landscape innovations***

**Landscape projects operate at a jurisdictional scale and usually deal with multiple administrative levels as well as multiple sectors that operate in the geography.** Within the landscape (project), there are often multiple MSPs (at different scales). Lobby and advocacy strategies are most commonly through MSPs (L&A pathway 2), but also includes direct policy engagement (pathway 1) and CSO empowerment (pathway 3). By taking an integrated or holistic approach, landscape projects integrate GP&RI as well as EPE objectives in one project. Landscape initiatives often operate at a jurisdictional scale with openness to bottom-up / decentralized policy dialogue.

**This strategy is particularly relevant in contexts where sustainability issues require action at a wider (landscape) scale and by multiple stakeholders, and where different landscape users have competing claims over resources.** Landscape projects and particularly the process of establishing MSPs can contribute to overcoming competing relations (or even conflicts) and build relations of cooperation between stakeholders and the adoption of good practices. Where policy influencing took place, Solidaridad in most cases took the lead in lobbying key decision-makers (strategy 1), especially at national level, followed or in parallel with MSPs being involved in L&A activities at local level (strategy 2).

**Creating successful connections between local and national administrative layers will promote the success and scaling of landscape interventions.** While landscape projects have a local focus, by establishing landscape level MSPs and conducting local pilot studies, this evaluation identified the importance of engaging other relevant administrative layers including national stakeholders (public agencies), in order to ensure the link between field practices and the enabling context. If taken on board from the beginning and in the right way, there is evidence that national government can play an important role in scaling the approach to other landscapes, or other sectors, or even other countries.

**Landscape project would benefit from a better analysis of relevant policies and systemic issues and undertaking pilot activities.** In the design phase, all landscape projects have carried out 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 integrated landscape approach success depends, among other factors, upon close interaction between on-the-ground pilots that demonstrate solutions, the elaboration of strong business cases linked to major investors, and working on an enabling policy context. In the current projects, land use planning, law enforcement and monitoring could receive more attention.

**Pre-existing experiences and building up social capital in the landscape and related sectors supports Solidaridad's convening role in the landscape approach.** In the AfC projects, Solidaridad is the convenor of the landscape projects. They usually build on firm experiences of Solidaridad in related supply chains and sectors which contributed to build up trust and networks with private and public sector actors.

**In addition to technical aspects, landscape projects need more training on L&A strategies.** Most landscape projects received training on landscape management and also on a range of landscape management tools, including pilots of their implementation. There has been limited training on aspects of policy analysis, integrating supply chain/ sector and administrative policies, as well as effective lobby & advocacy strategies.

*Recommendations:*

11. It is critical within the integrated landscape approach to remain aware of the potential trade-offs between the goals of productivity increase and the goals of conservation or protection.
12. 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. Local pilots could test which governance models will work out in practice in the local political context. Working on this is very much in line with objectives of strengthening civic space.

13. It is important for Solidaridad to engage with high level decision-makers, if possible at national level, as these are critical for ensuring the enabling context, and to play a role in scaling the approach to other landscapes, or other sectors, or even other countries.

***Cross-cutting issue 1: Inclusiveness and gender***

**This evaluation found that AfC projects have a strong focus on smallholder and indigenous groups and apply different strategies to empower them.** While many activities with smallholders and indigenous groups are trying to directly improve their livelihoods (e.g. through yield improvement and market access), the AfC projects also adopt strategies to empower them. However, it often takes long or it is even unrealistic to expect grassroots organizations to become effective in national or international policy dialogues. In such contexts, Solidaridad could forge strong partnerships between smallholder associations and industry associations and ensure the industry associations advocate for smallholder interests at (inter)national platforms. Solidaridad staff can also directly represent and defend smallholder interests. This requires the development and maintenance of genuine partnerships with grassroots organizations in order to articulate their interests.

**While several AfC projects have successfully achieved goals related to improving women's livelihood, it appears to be more challenging to enhance women's voice.** Especially the systemic (including cultural) issues seem to hamper this from being achieved. We found few projects with explicit goals and targets aimed to empower and enhance women participation in local or national decision-making and L&A activities. Examples are the Lestari project in Indonesia, the F&V MSPs in East Africa, and the PASOS project in Honduras. We did not come across explicit identification of the underlying systemic issues, such as socio-cultural norms or power dynamics.

*Recommendations:*

14. Formulate explicit goals regarding the inclusion of the voice of women and other target groups. Depending on the capacity of these target groups, consider direct strategies (e.g. supporting them in L&A activities) and indirect strategies (e.g. having Solidaridad or industry associations to defend their interest). The strategies may also differ for local, national and international level. Any indirect strategy needs to be based upon genuine partnership.
15. There is need to focus on implementing practices from Solidaridad's gender inclusivity bucket book on improving women's voice and addressing underlying systemic issues, such as cultural norms.

***Cross-cutting issue 2: Partnerships***

**Genuine partnerships are key in all L&A strategies.** The evaluation showed that Solidaridad has been able to develop many genuine partnerships. Partners do not see the partnership as a one-sided source 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, or build the networks necessary for representative participation in an MSP. Others refer to the technical or scientific inputs they share with Solidaridad. This shows that the collaboration is based upon the principle of equality rather than a traditional development project – which has a donor-beneficiary basis.

*Recommendations:*

16. It is recommended to continue investing in partnerships based upon the principle of equality, but also to remain critical of partners and change partners where there are good reasons to do so.

***7. Lessons learned and recommendations for PM&E, learning and exit***

**This evaluation found that where Solidaridad has experience in, or done good diagnostics, of a sector in its policy context, the ToCs are better grounded, and the policy targets, resulting strategies and actions are better defined. Another strength is that Solidaridad has been successful in combining different L&A strategies in a flexible manner in line with what the context demands.** In most cases Solidaridad combined different L&A strategies, depending upon the context and changing over time.

This responsiveness and flexibility is a strength, and there does not appear to be any evidence of negative trade-offs in projects that have shown flexibility and responsiveness. However, with a better understanding of the sector and landscape context, more effective strategies could have been designed and implemented from the beginning.

*Recommendations:*

17. There is need to build capacities and clear diagnostics for undertaking a policy and context analysis in order to identify relevant policy and other systemic issues. This can be part of developing the theory of change and strategic pathways. This process should be participatory to also contribute to local ownership. This will also help to better understand which capacities and partners are needed.
18. To identify the most suitable L&A strategies to directly or indirectly influence the identified policy targets and other systemic issues, it is recommended to use the following set of questions (Box 1). Gradually, as part of a learning process, these questions may be further developed.

**Box 1: Questions to support informed decision-making on L&A strategies.**

Key questions on the context:

1. Does the country have strong / moderate / weak institutions & policies?
2. Are policies and laws adequately enforced, at sector and/or landscape level? (Y/N)
3. What is the state of civic space, varying from open to repressed?
4. Is there a sense of urgency to find solutions to certain problems? (Y/N)
5. Are there policy windows to influence public /private policies? (Y/N)
6. Are public/private decision-makers open to policy dialogue and collaboration? (Y/N)
7. Does the country have strong CSOs? (Y/N)
8. Do stakeholders have competing interests / conflicts or common interests / trust?
9. Do stakeholders see a value in collaborative actions? (Y/N)

Key questions on Solidaridad and CSO position, role and capacities:

1. Does Solidaridad have strong social capital (networks, expertise and reputation)? (Y/N)
2. Does Solidaridad have clear added value as compared to local CSO partners? (Y/N)
3. Does Solidaridad have good relations with key public and private decision-makers? (Y/N)
4. Is there good collaboration between Solidaridad and CSO partners? (Y/N)
5. Is there good understanding (e.g. based on field work) of solutions for (urgent) problems? (Y/N)
6. Is there good understanding of policy-processes and L&A skills? (Y/N)
7. Does the MSP give a voice to different stakeholders and is well governed? (Y/N)

19. It is always useful, especially if good knowledge is missing and additional diagnostics are needed, or if the external context shows rapid changes, to revisit and adjust a project's ToC approx. 6 months after implementation started and at least every 2 consecutive years. It is common for a policy and economic context to show (unexpected) changes; these changes and the consequences for the ToC and chosen L&A strategies should be documented.

**While M&E and learning has received much attention in the AfC program, and has generated useful data, there is need for strengthening M&E and learning in a number of ways. For example, working with policy stages is considered very useful to capture progress and allow aggregation of findings within the AfC program. However, some improvements are needed:**

- the framework should acknowledge that policy change processes can skip or reverse stages, policy change is rarely a linear process
- the last stage of policy implementation should be expanded to include sub-stages of implementing policies including law enforcement, with different levels of maturity
- add the possibility of monitoring 'small wins', which are small yet significant positive improvements that do not directly lead to more advanced policy stages, but do improve the potential for such changes.

**We found good internal learning and also learning between some regional projects, though little is documented. Learning at a global scale is weak.** There is a lot of exchange within and between teams, but lessons are commonly not documented. For instance, a lot of experience was built up in Bangladesh working on social issues in the garment sector, but none of this has been documented to allow for the project in Myanmar and Ethiopia to benefit from. 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. A positive exception are the lessons learned from developing investment proposals in PASOS Honduras and Nicaragua. Most Solidaridad staff admits that global learning is weak. This is possibly because the right learning questions have not been well defined, or because management level did not support this activity as a priority, so that many RECs do not see their interests being reflected. One could argue that there should have been a L&A Task Force as for many staff L&A activities were relatively new.

*Recommendations:*

20. There is need to improve the definition of the stages of policy change in order to make this policy change monitoring tool more effective, see for details on improvement above.
21. There is the need to better define systemic changes and how these will be monitored. To do so, a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators should be developed to capture outcomes, e.g. to capture landscape governance (e.g. such as the framework proposed by LandScale) or monitoring systemic changes or sector transformation (e.g. such as proposed by Aidenvironment). Defining targets in terms of the desirable state of systemic issues should form part of such monitoring efforts, and will be part of a pathways approach.
22. There is need to include at least one KPI on the following important aspects:
  - women's voice and / or underlying systemic issues
  - scaling in its different dimensions (by copying, crowding in, expansion to other landscapes, countries or regions)
  - business case development to generate evidence based on credible data.
23. Mechanisms for evidence-based learning should be enhanced. To do so, well-defined learning and research questions and M&E are important. This could start with a limited list of strategic learning questions to which selected RECs and projects contribute. This has been tried before. However, knowledge themes and learning questions were not followed up with concrete cases studies to generate content. We believe learning questions should be more strategic, with room for more specific learning questions that are relevant for differing regional contexts, but from which evidence can contribute to the larger 'strategic' question. In addition, learning cycles should be shorter, M&E less quantitative and less demanding, and lessons better documented.
24. As part of improving the M&E system, at least for a limited number of projects, in order to inform a learning strategy, it is recommended to include activity-based costing with complementary output level monitoring to assess the cost-efficiency of different L&A strategies.

**While a period of five years is too short to change public and private policy environments and contribute to sectors being transformed, in several cases the Solidaridad engagement has been of a much longer period, and there are some promising cases of large scale and sustained impact.** The PASOS project provides a good example of how to secure funding and make the landscape initiative less dependent upon future Solidaridad funding. The investment proposals were attractive to investors because PASOS has found a way to convincingly manage high biodiversity-valued landscapes through a credible and participatory approach. Like the PASOS landscape project, the Ganga landscape project in India is also based on a longer period of involvement, and there are promising developments of scaling up the approach to new sectors and a much larger landscape area.

*Recommendations:*

25. *Instead of working towards an exit strategy, there is a need for long-term commitments with a possible decline of the intensity of support over time, changing to one of lower intensity and limited resources.* Also for landscape projects, there is a strong argument for Solidaridad to remain engaged

with a number of selected landscapes to show the full potential of the integrated landscape approach, while co-funding by third parties would be an essential component.

26. If the MSP is meant to last, it needs to be supported to develop approaches to become more independent, institutionally embedded and financially independent, e.g. by developing membership fees or service delivery that generates revenues for MSPs. This support may need to go beyond five years in duration, but the cost and intensity of support will likely decrease as the MSP has matured.

# 1. Introduction

For the period 2016-2020, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has granted Solidaridad two grants. Jointly, these two grants cover the strategic areas that are part of Solidaridad's theory of change to achieve sector transformation. Solidaridad stimulates sector transformation through supporting innovations, both nationally (government regulation, industry bodies, civil society) and globally (e.g. voluntary standards, markets, trade agreements). The 2 grants cover the 4 strategic areas as follows:

- The grant 'Practice for Change' (PfC) mainly covers result areas 1 (GP: Good Practices) and 2 (RI: Robust Infrastructure), and jointly aims to contribute to more sustainable and inclusive sectors;
- The grant 'Advocacy for Change' (AfC) mainly covers result areas 3 (Landscape Innovation) and 4 (Enabling Policy Environment), and jointly aims to contribute to more sustainable landscapes (i.e. landscapes where public social and environmental functions and goods are safeguarded).

The Advocacy for Change grant is the main subject of this evaluation. It originates from the Dialogue and Dissent policy framework developed by DGIS. It is based on the insight emerging from decades of experiences in programs to combat poverty, being the need to address the root causes of poverty and (gender) inequality, because otherwise poverty reduction results will remain limited in scale and will not sustain. To do so, DGIS has chosen for a 'Social Transformative' approach to development which is based on the assumption that poverty, inequality and exclusion are caused by power asymmetries and that development is a complex, nonlinear and political process aimed at changing power relations. Central to this approach are the political roles of civil society organisations (CSOs) to change power relations, being an educational, a communication, a representational and a cooperative role. An important condition for being able to perform these roles is the political space to do so.

The Draft report is organised as follows:

- Chapter 2: Conceptual framework, evaluation questions and methodology
- Chapter 3: AfC project portfolio analysis
- Chapter 4: Main insights and lessons on Strategy, Outcomes and Impact
- Chapter 5: Main insights and lessons on Efficiency
- Chapter 6: Conclusions on the evaluation questions
- Chapter 7: Main conclusions, lessons and recommendations

This is the main report. A separate volume is available with the following case studies:

- Case study 1: MSP: F&V projects in East and Southern Africa
- Case study 2: From local to regional: Tea and palm oil projects in Asia
- Case study 3a: Landscapes: Ganga – India
- Case study 3b: PASOS – Honduras & Nicaragua
- Overview of insights 3c: Kilimanjaro – Tanzania
- Case study 4: Linking zero-deforestation to emerging markets: continental soy and soy Bolivia
- Overview of insights case study 5 repressed state: Textile - Myanmar & Ethiopia
- Landscape main findings and recommendations

## 2. Conceptual framework and methodology

This chapter is an abbreviated version of the full methodology, which can be found in Annex 2.

### 2.1 Purpose

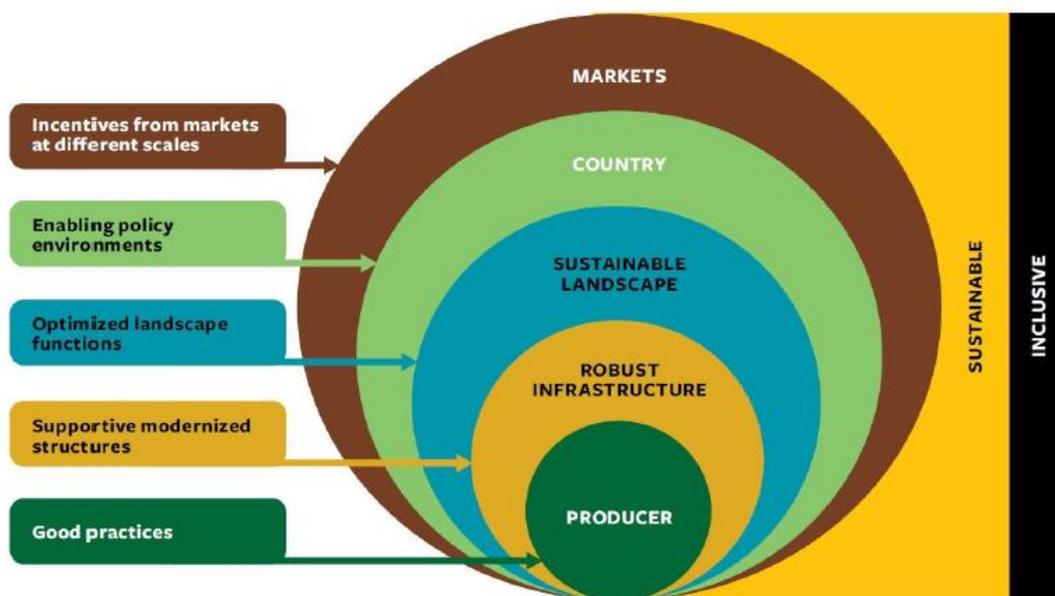
The purpose of this evaluation is twofold (see ToR, Annex 1). Primarily, it aims Solidaridad to learn which elements of its key lobby and advocacy interventions it should continue, improve, or discontinue and what new elements or interventions it should commence in the period after 2020. This evaluation therefore serves internal learning purposes, so as to strengthen future programming. Secondly, this evaluation serves accountability purposes (i.e. the requirement to submit an evaluation report to our donor the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). To do so, there is need to document the expected and unexpected, positive and negative, outcomes and lessons learned of the key lobby and advocacy interventions as implemented in the AfC programme in general, and the project portfolio in particular, in the period 2016 -2019/20.

### 2.2 Conceptual framework

The overall objective of Solidaridad during the period of this evaluation, as illustrated by its theory of change, is to contribute to transformation of sectors (and landscapes), more specifically the transition of a commodity sector in a specific regional setting towards more (social, environmental, economic) sustainable and inclusive production systems. Thus, the overall theory of change of Solidaridad has 4 pillars that can be considered as being embedded in each other (see below figure 1 from Solidaridad ToR). There are two programmes contributing to this objective:

1. 'Practice for Change' (PfC) covers result areas 1 (Good Practices) and 2 (Robust Infrastructure), to contribute to more sustainable and inclusive sectors, viable businesses and resilient ecosystems;
2. 'Advocacy for Change' (AfC) covers result areas 3 (Landscape Innovation) and 4 (Enabling Policy Environment), to contribute to landscapes where public social and environmental functions and goods are safeguarded.

Figure 1: Four components of Solidaridad theory of change (source: ToR for this assignment)

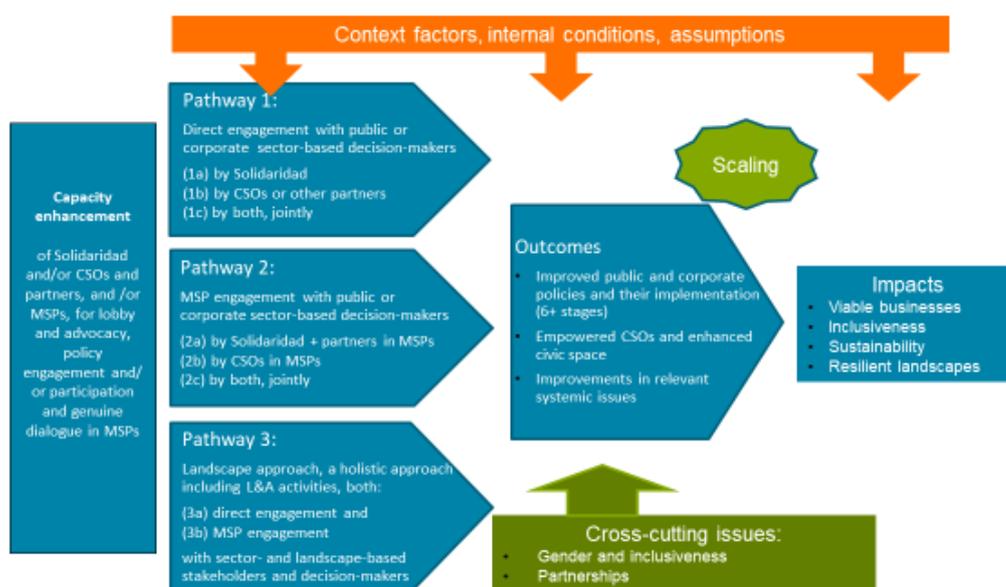


Within this overall programme, the objective of AfC, being the object of this evaluation, is to support the capacity development of southern CSOs in lobbying and advocating for sustainable and inclusive sectors and landscapes and to convene and mobilise key stakeholders to contribute to systemic changes. The strategy to do so is 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.

As part of preparing this evaluation, in collaboration with Solidaridad these three L&A strategies were restructured as they show strong interrelations. Some additional adjustments were made following the evaluation, based on additional insights. This generated the following theory of change with three L&A strategies or pathways, whereby capacity enhancement and empowering of CSOs is fundamental and relevant for each of these three pathways (see Figure 2). The contextual conditions and internal capacities largely determine which pathways will be followed.

Figure 2: Theory of change AfC programme with emphasis on the lobby and advocacy strategies



Systemic changes (outcomes) with positive impacts will contribute to sector transformation. Potential issues where systemic change can be relevant for the AfC program are noted in the conceptual framework. One of these is civic space, understood as civil society’s ability to participate in, and contribute to dialogue, without hindrance. The dialogue should be inclusive, meaning that interests and voices of workers, vulnerable groups and stakeholders are represented and heard in decision making.

Policy changes are one type of systemic change contributing to sector transformation. In monitoring the degree of policy change influence by L&A activities, Solidaridad defined 6 stages, as follows:

1. Agenda setting: (public or private) decision makers are open or willing to look into change;
2. Recommendations (position papers, proposals for reviews) are brought into dialogue;
3. Consensus is reached within the MSP/dialogue;

4. Mechanism, norm, policy, law or article proposal is reformulated after exchanges of the MSP/ dialogue members and submitted to the public or private decision maker(s)
5. Adoption of new or adjusted mechanisms, norms, policies, laws are passed successfully
6. Implementation or enforcement of new mechanism, norm, law, policy, articles.

The AfC projects have been classified according to the following categories and sub-categories:

- Enabling policy environment activities:
  - Global level, per commodity
  - Regional level, per commodity
  - National level, per commodity and country
- Landscape initiatives, including not only enabling activities but also the interventions in result areas 1 (Good Practices) and 2 (Robust Infrastructure), including the PfC programme.

To ensure gender inclusivity, several measures were taken:

- Specific interviews were held with coordinators of the gender task force, to gain insights in what has been done and receive feed-back on questionnaires
- The long list of questions for interviews and FGDs, where relevant, included a distinction between men and women, in terms of targets or results
- In the selection of stakeholders to be interviewed care was taken to include specific women's groups or female representatives
- A distinction was made in drawing conclusions on changes in women's livelihoods and women's voice.

## 2.3 Structuring lobby and advocacy strategies

### 2.3.1 Lobby and advocacy pathways

Of the 35 AfC projects, 22 are enabling policy environment (EPE) projects, with a focus on lobby and advocacy activities, and 7 are landscape innovation (LI) projects, with a more holistic approach towards landscape management (there are also 6 network projects). The strategies vary for these two categories of projects. Based on our conceptual models (Figures 1 and 2) three L&A pathways were designed that served as a basis for this evaluation:

- Pathway for L&A strategy 1: 'Direct engagement', (1a) through Solidaridad or (1b) through CSOs, (1c) by both, jointly
- Pathway for L&A strategy 2: 'Multi-stakeholder dialogue', (2a) through participation by Solidaridad or (2b) through participation by CSOs, (2c) by both, jointly, (2d) by strengthening MSPs
- Pathway 3: landscape innovation – see next section.

The evaluation focused on outcome levels, but also tracked back the specific activities that have been contributed to a certain outcome. Details on these L&A strategies can be found in Annex 2.

### 2.3.2 Landscape innovation projects

The landscape innovation (LI) projects have an approach whereby the landscape management aspect is a primary goal, e.g. water scarcity, deforestation, land degradation, etc. The approach is to pilot landscape management innovations, and bring this evidence into multi-stakeholder dialogue on sustainable practices and uptake thereof, and contribute to the formulation of landscape management frameworks. Of the 7 LI projects within the AfC programme, 4 include climate innovation pilots. Thus, the above two L&A pathways are relevant, but in a slightly different (landscape, spatial) context. Also, while some enabling policy environment projects have GP and RI objectives in their project design, and most have 'external' linkages with GP or RI result areas, LI projects have fully integrated GP and RI objectives in their design. This makes the landscape projects especially interesting for this evaluation.

## 2.4 Evaluation questions

The overarching evaluation question can be formulated as:

*How have L&A activities, within specific strategies or pathways, contributed to changes in capabilities, policies and specific systemic issues, with positive impacts (in terms of viable businesses, inclusiveness, sustainability or resilient landscapes).*

The break-down of this overarching question into specific evaluation questions follows three categories (see for details Annex 2, and also chapter 5 where the evaluation questions are answered).

- Strategy and interventions: the selection of L&A strategies within the given socio-political context to influence (public and private) policies
- Outcomes: the contribution by L&A strategies to policy changes and other systemic changes
- Impact: the (contribution by) policy changes to the following impact categories:
  - Sustainable and Inclusive Sectors: viable businesses, social inclusion, resilient ecosystems
  - Sustainable landscapes: public social and environmental functions and goods in a landscape are safeguarded

## 2.5 Evaluation methods and information sources

Three main evaluation methods were used, which have different information sources, as follows. For these three methods, overall documents that have been consulted are listed in Annex 4.

### 1. Portfolio level: fast track survey and desk review at portfolio level

A fast track desk study and survey was developed in close collaboration with Solidaridad, with joint responsibilities. The part of the fast track study carried out by Solidaridad and the RECs focused on providing an overview of capacity building results, policy change results and MSP strengthening and was completed in June 2020. Aidenvironment carried out fast track studies for all L&A projects, except the ones from REC Europe, using project documentation. This part covered additional issues such as:

- Complementarity with other projects/programmes, partners, GP / RI / PfC / other projects
- Policy target/s, current stage as reported in M&E reports according to 6-stage scaling list
- Evidence of systemic issues relevant for the AfC program
- External influences: economic, climate, political, security
- Evidence of scaling, as an ambition or based on evidence, copying, crowding in
- Sustainability: will results be sustained?
- Gender aspects, also youth

### 2. Selected case studies

Five case studies were selected each with a central theme, and usually encompass different projects falling within this theme, in different countries (see overview below). The case studies were selected in collaboration with Solidaridad, with the following selection criteria:

- to cover a range of relevant themes and issues as emerged from the fast track study of all projects.
- to cover a diversity of RECs

See also section 3.1 for an elaboration of how the case studies are representative for the AfC portfolio.

**Case study 1:** Comparative study on MSP functionality in South and East Africa, in F&V sectors, at national and regional level

- Main evaluation / learning question: What is the role of MSPs for L&A strategies to develop sector standards, at national and/or regional level, and what strategies (and related capacities) are most effective, in different contexts and different stages of developing a standard?

<p><b>Case study 2:</b> Building an authentic Asian sustainability agenda through complementary L&amp;A activities at local, national and continental level in the tea sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main evaluation / learning question: How to successfully link, local, national and continental L&amp;A processes and build an authentic sustainability agenda in emerging economies?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Case study 3:</b> Evaluating strategies to combine and integrate objectives of increasing productivity and enhancing ecosystem protection and restoration, with landscape projects in Asia, Africa and Latin America</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main evaluation / learning question: What are viable landscape governance models considering different levels of social conflict and possible conflicting production and protection objectives?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Case study 4:</b> Linking national no-deforestation MSP and direct advocacy initiatives to emerging markets, with a case study on soy in South America</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main evaluation / learning question: What are effective L&amp;A strategies to mobilise national public and private actors to implement no-deforestation policies in soy and links these to emerging markets?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Case study 5:</b> Developing effective and safe L&amp;A strategies in a context of limited or repressed civic space, with a case study on social dialogue in the garment sector in Asia and Africa.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main evaluation / learning question: What are effective L&amp;A strategies and capacities to achieve progress (in terms of a more enabling environment for sustainable and inclusive value chains) in countries with repressed civic space or political unrest?</li> </ul>

#### *Case study methods*

Because of the limitations to travel due to COVID-19, it was decided to carry out the case studies through on-distance interviews with Solidaridad staff, partners and stakeholders. Thus, data collection for all case studies was based upon desk research and on-distance interviews. The desk research included at least the inception report, all progress reports and the M&E excel file overview. For the interviews, an elaborate set of questions was developed, based on the case study theme and the evaluation questions. The selection of stakeholders to be interviewed was done in close collaboration with a local contact person. The aim was to interview a representative selection of stakeholders, from private sector, public sector and civil society, as well as research institutes if relevant. In most cases the interview was done directly by the consultant in English or Spanish language. In some cases (PASOS Honduras and Nicaragua, tea Indonesia) a local translator was used. In advance of the interviews a short list of questions was sent. In several cases follow-up interviews were held, mainly with project staff, to check and triangulate findings before writing the draft report. An overview of Solidaridad staff, partners and stakeholders interviewed is provided in Annex 3.

Of the case studies a draft report was elaborated, shared and discussed with the case study owners. For three cases, additional field visits were foreseen but these did not materialize.

### **3. Efficiency assessment**

Parallel to the case studies we carried out a qualitative assessment of the resources required for specific L&A activities, in order to be able to say something about their cost effectiveness. Unfortunately this proved to be very difficult, and most RECs did not succeed in providing good data. See for details on the methodology Annex 2. The results are reported in chapter 5.

## **2.6 Validation**

Of all case studies draft reports were shared and validated with the respective RECs and project managers. The results and remaining doubts or weaknesses in data sets were discussed, leading to a final version of each case study report. In some cases it seems that the case study report has played a role in subsequent planning. In one case (case study 2) it was agreed to further work out the case study findings to policy paper that will be shared with a larger audience.

## 2.7 Limitations of the methodology

Following are the main limitations of the methodology that was used.

1. The main expected limitation of this study has been the fact that no field studies could be done, but all the information was acquired from reports and distance interviews. In addition to saving GHG emissions, the advantage of this approach was that we were able to interview more respondents in a wider geographical scope than what would have been possible with targeted field visits. The drawback was however that the quality of the conversation was in certain cases lower than generally in face-to-face meetings. This is particularly valid for interviews with local community members and in cases where the internet or phone connection was poor. Although adequate responses were received on all questions posed, the exchange generally did not lead to a lively debate with joint reflections. Thus, the debate was less rich than it would have been with field visits. Altogether, we are satisfied by the results, thanks to the collaboration and responsiveness of the RECs in organising the distance interviews and ensuring that we received the right information.
2. The approach is mainly qualitative, with evidence by quantitative data emerging from the M&E data set of Solidaridad. Although the M&E data set has many gaps, apparently because several RECs did not find all indicators relevant to their projects, we received as part of the case studies information or updates of the indicators that were most relevant for us. Thus, we have been able to draw firm conclusions, based on plausible evidence emerging from the insights based on multiple sources of information. Also, the case study reports were all validated by and with the Solidaridad team.
3. Conclusions were drawn on the contribution by Solidaridad to the perceived changes and project results in the different countries. The aim was to draw conclusions on the effectiveness of different L&A strategies. We soon found that L&A strategies are being used in combination, and choices are made that also strongly depend upon differences in context and internal capacities. Even though the effects of separate L&A strategies could not be determined, the strategies itself have been analysed and a synthesis of findings, lessons and recommendation per strategy was made.
4. We have received limited results on our request to RECs to provide data on the efficiency of the L&A strategies. This is because such data are not readily available in current budget categories, and because it would take considerable time to restructure expenses in a way that was useful for us. It should be noted that this request also interfered with intensive work by RECs on preparing the new programme.

## 3. The AfC project portfolio

### 3.1 Portfolio overview

The portfolio has 7 landscape innovation (LI) projects and 17 enabling policy environment (EPE) projects, of which 9 national level projects and 8 continental projects, as well as 5 projects in Europe (see overview table 1). In addition, there are 6 projects at network level, including those on gender, global sector transformation, management information system development, and PMEL.

<p><b>7 Landscape projects</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Zona Litoral del Norte, Honduras: Avoiding deforestation and land degradation caused by rapid expansion of oil palm plantations</li><li>2. Southern Autonomous Region of Caribbean Coast, Nicaragua: Avoiding deforestation and land degradation caused by unregulated expansion of livestock and oil palm production systems</li><li>3. Chaco, Paraguay: Promoting dialogue with local government, farmers, indigenous people, meat companies and conservation CSOs for innovative development approaches, while avoiding further deforestation</li><li>4. Kilimanjaro Transboundary region, Tanzania: Shifting land use policies through landscape management approaches that promote food security and sustainable economic development.</li><li>5. Kafue River, Mazabuka District, Zambia: Advocate change in land and water use management by different sector actors within the Kafue River Basin.</li><li>6. Ganga Basin, India: Facilitating stakeholder dialogue and testing innovative models for water catchment area management approaches in alignment with Clean Ganga Mission</li><li>7. Mount Merapi, Central Java, Indonesia: Development of an inclusive regional sustainable Landscape Management Framework in Central Java.</li></ol>
<p><b>8 Continental EPE projects</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Advocafé, in Central and Southern America, Coffee: Create better adapted incentives and policies for coffee smallholders in Latin America</li><li>2. PanAmericaña, in Central and Southern America, Sugarcane: Developing and facilitating a virtual knowledge and exchange platform for Latin American sugarcane sector</li><li>3. Conducive policies for lower deforestation linked to soy production in South America, Soy: support public institutions' enforcement related to forest and natural resource management, in response to soy production</li><li>4. Healthy Fruits &amp; Vegetables for Africa, Southern &amp; Eastern Africa, Fruit &amp; Vegetables: Support the drafting of national policies for food safety and social and environmental requirements.</li><li>5. Livestock Global to Local Agenda Southern Africa, Livestock: Leverage national and regional livestock sector expertise through the formation of multi-stakeholder platforms</li><li>6. Social Dialogue in Emerging Textile Producers, East Africa and South East Asia: Support international and national dialogue on best practices in public policy to support social improvements in the textile sector</li><li>7. Tea Asia 2025, South East Asia. Tea: Develop tea supply and demand regulation in Asia in order to improve (fair) pricing, aligning the different domestic tea standards</li><li>8. ASPN South East, Palm oil: Aligning sustainability standards on palm oil production and trade in Asia</li></ol>
<p><b>14 Country projects</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Bolivia, Soy: Improve the application and enforcement of land use law to avoid illegal deforestation.</li><li>2. Bolivia, Gold: Improve public policies that support the creation of a national 'formalisation process policy', in order to address the high level of informality in the mining sector</li><li>3. Ghana, Cocoa: Advance the promulgation and enforcement of shade trees and land access security</li><li>4. Ghana, Gold: Improve national-level ASM policy, implementation and practice</li></ol>

5.	Uganda, Tea: Review and formulate the National Tea Policy that will contribute to improved production, processing and marketing of tea.
6.	Uganda, Palm Oil, tea and HCVA: supports the development of a comprehensive investment policy framework that guides responsible investments in selected supply chains,
7.	Mozambique, Fruit & Vegetables: creating and testing a national mandatory standard for a sustainable national fruit and vegetable sector
8.	Bangladesh, Aquaculture: Achieve meaningful sector transformation through the adoption of improved operational policy frameworks for responsible shrimp farming
9.	Indonesia, Tea: Developing a sustainable Indonesian tea industry through the development and acceptance of an inclusive, national tea standard
10.	Netherlands, Textiles and cotton: Alignment of social and environmental sustainability (issues and solutions) within the European garment and textile sector
11.	Netherlands, cocoa: Influence policies through existing networks, including promoting the development of viable alternatives to the existing certification system
12.	Netherlands, Gold: Participating in multi-stakeholder dialogues that build on growing awareness of responsible mining by downstream actors and the uptake of smelter audits
13.	Netherlands, Palm: Drive the smallholder inclusive agenda forward within RSPO by advocating for public and private stakeholders to stimulate and reward, landscape level initiatives
14.	Netherlands, Finance: Supporting new financial products and structures that either directly or indirectly benefit producers

Table 1: Overview of portfolio

The following table 2 gives an overview of the projects by REC, in terms of funding, commodities and geographical level of operation.<sup>1</sup> Table 2 shows there is a spread of EPE projects over the 6 RECs, with an average costs of about 500K EUR per project per country, covering 11 commodities. There is no LI project in WAF, the others are well spread, with an average cost of 1,742K EUR, covering 9 commodities.

	Regional Expertise Centres					
	ASIA	SAM	CAM	SAF	ECA	WAF
<b>EPE projects:</b>						
• number	• 5	• 4	• 2	• 3	• 4	• 2
• EUR (total)	• 3,746K	• 2,113K	• 639K	• 1,730K	• 1,351K	• 1,180K
• Sectors	• tea (2), palm (2), aquaculture, textiles	• gold, soy (2), coffee	• sugarcane, coffee	• F & V, livestock	• textiles, F & V (3), tea (2), aquaculture, coffee	• Gold, cocoa
<b>LI projects:</b>						
• number	• 2	• 1	• 2	• 1	• 1	-
• EUR (total)	• 4,026K	• 1,780K	• 3,660K	• 1,426K	• 1,303K	
• Sectors	• soy, sugarcane, leather	• dairy	• palm, livestock, cocoa	• sugarcane, livestock, aquaculture	• livestock, coffee	

Table 2: Overview of main portfolio characteristics

As for the Europe REC and network level projects, these projects cover the following commodities: textiles and cotton (2), cocoa, gold, palm (2), F&V, livestock and dairy.

<sup>1</sup> The number of EPE projects adds up to 20 because there are 3 EPE projects that cover two different RECs.

In terms of L&A strategy, we aimed to include in the above table an overview of which L&A strategies were adopted by the different projects. This information was collected in the 'fast track' overview, making a distinction between:

1. Policy Influencing via Capacity Enhancement of CSOs,
2. Policy Influencing via MSPs,
3. Policy Influencing via Direct Engagement (Solidaridad only, or Solidaridad with partners).

However, as explained in the next chapter (under 4.2 - L&A strategies), we found that in far most projects all three strategies were actually applied alongside each other, thus it is not useful to provide this overview in the above table.

## **3.2 Policy targets**

We have listed per project all the L&A policy targets and observed changes in Annex 5. Here is a brief summary:

- Of the 24 projects executed beyond Europe, the majority targets public policies, as compared to private policies (10 target public policies only, 12 target both public and private policies, 2 private policies only).
- Public policy targets are not always so clearly formulated. In most cases the projects target improving existing policies or developing new policies. Typically, this could be the development of new standards (e.g. F&V in East and South Africa). However, also in several cases the target is about supporting the implementation of existing policies. This may be through developing an investment framework, in order to implement existing policies (e.g. investment framework in Tanzania for the Kilimanjaro landscape management plan).
- The two projects on private policies only target health and safety measures, or HCV (high conservation value) measures.
- As part of the 5 projects run by REC Europe, the majority of activities (70%) targets business policies, and the remaining 30% targets policies at multilateral level.

## **3.3 Representation of the case studies in the portfolio**

We selected the case studies in such a way that these are representative for the above portfolio, because:

- All RECs were involved, except WAF, which has only 2 projects in just one country
- 4 landscape innovation projects were covered (of the 7 in total), with a total budget of EUR 7,737K.
- 5 national (of the total of 9) and 3 continental (of the total of 8) projects were covered, with a total budget of EUR 5,370K
- The commodities covered were palm, tea, textiles, soy, livestock, cocoa, sugarcane and leather
- As regards the projects executed in the Netherlands, no specific projects were evaluated but for the commodities soy, textiles and palm, interviews were held with the respective coordinators in REC Europe and linkages were made to the projects in Europe and the task forces that are in place.
- Together, the case studies covered 59% of the budget spent on projects beyond Europe.
- The case studies cover all L&A strategies and different combinations.

## 4. Insights and lessons on Strategy, Outcomes and Impact

The insights and lessons learned from the case studies are structured by a number of topics, which fall under three categories of evaluation questions, being Strategy, Outcomes and Impact (chapter 2). For each of the topics, the insights that emerged from the portfolio analysis are reported under the heading of 'portfolio analysis', and are used to support the case study findings or to provide further details. Apart from that, there is one topic related to monitoring and evaluation systems.

### 4.1 Strategy: Theory of change

*Leading evaluation question: How relevant and clear have the ToCs been in the AfC projects?*

**The theories of change for Enabling Policy Environment (EPE) and Landscape Innovations (LI) projects are valuable additions to ToCs of Solidaridad's Good Practices (GP) and Rural Infrastructure (RI).** Many projects in the AfC portfolio build upon previous experience in specific sectors and geographies, which usually had a strong GP/RI focus. Some projects' ToC clearly refers to the limitations of these GP and RI interventions in achieving impact in a context with a poor enabling environment. EPE interventions focus on creating such an enabling environment. For example, in the Asian tea and palm oil projects the EPE interventions address key policy constraints around price management, international trade and public investment in smallholder agriculture. The ToCs of LI projects generally encompass GP, RI and EPE interventions as part of the integrated landscape approach.

**The ToCs show variable quality and generally miss out the policy targets.** Some ToCs are elaborate and informative, others consist only of a simple narrative of the result areas. Not all ToCs have an easy-to-understand schematic overview, nor do all show the link of the L&A project with past or ongoing GP/RI projects or results (with the exception of Asian projects). In general, the ToCs do not clearly show which are the targeted policies to be influenced and how the project aims to contribute to these. Also, systemic issues and desirable changes are not included in the ToC, while these do play an important role in achieving impact at scale.

**A thorough knowledge of a sector or landscape is a prerequisite of a relevant ToC.** Where Solidaridad has experience in a sector or carried out detailed and accurate diagnosis, the ToCs are better grounded. Local ownership of ToC development can help to ensure their accuracy and relevance. Positive examples are the soy, palm oil and tea projects, PASOS landscape (palm oil, livestock) and Ganga landscape (sugarcane). On the contrary, the original African F&V ToCs seemed to be inherited from the fundraising efforts of central management and proposed a blanket approach to policy change without considering the reality in each country.

**Several projects have adapted and focused their original ToC during implementation based upon new insights, but adjustments are not always clearly reported.** The case studies show several examples of new insights that were used to adjust the original ToC. For example, early on in the African F&V projects there was an overall recognition that before developing a continental dialogue and standard, there was a need to establish national standards at individual country level. The original ToC in these projects also ignored the need to build capacities of producers to meet the new standards (standards on their own will not move a sector towards sustainability). 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.

It is understandable that policy targets can change during the course of the project and as a result of conducting pilots and experiencing policy constraints. In several projects this has led to the identification of new policy targets. However, in most cases these adjustments cannot be easily traced back in the progress reports.

**Insights from the AfC portfolio analysis support the above views.** It has not always been easy to extract the actual information on policy targets from the project documents (Annex 5) . While one policy target could be mentioned in the inception report, another policy target could be mentioned in a progress report, without clarifying what has become of the earlier policy target. It would have been good if the theory of change allows to get a rapid and good understanding of policy targets, and adjustments are clearly noted in each progress report.

## 4.2 Strategy: Selecting L&A strategies

*Leading evaluation question: How have L&A strategies been defined and how relevant are they?*

**The classification of L&A strategies as proposed within the AfC programme does not appear to be functional, as in most cases all three strategies are used. The new classification proposed for this evaluation appears to be more useful.** Solidaridad has differentiated between three L&A strategies:

1. Policy Influencing via Capacity Enhancement of CSOs,
2. Policy Influencing via MSPs,
3. Policy Influencing via Direct Engagement (Solidaridad only, or Solidaridad with partners).

From the portfolio analysis, using the ‘fast track’ data, we observe that for all 23 projects outside Europe the first two strategies are always applied, and the third option is applied 13 times, of which 5 times by Solidaridad only, and 8 times by Solidaridad with partners. However, based on case studies findings, we found that in 4 cases where the 3<sup>rd</sup> strategy was not included in the ‘fast track’ data, we concluded that the 3<sup>rd</sup> strategy was also applied. Only in the project working in repressed states, being Myanmar and Ethiopia, this 3<sup>rd</sup> strategy is certainly not applied. Thus, it seems that in most of the projects all three L&A strategies are applied alongside each other. Our restructured and more detailed classification in direct and MSP L&A strategies (section 2.1, Figure 2) appears to be more according to practice, where capacity enhancement is fundamental to each of the three pathways. Note that the landscape strategy is discussed in a later section.

**Projects often combine direct and MSP L&A strategies and may shift between strategies, depending upon the context and the L&A goal.** This flexibility is a strength as L&A activities take place in a dynamic context with moving targets. The choice of which strategy to use strongly depends upon the external context and on internal conditions, especially Solidaridad’s own positioning and the presence of strong partners. For example, Solidaridad’s long presence in Asia makes it well positioned to be involved in direct policy influencing. However, in the case of the tea sector in India, it has chosen to pursue policy change though several well-recognized and powerful partners who already had a long history of engaging with the public sector.

The following table show how different strategies are being applied for different purposes. A consequence of adopting various strategies simultaneously is that it is hard to disentangle the effectiveness of individual strategies.

*Examples of the application of L&A strategies, with reference to strategies in above scheme*

Direct strategies	Indirect - MSP strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (1a) L&amp;A by Solidaridad of public sector or companies (most projects): This strategy can consist of sharing new expertise, discussing policy options, co-developing / reviewing policy options, capacity building. This could include lobbying for recognition of smallholders, like the small tanners in Ganga.</li> <li>• (1b) L&amp;A by partners without Solidaridad: In certain cases (e.g. tea India, PASOS Honduras), partners have sufficient capacities to do L&amp;A themselves. In that case, Solidaridad provides expertise to specify evidence or define policy options. This is also the case in some repressed states, where Solidaridad keeps a low profile, but provides background support ‘behind the screens’.</li> <li>• (1c) L&amp;A by Solidaridad with partners: Solidaridad organises meetings and/or accompanies CSOs in L&amp;A activities, which is also very common.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L&amp;A within MSPs: MSP members are influenced through the exchange and capacity building which is done within the MSP.</li> <li>• L&amp;A with MSP members to external actors: The MSP, or a selection of its members, approach decision-makers. This is generally done jointly with Solidaridad (2c) and sometimes with Solidaridad as background supporter (2b) or even as main player, possibly delegated by the MSP (2a).</li> </ul>

**A clear L&A strategy based on a good understanding of the policy and political context is often lacking at the onset of a project, with the risk of weakening the effectiveness of L&A activities.** In most cases there has been insufficient understanding of which are the key public policies and regulations associated with the problems in the sector or landscape and which are the associated policy actors. An analysis of the policy context is often missing, i.e. a thorough understanding of the relevant policies and policy processes. One important distinction, which is often not made, is whether the right policies are in place, or if policies are in place but these are not being properly implemented. Understanding the policy processes may help to identify ‘policy windows’ which are moments that policies can be influenced. Also, insights in the underlying power relations and politics are often missing, as well the influence of big (multi-national) companies, which could form a bottleneck to implement policies in place. For example, in Argentina a strategy on how to engage with the government was lacking and consequently the project struggled for three years to achieve proper engagement. In a number of projects, Solidaridad tends to focus on technical issues and involves subject-matter specialists in policy development, while ignoring or failing to understand the political side of policy change by not involving high-level decision-makers at the outset of the policy development process. In the Tanzania F&V project, for example, they struggled to identify and involve the right decision-makers from the government in the MSP at the outset of the process, which could have helped expedite the policy change process. An external stakeholder also commented that there may have been some complementary routes to policy influence which could have been discussed early on. The case studies also show examples where this is better done (e.g. the Asia projects, F&V Uganda). It should be borne in mind that the political contexts in some countries can complicate L&A approaches by changing specific government targets.

**L&A strategies, whether direct or MSP-based, are more effective when they build upon and refer to concrete field activities (‘evidence-based L&A’).** There are many benefits of combining field implementation interventions with EPE and LI interventions, both in terms of process and in terms of effective solutions supported by an enabling context:

- Field projects as pilots of L&A projects or as complementary (previous or parallel) GP/RI projects generate insights into what needs to change in the enabling policy context.

- Pilot projects can generate the evidence needed to inform policy change, the ‘garment’ project in Ethiopia shows for example how policy changes on social issues can be informed by work with companies.
- Pilot projects can inform whether policy changes have the desired sustainability impact, for example in relation to standards development and LI projects, and may lead to finetuning of policies.
- Pilot projects are important for Solidaridad to show they ‘walk the talk’, giving them knowledge and experience which builds their credibility as drivers for policy change.
- Field projects can play an important role in motivating partners, MSP participants and decision-makers to engage in EPE and LI processes.

Whether private or public, most partners are confronted with limited resources, or do not have the required proof-of-concept which justifies the allocation of more resources. Solidaridad’s ability to bring in resources to pilot innovations makes them an attractive partner. The Asia tea portfolio offers an example in this regard. Solidaridad is engaged in field activities in all countries, except for China. The fact that Solidaridad does not have resources for field implementation in China, in contrast to the pre-AfP/PfC period, has a negative effect on the engagement of their main EPE partner the China Tea Marketing Association (CTMA).

**It is more effective to work on practical solutions for material problems, such as environmental management systems, before engaging on social issues.** 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. 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 is that of occupational health & safety, which has also become more urgent following the Covid pandemic.

**Insights from the AfC portfolio analysis shows that for about half of the projects the choice of L&A strategies is well documented, and appears to be based on earlier work done in the sector and country.** Analysis of power relations or politics are rarely included. Some projects show thorough information on the policy context of the project, such as the two projects in Ghana. The Mazabuka landscape project in Zambia provides a good example of the importance of understanding local politics and power relations. It was concluded that politicians are interfering with the fishing ban, by telling the communities they can fish in spite of the fish ban, even using explosives. However, we did not see how the L&A strategy was adjusted to take into account the important role of politicians. For instance, the project could seek common interests for enforcing the ban and then build a coalition to influence politicians (not decision-makers).

### 4.3 Strategy: Positioning and L&A capacities

*Leading evaluation question: What positioning and capabilities are required for successful L&A strategies?*

**Solidaridad is seen as a credible, reliable and a neutral partner.** Such positioning is beneficial in EPE and LI projects. In many cases, Solidaridad is the only or one of the few CSOs working in a sector with a neutral, a-political positioning and constructive approach. The following factors contribute to this positioning:

- **Solution-oriented field projects:** Having field projects aimed at developing solutions for perceived problems, often demand driven, shows commitment and builds up the expertise, networks and credibility needed for evidence-based L&A. Conducting these pilots in collaboration with partners helps to know the local languages and customs, both important in L&A activities.

- **Local ownership:** REC and country teams are seen as local or national NGOs, with national staff, decision-making and strategies. Solutions are developed in collaboration with local partners, not as blueprints.
- **Independency:** For L&A activities it is important to be a-political, not-for-profit and neutrally funded (independent from public or private actors in L&A process).
- **Constructiveness and mission-driven:** Solidaridad is tied to its objectives and can promote them in a constructive way, yet it remains modest, pragmatic and sensitive to the context (e.g. national priorities are acknowledged).
- **Expertise and capacities:** Experienced staff and research capacity (whether internal or externally hired) allows a fact-based rather than an ideological approach. Skills on for example convening MSPs are high across all RECs.
- Solidaridad's large (**international**) **network** enhances credibility. Good relationships with and active promotion by the Dutch Embassy also supports Solidaridad's legitimacy.
- **Genuine partnerships based upon equality:** This is about investing in strong personal relationships, co-investment and capacity building not done not through training, but through joint analysis and action.

**Solidaridad plays different roles with varying capacities to do so.** The roles they play include convening and facilitating MSPs, sharing expertise, capacity building, mediation, lobby & advocacy, communication & outreach and (co-)funding. Combining the expert role with neutral convening appears to be effective in L&A. Where the expertise is lacking, the needed knowledge is commonly acquired outside the organization, preferably at national level (e.g. research institutes). Capacities on L&A are less consistently present, particularly in relation to above mentioned strategizing around who to lobby, when and how in policy influencing processes.

**Having sufficient, stable and highly qualified staff is a key success factor for L&A effectiveness.** A strength of most RECs is the presence of experienced staff. Particularly in Asia and Central America, staff have worked for many years at Solidaridad and had relevant positions in companies and institutions prior to joining Solidaridad. This gives Solidaridad in-depth knowledge of the sector, strong networks and a good reputation, which are necessary ingredients for successful policy influencing. In some countries, Solidaridad faced challenges in meeting plans or progress due to staffing changes happening abruptly. Some projects also struggled to dedicate sufficient staff time to certain activities. Changes at central management level can also impact on the course of the project. In South-Africa this led to a change in priorities of Solidaridad more broadly and affected country-specific projects which compromised its credibility, the positive opinion of sector stakeholders and eventually the continuation of the EPE activities.

**There has been capacity building of Solidaridad staff, mainly through learning-by-doing and internal exchanges, but not on policy analysis or L&A skills.** Solidaridad staff did not receive capacity enhancement on policy analysis and the design of L&A strategies, as most skill development happens through learning-by-doing and team exchanges. Some RECs facilitate internal learning on L&A strategies by organizing regular staff meetings to discuss challenges and opportunities related to project implementation. Having experienced staff who can share knowledge and experience with new recruits is a key enabler. Most landscape projects received training on landscape management and also on a range of landscape management tools, including pilots of their implementation. There has been no internal training provided on gender. Some RECs feel that their capabilities on gender are sufficient.

## 4.4 Strategy: Linking local, national, international L&A processes

*Leading evaluation question: What is the added value and challenges of intervening at different geographical levels?*

The AfC programme includes 8 continental projects which intend to foster international collaboration. In the case studies, continental projects existed for soy (South-America – China linkage), palm (Asia), tea (Asia) and F&V (Africa).

**It is more effective to first ensure there is consensus within a country, for instance around a sustainability standard, before creating alignment between countries.** Not all continental projects have managed to work at international level. In the soy portfolio, the intended international links have not been fostered. The AfricaGAP ambition in the F&V projects was discontinued once it became clear that many countries lack the national standards necessary to serve as building blocks for the regional standard, and that the politics of regional trade would be a key challenge. This lesson had already been learned in the tea and palm oil projects, which explicitly prioritized national dialogues before promoting an international one. This allowed Solidaridad staff to better know the stakeholders, create national alignment and strengthen them before operating at international level. As mentioned before, there are various strategies to convene stakeholders at national or international level. But there is an added value in bringing international and national stakeholders together around local level activities (e.g. through field and/or exchange visits), as this contributes to a better understanding about realities in different contexts and facilitates more accurate and meaningful dialogue at international level. These exchange visits also contribute to mutual learning.

**Links between the global and regional or national projects often exist but are not always clear.** This was particularly seen in the palm oil portfolio where the Asian regional palm oil project, with a regionally well-grounded agenda, has limited overlap with the global activities managed by REC Europe. Whereas REC Europe focuses on promoting RSPO, REC Asia focuses on promoting national standards. In potential these strategies are complementary. Legal standards can become a stepping stone to international standards and both can learn from each other in terms of standard design, assurance models and outreach mechanisms. However, both RECs did little to explore this complementarity and used almost parallel narratives with Europe focussing on RSPO and Asia on national standards (often positioning them as alternative to RSPO). While both narratives can be relevant, there is a risk that, without coordination, they can contradict each other. This is something which should be avoided.

**Landscape projects in the first place have a local (landscape) focus and engage local stakeholders. Yet, it is important that Solidaridad includes engagement with high level decision-makers, if possible at national level. These can ensure the link between field practices and the enabling context.** Landscape projects have MSPs and conduct studies and pilot activities which focus on a particular landscape. It is important to not only engage with local stakeholders but also with high level decision-makers (within the MSP, or in parallel) and other relevant administrative layers from the beginning. If taken on board in the right way, these decision-makers will then play an important role in the link between field practices and the enabling context and in scaling the approach to other landscapes, or other sectors, or even other countries. This has been well done in Ganga and PASOS Honduras.

#### **Functional linkages between local, national and international interventions found in the case studies**

Contribution of local interventions to (inter)national interventions:

- Identification of EPE needs and proof of concept development as basis for evidence based policy influencing
- Bottom-up coordinated lobby activities based on perceived experiences

Contribution of national interventions to local and international interventions:

- Stakeholder alignment, knowledge development and sharing
- Enabling policy context and additional investment

Contribution of international interventions to national and local interventions:

- Technology exchange between stakeholders from different countries
- Market and trade promotion for sustainable products (including marketing, standard recognition and removal of trade barriers)
- International framework for national level policy making

**From the AfC portfolio analysis an additional insight is that most continental projects have led to national level results and not to results at international level**, thus the application of international level initiatives and standards to policy changes at national level. An exception is the establishment of the international platform of Asian tea industry stakeholders and the regional dialogue in the palm oil sector. Changes at global level can all be associated with AfC projects managed by REC Europe.

#### **4.5 Strategy: MSPs as a L&A strategy**

*Leading evaluation question: What are lessons & good practices on effective MSPs, and what are required capacities, e.g. to develop sector standards?*

All AfC projects beyond Europe have MSPs as an L&A strategy. In the African F&V case study MSPs have been set-up to develop national standards. In other projects they also contribute to other policy objectives. These are some of the key findings obtained across all case studies.

**MSPs can serve multiple purposes in L&A projects.** Some of the most common outcomes they achieve include:

- Creation of shared knowledge and capacity building (e.g. through training or expert advice, joint analysis, external research, exchange of knowledge and technologies and joined pilots)
- Match-making and networking (e.g. by bringing together different stakeholders to collaborate)
- Shared agenda setting (e.g. in terms of landscape or sector objectives)
- Governance roles and responsibilities in landscapes (e.g. on monitoring, accountability, land-use planning)
- Joint L&A activities (e.g. setting common policy objectives and pursuing them collectively)
- Conflict resolution and trust building (e.g. by bringing together stakeholders that were not on speaking terms)
- Joint inputs to standard development

The functions of an MSP may change over time, or become redundant, for instance if conflicts were solved and relations of trust built up leading to partnerships or bilateral relations that take over the roles of the MSP. MSPs may also have separate committees or working groups assigned with a specific time-bound task.

**MSPs give policy messages a lot more weight and credibility than individual action.** MSPs are a useful tool for policy influence, particularly when policy-making processes, such as national standards development processes, rely on multi-stakeholder input. MSPs allow key stakeholders to develop a common message which is delivered to the relevant decision-makers. This strength in numbers gives a lot more weight and credibility to lobbying approaches that are then adopted by Solidaridad, its partners, or the platform members. The impact is likely to be greater than individual actions because there are a large number of organisations working towards the same goal, without duplicating effort. 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 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.

The case studies, and particularly the MSP case study, generated **the following lessons and good practices with regards to MSP establishment and management:**

- **Government mandate:** This is key for developing for example a national standard, particularly one that is intended to be mandatory. Leadership by a government agency may lead to more direct linkages to policy changes and law enforcement.
- **MSP member selection:** Invite key stakeholders who have influence in the sector and/or have strategic contacts. Where Solidaridad has existing networks and experience in a country, it can be useful to draw on those networks. Solidaridad may also utilize the networks of other close partners, as was the case in Tanzania. An option is to start with a few key partners and grow over time.
- **CSO participation:** This can be promoted by providing resources for CSOs to attend or by having platforms / dialogues in different local geographies. Making sure they have the ability to participate also gives them more confidence and a stronger voice in the platform and beyond.
- **Gender inclusiveness:** Targets should be set and capacities should be built for women to be empowered in the process. This can include leadership positions, responsibilities in policy influencing, and field piloting.
- **Managing expectations:** Sufficient time needs to be dedicated to the inception phase to manage member's expectations. For example, farmers groups could be difficult to recruit because of their expectations of the benefits of participation (i.e. Per diem and/or an asset). Or members expect that participation opens doors to donor funds.
- **Defined internal roles & responsibilities among MSP members:** This should be done at the outset and is key to ensure that progress is made and that members hold each other accountable. Participants can offer ideas of what they could do, based on their strengths and suggest roles for others. Local ownership and sustainability can be promoted by establishing a steering committee. MoUs can strengthen accountability and ensure the work of the platform continues if the project ends.
- **A clear intervention strategy (or ToC):** The MSP should be clear about its purpose, intended strategy and 'pathways of change', which may also gradually emerge or be adjusted along the way. This may include targeted policy changes which requires a clear strategy on who to influence, and how.
- **Output focussed:** MSPs should ensure they focus on concrete outputs, not just top-level outcomes. Otherwise they become "talking-shops". This should be guided by pathways of change and a workplan. For example, 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.
- **Regular meetings:** This helps the MSP build trust and be effective.
- **Research:** The presentation of reliable facts and figures in early stages of the process is needed to agree on key issues, support the vision for the sector or landscape and agree on interventions. The involvement of local research institutes can be helpful for providing reliable data.
- **Facilitation and convening skills:** These include championing an idea, developing an agenda, convening relevant stakeholders, managing logistical issues, defining clear rules of communication at the outset and facilitating discussion and giving a voice to everyone.

- **Resource allocation:** Resources, particularly staff time, needs to be made available and in line with the level of ambition.
- **Complementary field piloting:** Enough time and resources need to be allocated for piloting of innovations (new techniques, draft standards), to ensure expected impact will be achieved, and making adjustments where needed. Here research institutes can also play a role.

**Insights from the AfC portfolio analysis complement above insights.** In 2019, according to the 2019 progress report, Solidaridad participated and contributed to 123 MSPs and dialogue fora, at various levels, ranging from local community level to global multi-stakeholder platforms such as RSPO. However, the fast track refers to 87 MSPs (only), while some of these are global MSPs (like RSPO, BCI) where Solidaridad only participated. **Analysis of the portfolio using the fast track data on 87 MSPs**, generates the following insights:

- **On geographical scope, the majority is at national level:** Of MSPs, there are 25% are at local (sub-national) level, 42% at national level, 8% at regional level, and 24% at global level.
- **On the origin of the MSP, around 50% were established by Solidaridad, mostly at local and national level.** Of the 43 MSPs established by Solidaridad, 42% were at local level, 35% at national level, 14% at regional level, and 9% at global level.
- **On functionality of the MSPs, in most of them Solidaridad participates or is involved in the leadership of the MSP, and has done so increasingly.** The following table 3 shows the role of Solidaridad in the MSPs at the onset and at the end of the project.<sup>2</sup> For MSPs that were established by Solidaridad, the scores are almost exclusively 3 and 4 (i.e. participation or partnership).

	Onset of project (2016)*	End of project (2019)*
<b>Four types of role by Solidaridad in MSPs</b>		
1- <b>Information:</b> Solidaridad is not involved in decision-making but only informed about MSP decisions and actions	10 / 19%	4 / 5%
2- <b>Consultation:</b> Solidaridad is invited to respond to plans by MSPs but has no direct influence on what is done with the response	15 / 28%	10 / 13%
3- <b>Participation:</b> Solidaridad collaborates with members of the MSP on planning and implementation of interventions	16 / 30%	37 / 46%
4- <b>Partnership:</b> Solidaridad jointly sets priorities and decides on the course of actions of the MSP. Solidaridad can be part of MSP leadership.	13 / 24%	25 / 31%

\* number of MSPs with specific role / proportion of total onset or end of project

Table 3: The role of Solidaridad in the MSPs at the onset and at the end of the project

## 4.6 Strategy: L&A strategies in repressed civic space

*Leading evaluation question: What has been the choice of L&A strategy/ies and how did they fit to the context?*

Several L&A projects have achieved significant results while working in a repressed civic space context, e.g. Myanmar (garment), Nicaragua (PASOS), Ethiopia (garment), or China (tea, palm oil, soy). The following lessons may be more widely applicable as in several countries civic space tends to decline.

**In the situation of a repressed state, Solidaridad should keep a low profile and not directly engage with decision-makers, but can be effective by providing support behind the screens to CSOs. Basically,**

<sup>2</sup> In the 'fast track' data, many CSOs did not indicate the role of Solidaridad but gave a narrative of the end situation only. We interpreted this narrative leading to a score for the end situation.

**empowerment of CSOs to play a direct role in engaging with decision-makers seems a good L&A strategy in a situation of repressed state.** The following L&A strategies are most commonly applied in situations of a repressed state:

- *Direct strategies - Partners lobby without Solidaridad:* In certain countries (e.g. tea and Ganga landscape in India, PASOS Honduras, increasingly CTUM in Myanmar), partners may have sufficient capacities to lobby by themselves. If not, Solidaridad can help to build capacities and / or provide support in terms of providing information or defining policy options.
- *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 both situations mentioned above empowerment of CSOs may be required:* In countries like Myanmar CSOs have few capacities and no opportunities to get involved in concrete activities. In this case, the most useful L&A strategy can be to empower CSOs on basic skills (on administration, communication, ICT skills) and provide resources such as ICT equipment. Especially provision of ICT equipment and enabling good connections with national and international NGOs is critical.

**In countries with a repressed or closed civic space, especially when new to a country or sector, it is more effective to work on field implementation projects (e.g. GP/RI, or pilots) before engaging in L&A activities.** 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 practical and less sensitive approach helps to build a local presence, credibility and the relationships which are indispensable to engage in policy influencing. For instance, in China, Solidaridad has a long track record on ground level implementation which resulted in good relationships with high-level decision-makers. The support by the Dutch Embassy also helped to become more credible and hence better positioned to be more active in policy influencing. 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. Field activities can be followed up by 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.

## **4.7 Strategy: Landscape Innovations and the role in L&A**

*Leading evaluation question: What are viable landscape governance models considering different levels of social conflict and possible conflicting production and protection objectives?*

The following findings is a brief version of a more complete document with findings, lessons and recommendations on the landscape approach, from the 4 landscape case studies in particular, included in a separate volume of this report.

**The landscape approach is a holistic approach in line with Solidaridad's overall theory of change, directly showing the potential synergy between the 4 strategies of GP, RI, EPE and LI. It includes L&A activities to improve the enabling context for practical solutions at landscape level to be effective.** For Solidaridad the relevance for a landscape approach has arisen as a reaction to emerging challenges and opportunities:

- 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 goals, considering local dependency and vulnerability of producers as well as environmental and social sustainability principles

**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.** These experiences have been mainly at national or sub-national level, working with key companies and public agencies, creating trust and local networks. Landscape projects also provide inputs to PfC projects by capacity development as well as enabling conditions for certification processes.

**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.

**The process of establishing an MSP 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 realize uptake and scale interventions.** In all landscape projects MSPs were established, at different levels. 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 major contribution by Solidaridad is 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).

**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. 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.

**In terms of L&A strategies, landscape projects mainly make use of direct engagement with decision-makers.** Although there has been training on lobby & advocacy skills of MSPs and its members, in most 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 mainly at local level. For instance, in Honduras, the MSP has resulted in a request for social services by local government, which was accepted. It seems that L&A skills by MSP members could be further enhanced.

**Undertaking pilot activities to test good practices is an essential element of the landscape approach.** 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. Pilots could be improved in terms of better understanding relevant issues in the enabling context (policies, regulations, systemic issues), which could lead to targeted L&A activities. Understanding the influence of the policy context and undertaking L&A activities could help make the pilot activity more successful and enhance further 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. Landuse planning and law enforcement could receive more attention.** 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. As related to the above insight on landscape governance, projects could focus more on landuse planning and law enforcement. 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.

**The landscape projects have contributed to policy changes as well as the improved implementation of existing policies.** 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, others are related to national policies such as the zero-deforestation policy in Honduras (being scaled to other countries in the region).

**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 in the four 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 six investment proposals have been developed, of which two are in the negotiation phase and the due diligence process started. 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.

## 4.8 Strategy and outcomes: Inclusiveness

*Leading evaluation question: How to ensure the voices of smallholders, landless, marginalised producers, women and youth are heard in L&A strategies?*

**AfC projects have a strong focus on smallholder and indigenous groups and apply different strategies to empower them.** While many activities with smallholders and indigenous groups are trying to directly

improve their livelihoods (e.g. through yield improvement and market access), the AfC projects also adopt strategies to empower them. Examples include:

- Support individual smallholder associations or indigenous groups in the dialogue with public and private decision-makers (through training, advice, hand-holding). This is done especially at local and landscape level.
- Support smallholder associations or their Apex organisations (e.g. unions or federations) to participate effectively in MSPs and direct policy influencing. This is done at local, landscape, and also national level.
- Make smallholder associations member of established and powerful industry associations and ensure these associations advocate smallholder interests. This strategy is implemented in the Asia tea projects and allows for the promotion of smallholder interests in national and international policy dialogue.

In certain contexts, it may take years or even be unrealistic to expect that grassroots organizations or Apex organizations can become effective in national or international policy dialogues. The above mentioned strategy to make them members of established industry associations could be a possible strategy. Solidaridad staff can also defend smallholder interests. This raises the question whether they are a legitimate party to represent the voice of smallholders. Asia staff claims they are as long as they have genuine partnerships with these smallholder associations. For example, Solidaridad Asia has MoUs with various grassroots organizations where they have included the activity of promoting their interest in different fora. Having the same staff members working at local, national and international level also helps to make better connections between these levels in the different dialogues.

In the Bolivia soy project, smallholders seem to be ignored. Another observation is that most projects do not differentiate between marginalized or better-off smallholders, while these may require different strategies to improve livelihoods and giving them a voice.

**There are various examples of the targeting of women with the aim to improve their livelihood.** Most projects explicitly target women participation and capacity building in their production and marketing related activities. For example, all landscape projects have targeted products in which women play a particularly important role (e.g. dairy in Ganga, cocoa in PASOS and non-timber forest products in Kilimanjaro). For the PASOS project, a specific type of gender support has been the support given to REDMUCH., a women's group working on cacao production and processing chocolate. In total 46 new cocoa and chocolate products were developed with 8 REDMUCH women's companies and put on the market. 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. In Indonesia, a quarter of the tea smallholders reached are women and they have been explicitly targeted to benefit from investments in small-scale processing factories.

**There are fewer examples of significant results in terms of enhanced women's voice.** Enhanced women's voice can be considered a structural improvement in terms of women's role and power in decision-making. In several projects (East-Africa F&V, PASOS, Kilimanjaro) it has been an explicit goal to empower and enhance women participation in MSPs. These goals were not always easy to meet. The examples where women's voices have been enhanced are less. They include:

- In Indonesia, women tea associations have been supported to lobby the government and industry and they now play a more active role in the development of the tea sector in their districts. Interviews with women revealed that the project has empowered them both economically and politically.
- In the Kilimanjaro project training was given to women on both livelihoods and voice. However, it was concluded that *“due to the strong cultural beliefs of indigenous communities and that behaviour change process, the project has not achieved much in ensuring inclusion.”*

- In PASOS it is reported that “young people and women participate without distinction, the leadership of women in the communities has been recognized, and they are active participants in development activities in their communities.” One specific example is that 5 women tasters from REDMUCH participate in the National Panel of Cocoa Tasting. There are also reports of a 20% increase in the participation of women in positions of the boards of directors of cocoa companies.
- In the soy project, gender strategies were not mentioned or part of the projects’ central activities. Some of the stakeholders pointed out that Solidaridad brought the gender debate into the MSPs, but there is no insight in resulting changes.
- In East-Africa, Solidaridad set themselves a minimum participation target of 40% for women in platform meetings, the steering committee and in capacity building work. However, it was a challenge recruiting enough women for several reasons. Firstly, some organisations only propose men to be part of the platform, or there may be staffing changes which mean a woman who originally attended the platform is replaced by a man. Secondly, women in Tanzania do not typically fill leadership roles (e.g. representing farmers etc), a reflection of the dominant social and cultural norms in the country. 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.*” One stakeholder interviewed thought 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.

**Solidaridad as a whole and the AfC programme in particular has given much attention to gender inclusivity. Gender has been a common topic for capacity building (Table 2).** In 2019 it published ‘The journey of Solidaridad towards gender inclusivity’, which outlines the history and strategies for gender inclusivity, and a Gender Inclusivity Buckets book, with tools on integrating and mainstreaming gender in various ways. It emphasises that there was still a way to go: an independent review in 2018 showed that of out of 646 projects in Solidaridad’s project management system, only 22 could be considered gender inclusive. The 2019 AfC progress report lists the projects where women inclusivity was addressed at a more systemic level, i.e. at the level of underlying structures and systems, such as women empowerment in various sector policies and standards (cocoa, coffee, tea, palm), the role of women in MSP dialogues, inclusivity within partner organisations, women’s leadership trainings, support to specific women’s network organisations. An analysis of the ‘fast track’ data results shows that capacity building on gender inclusiveness addressed the following subjects mainly:

- Women in specific commodities (mining, sugarcane, cocoa, coffee, tea, ...)
- Women in decision-making
- Women leadership
- Gender aspects in national policy

**It is difficult to get insights on gender-related outcomes from the AfC portfolio, because the AfC programme does not have indicators on either improved women’s livelihoods or improved women’s voice.** Thus one of the conclusions in the 2019 gender inclusivity journey paper is still valid: *As a result of weak monitoring and inadequate evaluation of projects with regard to gender, it is difficult to find evidence to what extent Solidaridad’s interventions have or have not contributed to gender inclusivity.* Also, the above mentioned gender inclusivity buckets book does not include guidance on monitoring gender inclusivity, nor has the learning within the task force been based on evidence from M&E.

## 4.9 Outcomes: Capacity building

*Leading evaluation question: What have been the outcomes in terms of CSO strengthening?*

**CSOs have been empowered mainly through the provision of new knowledge and better access to (national and international) networks.** CSOs involved in the AfC projects have been strengthened by various types of training and especially new knowledge. Apart from they have been linked to various

national and international networks and new contacts. The provision of a safe space for multi-stakeholder dialogue is also contributing to the empowerment of CSOs. This is also valid for several private and public sector partners.

**CSO partners have been supported on L&A skills particularly by supporting and accompanying them, but less so through training.** The building up of a relation of trust between different stakeholders and creating a safe space for multi-stakeholder dialogue contributes significantly to empower CSOs in undertaking L&A activities. In some cases, Solidaridad successfully accompanied and/or supported CSOs in L&A activities (notably by repetitive joint lobbying). Some partners/beneficiaries did receive capacity building on L&A strategies, but the case studies showed very few receiving capacity building on policy analysis, formulation of policy recommendations, accountability and monitoring policy change.<sup>3</sup> CSOs partners have been empowered through the provision of access to new knowledge and better networks/contacts, but there is less evidence on improved L&A capacities.

**To what extent CSOs will be able to develop L&A strategies and carry out the L&A activities by themselves is not always certain.** In several cases Solidaridad is undertaking most L&A activities, either directly or through MSPs. Good examples of CSOs conducting L&A activities were found in PASOS and the tea Asia projects. The capacity building on L&A activities of smallholder associations in Indonesia led for example to:

- Increased knowledge exchange and solidarity between farmers
- Increased confidence and advocacy skills
- Better connections and improved relationships with public decision-makers
- Increased awareness of their responsibility to take a more active role in the development of the tea sector in their districts (also for the women groups)

Capacity building cluster	% CSOs with improved capacity	Capacity building subjects		
		Very common (>50%)	Common (10-50%)	Rare (<10%)
Capacity to analyse, monitor, learn	76%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• technical knowledge</li> <li>• sustainability standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• internal management</li> <li>• landscape management</li> <li>• gender</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• policy analysis</li> <li>• business analysis</li> <li>• lobbying</li> </ul>
Capacity to meaningfully participate in dialogue	91%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participation in MSPs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understanding topics and issues for lobby</li> <li>• advocacy</li> <li>• gender</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leadership in dialogue</li> <li>• media role</li> <li>• communication skills</li> </ul>
Capacity to plan and execute	72%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participation in MSPs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop advocacy plan</li> <li>• share knowledge</li> <li>• monitoring</li> <li>• gender</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• legal advise</li> <li>• knowledge management</li> <li>• standard development</li> <li>• leverage resources</li> </ul>

Table 4: Overview of topics where capacities have improved as a result of the project.

**The portfolio analysis shows there has been much capacity building of partners and CSOs. The emphasis has been on technical issues and capacities to effectively participate in MSPs and dialogues. Much training was also provided on developing lobby & advocacy capacities.** From the 'fast track' data we extracted information on capacity building of CSOs for all AfC projects. The information on capacity building was in most cases provided by Solidaridad staff as a response to the question whether improving capacity has been part of the project, what Solidaridad has done to improve capacity, and

<sup>3</sup> This is in contrast to what is being reported in the 2019 progress report.

how this capacity has changed. Table 4 provides an overview of capacity building of CSOs for three clusters of capacity building (as given in the fast track format), and the main subjects of capacity building, which we analysed and then structured as being mentioned very commonly (more than 50% of CSOs), commonly (10-50% of CSOs) or rarely (less than 10%).

From the portfolio analysis and the above overview we draw the following insights:

- The distinction in above 3 clusters is not always clear, as certain subjects are mentioned in different clusters, especially gender and participation in MSPs and dialogues
- Commonly mentioned are technical support (on various techniques, value chains, standards, contracts, value chain relations) and capacities to participate in MSPs, and capacity building of MSPs as a whole (including the various members including private and public sector).
- Commonly mentioned are subjects in terms of lobby & advocacy: understanding how information can be used in advocacy, making an advocacy plan, negotiation and communication skills.
- Altogether, capacity building on gender aspects was mentioned many times.
- Capacity building on policy analysis, formulation of policy options, monitoring and accountability is uncommon. The 2019 progress report states that *“In 2019, we supported 160 local CSOs and producer organisations to develop their capabilities in areas like policy and gender analysis, monitoring policy implementation, formulation of policy recommendations, collaboration in coalitions, negotiating and engaging with decision-makers, and accountability to stakeholders”*. From our case studies and analysis of the fast track data, we found limited evidence of capacity building on aspects of policy analysis, formulation of policy options, negotiating and engaging with decision-makers, or accountability.

**Remaining priorities for capacity building seem to be on lobby & advocacy skills, business skills and developing policy goals.** Subjects that were mentioned just a few times and that could have received more attention are: business analysis, policy analysis, leadership, leveraging resources. We did not come across capacity building for making good business or investment plans. In the new 2020 capacity building plans we have noticed attention for:

- Knowledge transfer
- Policy analysis and policy goals
- Lobby and advocacy skills

#### **4.10 Outcomes: Policy changes**

*Leading evaluation question: What have been the outcomes in terms of policy changes?*

**The projects resulted in changes of policies and regulations and policy implementation mechanisms.**

In most case studies the projects have influenced relevant policy changes. These changes vary greatly in nature and can hardly be compared in terms of their potential impact. Also, while in some cases the projects contributed to new policies or regulations, in other cases they contributed to improved mechanisms for implementation of existing policies. Examples of new policies include:

- PASOS contributed to a zero-deforestation policy in Honduras, initially in palm but later on expanded to coffee and potentially livestock, and for the palm sector was replicated in Nicaragua and Guatemala and potentially other countries.
- Mutual recognition of the MSPO, ISPO and IPOS palm oil standards, and the tea standards of China, India and Indonesia.
- The Solvent Extractors Association (SEA) in India has been developed and is managing the Indian Palm Oil Sustainability framework (IPOS).
- In Ethiopia, the garment project contributed to amendments in labour laws, e.g. on expanding maternity leave from 3 to 4 months.

Examples of better implementation mechanisms include:

- PASOS is conducting a pilot on implementing the zero deforestation agreement, integrating it into the existing SIGMO monitoring system.
- The Kilimanjaro project has contributed to implementation of various village land-use acts, by realizing 11 village land use plans.
- The Ganga project contributed to the implementation of the policy goals of reducing water pollution in the Ganga watershed, through various techniques of water use and chemical content reduction, supported by regulations to make this accessible for sugarcane producers and small tanners.
- The Soy project in Bolivia provided 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.
- The Lestari projects convinced the Indonesian government to dedicate more funding to the tea sector for capacity building and setting-up smallholder tea factories.
- The Malaysian Palm Oil Board adopted a digital tool and an outreach model (i.e. cluster approach) to promote MSPO among smallholders.

**Many policy change processes are still on-going.** Policy change processes can take time. In most cases the time taken to achieve policy change isn't a deliberate choice but rather a reflection of the political context. The first years of a project may also be needed to set-up a MSP, conduct policy research and built relationships with L&A partners and/or targeted decision-makers. In those cases the actual policy influencing starts only after a few years. Hence, there are several examples where policy targets have not yet been achieved but are in progress. Examples include:

- A standard for good agricultural practices and good hygiene practices for F&V in Tanzania and Mozambique. In Tanzania F&V, the MSPs work fed directly into the formal standards development process, as laid out by the Bureau of Standards. The steering committee of the platform serves as the technical committee for the standards development process.
- The implementation of biodiversity policies in Honduras through well-managed palm oil plantations that can serve as biological corridors
- The agreement on no deforestation policies in Honduras and Nicaragua, followed by pilots on how these should be implemented and enforced
- The introduction of tea price regulation in Indonesia and India
- Change of status of palm oil to a plantation crop in India
- Revision of the Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil smallholder standard.

**There is need to pay more attention to what is needed to implement existing or new policies and regulations, including, for instance, aspects of law enforcement.** To capture policy changes, 6 stages of policy influencing were formulated, the last one being policy implementation. However, policy implementation may take a lot of time, including complex and sensitive topics such as law enforcement. In fact, we heard that in many countries the right policies are in place, but implementation is weak which is mainly due to poor law enforcement. So far, Solidaridad has hardly put sector or landscape governance including law enforcement on the agenda. This is in contrast to the 2019 progress report where it is stated that "...Solidaridad influences national standards, incentive schemes **and law enforcement** in specific national commodity sectors."

**Insights from the AfC portfolio analysis show that several projects did not report on policy changes. Our own analysis shows that of all projects executed by RECs outside Europe (24 in total) all except 2 target public policies, and 15 projects (63%) have contributed to significant policy changes (see Annex 5).** Of the 24 projects executed beyond Europe, 8 (33%) did not report on policy changes. We completed the analysis by making use of progress reports and also checked the fast track data with our findings from case studies. In several cases there were some differences. Of the 24 projects executed beyond Europe, 10 target public policies only, 12 target both public and private policies, and 2 only private policies. Of the 13 projects run by REC Europe, the majority (70%) is targeted at business policies, and

the remaining 4 at multilateral company level. Of the 24 projects executed beyond Europe, 15 projects (63%) have contributed to significant changes in policy targets, which was defined as policies moving from phase 1 (agenda setting) or phase 2 (recommendations formulated) to phase 5 or 6 (adoption, implementation) - for the definition of levels of policy change see section 2.1. This is a relatively good score. In the remaining 37% of the projects few or no policy changes were achieved, i.e. during the AfC programme period the policy stage did not move up (from the value at baseline to the value at endline) or got stuck at a low level. We did not see significant differences in successful scores for private and/or public sector policies.

From the analysis of policy changes we have the following observations:

- From the above findings it is clear that on the subject of policy changes the fast track data are incomplete and sometimes not consistent. For instance, while some projects (e.g. Ganga landscape) report on policy changes for each separate stakeholder, others lump these and report just on one policy change. Also we found that our case studies regularly concluded other scores in terms of policy stages than what was reported.
- Phase 6 of policy implementation is not well defined, does it include law enforcement or not? It seems that in most cases hurdles still need to be taken for full policy implementation and law enforcement.
- In the case where no significant policy changes were achieved, it is possible that important progress was realised. We refer to these as 'small wins', which can be relevant yet do not contribute to a shift in policy stage.<sup>4</sup> At least in 5 projects where no significant policy changes were noted, we do observe such 'small wins' (see Annex 5).

#### 4.11 Impact: Systemic change and sector transformation

*Leading evaluation question: How do L&A strategies and policy targets contribute to systemic changes and the potential of sector transformation?*

The scope on systemic changes can be understood by the fact that impact is undermined by system failures, i.e. the root causes of poverty and failing markets, as well as the root causes for non-sustainability and non-inclusiveness. Thus, in order to achieve sector transformation (of a commodity sector in a specific regional setting towards more sustainable and inclusive production systems) and to have impact at scale (national, regional, global level) and in time (long-term, sustained impact), there is need to address the underlying systemic drivers.

In line with the above, sector transformation can be understood as a sector that has positive scores on viable businesses, social inclusion, resilient ecosystems and social and environmental sustainability, while also systemic changes have been achieved so that positive impacts will sustain and reach scale. Systemic changes (at outcomes level) are changes in the underlying factors or root causes that hamper sectors of being environmentally and socially sustainable, inclusive, and commercially viable. Systemic changes are required in order to achieve transformation of a commodity sector (including the landscape/s in which these operate).

**In terms of sector or landscape transformation, we can see promising steps by addressing some of the underlying systemic issues. Although this is not reflected in all AfC projects, Solidaridad is developing a more holistic and coordinated approach towards sector transformation. It is too early to see the real (potential) impact.** If we consider sector or landscape transformation as the process of addressing systemic issues that show weaknesses which undermine the sustainable performance of a sector or landscape, then, despite all efforts, this has not yet been fully achieved across any of the projects.

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<sup>4</sup> See this reference on small wins for processes of change on complex problems ('wicked problems'), with incremental steps towards desired change. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14494035.2018.1497933>

However, the AfC projects have facilitated the investment in processes which already do or have the potential to address a wider range of systemic issues than the 'traditional' GP/RI interventions. Solidaridad and its closest partners are now also in a better position to pick up even more challenging issues (e.g. price setting in the Asian tea sector) or push for more institutional sector or landscape governance and coordination as a key element of sector transformation.

The proposed long list of systemic issues as part of the conceptual framework (section 2.1, Figure 2) has been a starting point to assess contribution to systemic changes and sector transformation, and understand the contribution by Solidaridad. One of the systemic issues are underlying policies and regulation. This is a clear objective in AfC programme's ToC as it aims to contribute to a more enabling policy environment. In this evaluation, we found that in addition to policies and regulations, many more systemic issues were influenced by AfC projects. Figure 3 gives an overview.

Figure 3: Overview of findings systemic changes and contributions by Solidaridad

Systemic issue	Case study						
	MSP F&V Tanz/Ugan da	Tea, palm oil India/ Indonesia	Landscapes			Soy SAM Bol/Arg / Par	Repressed state Eth/ Myanmar
			Ganga India	PASOS Hon / Nic.	Kilimanjaro Tanzania		
<b>Level 1: Policies, practices and resource flows</b>							
Supportive / enabling policies and regulations	1	2	2	2	1	1	1
Improved access to markets	?	2	2	0-2	0	0-1	0
Improved service delivery	?	2	2	2	1	-	-
Land tenure security	-	-	1	1	1	-	-
Landscape governance	-	-	0	0	1	-	-
Increased investment in the sector	0	1-2	1	1-2	0	?	0
<b>Level 2: Capacities and relationships</b>							
Trust and dialogue between stakeholders	1-2	2	2	2	1	0-2	0-1
Coordination, vision alignment stakeholders	1	1-2	2	2	1	0-2	0-1
Strengthening of civic space	1-2	2	2	2	1	0	0-1
Socio-cultural systems for voice of women	0-1	1-2	1	1-2	0	1	1-2
Change power dynamics between stakeholders	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
More transparency / accountability	2 / 1	1-2	1-2	1-2	1	1 / 1 / 0	0-1
Improved monitoring and learning	0-1	0-2	2	1	1	2 / 1 / 0	0
<b>Level 3: Mental models</b>							
Shift mindsets and norms	1-2	2	2	2	1	1 / 1 / 0	0 / 1

0 = no progress / yellow, 1 = moderate/white, 2 = good / green; - = not relevant; ? = relevant but unclear. Scores may show the variation between different countries (e.g. 1-2)

**The following insights are from the case studies only, as the AfC portfolio analysis does not generate additional information on systemic changes because these have not been reported, except for policy changes.**

**The case study projects contributed to several systemic changes, particularly:**

**1. Supportive or more enabling policies and regulations:** see previous section 4.9

**2. Improved service delivery:** Several projects show results in terms of improved services by public or private sector, which is indispensable for producers to be able to acquire and maintain good knowledge (e.g. on certification standards), have access to inputs, access to finance and access to markets. Examples include:

- In the Asia palm oil project support is given to smallholders by the Malaysian Palm Oil Board to achieve MSPO certification. Complementary PFC projects also contribute to improved service delivery (e.g. Tinitea in India).
- In the PASOS project a model emerges whereby palm oil companies purchase from smallholders and supply services to them. In other cases cooperatives were strengthened to supply services to their members.

**3. Trust and dialogue between stakeholders:** Improved trust and dialogue between stakeholders is a common outcome of the AfC projects, largely related to the establishment of MSPs and the support and capacity building being provided. Improved trust and dialogue is a necessary conditions for co-design of solutions and ownership of the emerging solutions strategies.

- The Asia projects on tea and palm oil contribute to improved 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, which is remarkable in a context where many political tensions exist between both countries. Similar changes exist between the governments of Indonesia and Malaysia on palm oil.
- The PASOS project in Nicaragua contributed to change relationships of mistrust and tension between palm oil producers and communities, to one of mutual collaboration
- The Ganga project in India has contributed to much improved relations of small tanners with both private and public agencies, initially small tanners being seen as polluters only.

• **Coordination, shared vision, alignment between stakeholders:** Improved stakeholder alignment and coordination is a common outcome of the AfC projects, largely related to the establishment of MSPs and the support and capacity building being provided. Improved coordination, shared vision and alignment between stakeholders is a condition for a joint view on the direction of desirable change and joint efforts to influence policies.

- In Uganda, the MSP helped to improve an improved understanding of who is doing what. The project also contributed to some improvement in coordination of stakeholders in the sector. In Tanzania, the MSP 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. Creating a shared vision and alignment and coordination has had varied success. For example, in the Indonesian and Indian tea sector there have been attempts to align stakeholders behind a common vision. In Indonesia this worked well and a vision document guides the discussion within the national tea platform. In India this did not work as expected, as here the tea sector is conservative and it is difficult to introduce a far-fetching and comprehensive vision.
- In all the landscape projects MSPs have been established and capacity building and joint activities have contributed to joint understanding of the issues that should be addressed. In Ganga this has centred around the need to reduce water use and pollution. In the PASOS projects this has centred around the need for no deforestation policies and support to restoration projects.

**4. Strengthening of civic space:** Strengthening of civic space is a common outcome of the AfC projects, largely related to the capacity building being provided and MSPs being established as a platform for

dialogue and developing joint opinions and claims. Improved civic space contributes to empowerment of civil society to take responsibility and have the information and skills available to take joint actions that can influence policies and decision-makers

- Social dialogue initiatives in garment have contributed relatively much to civic space improvements in Myanmar, because of the capacity building on societal aspects with strong linkages to accountability, transparency, inclusiveness and equality.
- In PASOS Honduras local stakeholders have acquired the capacity to express their needs and lobby for improved local infrastructure, which has been granted by the government

**5. More transparency / accountability of stakeholders, as well as reduced corruption:** Increased transparency and accountability towards the responsible government agencies would be one function of a well-functioning MSP, but few have explicitly addressed this systemic issue.

- In the Tanzanian F&V project context, players already knew each other well and trust already existed between major sector stakeholders (or at least there was no mistrust). But the platform helped solidify and strengthen trust, particularly in relation to the government who were invited to all meetings. 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.

**6. Socio-cultural systems related to women's voice.** Changing the underlying causes for enhancing women's voice can also be considered a systemic change, and has been reported in section 4.4 showing mixed results. The challenges in enhancing women's voice are often strongly interrelated with cultural norms, as was especially mentioned in the projects in East Africa. This shows the interrelation with the next systemic issue, being the shift of mindsets and norms.

**7. Shift of mindsets and norms:** This issue is difficult to evaluate, as one should determine whether a norm has definitely changed, or just for the time being. One indication of a change in mindset would be that actors take proactive decisions to promote a new norm. Some examples are the following:

- The decision of the Indian Tea Association to open-up membership to smallholders and to represent them.
- Increased awareness about the relevance of social and environmental sustainability among private and public sector. This is a common outcome of AfC projects. In Asia, the AfC projects feed into the emerging authentic sustainability agenda in the target countries.
- The participation of palm oil companies in Honduras to ensure that no-deforestation should be the new norm.
- The recognition in the Ganga project that small tanners are willing to contribute in reducing water pollution.

**We see mixed or weak contributions to the following systemic issues:**

**1. Improved access to markets:** The results are mixed with good results in the tea and Ganga projects, while for other projects efforts do not succeed (e.g. Kilimanjaro) or take more time to mature (e.g. palm oil within Asia and towards the EU). In some projects, demand promotion is not being significantly addressed while this is an important condition for success (e.g. consumer demand for safe F&V Africa).

**2. Change power dynamics between stakeholders:** A true shift in power dynamics is not easy to obtain and can take significant time. There are several examples where some shift took place. For example, Solidaridad helped to build the capacity of CSOs in Tanzania, giving them more confidence and a stronger voice in the platform and beyond. This supported more balanced power dynamics between different stakeholders. In Uganda, 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. The MSP 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.

- 3. Landscape and/or sector governance:** In the landscapes 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. The PASOS project intends to take 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. Within sectors Solidaridad and its partners may have influence through their participation in sector level platforms, but several aspects of sector governance have not yet been addressed.
- 4. Increased investment in the sector:** There has been important co-funding in some projects, but in most projects less. The development of viable investment proposals in the PASOS Honduras and Nicaragua landscape projects appear to have good potential. None of the projects has worked on realising reinvestments in the sector from taxes or levies that were obtained from those who acquire profits from the value chain. This would be the most sustainable approach to ensure viability of the sector, and can be considered one key element of sector transformation.

#### 4.12 Impact: Evidence of scaling

*Leading evaluation question: What is the evidence of scaling (by copying, crowding in, expansion to other landscapes, countries or regions)?*

Scaling is expected to occur if systemic issues are addressed, as these constitute the root causes for unsustainable practices and if changed, better practices can generate expected benefits. Scaling can take place through mechanisms of copying, crowding in or expansion of good practices. Some projects, especially the landscape projects, are dealing with piloting which is expected to lead to more widespread application. The following dimensions of scaling have been identified:

##### **Scaling within a landscape or sector:**

- Increased adoption of sustainable practices among MSP members e.g. cacao agroforestry plantations in Honduras and Nicaragua, Lestari certification in Indonesia, technologies among small tanners in Ganga landscape.
- The Malaysian Palm Oil Board expanding the pilot on the cluster approach from 3 to 7 clusters (a cluster reaches 2000 smallholders).
- Partners intend to replicate Tanzania F&V MSP approach to other regions in the country through local food safety policies and plans.

##### **Scaling related to MSPs:**

- Crowding-in of new members in MSPs e.g. Sri Lanka and Japan joining the Asia Tea Alliance, Cargill joined Bolivia MSP, several new members gradually joined the Kilimanjaro MSP, significant interest among additional organisations to join the Tanzania MSP as it progressed. New members will contribute to apply and expand new practices that are being promoted by the MSP, by themselves and through their own networks.
- Increasing issue scope of MSP, e.g. Bolivia MSP starts to address new issues such as biotechnology (transgenic), agriculture expansion, and its social and environmental impacts. PASOS MSPs formulate new pilot projects on gender, biodiversity, land tenure. The Tanzania F&V MSP starts to work on

additional policy change objectives, through lobbying for a broader food safety policy for Arusha (which would be implemented by the Arusha city council).

#### **Scaling to other landscapes and countries:**

- Zero-deforestation agreement from Honduras to Nicaragua and Guatemala.
- 8 proposals submitted by Solidaridad to replicate PASOS approach in Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico and Guatemala.

#### **Scaling to other sectors:**

- Applying the approach to textiles in the Ganga landscape.
- The Lestari system has informed current processes in the Indonesian coffee and cocoa sector.
- The Indian Solvent Extractors Association adapts certain strategies from the APSN project to other vegetable oil crops in their memberships.
- PASOS landscape project scaling the no deforestation policy to other sectors, e.g. coffee in Honduras, possibly also livestock and shrimps

### **4.13 Impact: Sustainability & exit strategies**

*Leading evaluation question: What are successful follow-up or exit strategies for Solidaridad's MSP work policy influencing work?*

**While most projects show some quick-wins in policy influencing or implementation, a four-year timeframe is too short to change public and private policies to a degree that one can claim a landscape or sector has been transformed.** Influencing individual policies can take time, let alone changing the overall policy environment. It also takes time for an organisation to gain the credibility, contacts and positioning to be able to influence policies. Moreover, sector or landscape transformation requires more than policy influencing, even when good policies are in place there may be many factors causing policies not being implemented. We found that all the landscape projects evaluated require at least 3 more years of support by Solidaridad, which could be very light in intensity.

**All MSPs established by Solidaridad depend entirely upon external funding, while Solidaridad is playing an increasingly active role. Most of the MSPs will not function well or even survive without Solidaridad support.** The portfolio review shows that of all MSPs, 34% largely depends upon AfC or Solidaridad funding, 49% mainly depends upon other external (mainly donor) funding, and 18% largely or partly depends upon membership funding, levies or taxes. The last category is interesting, however, it appears these are all global standard organisations, such as RSPO and BCI, or platforms in the Netherlands. There is one exception, being the Uttar Pradesh Voluntary Action Network in the Ganga landscape project. Of the 43 MSPs established by Solidaridad, all depend upon Solidaridad and/or other external funding. There is one exception being the PASOS MSP in Honduras, whereby 10% of the funding comes from members.

Apart from financial reasons, underlying causes are the lack of strategic, technical and facilitation as well as L&A skills among MSP members. While there is some evidence that Solidaridad is building capacities of MSP partners to take over leadership of MSPs, the fast track data show that overall Solidaridad has been increasingly playing an active role including facilitation and leadership (table 3). On the other hand, Solidaridad and its closest implementing partners have a unique role to play in supporting MSP processes (politically neutral, international network, technical skills, convening skills, flexibility) for which there are typically no alternative CSOs to fulfil that role.

**Yet, some potential exit strategies are being implemented.** For example in Bolivia, implementation partner ANAPO will likely be able to continue the work. In Tanzania, the MSP is set-up as a temporary vehicle to develop a standard and a consortium of members has committed to continue the roll-out and

management of the standard, and other food safety-related work. In PASOS, local CSOs are trained to take over the facilitation role of Solidaridad in MSPs. In Indonesia, the Lestari project works on a revenue model for the national tea MSP to ensure its continuity.

**The longstanding presence of Solidaridad and the AfC projects has laid the foundation for much larger changes if Solidaridad is able to continue. This raises questions about the need for an exit strategy.**

The AfC programme has enabled Solidaridad to seriously engage in policy influencing. Although some initial successes have been achieved, the programme has laid the foundation for much larger changes if it is able to continue. In a number of contexts, one could argue that the pre-AfC phase has allowed Solidaridad to prepare the ground for L&A activities and the AfC programme has allowed to sow the seeds of transformative change. However, harvesting requires several more years, or may actually be a continuous process in which Solidaridad participates as a local partner.

#### 4.14 Enabling and disabling factors

*Leading evaluation question: What external factors enabled or disabled the effectiveness of EPE interventions?*

Solidaridad has played a key role in most of the changes that were observed. This evaluation identified several external factors which contributed positively or negatively to the progress made.

##### **Enabling factors:**

- **Supportive existing policy frameworks:** This is particularly the case where good policies are in place and are aligned with Solidaridad's objectives, e.g. regulation on water pollution in the Ganga area, land tenure policies in soy-producing areas in Latin America, food security policies in India, or the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (as driver for international collaboration in the tea sector).
- **Strong national / local institutions, coordination and networks:** This facilitates the choice of who to target and facilitates policy implementation.
- **Sense of urgency:** This is about the awareness that things need to change and that some issues can only be addressed by collaborative action. Issues which can promote the sense of urgency include low prices, climate change, water pollution, food safety concerns and deforestation.
- **A shift in political and economic dogma:** There is growing acceptance in the donor landscape to fund government interventions and make available resources for EPE interventions (i.e. in contrast to neo-liberal thinking).

##### **Disabling factors:**

- **Excessive bureaucracy:** This can have serious implications on the progress made in moving through the policy change stages, although a proactive role of Solidaridad was noted to speed up the process.
- **Competing policy objectives:** For example, opposing interests on poverty alleviation, food security, and competitiveness can create barriers for alignment between actors and distract from the focus on sustainability within the dialogue.
- **Political tensions within and between countries:** For the Asian continental projects this has created delays or forced projects 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. Tensions between China and India also regularly and negatively affect project activities.

Some factors are **disabling or enabling** depending on the context

- **Change in decision-makers:** Whether through elections or organizational reforms, the change of key decision-makers generally requires a repetition of L&A efforts and can cause delays. This has for instance been one of the main reasons why the soy project in Bolivia did not succeed in fully engaging

the influencing the National Institute for Agrarian Reform. On the positive side, they can also result in the introduction of more capable and willing decision-makers.

- **Changing economic dynamics:** On the one hand, changes can result in an increased sense of urgency (e.g. a price crisis, consistent shifts in market share from large-scale to small-scale producers, falling product quality, effects of climate change on profitability). On the other hand, such developments can reduce the capacity and willingness of actors to invest (e.g. a sudden drop in prices).
- **Civic space:** As explained in section 4.7, the degree of civic space influences the type of strategies one can adopt. But even in a repressed state good results can be achieved.
- **COVID-19:** This caused delays for many activities and made several face to face meetings of MSPs impossible, in countries where remote working is less commonplace. It also caused economic damage among target groups as production and processing facilities were closed and demand for certain products dropped. It can however also offer opportunities. In Latin America, it highlights the relevance of remote land use monitoring systems and the digitalization of procedures. In Indonesia, it created a better market for smallholder tea as large factories were closed and people drink more tea at home.

## 4.15 Monitoring & learning

*Leading evaluation question: What lessons can be learned on monitoring & learning of EPE and LI projects?*

**The project documents and M&E indicators do not capture targets and changes in policies and systemic issues well.** Clarity of what is meant by ‘policy change’ is lacking in many projects. Where the projects actually targeted the implementation of existing policies, the ‘policy target’ has not been clear. The scores on the policy change stages in progress documents are also inconsistent, which is partly due to difficulties in understanding and applying scoring levels to processes of policy implementation. We identified gaps in the M&E reporting by RECs, apparently because they have doubts about the relevance or usefulness of the proposed M&E indicators or difficulties to find the required data. The AfC programme has objectives of contributing to systemic changes and sector transformation, and some projects that were evaluated specifically refer to these objectives. It is, however, our impression that these concepts are not well understood, because we do not find indications in M&E or reporting whether these objectives are being realized. We also found that pilot projects or business cases are not always well monitored. Finally, the M&E system of the AfC programme does not specifically look at aspects of gender empowerment and issues of scaling.

**Monitoring of progress towards achieving the full ambitions of landscape projects should be improved, which could be in line with the ten principles of the landscape approach.**<sup>5</sup> 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.

**There is good internal learning and also learning between some regional projects, though little is documented.** There is a lot of exchange within and between teams, but lessons are commonly not documented. For instance, a lot of experience was built up in Bangladesh working on social issues in the garment sector, but none of this has been documented to allow for the project in Myanmar and Ethiopia to benefit from. Also, the lessons from the Myanmar-Ethiopia exchange visit could have been

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<sup>5</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.

documented, as well as the actions taken by participants based on the exchange. A positive exception are the lessons learned from developing investment proposals in PASOS Honduras and Nicaragua.

**Learning at a global scale is weak.** Most Solidaridad staff admits this. This is possibly because the right learning questions have not been well defined, or because management level did not support this activity as a priority, so that many RECs do not see their interests being reflected. One could argue that there should have been a L&A Task Force as for many staff L&A activities were relatively new.

## 5. Cost-efficiency analysis

Carrying out an efficiency analysis has been a specific question in the ToR for this assignment, and a separate subject for this evaluation. A detailed methodology was proposed in the ToR and was proposed in our inception report. This methodology has been adjusted several times in collaboration with the REC of South East Asia, which served as a first pilot for this part of the evaluation. In spite of the pilot and several adjustments of the framework, it proved difficult to receive useful data, for two main reasons:

3. The data that were requested are not readily available in current budget categories
4. The RECs did not want to spend time to restructure expenses in a way to extract the data that we requested. It should be noted that this request also interfered with intensive work by RECs on preparing the new programme document

Thus, it appears the lack of activity based costing does not allow for a useful breakdown of costs to draw conclusions on cost-effectiveness of L&A strategies. The related recommendation would be that activity-based costing with complementary output level monitoring would allow to assess the cost-efficiency of different L&A strategies, which could inform a learning strategy.

In spite of this constraint, from four case studies useful data on costs were received, of which Annex 6 gives an overview. Table 4 gives a summary of insights on cost-effectiveness. We note that the scores for perceived effectiveness were adjusted by the evaluation team based on our own findings. Note that all costs show large variation between the 4 case studies, which may be mainly due to local staff costs.

Type of L&A activities carried out	Cost	Effectiveness	Cost-effectiveness
1. Multi stakeholder Platform	High costs, 150-500 K EUR per year, to establish MSPs and for Solidaridad to facilitate. Costs will decline (40-60 K EUR per year) once the MSP is functional, for convening and supporting.	Highly effective, essential element of each AfC project. This activity is also essential to build up a network and trust with different stakeholders, and contribute to conflict solution.	High
2. Lobbying	Low costs, 50-180 K EUR per year, especially on training on L&A skills	Variable effectiveness, very much depending upon the context and potential for lobbying to be effective	Moderate
3. Policy Advocacy	Costs are rather high and variable, 100-300K EUR per year. These costs include policy analysis, formulation of a policy recommendation, exchange visits.	Effectiveness is variable, as this activity is always needed and contributes much to capacity building, but whether it leads to policy change is variable.	Moderate - high
4. Stakeholder engagement	Costs are low, up to 90K EUR per year, and sometimes considered to be part of MSP establishment.	Effectiveness is difficult to assess, because it is actually part of establishing MSPs. However, if conflicts need to be resolved, this is an essential activity.	High if including conflict resolution
5. Pilot demonstrations	Costs are highly variable, and can increase to 250K EUR per year, very much depending upon the type of pilot.	Field level experiences are essential for effective lobbying.	High

Table 4: Indication of cost-effectiveness of different AfC activities

## 6. Responses to evaluation questions

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

*1. Which L&A strategy has the best potential to influence policies and bring about desirable changes in which political-economy context?*

In most cases Solidaridad combined different L&A strategies, depending upon the context and changing over time. As projects often combine different strategies it is hard to disentangle the effectiveness of individual strategies. In any case, the role of Solidaridad, either through direct lobby, through capacity building and support of CSOs and MSPs, is very important.

*1a. How have L&A strategies been defined or selected?*

Solidaridad defined three L&A strategies, which we have restructured into (1) direct L&A by Solidaridad and/or partners, (2) indirect through MSPs, and (3) the landscape approach whereby both above strategies can be part of a holistic area-based approach including L&A activities. The fast track study shows that in most projects all three (original) L&A strategies are applied. Not in all cases these strategies were based on a thorough knowledge of a sector or landscape from previous project experiences or new diagnostics. In general we find insufficient understanding of the political economy context, i.e. which are the relevant policies, which public agencies are in charge, what are the underlying politics, who should be targeted and what L&A strategies are appropriate to do so.

*1b. Which combination of L&A strategies has been used, what has been the sequence, synergy/complementarity or trade-offs? What lessons can be learned in combining L&A strategies?*

Projects often combine L&A strategies or shift between strategies as L&A targets change or new targets emerge. This responsiveness and flexibility is considered to be a strength as there is evidence of complementary value and no evidence of negative trade-offs. However, with a better understanding of the sector and landscape context more effective strategies could have been implemented from the onset. Multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) are part of most projects and are generally established before these are used as part of an indirect L&A strategy. There are also projects where MSPs are used for local or national level L&A activities. In repressed states, Solidaridad opted for a low profile and supported CSOs and/or MSPs to do the L&A.

*1c. At what geographical level or combination of levels have the L&A strategies been operational? (levels: local, national, regional, global, landscape)? What added value / challenges exist to be active at different levels?*

Most projects are active at local and/or national level. The continental projects also target international level interventions. A lesson is that it is more effective to first create consensus within a country, if this doesn't already exist, before creating alignment between countries. In landscape projects it is vital to involve local as well as national-level decision-makers, to ensure the link between field practices and enabling context. The links between the global and regional or national projects are not always evident. In palm oil Europe and Asia promoted different objectives, with little cross-fertilization.

*1d. Which contextual factors determine the selection of EPE or LI interventions (AfC) and/or GP&RI (including Pfc) interventions – or within one landscape?*

Most projects in the AfC portfolio build upon previous experience in specific sectors and geographies, which usually had a strong GP/RI focus. EPE and LI interventions are considered to be necessary and complementary strategies to create an enabling environment for GP and RI related outcomes and/or to address issues that hamper progress rooted at landscape level. EPE and LI interventions are more effective if they are informed or complemented by GP and RI interventions. MSP convening & facilitation skills are necessary ingredients for successful policy influencing. Capacities on policy analysis and L&A strategies are less consistently present, particularly in relation to strategizing around who to

lobby, when and how in policy influencing processes. Solidaridad staff did not receive capacity enhancement on policy analysis and L&A strategies as most skill development happens through learning-by-doing and team exchanges. Some partners/beneficiaries did receive capacity building on L&A strategies, but the case studies showed very few receiving capacity building on policy analysis, formulation of policy recommendations, accountability and monitoring policy change. CSO partners have been empowered through the provision of access to new knowledge and better networks/contacts, but there is less evidence on improved L&A capacities.

*3. How effective have been the efforts to build internal capacity of the RECs on the integration of the innovation themes Gender Inclusivity, Sustainable Landscape Innovation, and Climate Innovation?*

The case studies revealed limited evidence of internal training provided on gender and climate innovation. RECs did show evidence of training on Sustainable Landscape Innovation.

*4. Which activities (implemented by RECs as part of L&A projects) have been most effective to build desirable capabilities of CSOs (as beneficiaries and partners)?*

The building up of a relation of trust between different stakeholders and creating a safe space for multi-stakeholder dialogue contributes significantly to empower CSOs in undertaking L&A activities. In other cases, Solidaridad successfully accompanied and/or supported CSOs in L&A activities (e.g. by repetitive joint lobbying). There has been some training on L&A, with positive outcomes on L&A capabilities of CSOs.

*5. What is the efficiency of each L&A strategy?*

We have limited data available on each L&A strategy, particularly because Solidaridad did not employ activity-based budgeting. The available data shows that establishing an MSP seems to be the most expensive activity, while it is also very effective, but once the MSP has been established the costs of convening or participating in an MSP are lower. Field activities to develop or test solutions to problems are also costly yet very important. These could be done through GP&RI projects or as case studies being part of the AfC project. Overall, the costs are mainly staff costs. Because of the complementary value of different L&A strategies and of GP and RI interventions, as well as the context specificity of projects, it will always be a challenge to determine the cost-effectiveness of individual strategies.

*6. Which activities are most successful in ensuring the voices of smallholders, landless, marginalised producers, women and youth were heard in the L&A strategies?*

Various activities have been successful including the strengthening of smallholder and indigenous people associations to participate in MSPs and L&A activities and the liaising of smallholder associations with powerful industry associations. Solidaridad staff also defends the interests of these groups at different fora (either as expert or convener). While various projects target women in livelihood improvements, there are only a few examples where significant results are shown in terms of enhanced female voice. The main explanation could be that this is an issue that has complex underlying root causes. We did not see evidence that the root causes were addressed.

*7. What are successful follow-up strategies and who carried them out (or disengagement in case of low potential) for Solidaridad's MSP and public influencing engagement?*

While quick-wins in policy influencing are possible, a four year timeframe is generally too short to change public and private policy environments and address systemic issues to a degree that one can claim sectors have been transformed. Most of the MSPs supported will not function well or even survive without Solidaridad beyond AfC support. EPE and LI interventions clearly need a long-term commitment. Solidaridad seems to be aware of this and committed to find the resources to do this, in spite of the fact that all MSPs created by Solidaridad are fully dependent on external funding sources. In some projects, exit strategies are in place as local stakeholders would be able to continue a MSP or standard system without future Solidaridad involvement.

**Outcome: On the effectiveness of L&A strategies to influence (public and private) policies**

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

Of the 24 projects executed beyond Europe, 10 target public policies only, 12 target both public and private policies, and 2 only private policies. As part of the 5 projects run by REC Europe, the majority of activities (70%) targets business policies, and the remaining 30% targets policies at multilateral level. It is our understanding that policy changes are one category of possible systemic changes. Other systemic changes were not specifically targeted, although we found contribution by the AfC programme to other systemic changes.

**9. How effective has the L&A strategy been to influence (public and private) policies?**

**a. Effectiveness in terms of targeted change agent (public or private decision maker)**

**b. Effectiveness in terms of targeted policy issues**

**c. Effectiveness in terms of progress along the stages of policy influencing**

**d. Effectiveness in terms of type and level of policy influence**

For several projects L&A policy influencing targets were not well defined, but emerged along the way, including new policies or ways of implementing existing policies. Of the 24 projects executed beyond Europe, 63% contributed to significant changes in policy targets, which was defined as policies moving from phase 1 (agenda setting) or phase 2 (recommendations formulated) to phase 5 or 6 (adoption, implementation). There are no significant differences in successful scores for private or public sector policies. We observe that phase 6 of policy implementation is not well defined; it seems that in most cases hurdles still need to be taken for full policy implementation and law enforcement, which also implies that there is scope for follow-up to make policies work. Also, at least in 5 projects where no significant policy changes were noted we observed ‘small wins’ which are relevant results.

**10. What have been constraints / dynamics that limited / delayed effectiveness of L&A strategies and what has been or should have been the appropriate response to overcome these constraints?**

One of the strengths of Solidaridad is its flexibility, to adjust to changing conditions. As most disabling factors we encountered:

- Excessive bureaucracy: this hampers progress although a proactive role of Solidaridad was noted to speed up the process.
- Competing policy objectives: this can create barriers for alignment between stakeholders
- Political tensions within and between countries: For instance, political tensions between India and Malaysia affected project activities.
- Change in decision-makers: The change of decision makers often causes delays, but it can also result in the introduction of more capable and willing decision-makers.

The influence of a situation of a repressed state was particularly studied in one case study. In situations of a repressed state, Solidaridad has been effective by keeping a low profile, not directly engaging with decision-/policy-makers but providing support behind the screens. The L&A strategies that were adopted in a situation of repressed state is to support partners or MSP members to lobby without visible presence of Solidaridad. Especially where the presence of an MSP may be unacceptable, the empowerment of CSOs is the most useful strategy including basic skills training, providing ICT equipment, generating evidence for L&A statements, providing financial support.

**11. What have been factors or opportunities that favoured effectiveness of L&A strategies and what has been or should have been the appropriate response to benefit from these opportunities?<sup>6</sup>**

The following factors have been beneficial for the AfC interventions:

- Supportive existing policy frameworks: Where good policies are in place and are aligned with Solidaridad’s objectives, e.g. regulation on water pollution in the Ganga area, China’s Belt and Road Initiative, land use policies in Tanzania, Solidaridad conducted pilots to implement these policies.

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<sup>6</sup> The inception report says “to overcome these constraints’, which obviously is not correct.

- Strong national / local institutions, coordination and networks: This facilitates the choice of who to target and facilitates policy implementation.
- Sense of urgency: This helps to raise awareness for the need to change through collaborative action, for instance climate change, water pollution, food safety concerns and deforestation.

*12. What is the time it takes to move from policy influencing stage 1 to 6? Which capabilities or contextual factors influence this?*

Several projects results show that within the duration of four years the change from policy influencing stage 1 to 6 can be achieved. However, this conclusion should be nuanced in several ways:

- In most cases Solidaridad has already been working with policymakers thus the important stage of building up trust and networks (which may take long) was already achieved.
- Policy change does not necessarily follow a linear path from stage 1 to 6: sometimes stages can be skipped, the order can be changed or there is a fall back to a previous stage.
- Policy influencing stage 6 is not well defined and seems to be interpreted as ‘adoption’, while full implementation may take much longer (e.g. with law enforcement and evidence of impact). It should be noted that in many countries policies are in place but not well or not at all implemented.
- Assumptions for policy change are L&A skills (among Solidaridad staff and/or its partners), good contacts with decision-makers, and a relatively stable policy context.

*13. What are general factors for each of the L&A strategies to be successful, for instance link to GP and RI interventions for evidence of successful models, local ownership, legitimacy, partnerships.*

One main success factor for effective L&A strategies is the social capital built up by Solidaridad, which includes local ownership, expertise, networks. One of the best ways to build up social capital is to enter a new (sector / country / landscape) context with field implementation projects (GP/RI) that work on concrete solutions for perceived problems before engaging in L&A activities. It is also recommended to continue field implementation projects and pilots parallel to L&A projects to generate the evidence needed for policy advocacy and to bring together actors with conflicting relations and potential for collaboration. Experienced & highly qualified staff and research capacity (whether internal or externally hired), Solidaridad’s large (international) network and having genuine partnerships based upon equality are other success factors. For example in India, Solidaridad has several well-recognized and powerful partners who already had a long history of engaging with the public sector. Having experiences in L&A strategies, including the ability to create and benefit from policy windows, seems to be a success factor which is not fully met.

***Impact: On the relation between policy changes and sector transformation***

*14. What is the contribution of targeted or realised policy changes to sector transformation?*

- a. Which systemic drivers are being addressed by the policy changes?*
- b. What is the scale and depth of the (expected or realized) systemic changes and impacts as a result of the policy implementation?*
- c. Which are systemic drivers that appear to be missing, i.e. show significant weaknesses?*

Sector transformation is a goal and ambition of the AfC programme, but only in a few projects this was made operational in terms of how it can be achieved. In spite of that, we found that, apart from policy changes, which is one type of systemic issue, AfC projects have contributed to several systemic changes other than policy changes. Most noteworthy are:

- Improved service delivery, by public or private sector
- Trust and dialogue between stakeholders
- Coordination, shared vision, alignment between stakeholders
- Strengthening of civic space, largely related to capacity building of CSOs and MSPs
- More transparency / accountability of stakeholders, as well as reduced corruption
- Shift of mindsets and norms

We found mixed or weak contributions to the following systemic issues, although some of these issues are being addressed by complementary GP and RI projects.

- Improved access to markets
- Change in power dynamics between stakeholders
- Sector and/or landscape governance
- Social sustainability issues in supply chains
- Increased investment in the sector

From this overview it can be concluded that the AfC project has made an important contribution to the potential for sector transformation, especially when seen in combination with GP and RI projects. We believe that a better contribution to sector transformation could be achieved if relevant systemic issues are addressed at early stages and are deliberately addressed.

*15. What is the evidence for scaling (by copying, crowding in, expansion to other landscapes, countries or regions)? What might be the evidence of adoption of the realized policy changes or changes in systemic drivers at other geographical localities (e.g. from one district to another)?*

Scaling can take place through mechanisms of copying, crowding in or expansion of good practices, but is poorly captured in the project documentation. Some projects, especially the landscape projects, are dealing with piloting which is expected to lead to copying and more widespread application. Evidence of the following dimensions of scaling were identified in the case studies:

- Scaling within a landscape or sector:
- Scaling related to MSPs, new members or increasing issue scope of MSP
- Scaling to other landscapes and countries
- Scaling to other sectors within a country of landscape.

*16. How are L&A activities informed by GP and RI projects and experiences? To what extent do policy changes contribute to more successful GP and RI interventions (including PfC projects)?*

L&A strategies, including MSPs, are more effective when they build upon and are combined with concrete field activities. Benefits of combining field implementation interventions with EPE and LI interventions include the identification of policy gaps, the yielding of evidence needed for policy change, building up the expertise, networks and credibility needed for L&A activities and the motivation of stakeholders to remain engaged in M&E and L&A activities. There are numerous examples in the AfC portfolio where EPE and LI outcomes have supported GP and RI outcomes.

## 7. Main lessons and recommendations

### 7.1 Main conclusions of the evaluation

#### *Relevance*

**The AfC program has shown to be relevant, in most cases building upon earlier Good Practices (GP) and Robust Infrastructure (RI) projects, working on improvement of the policy context for these projects. However, the understanding of this policy context could have been improved.** When building upon earlier experiences, Solidaridad already had a good knowledge of a sector and/or landscape which contributed to the definition of relevant lobby and advocacy policy objectives and strategies, such as for the tea sector in Indonesia. In some new project contexts, the lack of proper diagnostics compromised the relevance of original policy objectives and L&A strategies, though this was often improved during the project implementation period as knowledge and experience grew. A general observation is that only few projects made explicit and operational how they aim to contribute to the overall AfC goal and ambition of sector transformation.

#### *Effectiveness*

**The majority of the projects has been effective, showing evidence of positive policy changes that were achieved by Solidaridad and its partners. Also, CSOs involved in the program have strongly benefitted from capacity building, but the subject of policy analysis remains weak.** Of the 24 projects executed beyond Europe, 63% contributed to significant changes in policy targets, which was defined as policies moving from phase 1 (agenda setting) or phase 2 (recommendations formulated) to phase 5 or 6 (adoption, implementation). Examples of realized policy changes include the adoption of national standards (F&V in Tanzania, palm oil in India), the mutual recognition between countries of national standards (tea and palm oil in Asia), amendments in labour laws (garment in Ethiopia) and the addition of a zero-deforestation policy on palm, coffee and livestock (Honduras). There are no significant differences in successful scores for private or public sector policies. However, for several projects L&A policy objectives were not well defined beforehand, but emerged along the way. Policy objectives could be related to the development of new policies or ways of implementing existing policies. We observe that the phase of policy implementation (phase 6) is not well defined; it seems that in most cases many hurdles still need to be taken for full policy implementation and law enforcement. This implies there is a need for follow-up activities to make policies work. At least in 5 projects where no significant policy changes were noted, we did observe 'small wins', being defined as 'concrete, completed, implemented outcomes of moderate importance'. Small wins can be relevant in situations of wicked or complex problems, where pathways of change may not be so clear. A series of small wins may finally result in real policy change.

As projects often combine different lobby and advocacy strategies it is hard to disentangle the effectiveness of individual strategies. This will be further elaborated in the next section.

Various activities have been successful in strengthening smallholder and indigenous people associations to participate in MSPs and L&A activities and in liaising between smallholder associations and powerful industry associations. For example, in Indonesia local smallholder associations obtained better advocacy skills and improved relationships with public decision-makers which resulted in various policy changes at local level. Solidaridad staff also defends the interests of these groups in different fora (either as expert or convener). While various projects target women in livelihood improvements, there are only a few examples where significant results are shown in terms of enhanced female voice. On the latter it seems that there are no specific strategies to address the underlying root causes. The Solidaridad gender inclusivity bucket book does contain tools to improve women's voice and address underlying systemic

issues, such as leadership, policies and land rights, but in practice the focus has been on improving on women's livelihoods rather than (the more complex issue of) improving women's voice.

According to Solidaridad's reporting, CSOs have benefitted from capacity building, in terms of capacity to meaningfully participate in dialogue (91% of CSOs reviewed in the portfolio), capacity to analyse, monitor and learn (76%), and capacity to plan and execute (72%). The case studies found an emphasis of capacity building on technical issues and capacities to effectively participate in MSPs and dialogues (whether at landscape, national or regional level). Subjects that should receive more attention are: policy analysis and defining policy goals, defining and implementing L&A strategies, and business skills.

### *Efficiency*

**Cost-effectiveness was difficult to determine but appears to be highest for establishing MSPs and field level pilot activities, and very variable for L&A activities.** Carrying out an efficiency analysis has been a specific component of this evaluation. A methodology was developed and tested, but proved difficult to apply for two main reasons:

1. The data that were requested are not readily available in current budget categories
2. The RECs did not want to spend time to restructure expenses in a way to extract the data that we requested, also because the timing interfered with preparing the new programme document.

Thus, the following insights are based on only few case studies with cost indications, and our own interpretations of effectiveness. First, it appears that the costs to establish MSPs are high (150-500 K EUR) but are considered cost-effective and in fact essential. Costs will decline (40-60 K EUR per year) once the MSP is functional, for convening and supporting. Costs for field level pilot activities vary much but are also essential and often highly effective. Costs for lobby, policy advocacy and stakeholder engagement activities vary greatly, and effectiveness also varies greatly because policy change also depends upon external factors.

### *Impact*

**The AfC program has made an important contribution to the potential for sector transformation, especially when seen in combination with GP and RI projects.** Despite that, in nearly all projects many issues still need to improve for sectors to be fully transformed (to an inclusive, sustainable and competitive sector. While quick-wins in policy influencing are possible, a five-year timeframe is generally too short to change public and private policy environments and address systemic issues to a degree that one can claim sectors have been transformed.

Apart from policy changes or improved policy implementation, AfC projects have contributed to several other systemic changes (even if these were not defined or targeted as such). Most noteworthy are:

- Improved service delivery, by public or private sector
- Trust and dialogue between stakeholders
- Coordination of and alignment between stakeholders
- Strengthening of civic space, largely related to capacity building of CSOs and MSPs
- More transparency / accountability of stakeholders, as well as reduced corruption
- Shift of mindsets and norms

In the AfC portfolio there are no or weak contributions to the following systemic issues, although – as indicated - some of these issues are being addressed by complementary Good Practices (GP) and Robust Infrastructure (RI) projects:

- Improved access to markets – sometimes addressed by GP and RI projects
- Change in power dynamics between stakeholders - not explicitly addressed in any project
- Sector and/or landscape governance - not addressed in any landscape project
- Social sustainability issues in supply chains - sometimes addressed by GP and RI projects, e.g. garment in Ethiopia

- Increased re-investment in the sector, e.g. based on levies and taxes – not addressed in any project

#### *Scaling*

**Within the AfC program there is evidence of scaling through mechanisms of copying, crowding-in or expansion of good practices. These processes are poorly captured in project documentation.** Some projects, especially the landscape projects, are working on piloting which, if success can be demonstrated, is expected to lead to replication and widespread application. In other cases, scaling happens in ways that were not foreseen by a project. Evidence of the following dimensions of scaling was found in the case studies of this evaluation (but could not be traced in the entire AfC portfolio):

- Scaling within a landscape or sector, e.g. adoption of sustainable practices among MSP members
- Scaling related to MSPs, new members or new or emerging issues such as biotechnology or land tenure
- Scaling to other landscapes and countries, e.g. zero-deforestation agreement from Honduras to Nicaragua and Guatemala
- Scaling to other sectors within a country of landscape, e.g. the Ganga landscape project will apply its approach to the textiles sector, the Lestari system has informed current processes in the Indonesian coffee and cocoa sector (this is an example of unexpected scaling).

#### *Sustainability*

**Most of the MSPs supported indicated that they would require support from Solidaridad, especially in terms of finance, but also leadership or facilitation, to function well over the coming years.** EPE and LI interventions clearly need a long-term commitment by Solidaridad and/or its local partners. Solidaridad seems to be aware of this and is committed to find the resources to do this. In some projects, exit strategies are in place as local stakeholders would be able to pursue the functions of an MSP or standard system without future Solidaridad involvement.

## **7.2 Lessons learned and recommendations on strategic choices**

**The insights and networks from Good Practices (GP) and Robust Infrastructure (RI) interventions contribute to the success of EPE and LI interventions.** The Enabling Policy Environment (EPE) and Landscape Innovations (LI) result areas in the AfC portfolio contribute to an enabling environment for Good Practices (GP) and Robust Infrastructure (RI) interventions. This can also support successful GP and RI interventions to sustain and scale. In turn, lobby and advocacy strategies are most effective when they are built upon or combined with concrete field activities (i.e. GP / RI interventions). Note that in landscape projects this integration takes place within one project. Field activities help to identify policy gaps, yield evidence, and build expertise, networks, credibility and motivation of stakeholders to remain engaged. Having field projects aimed at developing demand-driven solutions shows commitment and builds up expertise, networks and credibility needed for evidence-based lobby and advocacy. Therefore, as a pathway to sector transformation, in a country, region or landscape, the best sequence seems to be by starting with GP&RI interventions that work on concrete solutions for perceived problems, followed by EPE and LI interventions. Policy objectives on social issues are also important, but may need to be preceded by or implemented in parallel with working on practical solutions for less sensitive issues such as environmental management systems for companies (e.g. waste management, reduced emissions).

**The potential for Solidaridad to contribute to sector transformation, and thus to have sustained impact at scale, can be improved by an improved identification and focus on the underlying systemic drivers.** The projects show several examples of contributing to systemic changes. However, a more explicit understanding of which systemic changes, including policy changes, are needed for sector transformation, would lead to better design of L&A strategies to contribute to such changes. Enhancing civic space is also an important systemic change. Through improvement of the enabling context, achieving systemic changes will contribute to scaling and sustaining results. Focusing on systemic

changes requires a shift from a focus on field level solutions to a focus at governance, relationships and power dynamics, and the change of mindsets. While Solidaridad has focused on influencing policies, there are remaining challenges of implementing improved policies and addressing the underlying governance issues required to do so. So far, the projects that were evaluated did not specifically address sector or landscape governance including law enforcement. This may be because of political sensitivities and the complexity of the issue, or because Solidaridad had not yet built up sufficient capacities and local trust and credibility to address this topic.

**Based on the experiences with EPE and LI activities there is good potential for Solidaridad to expand the field of expertise to new themes.** In terms of setting goals and defining strategies, this evaluation suggests there is potential to reflect on how to further develop the strengths of Solidaridad. We found Solidaridad to have strong knowledge about business development, supply chain dynamics and increasingly also landscape approaches. EPE activities have put Solidaridad in a position where it can contribute to national and international policy design processes. This makes knowledge on macroeconomic topics such as supply-demand balance, price formulation, trade policies and trade balances, and employment creation increasingly relevant. There is also an increasing demand for more knowledge such as how to make use of digitalized marketing channels for smallholder-based supply chains (e.g. in tea and coffee) and diversify export markets (e.g. to the Middle-East). Concerning landscape innovations, there is scope to expand the integrated landscape focus towards including governance aspects, investment opportunities, and influencing policy and systemic changes for a more enabling context, and the role of landscape level MSPs in doing so.

The following recommendations are made:

1. Make strategic choices on how EPE and GP&RI interventions can reinforce each other, e.g. by a well planned sequencing and coordinated integration. In contexts where Solidaridad is new and strong partners are absent, GP&RI interventions can help build up relations, generate in-depth knowledge, a reputation and a network. While EPE activities require independent funding to remain neutral (i.e. independent from actors with a direct interest in the L&A targets), field pilots can be co-financed by public and private sector actors. The landscape approach has high potential as it is intrinsically holistic, typically including at least pilots that are in fact GP and/or RI activities.
2. Depending upon Solidaridad's capacities and local trust and credibility, consider building up capacities on new themes of expertise, as mentioned above.
3. Better anticipate and define how scaling is expected to take place in its different dimensions (by copying, crowding in, expansion to other landscapes, countries or regions, and/or through systemic changes), monitor scaling, and strengthen processes of scaling where possible.
4. In addition to influencing policies, identify and address the root causes for poor implementation of policies by focusing more on governance structures and processes at the sector and landscape level.
5. The more Solidaridad operates with an international policy agenda, the more important it becomes to ensure strategic alignment between RECs in order to achieve effective engagement at international policy level. This means that national dialogues, campaigns, and linking and learning activities feed into global level activities and vice versa, reinforcing each other reciprocally towards systemic change at different levels.

### **7.3 Lessons learned & recommendations on L&A strategies**

Three different L&A strategies were identified (see section 2). While these have been used in combination and complementarity, this evaluation found that projects make deliberate and strategic choices which strategy to adopt. We have tried to better understand the underlying reasoning and logic. The following overview on common enabling and disabling conditions across the L&A strategies, emerging from the evaluation, has been helpful for such understanding.

Disabling conditions	Enabling conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excessive bureaucracy: this hampers progress although a proactive role of Solidaridad was noted to speed up the process.</li> <li>Competing policy objectives: this can create barriers for alignment between stakeholders</li> <li>Political tensions within and between countries, e.g. political tensions between India and Malaysia affected project activities.</li> <li>Change in decision-makers: The change of decision makers often causes delays, but it can also result in the introduction of more capable and willing decision-makers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supportive existing policy frameworks: Where good policies are in place and are aligned with Solidaridad's objectives.</li> <li>Strong national / local institutions, coordination and networks: This facilitates the choice of who to target and facilitates policy implementation.</li> <li>Sense of urgency: This helps to raise awareness for the need to change through collaborative action, for instance climate change, water pollution, food safety concerns and deforestation.</li> </ul>

The following tabular overview shows how both contextual conditions and internal position, role and capacities have influenced the L&A strategies that were adopted.

*The influence of context factors and Solidaridad position, role & capacities on decision-making for 4 different L&A strategies*

	1a. Direct policy influencing by Solidaridad	1b. Direct policy influencing by CSOs	2. Policy influencing through MSPs	3. Landscape approach
<b>Context factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong institutions &amp; policies, including law enforcement, are supportive to each L&amp;A strategy, while weak institutions &amp; policies always constitute a challenge. This factor is not discriminating between L&amp;A strategies.</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rigid bureaucracies and slow policy changes</li> <li>Open civic space</li> <li>High level decision-makers open to dialogue</li> <li>Sense of urgency to find solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scenario 1: open civic space and strong CSOs are present and have good contacts with decision-makers</li> <li>Scenario 2: Repressed civic space with Solidaridad or MSPs not accepted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open civic space</li> <li>Stakeholders see value in collaborative action</li> <li>No stakeholder conflicts</li> <li>Local decision-makers and private sector willing to participate in MSPs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competing interests between different ecosystem users</li> <li>Sectors causing urgent landscape degradation</li> <li>Openness to bottom-up / decentralized policy dialogue</li> </ul>
<b>Position, role and capacities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good relations with public and private sector decision-makers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence-based knowledge of solutions</li> </ul> </li> <li>Understanding of policy processes, good L&amp;A skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to create or make use of policy windows</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solidaridad / CSO has solid reputation</li> <li>Trustworthy relations between Solidaridad &amp; CSOs</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MSP has mandate from public/private decision-makers</li> <li>MSP members include decision-makers</li> <li>Experienced facilitator with neutral position</li> <li>Good governance within MSP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solidaridad has social capital (e.g. expertise, networks, reputation) in landscape</li> <li>Good governance within landscape level MSPs</li> </ul>

***Lessons learned and recommendations on L&A strategy 1: Direct policy influencing (a) by Solidaridad or (b) by partners / CSOs***

**Direct policy influencing has been an L&A strategy in many projects and serves many purposes.** It is effective to raise awareness and create willingness to collaborate at higher levels of public or private sector actors, who are open to dialogue with Solidaridad or CSOs. Where Solidaridad has a good reputation this strategy has been effective to unlock complex bureaucracies and thus speed up processes of policy formulation or implementation, after which CSOs or MSPs can take over.

**In countries with a repressed or closed civic space, especially when new to a country, it appeared better for Solidaridad to keep a low profile and empower local CSOs.** In such contexts, direct policy influencing is not the best option to pursue and it makes more sense to empower CSOs to create a shared voice. Empowerment of CSOs may include training on basic skills (administration, communication) and providing ICT equipment for connections with national and international NGOs. However, in doing so, Solidaridad's role of providing support behind the scenes will be important. Even if relationships with key decision-makers already exist, it is still recommended to start collaboration on field implementation projects (e.g. GP&RI) before engaging in direct L&A activities. The collaboration with and role of the Dutch Embassy proved to be important especially in countries with a repressed civic space, to establish contacts with high level decision-makers.

**Solidaridad's role in this strategy is highly dependent upon its credibility, capacities and the type of partners.** Direct policy influencing is done by Solidaridad staff, or primarily by partners, being CSOs or others, or jointly. A long standing presence in a country with field level experience facilitates a more active role by Solidaridad. In this strategy, Solidaridad has supported CSO partners on L&A skills particularly by supporting and accompanying them in direct L&A activities and sometimes through training. In situations with strong partners and CSOs with L&A experience Solidaridad's role will be more in the background.

**For direct policy influencing it is key to invest in personal relationships and strong partnerships with the target private and public decision-makers.** This is often a lengthy process, but the resulting relations and trust are key to long-term success. It is also important to understand the political economy context and the opportunities, and be aware of windows for policy change. This requires a continuous assessment of the context and the flexibility and adaptive management to respond to opportunities and changes.

**This evaluation shows there has been little capacity building of Solidaridad staff on policy analysis or L&A skills.** Some RECs facilitate internal learning on L&A strategies by organizing regular staff meetings to discuss challenges and opportunities related to project implementation. Having experienced staff who share knowledge and experience with new recruits is a key enabler. Whereas actual direct policy influencing activities are relatively cheap, to become successful additional human resources and investments may be needed for intelligence, in research and field pilots. L&A skills should include how to create or benefit from policy windows (moments in policy-making processes when decision-makers are more open to change).

*Recommendations:*

6. There is need to invest in the capacity needed to perform policy analysis, understanding key policies and regulations associated with the problems in a sector, ensure full understanding of the associated stakeholders, the underlying power dynamics, the enabling and disabling factors, and how to create or benefit from policy windows to influence policies, and plan advocacy strategies accordingly. This should be complemented with continued support of CSOs in their L&A activities (notably by repeated joint lobbying).

7. In countries with a repressed or closed civic space, especially when new to a country, it is better for Solidaridad to keep a low profile and empower local CSOs in stead of direct policy influencing To empower CSOs and create a shared voice useful support is securing ICT infrastructure, building up communication skills, and establishing linkages with the international network are important.

### ***Lessons learned and recommendations on L&A strategy 2: Policy influencing through multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs)***

**MSPs serve many purposes and give L&A activities more weight than individual actions.** In all evaluated AfC projects, Solidaridad has established or strengthened MSPs as part of their L&A strategy. MSPs often fill a gap, in terms of moderate institutions and policies, and often poor law enforcement. MSPs have been operational at national, landscape and occasionally at international level. MSPs contribute to co-creation of knowledge, capacity building, match-making & networking, shared agenda setting, conflict resolution & trust building, shared L&A activities, and joint inputs to standard development. MSPs give policy messages more weight and credibility than actions by individual CSOs. In relation to standards development, MSPs ensure the standards being developed address all aspects of sustainability, are approved by and are relevant to a broader section of stakeholders. In repressed states, MSPs are generally unacceptable, though more informal collaborations are still a valid strategy. As part of establishing MSPs, Solidaridad has successfully supported initiatives of conflict resolution between CSOs and other stakeholders, and enhance cooperation with local stakeholders. The establishment of MSPs and their capacity building contributes to building up civic space.

**International multi-stakeholder processes are particularly relevant in contexts where the options to create change within countries or landscapes are limited and/or are strongly dependent on international trade dynamics and political relationships between key trading nations.** The international initiatives contributed to market and trade promotion, aligning and recognizing national sustainability standards and enhancing technology exchange and knowledge development.

**The functions of an MSP show changes over time.** MSPs can also become redundant, for instance once national standards have been developed and are managed by the appropriate institutions, or if conflicts are solved and relations of trust built up leading to partnerships or bilateral relations that take over the roles of the MSP.

**Several internal conditions and capacities were found to be important for MSPs to be successful.** They include: getting key stakeholders to participate and managing their expectations from the onset, feeding the dialogue with fact-based data to agree on key issues, supporting the vision for the sector or landscape with agreed interventions, and finding a balance between concrete short-term outputs and more strategic longer-term outcomes. It is also good to ensure a government mandate for a MSP, define clear roles between members with possible separate committees or working groups assigned with a specific time-bound task. When operating at international level, it is usually more effective to first ensure there is consensus within each country before starting to create alignment between countries. For example, the AfricaGAP ambition in the F&V projects was discontinued once it became clear that many countries lack the national standards necessary to serve as building blocks for the regional standard. However, the reverse can also be valid, where international action drives national action. For example, the international ASPN network was a key driver in the creation of a national Indian palm oil initiative.

**Capacity building has focused on CSO capacities to participate in MSPs and contributing to an effective dialogue, as well as internal capacities of leadership and governance.** Solidaridad often plays a role as a convener or is part of the MSP leadership. Solidaridad's experience, not-for-profit status, independence, understanding of the private sector, sector knowledge and facilitation skills are important in this. Solidaridad supports CSOs to participate in MSPs. The building up of a relation of trust between

different stakeholders and creating a safe space for multi-stakeholder dialogue is sometimes enough to empower CSOs to participate effectively.

**Establishing an MSP is costly, but costs generally reduce over time.** We found that all MSPs established by Solidaridad are dependent upon Solidaridad and/or other external funding. Establishing an MSP is often the most costly activity of the AfC project, mainly because of the required staff time. Over time, these costs tend to reduce considerably.

#### *Recommendations*

8. Define the purpose of the MSPs being established, ensure its alignment with L&A strategies, and evaluate the relevance over time or whether the MSP has become redundant.
9. Solidaridad's role in MSPs should be mainly a combination of the expert and neutral convening role.
10. Support MSPs in understanding policy processes and developing L&A skills on how policies can be influenced, and how to create or benefit from policy windows to influence policies. Involve (national level) government agencies in the leadership of an MSP for direct linkages to policy changes and law enforcement, or alternatively keep national agencies well informed.

#### ***Lessons learned and recommendations on L&A strategy 3: Landscape innovations***

**Landscape projects operate at a jurisdictional scale and usually deal with multiple administrative levels as well as multiple sectors that operate in the geography.** Within the landscape (project), there are often multiple MSPs (at different scales). Lobby and advocacy strategies are most commonly through MSPs (L&A pathway 2), but also includes direct policy engagement (pathway 1) and CSO empowerment (pathway 3). By taking an integrated or holistic approach, landscape projects integrate GP&RI as well as EPE objectives in one project. Landscape initiatives often operate at a jurisdictional scale with openness to bottom-up / decentralized policy dialogue.

**This strategy is particularly relevant in contexts where sustainability issues require action at a wider (landscape) scale and by multiple stakeholders, and where different landscape users have competing claims over resources.** Landscape projects and particularly the process of establishing MSPs can contribute to overcoming competing relations (or even conflicts) and build relations of cooperation between stakeholders and the adoption of good practices. Where policy influencing took place, Solidaridad in most cases took the lead in lobbying key decision-makers (strategy 1), especially at national level, followed or in parallel with MSPs being involved in L&A activities at local level (strategy 2).

**Creating successful connections between local and national administrative layers will promote the success and scaling of landscape interventions.** While landscape projects have a local focus, by establishing landscape level MSPs and conducting local pilot studies, this evaluation identified the importance of engaging other relevant administrative layers including national stakeholders (public agencies), in order to ensure the link between field practices and the enabling context. If taken on board from the beginning and in the right way, there is evidence that national government can play an important role in scaling the approach to other landscapes, or other sectors, or even other countries.

**Landscape project would benefit from a better analysis of relevant policies and systemic issues and undertaking pilot activities.** In the design phase, all landscape projects have carried out 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 integrated landscape approach success depends, among other factors, upon close interaction between on-the-ground pilots that demonstrate solutions, the elaboration of strong business cases linked to major investors, and working on an enabling policy context. In the current projects, land use planning, law enforcement and monitoring could receive more attention.

**Pre-existing experiences and building up social capital in the landscape and related sectors supports Solidaridad's convening role in the landscape approach.** In the AfC projects, Solidaridad is the convenor of the landscape projects. They usually build on firm experiences of Solidaridad in related supply chains and sectors which contributed to build up trust and networks with private and public sector actors.

**In addition to technical aspects, landscape projects need more training on L&A strategies.** Most landscape projects received training on landscape management and also on a range of landscape management tools, including pilots of their implementation. There has been limited training on aspects of policy analysis, integrating supply chain/ sector and administrative policies, as well as effective lobby & advocacy strategies.

*Recommendations:*

11. It is critical within the integrated landscape approach to remain aware of the potential trade-offs between the goals of productivity increase and the goals of conservation or protection.
12. 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. Local pilots could test which governance models will work out in practice in the local political context. Working on this is very much in line with objectives of strengthening civic space.
13. It is important for Solidaridad to engage with high level decision-makers, if possible at national level, as these are critical for ensuring the enabling context, and to play a role in scaling the approach to other landscapes, or other sectors, or even other countries.

***Cross-cutting issue 1: Inclusiveness and gender***

**This evaluation found that AfC projects have a strong focus on smallholder and indigenous groups and apply different strategies to empower them.** While many activities with smallholders and indigenous groups are trying to directly improve their livelihoods (e.g. through yield improvement and market access), the AfC projects also adopt strategies to empower them. However, it often takes long or it is even unrealistic to expect grassroots organizations to become effective in national or international policy dialogues. In such contexts, Solidaridad could forge strong partnerships between smallholder associations and industry associations and ensure the industry associations advocate for smallholder interests at (inter)national platforms. Solidaridad staff can also directly represent and defend smallholder interests. This requires the development and maintenance of genuine partnerships with grassroot organizations in order to articulate their interests.

**While several AfC projects have successfully achieved goals related to improving women's livelihood, it appears to be more challenging to enhance women's voice.** Especially the systemic (including cultural) issues seem to hamper this from being achieved. We found few projects with explicit goals and targets aimed to empower and enhance women participation in local or national decision-making and L&A activities. Examples are the Lestari project in Indonesia, the F&V MSPs in East Africa, and the PASOS project in Honduras. We did not come across explicit identification of the underlying systemic issues, such as socio-cultural norms or power dynamics.

*Recommendations:*

14. Formulate explicit goals regarding the inclusion of the voice of women and other target groups. Depending on the capacity of these target groups, consider direct strategies (e.g. supporting them in L&A activities) and indirect strategies (e.g. having Solidaridad or industry associations to defend their interest). The strategies may also differ for local, national and international level. Any indirect strategy needs to be based upon genuine partnership.
15. There is need to focus on implementing practices from Solidaridad's gender inclusivity bucket book on improving women's voice and addressing underlying systemic issues, such as cultural norms.

***Cross-cutting issue 2: Partnerships***

**Genuine partnerships are key in all L&A strategies.** The evaluation showed that Solidaridad has been able to develop many genuine partnerships. Partners do not see the partnership as a one-sided source 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, or build the networks necessary for representative participation in an MSP. Others refer to the technical or scientific inputs they share with Solidaridad. This shows that the collaboration is based upon the principle of equality rather than a traditional development project – which has a donor-beneficiary basis.

*Recommendations:*

16. It is recommended to continue investing in partnerships based upon the principle of equality, but also to remain critical of partners and change partners where there are good reasons to do so.

**7. Lessons learned and recommendations for PM&E, learning and exit**

**This evaluation found that where Solidaridad has experience in, or done good diagnostics, of a sector in its policy context, the ToCs are better grounded, and the policy targets, resulting strategies and actions are better defined. Another strength is that Solidaridad has been successful in combining different L&A strategies in a flexible manner in line with what the context demands.** In most cases Solidaridad combined different L&A strategies, depending upon the context and changing over time. This responsiveness and flexibility is a strength, and there does not appear to be any evidence of negative trade-offs in projects that have shown flexibility and responsiveness. However, with a better understanding of the sector and landscape context, more effective strategies could have been designed and implemented from the beginning.

*Recommendations:*

17. There is need to build capacities and clear diagnostics for undertaking a policy and context analysis in order to identify relevant policy and other systemic issues. This can be part of developing the theory of change and strategic pathways. This process should be participatory to also contribute to local ownership. This will also help to better understand which capacities and partners are needed.
18. To identify the most suitable L&A strategies to directly or indirectly influence the identified policy targets and other systemic issues, it is recommended to use the following set of questions (Box 1). Gradually, as part of a learning process, these questions may be further developed.

**Box 1: Questions to support informed decision-making on L&A strategies.**

Key questions on the context:

1. Does the country have strong / moderate / weak institutions & policies?
2. Are policies and laws adequately enforced, at sector and/or landscape level? (Y/N)
3. What is the state of civic space, varying from open to repressed?
4. Is there a sense of urgency to find solutions to certain problems? (Y/N)
5. Are there policy windows to influence public /private policies? (Y/N)
6. Are public/private decision-makers open to policy dialogue and collaboration? (Y/N)
7. Does the country have strong CSOs? (Y/N)
8. Do stakeholders have competing interests / conflicts or common interests / trust?
9. Do stakeholders see a value in collaborative actions? (Y/N)

Key questions on Solidaridad and CSO position, role and capacities:

10. Does Solidaridad have strong social capital (networks, expertise and reputation)? (Y/N)
11. Does Solidaridad have clear added value as compared to local CSO partners? (Y/N)
12. Does Solidaridad have good relations with key public and private decision-makers? (Y/N)
13. Is there good collaboration between Solidaridad and CSO partners? (Y/N)
14. Is there good understanding (e.g. based on field work) of solutions for (urgent) problems? (Y/N)
15. Is there good understanding of policy-processes and L&A skills? (Y/N)
16. Does the MSP give a voice to different stakeholders and is well governed? (Y/N)

19. It is always useful, especially if good knowledge is missing and additional diagnostics are needed, or if the external context shows rapid changes, to revisit and adjust a project's ToC approx. 6 months after implementation started and at least every 2 consecutive years. It is common for a policy and economic context to show (unexpected) changes; these changes and the consequences for the ToC and chosen L&A strategies should be documented.

**While M&E and learning has received much attention in the AfC program, and has generated useful data, there is need for strengthening M&E and learning in a number of ways. For example, working with policy stages is considered very useful to capture progress and allow aggregation of findings within the AfC program. However, some improvements are needed:**

- the framework should acknowledge that policy change processes can skip or reverse stages, policy change is rarely a linear process
- the last stage of policy implementation should be expanded to include sub-stages of implementing policies including law enforcement, with different levels of maturity
- add the possibility of monitoring 'small wins', which are small yet significant positive improvements that do not directly lead to more advanced policy stages, but do improve the potential for such changes.

**We found good internal learning and also learning between some regional projects, though little is documented. Learning at a global scale is weak.** There is a lot of exchange within and between teams, but lessons are commonly not documented. For instance, a lot of experience was built up in Bangladesh working on social issues in the garment sector, but none of this has been documented to allow for the project in Myanmar and Ethiopia to benefit from. 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. A positive exception are the lessons learned from developing investment proposals in PASOS Honduras and Nicaragua. Most Solidaridad staff admits that global learning is weak. This is possibly because the right learning questions have not been well defined, or because management level did not support this activity as a priority, so that many RECs do not see their interests being reflected. One could argue that there should have been a L&A Task Force as for many staff L&A activities were relatively new.

*Recommendations:*

20. There is need to improve the definition of the stages of policy change in order to make this policy change monitoring tool more effective, see for details on improvement above.
21. There is the need to better define systemic changes and how these will be monitored. To do so, a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators should be developed to capture outcomes, e.g. to capture landscape governance (e.g. such as the framework proposed by LandScale) or monitoring systemic changes or sector transformation (e.g. such as proposed by Aidenvironment). Defining targets in terms of the desirable state of systemic issues should form part of such monitoring efforts, and will be part of a pathways approach.
22. There is need to include at least one KPI on the following important aspects:
  - women's voice and / or underlying systemic issues
  - scaling in its different dimensions (by copying, crowding in, expansion to other landscapes, countries or regions)
  - business case development to generate evidence based on credible data.
23. Mechanisms for evidence-based learning should be enhanced. To do so, well-defined learning and research questions and M&E are important. This could start with a limited list of strategic learning questions to which selected RECs and projects contribute. This has been tried before. However, knowledge themes and learning questions were not followed up with concrete cases studies to generate content. We believe learning questions should be more strategic, with room for more specific learning questions that are relevant for differing regional contexts, but from which evidence can contribute to the larger 'strategic' question. In addition, learning cycles should be shorter, M&E less quantitative and less demanding, and lessons better documented.

24. As part of improving the M&E system, at least for a limited number of projects, in order to inform a learning strategy, it is recommended to include activity-based costing with complementary output level monitoring to assess the cost-efficiency of different L&A strategies.

**While a period of five years is too short to change public and private policy environments and contribute to sectors being transformed, in several cases the Solidaridad engagement has been of a much longer period, and there are some promising cases of large scale and sustained impact.** The PASOS project provides a good example of how to secure funding and make the landscape initiative less dependent upon future Solidaridad funding. The investment proposals were attractive to investors because PASOS has found a way to convincingly manage high biodiversity-valued landscapes through a credible and participatory approach. Like the PASOS landscape project, the Ganga landscape project in India is also based on a longer period of involvement, and there are promising developments of scaling up the approach to new sectors and a much larger landscape area.

*Recommendations:*

25. *Instead of working towards an exit strategy, there is a need for long-term commitments with a possible decline of the intensity of support over time, changing to one of lower intensity and limited resources. Also for landscape projects, there is a strong argument for Solidaridad to remain engaged with a number of selected landscapes to show the full potential of the integrated landscape approach, while co-funding by third parties would be an essential component.*
26. If the MSP is meant to last, it needs to be supported to develop approaches to become more independent, institutionally embedded and financially independent, e.g. by developing membership fees or service delivery that generates revenues for MSPs. This support may need to go beyond five years in duration, but the cost and intensity of support will likely decrease as the MSP has matured.

# Annex 1: Terms of Reference End Evaluation Advocacy for Change Programme 2016-2020 Solidaridad

## 1. Background

Solidaridad is an international network organization with over 40 offices across the globe. The interconnected network places a focus on decentralized responsibility and implementation by regional teams. Local knowledge, experience and vision are guiding principles. The network's connectedness is fostered by a global vision, strategy, programming, communication and internal quality-control systems. Each part of the network contributes to the whole.

The Solidaridad Network consists of eight regional expertise centres located in Asia, Central America, South America, West Africa, East and Central Africa, Southern Africa, Asia, North America, and Europe - each with their own specific expertise and focus. Solidaridad's programmes are developed and implemented by regional centres, each of which is locally registered and has a local legal structure.

Solidaridad sees sector transformation as the transition of a commodity sector in a specific regional setting towards more sustainable and inclusive production systems. Sustainable means that the sector is economically profitable, socially responsible and environmentally sound. Inclusive means that all participants, men and women, young and old, contribute to creating opportunities, equally share in the benefits of development, and participate in decision making. The nature of the inclusive sector transformation is largely determined by the structures of sectors at both regional and global levels. Solidaridad stimulates a number of innovations, both nationally (government regulation, industry bodies, civil society) and globally (voluntary standards, markets, trade agreements) to truly transform supply chains.

Solidaridad believes that the pathway to successful sector transformation consists of four strategic areas:

1. **Good Practices**, at farm, mine and factory level, where producers implement good agricultural, mining and industrial practices that optimize the social, economic and environmental performance;
2. **Robust Infrastructure**, with modernized scales of production and a dedicated service sector; where producers have improved access to services, finance, land and natural resources, knowledge and markets, creating vital rural communities. Impact Investment can bring interventions at scale.
3. **Landscape Innovation**, where solutions for sustainable landscape management are implemented at scale, creating Resilient landscapes based on avoided deforestation, smart and sustainable water and land use management, recuperation of degraded lands, spatial planning and ecological zoning for optimized use of landscape functions.
4. **Enabling Policy Environments**, where national and international public and corporate policies create an enabling environment for sustainable investment, production and trade. Supply chain alliances follow a variety of local, regional and international market developments, with corporate and public engagement creating co-funding in a more balanced supply chain; creating communities of change with the ultimate aim to create scale and speed in bringing sustainable economies to necessary levels; using new business models for the future.

In Solidaridad's view, working on the 4 result areas –Good Practices, Robust Infrastructure, Landscape Innovation, and Enabling Policy Environments– leads to sustainable sectors and landscapes and adds to the long-term objective of a sustainable and inclusive social, environmental and economic development.

For the period 2016-2020, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has granted Solidaridad two interlinked grants: 'Practice for Change' (PFC), is mainly covering result areas 1 (Good Practices) and 2 (Robust Infrastructure), and 'Advocacy for Change' (AfC), covering the result areas 3 (Landscape Innovation) and 4 (Enabling Policy Environment). Practice for Change will end in December 2022, Advocacy for Change will come to an end in December 2020. Given that the duration of Practice for Change is longer, an end evaluation for Practice for Change is scheduled for 2022. This Terms of Reference for and End Evaluation focuses on Advocacy for Change only.

Although this End Evaluation focuses mainly on AfC programme, it is key to note that the two programmes are closely interrelated and designed to strengthen each other.

### **1.1 Advocacy for Change 2016-2020**

Solidaridad's Advocacy for Change programme is a 32 million euro strategic partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2016-2020) in the framework of their Strategic Partnerships for Dialogue and Dissent (2016-2020), with the aim to improve the quality, coherence and inclusiveness of policies, so as to create an enabling policy environment for sustainable sector transformation. The objective of the Advocacy for Change strategic partnership is:

**To support the capacity development of southern civil society organisations (including producer and sector organisations) in lobbying and advocating for sustainable and inclusive commodity sectors and geographical landscapes as well as to convene and mobilise key stakeholders to contribute to systemic changes.**

Advocacy for Change is implemented in 26 countries. Please refer to annexes 1 and 2 for details about the countries, project portfolio, objectives and results.

In our Advocacy for Change programme, Solidaridad acknowledges that focusing exclusively on the improvement of producer practices in a given sector does not suffice to achieve genuine sustainability on a large scale. In order to get there, a holistic landscape approach and an enabling policy environment that is open to change are key additional ingredients. Gender Inclusivity and Landscape & Climate Innovation are cross cutting themes.

In our Advocacy for Change Programme, we aim to **strengthen the capacity** of stakeholders, by following an inclusive strategy of engaging marginalised stakeholders, and we are open and receptive to their diverse interests and concerns. We realize the importance of a common concern entry point to facilitate engagement of stakeholders at landscape level. Solidaridad may show the way in convening, advising, empowering and building networks, but we do not walk alone. Our partners are key and represent a wealth of diverse local and international civil society organisations partners, local public actors and embassies, sector- and branch organizations, major research partners. Private partners also play a critical role and are closely involved and contribute to the programme. In our Advocacy for Change programme, it is our explicit strategy to create and increase civic space, understood as civil society's ability to participate in, and contribute to dialogue, without hindrance. Solidaridad appears to be well positioned to deliver on this strategy. We -our local offices- are seen as local entities and trusted partners. Our main entry point is economic development, providing the common concern for all stakeholders, and paving the

way for social and ecological issues. We aim to create consensus and to de-escalate sensitivities. We aim to improve the quality and coherence of policy in a multistakeholder context. By jointly reviewing public and private sector policies and creating new, inclusive ones, we strengthen both civil society and public and private decision-makers, and we build bridges where needed.

The key lobby and advocacy interventions that Solidaridad identified in its TOC are the following:

1. **Lobby, direct advice and support:** where Solidaridad engages directly with decision-makers providing knowledge and expertise as well as practical tools to improve policy making and enforcement;
2. **Mobilise & convene multi-stakeholder partnerships and dialogue,** where Solidaridad establishes new forms of multi-stakeholder dialogue and convenes relevant stakeholders, to advocate for sustainable and inclusive commodity sectors and geographical landscapes. This includes mobilization and engagement of the private sector to jointly influence corporate and public policies.
3. **Capacity enhancement:** where Solidaridad empowers, supports and mobilizes local civil society to engage in, participate in and contribute to dialogue and policy change processes. This capacity enhancement includes Solidaridad's internal capacity to lobby and advocate for sustainable and inclusive commodity sectors and geographical landscapes.

## 1.2 Mid Term Review

Over the course of 2018, Solidaridad commissioned an external Mid Term Review of Solidaridad's Advocacy for Change and Practice for Change programmes over the period January 2016-December 2017. This Mid Term Review was an opportunity for Solidaridad to reflect on how we work, to identify corrective actions to achieve maximum results by 2020, and to inform our strategic thinking post 2020. The Review was carried out by a consortium of KIT and MDF Consultancy, and included desk study, stakeholder interviews, survey and 6 field case studies. The participatory approach used in the field case studies have been received very positively by both Solidaridad RECs, as well as partners and stakeholders, as it enhanced strategic consultation and strengthened partnerships. The executive summary of the Mid Term Review report with key findings and recommendations is attached as an annex, as well as Solidaridad's management response.

The recommendations of the Mid Term Review are being addressed since and the ToC has been revised:

- Result Area 3 (Landscape Innovation) has been integrated in the other Result Areas, in response to the recommendation that Landscape Innovation is an approach, rather than a result in itself
- The pathway towards an Enabling Policy Environment has been much simplified. Our lobby and advocacy activities are now better reflected, including the mobilisation of the private sector to invest in sustainable supply chains, our direct lobby, advocacy and advisory activities for public, private, voluntary and mandatory frameworks, as well as the empowerment of civil society to join in dialogue and advocate and lobby for sustainable frameworks.
- We included the role of pilots as we see that evidence-based advocacy and lobby and joint testing with partners and decision makers is the most effective way to convince decision-makers.

## 1.3 AfC Management

AfC started in January 2016 with a period of inception during which projects were identified and designed and partnerships were created. As per January 2019, the portfolio of projects consists of 50 projects<sup>7</sup>. All projects are managed by one of the Solidaridad Regional Expertise Centres (RECs), together with local private and civil society partners, in 26 countries. The purpose and the Theories of Change (ToC) are described in the documents attached (See Annex 1).

Solidaridad is the grant recipient and is the contract holder with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Considering the size, scope and cross-regional nature of the AfC and PfC grants, the responsibility for the management of the funding has been delegated to a dedicated Programme Management Team, which comprises a range of Solidaridad staff members from across different Solidaridad entities with expertise on Solidaridad's Vision and Strategy, Programme Cycle Management, Grant Management, Financial Management and Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning. The Programme Management Team (PMT) is the management unit of both AfC and PfC funds and is responsible for:

- **Planning, monitoring and reporting** -the organisation of the entire planning, monitoring and reporting cycle, including the setup and implementation of a fund allocation mechanism, progress monitoring, financial management, development of donor plans and reports, the organization of a Mid Term Review and Final Evaluation;
- **Contract preparation** -the preparation of project contracts and monitoring execution;
- **Quality assurance** -the implementation of the quality standards for Programme Management, Monitoring and Evaluation and Financial management of the Solidaridad Network in the above.
- **Coordination** -acting as the first contact point for the RECs for any matter related to the procedures, administration and implementation of the funds.

## 2. Purpose of the evaluation

Solidaridad seeks to learn which elements of its **key lobby and advocacy interventions** it should continue, improve, or discontinue and what new elements or interventions it should commence in the period after 2020.

This Evaluation therefore serves internal learning purposes, so as to strengthen future programming, as well as accountability purposes (i.e. the requirement to submit an evaluation report to our donor the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

1. **Learning:** Outline the elements of the key lobby and advocacy interventions that Solidaridad should continue, improve, or discontinue and what new elements or interventions it should commence in the period after 2020.
2. **Accountability:** Document the expected and unexpected, positive and negative, outcomes and lessons learned of the key lobby and advocacy interventions as implemented in the AfC programme in general, and the project portfolio in particular, in the period 2016 -2019/20.

### 2.1 Audience

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<sup>7</sup> 7 Landscape Projects; 13 Global Sector Policy Influencing projects; 8 Continental / Regional sector policy influencing projects, 22 national policy influencing projects.

Primary audience of this Evaluation is Solidaridad. Recommendations will support Solidaridad, and Solidaridad's Regional Expertise Centers in its 2021-2025 planning and programming.

The full Report will be made available to the donor, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for accountability purposes.

The Executive Summary of the Evaluation report, along with a Management Response signed by Solidaridad will be made publicly available on the Solidaridad public website.

### 3. Subject and focus of the evaluation

The End Evaluation applies to the **Advocacy for Change** programme of Solidaridad, and its portfolio of projects and activities funded under this programme.

Solidaridad is particularly interested in the following themes:

1. The key lobby and advocacy interventions undertaken in the AfC programme by Solidaridad and partners, their outcomes and their impacts
2. Solidaridad's external and internal efforts to enhance local civil society's capacity to effectively participate in lobby and advocacy
3. Solidaridad's own role and its legitimacy to act as local representative in lobby and advocacy initiatives
4. The extent to which Solidaridad has succeeded in enhancing civic space and inclusive dialogue
5. The extent to which the strategies undertaken in the AfC programme enforce our efforts in Good Practices and Robust Infrastructure strategies (see Background) and vice versa

The Consultant(s) is expected to review the programme following the OECD/DAC criteria and quality guidance provided by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for I. Validity; II. Reliability; III. Effectiveness; IV. Efficiency; V. Usability.

### 4. Evaluation Questions

The Consultant is expected to answer the following main evaluation questions and related sub evaluation questions:

#### Main evaluation questions:

1. To what extent have the key lobby and advocacy interventions, as reflected in the Theory of Change of the AfC programme (see Annex 2), been effective in lobbying and advocating for sustainable and inclusive commodity sectors and geographical landscapes?
2. To what extent have the underlying assumptions with regard to the key lobby and advocacy interventions proved to be correct?

#### **Sub evaluation questions to be answered for each of the 3 key lobby and advocacy interventions<sup>8</sup>:**

##### Relevance

3. To what extent has each of the key lobby and advocacy interventions been **relevant** to address the challenges identified in the projects where each intervention was implemented?

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<sup>8</sup> These sub questions are expected to be answered for the following key advocacy interventions: 1) external capacity enhancement and internal capacity enhancement, 2) direct advocacy, and 3) multi-stakeholder partnerships & dialogue.

4. To what extent has Solidaridad had the **legitimacy** to carry out each of the key lobby and advocacy interventions?
  - a. How has the legitimacy of each of the key lobby and advocacy interventions of Solidaridad been perceived by stakeholders? To what extent do they consider Solidaridad to have an added value in implementing each of the key lobby and advocacy interventions (e.g. in terms of expertise, effectiveness, collaboration power and influence, inclusiveness, or credibility)?
  - b. To what extent have local ownership and local legitimacy been ensured within each of the key lobby and advocacy interventions? What is needed to enhance the legitimacy of each of the key lobby and advocacy interventions further?

#### Effectiveness and Impact

5. What have been the effective and less effective **core elements**<sup>9</sup> of each of the key lobby and advocacy interventions? Solidaridad is specifically interested in effective and less effective innovative elements of each of the key lobby and advocacy interventions.
6. To what extent did each of the key lobby and advocacy interventions contribute to expected, unexpected, positive and/or negative **outcomes and impact** observed in the AfC programme?
7. On which **topics and themes** has each of the key lobby and advocacy interventions been particularly effective?
8. To what extent has each of the key lobby and advocacy interventions enhanced **civic space**, especially regarding the inclusion, representation and voice of marginalized groups (e.g. improved inclusion and participation of women, smallholders or other civic actors in policy dialogue/development, or increased voice of civil actors to demand policy implementation)?
9. To what extent has **cooperation in partnerships** (between Solidaridad and local, regional and international public and private partners, including corporate actors, civil society partners, research institutes, national and local governments as well as the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and its Royal Dutch Embassies) contributed to the effectiveness of each of the key lobby and advocacy interventions?

#### Efficiency

10. To what extent has each of the key lobby and advocacy interventions been implemented in an **efficient** way? Could the same results have been achieved with less investment?

#### Sustainability

11. To what extent has each of the key lobby and advocacy interventions contributed to an environment where outcomes are continued, scaled, and/or locally owned?

#### **Sub evaluation questions related to a comparison between the 3 key lobby and advocacy interventions:**

12. Which of the identified key lobby and advocacy interventions has been most effective?
13. Which of the identified key lobby and advocacy interventions has been most efficient / cost-effective? The evaluation is expected to make a comparison of the estimated resources invested in each of the key lobby and advocacy interventions (in terms of money, staff time and/or effort) in relation to the comparison of the effectiveness of each of the key lobby and advocacy interventions.

#### **Sub evaluation questions related to synergy with Solidaridad's Practice for Change programme interventions**

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<sup>9</sup> With core elements we mean the essential functions, principles and activities that define the intervention.

14. To what extent is the assumption correct that key lobby and advocacy interventions are more effective when there is a clear synergy effect with Good Practices and/or Robust Infrastructure interventions in the Practice for Change programme?

## 5. Proposed methodology and guiding principles

### 5.1. Proposed methodology

To fulfil the objectives of this evaluation, **both quantitative and qualitative assessment** methods should be employed.

**Desk Study:** We expect the Consultant(s) to carry out a desk study to analyse the key lobby and advocacy interventions applied in the various projects within the Advocacy for Change programme. We expect the Consultant(s) to develop a typology of the projects that can also support the selection of case studies. The primary sources for the desk study include reports and plans prepared by Solidaridad, data collected by Solidaridad and other studies, listed in Annex 7.

**Literature study:** Literature study should provide further knowledge about ‘proven’ effective intervention strategies for Policy Influencing, as well as intervention strategies to deal with shrinking civic space.

For the **efficiency** analysis (evaluation questions 10 and 13), we recommend the Consultant to follow qualitative stakeholder efficiency ratings, such as suggested by Efficiency Lab and the MADM<sup>10</sup> approach, or similar approaches.

**Case Studies:** We expect the Consultant(s) to identify a feasible number of case studies in consultation with Solidaridad. The case studies allow for a deeper understanding of relevance, effectiveness and impact, efficiency and sustainability of our key lobby and advocacy interventions. The case studies will also allow for practical recommendations to improve our key lobby and advocacy interventions.

Within the case studies, a **participatory approach** is required in which external stakeholders and (internal) Solidaridad staff members are interviewed to collect data and co-analyse findings and make recommendations. We expect the Consultant(s) to do this in a way that is tactful and sensitive in dealing with others. Outcome harvesting and storytelling techniques are encouraged to review the Advocacy for Change projects and related lobby and advocacy processes for Enabling Policy Environments and gender inclusion. In data collection, use triangulation and sufficient **independent sources**, and invite sufficient external stakeholders to assure sufficient objectivity. **Alternative Pathways to change** should be explored to evaluate the results of our Advocacy initiatives.

We invite the Consultant to propose a case study selection methodology that is sufficiently representative for our strategy, and allows for sufficient (regional) spread in our portfolio.

Further, the Evaluation Methodology:

- must be gender responsive and allow for **gender inclusive analysis**<sup>11</sup>.
- should describe well how synergy between various interventions inside and outside AfC (see evaluation question 11) will be evaluated.
- should include a section on the **limitations** of the proposed methodology

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<sup>10</sup> see for instance <https://thespindle.org/2019/06/06/how-efficient-are-your-lobby-and-advocacy-interventions/>

<sup>11</sup> see for instance <https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/about-iom/evaluation/iom-gender-and-evaluation-guidance-2018.pdf>

- should also consider how to **protect the rights of individual data**-subjects and their personal information as stated under GDPR.

## 5.2 Guiding principles

Solidaridad considers the following standards and guiding principles important:

- o *Utility*: the evaluation serves the **practical information** needs of the intended usage and users. Intended users include Solidaridad and programme managers. Intended use includes future strategic planning;
- o *Accuracy*: the evaluation reveals accurate information, that is founded with evidence or **supportive argumentation and triangulation**, with clear reference to sources or analyses;
- o *Feasibility*: the evaluation is planned and carried out in a **realistic and frugal** manner; Risks for delay and how to minimise them are identified.
- o *Propriety*: the evaluation is carried out legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the review as well as those affected by the results. This includes the **protection of the rights** and confidentiality of personal information of persons interviewed. The proposed methodology requires full compliance with the GDPR. Due to GDPR-requirements, data required in the research should not be traceable to individuals. This can either be done through full anonymization or through aggregation of data. If it is required for identifiable information to be made public due to the nature of the research, informed written consent is required and the rights of data-subjects under GDPR are still in place.

## 6. Deliverables

The Consultant(s) will develop:

1. an **Inception Report**, which will be approved by Solidaridad, advised by its External Reference Group. The inception report will form the basis for the ultimate agreement between parties for how the Evaluation is to be conducted. The Inception Report shall include:
  - o Final purpose, objective, scope and subject of the evaluation;
  - o An evaluation matrix, specifying the evaluation criteria, and indicators or benchmarks against which the criteria will be assessed in order to answer the research questions in a valid and reliable manner;
  - o Data collection methodology, the criteria on which these methodologies are selected, criteria for case studies selection and a provisional list of case studies and stakeholders to be interviewed (in general and per case study);
  - o Information collection, analysis and reporting;
  - o List of sources, and criteria against which these are selected;
  - o Any limitations of the chosen methodology;
  - o Detailed Work plan and time schedule, including a plan to (co-)organize the field visits;
  - o Division of work between (the team of) consultants and Solidaridad;
  - o Detailed budget;
  - o Risk and Mitigation strategy.
2. **Draft interview guides** and survey questions for each of the stakeholder groups
3. a concise **draft** Evaluation report (<50 pages, excluding Annexes):
  - o In English;
  - o Draft conclusions and recommendations, based on solid and verifiable facts and/or argumentation;

- Draft recommendations are formulated in a constructive manner that is providing guidance for future orientation and implementation of Solidaridad's key lobby and advocacy interventions;
4. A concise **final Evaluation Report** (<50 pages, excluding Annexes), in which the feedback of Solidaridad and the External Reference Group has been processed.
- The Final report should include the following chapters:
- a. Title page
  - b. Table of contents
  - c. Executive Summary (<5 pages, preferably 1 page for findings and 1-2 pages for recommendations)
  - d. Introduction to the programme under review, including its Theory of Change
  - e. Evaluation methodology
  - f. Findings, conclusions and recommendations for each of the key lobby and advocacy interventions
  - g. Overall conclusions
  - h. Overall recommendations
  - i. Glossary of Acronyms

The Consultant(s) is expected to provide actionable, specific and practical recommendations on how Solidaridad and its partners can use the learnings to strengthen future work.

## **7. Team, organization and coordination**

The contact person and responsible for the coordination and management of the Evaluation process is the Evaluation Manager: Irene de Bruin ([irene.debruin@solidaridadnetwork.org](mailto:irene.debruin@solidaridadnetwork.org))

The Evaluation Manager is supported by an internal team of PMEL experts.

The Evaluation will be advised by an External Reference Group (ERG), consisting of 3 independent advisors. The role of ERG is to guide quality by providing feedback and advice on the final Terms of Reference, the selection of the Consultant(s), the draft Inception Report, and approval of the draft Evaluation Report.

The assignment can be fulfilled by a team of international and local consultants. The assignment should be led by **one** lead Consultant. (S)he is the main contact person for Solidaridad. (S)he will be responsible for the overall assignment, and will make the necessary internal arrangements to manage his/her team. One or more junior positions could be accepted, for instance for collection and organization of information.

## **8. Requirements of the Consultant(s)**

### **8.1 Mandatory requirements**

- Proven track record in undertaking complex, multi country evaluations;
- Proven track record in participatory approaches;
- Demonstrated experience with the use of quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analyses;
- Demonstrated experience in evaluating (inter)national lobby and advocacy processes;

- Demonstrated expertise in gender and gender assessments;
- Demonstrated knowledge of Multi-stakeholder dialogue and partnerships;
- Demonstrated experience with sector development and a good understanding of its various stakeholders, their roles and positions

## **8.2 Preferred skills**

- Preference is given to a gender-balanced team of consultants with various expertise and access to a network of consultants in the various regions Solidaridad is active in (i.e. Central America, Southern America, West, East and Southern Africa and Southeast Asia).
- Flexibility and openness to work collaboratively with Solidaridad, the Evaluation Manager, the project teams and partners, and the External Reference Group in a co-creative evaluation process;
- Excellent intercultural and interpersonal communication skills, including coordination, facilitation and presentation;
- Fluent in English, both spoken and written. Command of Spanish is an advantage.

## Annex 2: Detailed methodology

### 1. Conceptual framework

The overall objective of Solidaridad during the period of this evaluation, as illustrated by its theory of change, is to contribute to transformation of sectors (and landscapes), more specifically the transition of a commodity sector in a specific regional setting towards more (social, environmental, economic) sustainable and inclusive production systems. There are two programmes contributing to this objective:

1. 'Practice for Change' (PfC) covers result areas 1 (Good Practices) and 2 (Robust Infrastructure), to contribute to more sustainable and inclusive sectors, viable businesses and resilient ecosystems;
2. 'Advocacy for Change' (AfC) covers result areas 3 (Landscape Innovation) and 4 (Enabling Policy Environment), to contribute to landscapes where public social and environmental functions and goods are safeguarded.

Within this overall programme, the objective of AfC, being the object of this evaluation, is to support the capacity development of southern CSOs in lobbying and advocating for sustainable and inclusive sectors and landscapes and to convene and mobilise key stakeholders to contribute to systemic changes.

The scope on systemic changes can be understood by the fact that impact is undermined by system failures, i.e. the root causes of poverty and failing markets, as well as the root causes for non-sustainability and non-inclusiveness. Thus, in order to achieve sector transformation (of a commodity sector in a specific regional setting towards more sustainable and inclusive production systems) and to have impact at scale (national, regional, global level) and in time (long-term, sustained impact), there is need to address the underlying systemic drivers.

In line with the above, sector transformation can be understood as a sector that has positive scores on viable businesses, social inclusion, resilient ecosystems and social and environmental sustainability, while also systemic changes have been achieved so that positive impacts will sustain and reach scale. Systemic changes (at outcomes level) are changes in the underlying factors or root causes that hamper sectors of being environmentally and socially sustainable, inclusive, and commercially viable. Systemic changes are required in order to achieve transformation of a commodity sector (including the landscape/s in which these operate).

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 is by supporting the capacity development of southern CSOs in lobbying and advocating (for systemic changes). Three different lobby and advocacy strategies were defined:

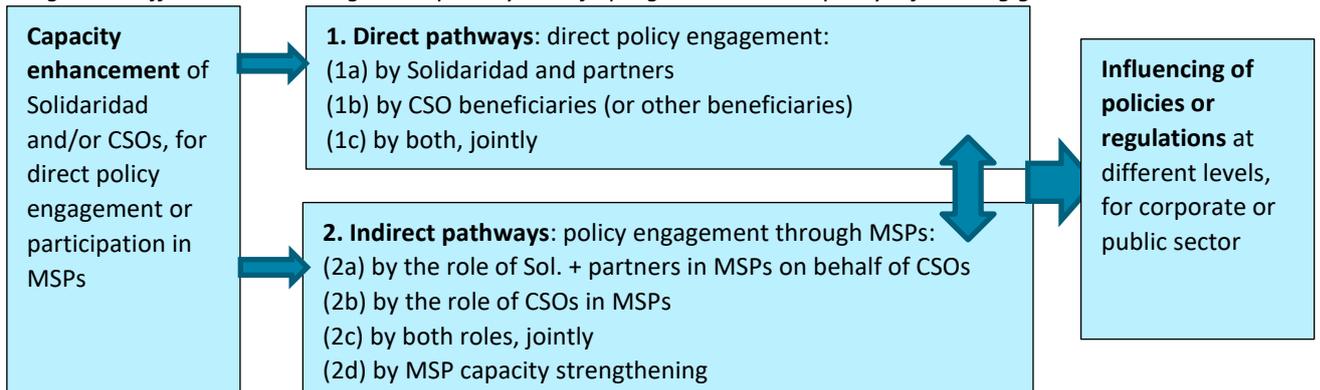
1. *Lobby, direct advice and support*, by directly providing knowledge, advice and practical tools to public and private decision makers to improve policy making and enforcement;
2. *Mobilise & convene multi-stakeholder partnerships and dialogue*, by establishing multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) and 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.

At the operational level, for each lobby and advocacy (L&A) strategy, concrete activities are undertaken by the RECs, who have a certain level of freedom to select the best strategy and activities to implement these, depending upon the local context.

Upon closer reflection with Solidaridad, there are interrelations between the three L&A strategies, which leads to an adjustment of the different L&A strategies (see Figure 1). Capacity enhancement of

stakeholders and/or CSOs (strategy 3) is generally done in parallel with direct policy engagement (strategy 1) as well as MSPs and dialogue (strategy 2), both for influencing policies. This interrelation between the 3 L&A strategies leads to 2 sets of pathways. While the first pathway can be seen as a direct pathway (by targeting public and corporate decision makers directly) the second pathway can be seen as indirect (as MSPs first may need strengthening, and should then address public or corporate decision-makers to change policies). For both pathways there is the possibility of Solidaridad playing a role (representing CSOs) and/ or for CSOs being involved. The two strategies can also complement each other, e.g. Solidaridad being involved in direct policy influencing and informing CSOs on issues to raise within MSPs.

Figure 1: Different L&A strategies adopted by the AfC programme and its policy influencing goals



The above logic can be integrated in conceptual thinking by Aidenvironment and others on sector transformation and systemic changes. As a useful organizing framework we used the 3 levels of systems change from the PPP lab (Figure 2). This helps to organize the systemic changes that we may expect in the AfC programme, and leads to the following conceptual framework (Figure 3) as a basis for this evaluation. Basically, it is a high level theory of change for the AfP programme.

Figure 2: Three levels and six conditions of systems change (Ref)

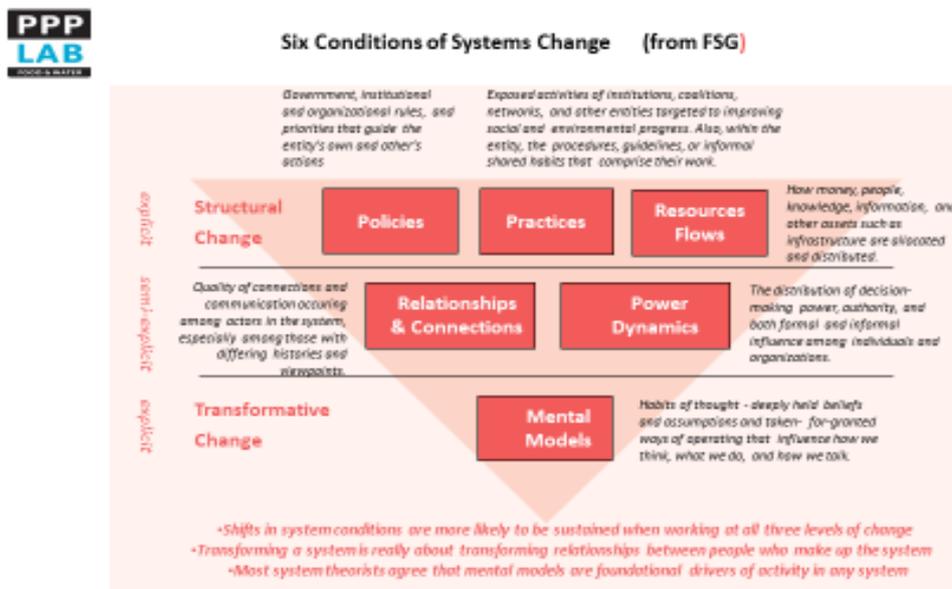
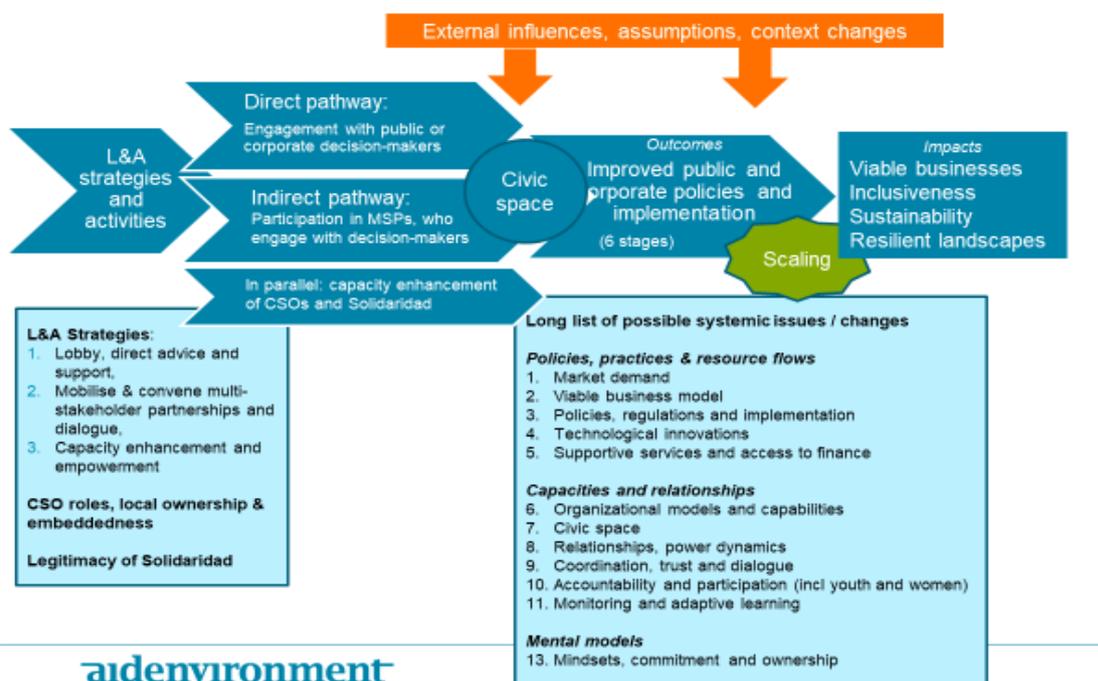


Figure 3: Conceptual framework / theory of change AfC programme including systemic changes



In this conceptual framework, we highlight the following elements.

First, within the framework (pathway of change) we can differentiate three main parts:

1. Strategy: the selection of L&A strategies within the given socio-political context
2. Outcomes: the contribution by L&A strategies to policy changes and other systemic changes
3. Impact: the (contribution by) policy changes to viable businesses, inclusiveness, social and environmental sustainability, and resilient landscapes.

Sector transformation is the totality of systemic changes (outcomes) and proven positive impacts of these systemic changes (see explanation previous page).

Second, Solidaridad broke down the pathway towards policy change into 6 stages, which are also used to measure progress towards policy change as part of the M&E system (in a qualitative way). These stages constitute a useful specification of the progress towards the final outcome of policy change and its implementation, as follows:

7. Agenda setting: (public or private) decision makers are open or willing to look into change;
8. Recommendations (position papers, proposals for reviews) are brought into dialogue;
9. Consensus is reached within the MSP/dialogue;
10. Mechanism, norm, policy, law or article proposal is reformulated after exchanges of the MSP/dialogue members and submitted to the public or private decision maker(s)
11. Adoption of new or adjusted mechanisms, norms, policies, laws are passed successfully
12. Implementation or enforcement of new mechanism, norm, law, policy, articles.

Third, the AfC projects have not been classified according to the 3 L&A strategies, but rather by the following 2 categories and sub-categories for geographical scope:

- Enabling policy environment activities:
  - Global level, per commodity
  - Regional level, per commodity
  - National level, per commodity and country

- Landscape initiatives, including not only enabling activities but also the interventions in result areas 1 (Good Practices) and 2 (Robust Infrastructure), including the PfC programme.

Fourth, the L&A programme aims to achieve empowerment and capacity enhancement of its partners, CSO beneficiaries and MSPs. Empowerment is defined as the ability to regain agency over decision making processes; Solidaridad empowers vulnerable groups, and/or their CSO representation. Instead of the concepts we rather use the term capabilities, which is defined as the collective ability of a group or a system to do something either inside or outside the system. Each capability depends on a series of skills or abilities (competences) by individuals. Fundamental to all are inputs like human, material and financial resources, technology, information and so on. Depending on the level of development and successful integration, capabilities contribute to the overall capacity or ability of an organization or system to create value for others. One single capability is not sufficient to create capacity. All are needed and are strongly interrelated.

Related to the aspect of capacity building and central in the theory of change of Solidaridad is the concept of **civic space**, understood as civil society's ability to participate in, and contribute to dialogue, without hindrance. In Figure 2 it has been highlighted as one of the systemic changes. The dialogue should be inclusive (inclusive dialogue), meaning that interests and voices of workers, vulnerable groups and stakeholders are represented and heard in decision making. The AfC program aims to create and increase civic space. It will be useful to explore the L&A strategies, understand the current degree of civic space and to what extent this is enabling or obstructing, and the potential for Solidaridad in creating or increasing civic space. To do so, we will collaborate with Avance Impact, which has an assignment on conceptualizing civic space for Solidaridad.

On the aspect of impact, the AfC programme aims to contribute to the following impact categories:

1. Sustainable and Inclusive Sectors: viable businesses, social inclusion, resilient ecosystems
2. Sustainable landscapes: public social and environmental functions and goods in a landscape are safeguarded

Critical in the conceptual model and for this evaluation will be to assess whether the changes in policies and systemic issues have the potential to contribute to positive impacts on the above impact categories.

## 2. Structuring lobby and advocacy strategies

Of the 30 AfC projects, 23 are enabling policy environment (EPE) projects, with a focus on lobby and advocacy activities, and 7 are landscape innovation (LI) projects, with a more holistic approach towards landscape management. The strategies vary for these two categories of projects.

### Enabling policy lobby and advocacy projects

Based on our conceptual models (Figures 1 and 2) the following two L&A pathways were designed that served as a basis for this evaluation. The evaluation focused on outcome levels, but also tracked back the specific activities that have been most valuable in contributing to a certain outcome. Critical is the level of capabilities. We differentiate capabilities for individual organisations, i.e. Solidaridad, project partners, CSOs and possibly private and public sector actors; and capabilities for MSPs. We focus on capabilities that have been addressed by Solidaridad but also added some new ones considered as needed for sector transformation purposes. We also included reference to improved knowledge and access to resources, as specifications of capabilities.

### Pathway for L&A strategy 1: ‘Direct engagement’, (1a) through Solidaridad or (1b) through CSOs, (1c) by both, jointly

Interventions	Immediate outcomes	Final outcomes	Impacts
Direct engagement with policy and corporate decision-makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating improved knowledge</li> <li>• Creating Improved capacities and willingness to change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy changes from adoption to implementation</li> <li>• Systemic changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viable businesses</li> <li>• Social inclusion</li> <li>• Resilient ecosystems</li> <li>• Social and envir. sustainability</li> </ul>
<b>Required capabilities of CSO beneficiaries and Solidaridad + partners that might need strengthening</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improved knowledge, of specific and relevant themes that require policy change, and their root causes and/or systemic causes</li> <li>2. Different types of capacities, classified as:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Capacity to analyse, monitor, learn, more specifically:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse policies, analyse the policy process &amp; agenda, define policy windows, set policy targets, define policy recommendations, translate solutions into policy and legal texts</li> <li>• Monitor policy implementation and law enforcement</li> <li>• Learn from L&amp;A work and interventions, become more effective in L&amp;A</li> </ul> </li> <li>2.2 Capacity to meaningfully participate in dialogue, more specifically:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collaborate and form coalitions (Solidaridad, CSOs, other stakeholders)</li> <li>• be accountable to vulnerable groups being represented (in view of legitimacy)</li> </ul> </li> <li>2.3 Capacity to plan and execute, more specifically:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity to engage with decision-makers</li> <li>• engage in dialogue with decision-makers, communication skills</li> <li>• influence the policy agenda</li> <li>• lobby for adoption of policy recommendations</li> </ul> </li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Financial resources needed to influence policies and decision-makers</li> </ol>		

**Pathway for L&A strategy 2: ‘Multi-stakeholder dialogue’, (2a) through participation by Solidaridad or (2b) through participation by CSOs, (2c) by both, jointly, (2d) by strengthening MSPs**

Interventionss	Immediate outcomes	Final outcomes	Impacts
Convene and participate in MSPs for dialogue and advocate for sector transformation, sustainable landscapes and better policies	<p><i>MSP strengthening:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved internal knowledge</li> <li>Improved capacities for internal governance</li> </ul> <p><i>MSP policy influencing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MSPs create awareness</li> <li>MSPs influence policy agenda of decision-makers</li> </ul>	<p><i>MSP strengthening:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MSPs adopt changes to their own strategy and way of working</li> </ul> <p><i>MSP policy influencing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy changes from adoption to implementation</li> <li>Systemic changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Viable businesses</li> <li>Social inclusion</li> <li>Resilient ecosystems</li> <li>Social and envir. sustainability</li> </ul>
<b>Required capabilities of MSPs (organisation as a whole and its members) that might need strengthening</b>	<p><i>Capabilities of MSP participants</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved knowledge, of specific and relevant themes that require policy change, and their root causes and/or systemic causes (new)</li> <li>Capacity to meaningfully participate in dialogue (Sol), more specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity to participate, collaborate with MSP participants and engage in dialogue</li> <li>Capacity to voice one’s interests and use evidence to support one’s position</li> </ul> </li> <li>Resources to participate in MSPs</li> </ol> <p><i>MSP capabilities</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity to analyse, monitor, learn, more specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyse policies, analyse the policy process &amp; agenda, define policy windows, set policy targets, define policy recommendations, translate solutions into policy and legal texts</li> <li>Monitor policy implementation and law enforcement</li> <li>Learn from L&amp;A work and interventions, become more effective in L&amp;A</li> </ul> </li> <li>Capacity to meaningfully participate in dialogue within the MSP, more specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity to assure relevant stakeholders are represented and their voices are heard (including vulnerable people due to negative impacts of commodity production system)</li> <li>Clarity in roles &amp; responsibilities between members, management, etc.</li> <li>Capacity to meet on a regular basis and have a quality dialogue</li> <li>Capacity to coordinate and join efforts and agree on a joint vision/strategy</li> <li>Capacity to implement strategy / follow-through</li> <li>Leadership and Secretariat skills and capacities</li> </ul> </li> <li>Capacity to plan and execute, more specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity to engage with decision-makers</li> <li>engage in dialogue with decision-makers, communication skills</li> <li>influence the policy agenda</li> <li>lobby for adoption of policy recommendations</li> </ul> </li> <li>Financial resources needed to sustain the MSP and influence policies and decision-makers</li> </ol>		

**External factors for pathways 1 and 2**

External factors to realise immediate outcomes	External factors to realise final outcomes and impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decision makers are open to new knowledge</li> <li>Space for civil society to have dialogue</li> <li>Space for civil society to form coalitions and/or participate in MSPs</li> <li>Space for MSPs to have a role</li> <li>Solidaridad’s role is seen as legitimate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies are functional, i.e. politics and power relations do not overrule policy implementation</li> <li>Decision makers are willing to enforce policy and have capacity / resources to do so</li> <li>New elections or regime changes do not disrupt policies</li> <li>Adherence to international frameworks/conventions which correspond to policy objective</li> </ul>

### **Landscape innovation projects**

The landscape projects have a landscape management aspect as a primary goal, e.g. water scarcity, deforestation, land degradation, etc. The approach is to pilot test landscape management innovations, and bring this evidence into multi-stakeholder dialogue on sustainable practices and uptake thereof, and contribute to the formulation of landscape management frameworks. Thus, for landscape projects the MSPs are landscape management oriented, thus may need to deal with multiple sectors, including the interactions or competition between these sectors. Of the 7 landscape projects within the AfC programme, 4 include climate innovation pilots. The landscape innovation projects focus lies not with clarifying rights and responsibilities, but rather a pragmatic approach of capacity building which depends upon the country context regarding the quality of laws and policies and the civic space available.

Thus, the above two L&A pathways are relevant, but in a slightly different context. Whereas enabling policy environment projects have 'external' linkages with GP or RI result areas, landscape projects have direct linkages with the GP and RI result areas. This makes the landscape projects especially interesting for this evaluation, as the linkages between the 4 result areas are more direct.

The following challenges were highlighted to further develop the landscape approach:<sup>12</sup>

- Defining what we mean by landscape level resilience (scale and expected type of impact)
- Developing a better understanding and structured approach to the functions of a landscape level MSP
- Developing a tool to make climate change adaptation measurable over time.

The evaluation approach for landscape projects thus included:

- Evaluation of L&A approach, using pathways 1 and 2 outlined above, with a focus on the landscape level MSPs
- Evaluation of GP and RI activities integrated or relevant for the landscape project, and how these have informed the L&A approach
- Evaluation of the synergy between GP, RI and L&A activities and how these have helped realise the landscape level goal.

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<sup>12</sup> AfC Workplan 2019

### 3. Evaluation questions

From the above conceptual framework and the two L&A strategies / pathways as key organizing principle of this evaluation, we come to a set of evaluation questions that will guide our evaluation.

The overarching evaluation question can be formulated as:

*How have L&A activities, within specific strategies or pathways, contributed to changes in capabilities, policies and specific systemic issues, with positive impacts (in terms of viable businesses, Inclusiveness, Sustainability or Resilient landscapes).*

The break-down of this overarching question is as follows.

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

1. Which L&A strategy has the best potential to influence policies and bring about desirable changes in which political-economy context?
  - a. How have L&A strategies been defined or selected? What contextual factors influence the effectiveness of L&A strategies? (anticipated and retrospectively)
  - b. Which combination of L&A strategies has been used, what has been the sequence, synergy/complementarity or trade-offs? What lessons can be learned in combining L&A strategies?
  - c. At what geographical level or combination of levels have the L&A strategies been operational? (levels: local, national, regional, global, landscape)? What added value / challenges exist to be active at different levels?
  - d. Which contextual factors determine the selection of EPE or LI interventions (AfC) and/or GP&RI (including PfC) interventions – or within one landscape?
2. Which capabilities are required for the L&A strategies to be successful, and which of these capabilities have been strengthened (within Solidaridad + partners, CSO beneficiaries and MSPs)?
3. How effective have been the efforts to build internal capacity of the RECs on the integration of the innovation themes Gender Inclusivity, Sustainable Landscape Innovation, and Climate Innovation?
4. Which activities (implemented by RECs as part of L&A projects) have been most effective to build desirable capabilities of CSOs (as beneficiaries and partners)?
5. What is the efficiency of each strategy?
6. Which activities are most successful in ensuring the voices of smallholders, landless, marginalised producers, women and youth were heard in the L&A strategies?
7. What are successful follow-up strategies and who carried them out (or disengagement in case of low potential) for Solidaridad's MSP and public influencing engagement?

#### **Outcome: On the effectiveness of L&A strategies to influence (public and private) policies**

8. Which policy issues have been targeted, and how are these related to systemic issues?
9. How effective has the L&A strategy been to influence (public and private) policies?
  - a. Effectiveness in terms of targeted change agent (public or private decision maker)
  - b. Effectiveness in terms of targeted policy issues
  - c. Effectiveness in terms of progress along the stages of policy influencing
  - d. Effectiveness in terms of type and level of policy influence
10. What have been constraints / dynamics that limited / delayed effectiveness of L&A strategies and what has been or should have been the appropriate response to overcome these constraints?
11. What have been factors or opportunities that favoured effectiveness of L&A strategies and what has been or should have been the appropriate response to overcome these constraints?
12. What is the time it takes to move from policy influencing stage 1 to 6? Which capabilities or contextual factors influence this?
13. What are general factors for each of the L&A strategies to be successful, for instance link to GP and RI interventions for evidence of successful models, local ownership, legitimacy, partnerships.

**Impact: On the relation between policy changes and sector transformation**

14. What is the contribution of targeted or realised policy changes to sector transformation?
  - a. Which systemic drivers are being addressed by the policy changes?
  - b. What is the scale and depth of the (expected or realized) systemic changes and impacts as a result of the policy implementation?
  - c. Which are systemic drivers that appear to be missing, i.e. show significant weaknesses?
15. What is the evidence for scaling (by copying, crowding in, expansion to other landscapes, countries or regions)? What might be the evidence of adoption of the realized policy changes or changes in systemic drivers at other geographical localities (e.g. from one district to another)?
16. How are L&A activities informed by GP and RI projects and experiences? To what extent do policy changes contribute to more successful GP and RI interventions (including PFC projects)?

#### **4. Evaluation methods and information sources**

Five main evaluation methods were foreseen, which have different information sources, as follows.

##### **Fast track survey and desk review**

A fast track desk study and survey was foreseen to acquire basic information from all the projects in the AfC programme. The fast track study was developed in close collaboration with Solidaridad, with joint responsibilities. The part of the fast track study carried out by Solidaridad and the RECs was completed in June 2020, which was too late to play a role in shaping the case studies. Also, the case studies that were ongoing generally provided more detail.

Aidenvironment carried out fast track studies for all L&A projects, except the ones from REC Europe. The following set of issues was mapped based on available project documentation. This information was used to improve understanding of the L&A projects and make a selection of the case studies.

1. Socio-political / civic state context: use CIVICUS country index.
2. Complementarity with other projects/programmes, partners, GP / RI / PFC / other projects
3. Aspects of ownership and legitimacy of Solidaridad role
4. Policy target/s, current stage as reported in M&E reports according to 6-stage scaling list
5. Information on fail and success factors, internal and external, threats / root causes
6. Evidence of systemic issues relevant for the AfC program
7. External influences: economic, climate, political, security
8. Policy change influencing systemic issues, pathways with main L&A activities
9. Evidence of scaling, as an ambition or based on evidence, Copying, Crowding in
10. Sustainability: will results be sustained?
11. Capabilities of MSPs and CSOs
12. Gender aspects, also youth
13. Role Dutch Embassy

##### **Case studies on civic space led by Avance**

A range of case studies with a focus on civic space was conducted by Avance in collaboration with Solidaridad. The results of these case studies were received mid June 2020 and were sometimes used to substantiate the findings of our own case studies.

##### **Case studies Aidenvironment**

Five case studies were selected each with a central theme, and usually encompass different project/s falling within this theme, in different countries. The case studies were selected in collaboration with Solidaridad, with the following selection criteria:

- to cover a range of relevant themes and issues as emerged from the fast track study of all projects.
- to cover a diversity of RECs

The following table shows the main objectives, projects & countries, and consultant for each case study.

<b>Case study 1: MSP functionality</b>	
Name	Comparative study on MSP functionality in South and East Africa, in F&V sectors, at national and regional level
Project numbers, sectors and countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1649 &amp; 1420: continental; F&amp;V in RSA, Tanzania, Zambia and Uganda</li> <li>• 1444: national; F&amp;V in Mozambique</li> <li>• 1419: national; F&amp;V in Uganda</li> </ul>
Main evaluation / learning question	What is the role of MSPs for L&A strategies to develop sector standards, at national and/or regional level, and what strategies (and related capacities) are most effective, in different contexts and different stages of developing a standard?
Consultant	Emma Blackmore, based in Nairobi

<b>Case study 2: Linking advocacy at different levels</b>	
Name	Building an authentic Asian sustainability agenda through complementary L&A activities at local, national and continental level in the tea sector
Project numbers, sectors and countries	1472: national; tea in Indonesia 1469: continental; tea in India, Indonesia and China 1468: continental; China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia; palm oil REC Europe activities in palm oil
Main evaluation / learning question	How to successfully link, local, national and continental L&A processes and build an authentic sustainability agenda in emerging economies?
Consultant	Jan Willem Molenaar

<b>Case study 3: The landscape approaches</b>	
Name	Evaluating strategies to combine and integrate objectives of increasing productivity and enhancing ecosystem protection and restoration
Project numbers, sectors and countries	1430: Landscape Innovation in the Paraguayan Chaco 1464: Landscape; Palm oil, cocoa; Honduras; Zona Litoral del Norte 1437: Nicaragua 1462: India 1418: Tanzania
Main evaluation / learning question	What are viable landscape governance models considering different levels of social conflict and possible conflicting production and protection objectives?
Consultant	Jan Joost Kessler

<b>Case study 4: Linking zero-deforestation to emerging markets</b>	
Name	Linking national no-deforestation MSP and direct advocacy initiatives to emerging markets
Project numbers, sectors and countries	1421: continental; Bolivia, Argentina, Paraguay, China ; soy 1424: national; Bolivia; Soy
Main evaluation / learning question	What are effective L&A strategies to mobilise national public and private actors to implement no-deforestation policies in soy and links these to emerging markets?
Consultant	Joana Faggin

<b>Case study 5: L&amp;A in a repressed civic space – no field visit</b>	
Name	Developing effective and safe L&A strategies in a context of limited or repressed civic space.

Project numbers, sectors and countries	Myanmar: 1467: continental; textile Ethiopia: 1467: continental; textile Nicaragua: 1437 (landscape) China: 1421 (soy); 1468 (palmoil)
Main evaluation / learning question	What are effective L&A strategies and capacities to achieve progress (in terms of a more enabling environment for sustainable and inclusive value chains) in countries with repressed civic space or political unrest?
Consultant	Jan Joost Kessler, Joana Faggin and Janwillem Molenaar

### *Case study methods*

Because of the limitations to travel due to COVID-19, it was decided to carry out the case studies through on-distance interviews with Solidaridad staff, partners and stakeholders. Thus, data collection for all case studies was based upon desk research and on-distance interviews. The desk research included at least the inception report, all progress reports and the M&E excel file overview. For the interviews, an elaborate set of questions was developed, based on the case study theme and the evaluation questions. The selection of stakeholders to be interviewed was done in close collaboration with a local contact person. The aim was to interview a representative selection of stakeholders, from private sector, public sector and civil society, as well as research institutes if relevant. In most cases the interview was done directly by the consultant in English or Spanish language. In some cases (PASOS Honduras and Nicaragua) a local translator was used. In advance of the interviews a short list of questions was sent. In several cases follow-up interviews were held, mainly with project staff, to check and triangulate findings before writing the draft report.

Of most case studies a draft report was elaborated, shared and discussed with the case study owners. In some case studies this was done more extensively than in others. For three cases, additional field visits were foreseen but these did not materialize.

### **Program level review**

Interviews with AfC management and RECs.

At program level, following the case studies and other evaluation components elaborated above, we will make the following analyses, using the aggregated data from the case studies and portfolio analysis at programme level:

- Comparison between effectiveness, especially the scores on (potential for) sector transformation, scaling and sustainability, with L&A strategies and their efficiency
- Analysis of synergy between PfA interventions and their effectiveness, and the presence of PfC interventions
- Analysis of the overall effectiveness of each L&A intervention strategy, in relation to the socio-political context.

### **Efficiency assessment**

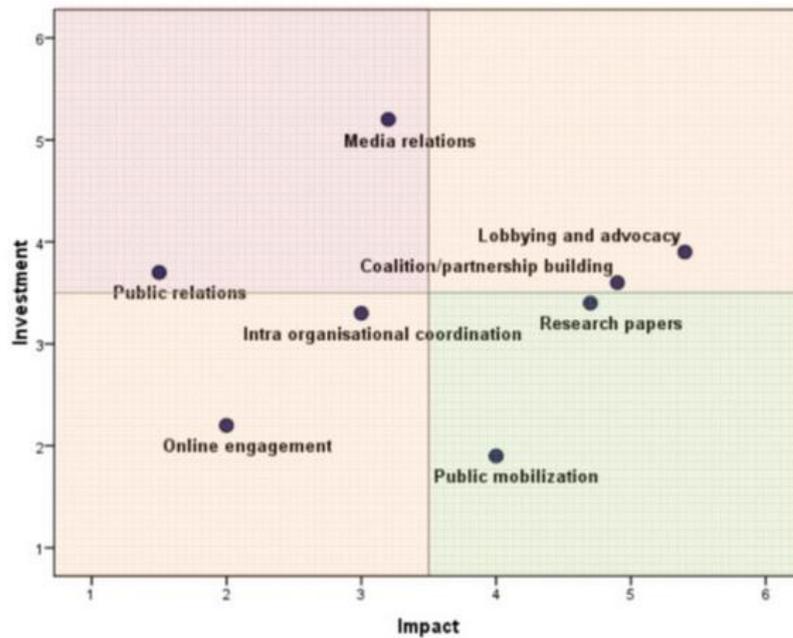
As part of the case studies we will make a qualitative assessment of the resources required for specific L&A activities, in order to be able to say something about their cost effectiveness. This will be done with caution, because in many cases the L&A activities will build onto work done earlier on, and/or be done in close collaboration with partners, and/or will need to be pursued in order to achieve end results. The approach that will be followed is as follows.

1. List the main types of L&A activities that appear to have been used by Solidaridad and partners (RECs), including direct L&A as well as capacity building of CSOs
2. Carry out qualitative stakeholder efficiency ratings,<sup>13</sup> whereby the different L&A activities are rated in terms of (i) effectiveness, and (ii) required resources (finances and human resources – time and skills). This can be done by a rating (relative effectiveness, cost ratings). The ratings will be

<sup>13</sup> <https://thespindle.org/2019/06/06/how-efficient-are-your-lobby-and-advocacy-interventions/>

requested to be done by RECs, and possibly some partners. Note that the ratings will be done for a specific context. This will result in a scheme as indicated hereunder.

3. The efficiency ratings will be compared with the findings on effectiveness emerging from the case studies, possibly leading to some adjustments, and most likely specifications for context.
4. This will result in a relative rating of L&A activities in terms of their efficiency, with indication of relation to the context.



Following initial discussions on conducting the efficiency analysis and a pilot study, the following scheme was developed as a guidance for RECs to complete (with examples in red).

Type of L&A activities carried out	Cost indication	Percentage by sub-category - sum of cost items 1)	Nominal costs 1)	Effectiveness of this type of L&A activity 2)
<b>1. Multi stakeholder Platform</b>		<b>15%</b>	<b>\$200</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Establishing a new MSP at landscape or national level	Cost per year	1.1 60%	\$120	2
1.2 Convening / facilitating an established MSP at landscape or national level	Cost per year	1.2 20%	\$40	3
1.3 Participating in an MSP at landscape or national level	Cost per year	1.3 5%	\$10	3
1.4 Convene a multi-stakeholder event	Cost per event	1.4 10%	\$20	3
1.5 Convene a session in a multi-stakeholder event	Cost per event	1.5 5%	\$10	2
<b>2. Lobbying</b>		<b>20%</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>
2.1 Direct lobby of decision-maker, without partners	Cost per year per decision-maker	..	..	..
2.2 Direct lobby of decision-maker, with partner	Cost per year per decision-maker	..	..	..
2.3 Capacity building of a CSO on lobby skills	Cost per year per CSO	..	..	..
<b>3. Policy Advocacy</b>		<b>30%</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>
3.1 Policy / sector review study	Cost per study	..	..	..
3.2 Formulation of a policy briefing paper/ policy recommendation	Cost per paper	..	..	..
3.3 Demonstration visit to a pilot or activity	Cost per visit	..	..	..
3.4 Exchange visit – local or national	Cost per visit	..	..	..
3.5 Exchange visit – international	Cost per visit	..	..	..
<b>4. Stakeholder engagement</b>		<b>10%</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>
4.1 Mediating a conflict between stakeholders	Cost per case	..	..	..
<b>5. Pilot demonstrations</b>		<b>25%</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>
5.1 Conducting a pilot to demonstrate evidence and sound business case	Cost per pilot	..	..	..

1) On the cost estimate, we would like you to consider and add the following cost items:

- Staff costs, i.e. time @ salary- 45%
- Costs of hired persons (consultants, 3<sup>rd</sup> parties)- 20%
- Logistics- 15%
- Material costs- 20%

## 5. Specific methodologies

### *Contribution analysis*

We used elements of contribution analysis to draw conclusions on the role of Solidaridad in the observed changes, using the following logic:

1. Understanding of the expected pathways of change and related indicators (see above)

2. Evidence of changes of relevant issues and indicators during the evaluation period, using existing M&E data at programme level and data and information from the case studies
3. Information on contextual changes and relevant external factors
4. Analysis of expected pathway of change and alternative pathways, to draw conclusions about a plausible contribution by the programme (and its partners) to these changes and the influence of other (external) factors.

#### *Mixed methods including well prepared narratives*

We make use of the existing M&E data, which are analysed in advance of the fieldwork, in order to gain initial insights and be able to focus the cases studies on key issues and remaining gaps. Apart from that we make use of qualitative methods mainly. Methods include primarily key informant interviews (individual and group), structured by means of outcome harvesting principles, to capture both expected and unexpected changes. The aim was to understand the changes that took place during recent years, and the relation (causality) of these changes, including the activities undertaken by the project/s or interventions by Solidaridad. Quantitative and qualitative information sources was integrated in order to draw conclusions and generate lessons.

#### *Stages of external policy influencing*

We agreed on the following stages to capture changes in 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

## Annex 3: Solidaridad staff, partners and stakeholders interviewed

### Programme level: Solidaridad key informants at global level

Solidaridad staff	
Name	Position
Njeri Kimotho	Gender Task Force leader
Janna Visser	Gender specialist - REC Europe
Eduard Merger	Landscapes taskforce leader
Katie Minderhoud	Landscape specialist - REC Europe
Tamar Hoek	IPC Textiles

### Case study 1: MSPs in Fresh Fruit and Vegetables in Southern and Eastern Africa

Solidaridad staff	
Name	Position
Maria Sengelela	Project officer - sustainable landscape innovation, Fruits and vegetables, Tanzania
Mary Mkonyi	Country manager - Tanzania
Julius Ssemyalo	Country projects manager – Uganda
Geoffrey Kibet Rotich	Monitoring, evaluation and learning manager
Karin Kleinbooi	Senior Programme Manager
Angela Mulenga	Ex-staff – Zambia
Francisco Nhanale	Country Coordinator – Mozambique

Tanzania		
Stakeholder	Type	Organisation
Ernest Likoko	NGO	Agriprofocus
Shukuru Tweve	NGO	Rikolto East Africa
Merius Nzalawahe	Government	Ministry of agriculture and fisheries
Isaac Ndamanyhulu	Private sector	Kilimanjaro Certification and Consultancy

Uganda		
Stakeholder	Type	Organisation
Dr Paul Stephen Gitta	Private sector	Independent consultant
Prudence Ayebare Kaijuka	CSOs/producers	Uganda National Farmers Federation
Dr Africano Kangire	Government	National Agriculture Research Organisation (NARO)/National Crops Resources Research Institute (NaCRRI)

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

Solidaridad staff	
Name	Position
Shatadru Chattopadhyay	Managing Director, South & South East Asia
Ranjan Cincar	Project lead Continental Tea project
Suresh Motwani	Project lead ASPN
Rusong Li	Country manager China
Kulbir Mehta	Country manager Indonesia
Veronika Rati (Business Watch Indonesia)	Project lead Lestari project
Marieke Leegwater	IPC Palm oil
Nico Roozen	Former Director Solidaridad

India		
Stakeholder	Type	Position and organisation
Arijit Raha	Industry association	Secretary General, India Tea Association
Ullas Menon	Industry association	Secretary General, United Planters Association of Southern India (UPASI)
Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty	Smallholder association	President, Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers Association (CISTA)
Dr B V Mehta	Industry association	Executive Director, The Solvent Extractors' Association of India & Convener, SEA-IPOS Council
Nasim Ali	Company (palm oil)	CEO, Godrej Agrovet, India
Yingjie Yu	Industry association/ government	Deputy Director, Outreach and Cooperation Department, China Tea Marketing Association (CTMA)
Dr Ainie Binti Hj Kuntom	Government	Senior Research Fellow, Malaysian Palm Oil Board, Government of Malaysia
Muhammad Saifulloh	Government	Deputy Director for Estate Crops Commodities, Coordinating Ministry for Economy Affairs, Republic of Indonesia
Harry Hendrato	Industry association	Secretary General, Indonesian Tea Marketing Association (ITMA)
Dr. I Nyoman Oka Tridjaja	CSO	Chairman of Lestari Foundation
Mr. Waras	Smallholder association	Paguyuban Tani Lestari, Indonesia
Mrs. Endah	Smallholder association/ farmer	Paguyuban Tani Lestari - Majalengka District, West Java Province - Indonesia
Mrs. Nunung	Smallholder / farmer association	Paguyuban Tani Lestari - Purwakarta, District, West Java Province - Indonesia
Mrs. Sripah	Smallholder association/ farmer	Paguyuban Tani Lestari - Pekalongan District, Central Java Province - Indonesia

### Case study 3: landscape projects

#### 3.1 India – Ganges project

Solidaridad staff	
Name	Position
Nitin Rao	REC director
Shatadru Chattopadha	Programme manager
Tatheer Zaidi	Coordinator Tanneries sector
Alok Pandey	Coordinator Sugarcane sector

India		
Stakeholder	Type	Name and position
Uttar Pradesh Leather Industries Association	Labour association	Mr. Taj Alam, Vice Chairman
Small Tanners Association	Organised labour	Mr. Hafizur Rehman, Babu Bhai- President
Embassy of The Netherlands in India	Donor	Ms Maya Acharya, Senior Policy Adviser
DCM Sriram – Sugars, and Committee at Indian Sugar Mill Association	Private sector	Mr. Roshan Lal Tamak (Chief Executive Officer)
Village Panchayat Maholi	Local government	Mr. Ajay Bajpayee, head
Central Pollution Control Board	Government	Dr. AK Vidyarthi – additional director

#### 3.2 Tanzania – Kilimanjaro project

Solidaridad staff	
Name	Position
Maria Sengelela	Project manager
Geoffrey Kiet Rotich	REC East Africa director
Rakula Okoth	Investment expert

Tanzania		
Stakeholder	Type	Name and position
National Land Use Planning Commission	Government	Gerald Mwakipesile
Enduimet Wildlife Management Areas	Civil society – community-based	Peter Millanga
Longido district Authority	Local Government	Ally Msangi
Sokoine University of Agriculture (Wildlife and forestry department)	Research	Charles Kilawe
Kilimanjaro region authority	Government	Emmanuel Kiyengi
Coffee company - Taylor Winch	Private sector	Murungi Grace

#### 3.3 Nicaragua and Honduras – PASOS project

Solidaridad staff
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Name	Position
María Duran	Program Manager Nicaragua
Marlon Lopez	Consultor, Oficial de Proyecto PASOS Nicaragua
Al Cunningham	Impact Investment Specialist
Michaelyn Baur	Managing Director
Carlos Perez	Landscape & Climate Specialist
Jose Guillermo Flores	Program Manager Honduras
Dubail Rosa	Project Officer Honduras
Flor Tejada	PMEL Officer
Suyapa Saldivar	Project Officer & Gender Specialist
Flavio Linares	Technical Head of Programs

Nicaragua		
Stakeholder	Type	Name and position
CIAT - Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (International Center for Tropical Agriculture)	Research	Rein Van der Hoek - Coordinador de proyectos Forrajes
FUNIDES - Fundación Nicaragüense para el Desarrollo Económico y Social (Nicaraguan Foundation for Economic and Social Development)	NGO	Roman Leupolz-Rist - Economista Principal Unidad de Economía Ambiental
San Jose (Palm Oil Company)	Private	Yasica Sequeira - Responsable de Medio Ambiente
Pequeños Productores (Small Producers)	Labour organization	Sandra Díaz - Productora líder ECA ganadería
Honduras		
Stakeholder	Type	Name and position
Salama (Palm Oil Company)	Private	Jerman Cruz Benitez Vasquez - director
FHIA - Fundación Hondureña de Investigación Agrícola (Honduran Agricultural Research Foundation)	Research	Roberto Tejada - Gerente de comunicaciones
REDMUCH - Red de Mujeres Chocolateras y Cacaoterías de Honduras (Network of Chocolate and Cocoa Women of Honduras)	Labour organization	Dunia Paz - Miembro de REDMUCH Judith Suazo - Presidenta de REDMUCH
PROLANSATE - Fundación para la Protección de Lancetilla, Punta Sal y Texiguat (Foundation for the conservation of Lancetilla, Punta Sal and Texiguat (Protected areas))	NGO	Nelbin Bustamante - Director Ejecutivo
ICF - Instituto de Conservación y Desarrollo Forestal (Forest Conservation and Development Institute)	Government	Dáryl Medina - Coordinador Nacional del Sistema de Monitoreo Forestal
Secretaría de Agricultura y Ganadería / Consejo Nacional Del Cafe (CONACAFE) (Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock / National Coffee Council (CONACAFE))	Government	Jacobo Paz - Ex Ministro de Agricultura / Designado presidencial para el Consejo Nacional del Café

#### Case study 4: Lobby & advocacy in a repressed state

Solidaridad staff	
Name	Position
Alex Ehrenhaus	Global Soy Program Manager
Augustín Mascotena	Project Manager in Argentina and Bolivia
Alma Acosta	Project Manager in Paraguay
Isabel Nepstad	Former Project Manager in China
Gustavo Erico Paul	Consultant in Argentina

Stakeholder	Type	Name and position
<b>Bolivia</b>		
Fundación Avina	Civil Society Organization	Chiaki Kinjo, Program Coordinator
Fundación Amigos de la Naturaleza (FAN)	Local Civil Society Organization	Natalia Calderón Angeleri, Executive Director
Asociación de Productores de Oleaginosas y Trigo (ANAPO)	Soy Producer's Association	Fernando Asturizaga, Agrarian Executive Director
Asociación de Productores de Oleaginosas y Trigo (ANAPO)	Soy Producer's Association	Antonio Guardia, Project Coordinator
Cámara Agropecuaria del Oriente (CAO)	Producers Association	René Alvarez Medina,
<b>Argentina</b>		
Fundación ProYungas	Local Civil Society Organization	Alejandro Brown, President Sebastián Malizia, Executive Director Juan Sebastián Entrocassi, Program Manager
The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	Civil Society Organization	Hernán Zunino, Soy Value Chain Coordinator
Secretaría de Ambiente e Desarrollo Sustentable de la Provincia de Salta	Local Government	Alejandro Aldazabal, Secretario
Secretaría de Ambiente e Desarrollo Sustentable de la Provincia de Salta	Local Government	Ignacio Goitia, Technician
Sociedad Rural Salteña	Producer's Association	Lucas Elizalde, Inspection Body
Asociación Argentina de Productores en Siembra Directa (AAPRESID)	Producer's Association	Tomás Mata, Program Manager
Cooperativa Agropecuaria de Acopiadores Federados (CAAF)	Association of Owners of Warehouses	Pablo Bruna, Director Cecilia Piermatei, Training and Reporting
Camara de la Industria Aceitera de la República Argentina (CIARA)	Traders Association	Maria Marta Rebizo, Economic and Commercial Affairs Manager
<b>Paraguay</b>		
National Deputy Chamber	Government	Pastor Emilio Soria Melo, National Deputy

## Case study 5 : Lobby & advocacy in a repressed state

### Myanmar

Solidaridad staff	
Name	Position
Sebastian Taylor	Team leader
Nay Myo Htet	Assistant

Stakeholder	Type	Name and position
Confederation of Trade Unions of Myanmar (CTUM)	Organised labour	U Maung Maung - President
Industrial Workers Federation of Myanmar (IWFM)	Organised labour	Daw Khaing Zhar - President
Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association - Project Management Unit (MGMA - PMU)	Government - Employers Association	Joe Falcone - Education & Training Strategist (former)
H&M	Brand / Buyer	Tobias Fisher - Country Manager (former)
ILO	Multilateral	Catherine Valliancourt LaFlamme - Liaison Officer

### Ethiopia

Solidaridad staff	
Name	Position
Samuel Abebe	Team leader
Dawit Girma	Assistant

Stakeholder	Type	Name and position
Confederation of Trade Unions of Ethiopia (CETU)	Organised labour	Kassahun Folo - President
Industrial Federation of Textile, Leather & Garment Workers Trade Unions (IFTLGWTU)	Organised labour	Angesome Yohannes - President
Ethiopian Textile Industry Development Institute (ETIDI)	Government	Yitbarek Abebe - Director
Labour Union Desta garment factory	Organized labour	Ms. Makia Hussein – chairman

## Annex 4: Documents consulted

The following information sources were consulted and used for this evaluation.

### **General project documentation:**

- Advocacy for Change Proposal to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 2016
- Advocacy for Change - Inception Report, November 2016
- Advocacy for Change - Work Plan and Budget 2017, November 2016
- Advocacy for Change - Work Plan and Budget 2018, November 2017
- Advocacy for Change - Work Plan and Budget 2019, November 2018
- Advocacy for Change - Work Plan and Budget 2020, November 2019 (planned)
- Advocacy for Change - Narrative and Financial Progress Report 2016, May 2017
- Advocacy for Change - Narrative and Financial Progress Report 2017, April 2018
- Advocacy for Change - Narrative and Financial Progress Report 2018, April 2019
- Advocacy for Change - Narrative and Financial Progress Report 2019, April 2020
- Solidaridad Theory of Change and related Monitoring Protocol
- Executive Summary of the Mid Term Review Report
- Management Response to Mid Term Review Report
- MoFa DSO - Dialogue and Dissent Theory of Change

### **For each of the projects that were included in the case studies**

- Inception report
- Annual report 2017
- Progress report 2018
- Progress report 2019
- Workplan 2020
- Specific studies and background reports

### **Fast track documentation**

- Excel file with fast track findings

## Annex 5: Overview of policy targets and changes realised for all AfC projects outside Europe

Project	L&A main target/s	Public or private policy	Policy changes targeted		Source and comments
			Significant change	Limited or no change	
<b>Africa</b>					
1463 LI; Zambia	(i) The Fish ban policy; (ii) Water act of 2011 and Water users association; (iii) Forestry act for community management of Natural resources.	Public		Unclear how many	No fast track data. Based on progress reports.
1765 & 1470 EPE; RSA, Zambia, Malawi, Eswatini, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia	Develop national principles of sustainable beef production, and then also at a regional level.	Public		(1) 'Small wins' in Malawi and Zimbabwe	Fast track data
1444; Mozambique; F&V	To establish a national mandatory F&V standard with regulatory mechanisms for sustainable F&V value chains	Public	(1)		Fast track data supported by case study: stage 1 > 4
1649 & 1420 EPE; RSA, Tanzania, Zambia (2018), Uganda (2019)	National standard for food safety and sustainability in the F&V value chains. Develop African GAP standard for sustainable F&V.	Public	(1) Tanzania	(1) Other countries	Fast track data and case study: progress slow and variable by country. Case study more positive
1419 EPE; Uganda	National Tea Policy, implementation strategy and regulatory framework.	Public	(1)		Fast track data state no progress. Progress reports are much more positive
1418 LI; Tanzania	The Kilimanjaro Investment Framework and related policy position paper.	Public	(1)		Fast track claims 1 > 5, but case study is less positive. Scale is also limited.
2084 EPE; Uganda – Great Lakes	Policy framework for investment around HCV areas.	Private		(1)	Fast track says no progress, target also unclear

1473 EPE; Ghana; gold	Improve national level ASM policy and lobby for sustainable land use management policies in ASM sector	Public and private	(1)		No fast track data. New policy framework was adopted.
1475 EPE; Ghana; Cocoa	The policy and regulatory framework on land and tree tenure in cocoa	Public and private	(2)		Fast track data, stage 1 > 4
<b>Asia</b>					
1462 LI; India	Policy practices for reducing pollution for river basin, sugarcane and leather	Public and private	(5)	(1)	Fast track data refer to 9 positive changes, but these are related to different stakeholders. Case study focuses on major changes
1465 LI; Indonesia; Soy	Sustainable landscape solutions and incentive frameworks	Public and private		(2) 'small wins'	No fast track data. Progress reports refers to small wins related to pilots
1474 EPE; Bangladesh; Shrimp	Policies on shrimp quality, food & safety, traceability, etc.	Public		(3) 'small wins'	No fast track data. From progress reports we derive several 'small wins'
1472 EPE; Indonesia; Tea	Lestari approved as the national standard for tea	Public and private	(4)		No fast track data. These are case study results
1469 EPE; India, Indonesia and China; Tea	Development of an aligned approach of sustainability standards in Asian markets linked to SDG targets.	Public and private	(1)	(3)	No fast track data. These are case study results
1468 EPE; China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia; Palmoil	Increase efficiency of ISPO and MSPO standards, audit process, incentives for business and producers	Public and private	(3)		Fast track data and case study results match
1467 EPE; Myanmar, Ethiopia; Textile	Public Policy Measures to Mainstream Social Dialogue	Public	(2)	(2)	Fast track data and case study results match
<b>Latin America</b>					
1464 LI; Honduras	Sustainable landscape level investments with multiple benefits for multiple landscape actors.	Public and private	(4)		Fast track data incomplete and completed with case study

1437 LI; Nicaragua	Sustainable landscape level investments with multiple benefits for multiple landscape actors.	Public and private	(1)	(2)	No fast track data
1466 EPE; Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras; Sugarcane	Several themes including Improving working conditions and health & safety	Private		(3) 'small wins'	Fast track data suggest no major progress. targets not so clear
1430 LI; Paraguay	Support voluntary deforestation free livestock.	Public ?		(0)	No fast track data, policy targets are not clear
1424 EPE; Bolivia; Soy	improve procedures and enforcement of land use policies and land use planning.	Public	(1)	(1)	Fast track data are incomplete, has been completed with case study
1488 EPE; Bolivia; Gold	In terms of policy objectives, three concrete laws were targeted.	Public and private	(2)	(2)	Fast track data
1421 EPE; Argentina, Paraguay, China, Bolivia; Soy	Policies to manage deforestation	Public and private		(3) 'small wins'	Fast track refers to some small steps, completed with case study, in 3 countries
1554 EPE; Honduras, Nicaragua, Colombia, Peru; Coffee	Improve the (inter-) national policy framework for sustainable coffee farming in Latin America.	Public and private		(4)	Fast track data

## Annex 6: Cost data from 4 case study projects

Type of L&A activities carried out	Estimated cost – nominal and %			
	Mozambique F&V (2016-2020)	Tanzania LI Kilimanjaro (2016-2020)	Tanzania F&V (2016-2020)	India – LI Ganga landscape (2019 only)
<b>1. Multi stakeholder Platform</b>	<b>376.606 – 41%</b>	<b>596.947 – 35%</b>	<b>148.988 - 45%</b>	<b>149,638 = 20%</b>
1.1 Establishing a new MSP at landscape or national level	131.811	200.473	54.569	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff costs - 60%</li> <li>• Hired persons - 10%</li> <li>• Logistics- 25%</li> <li>• Material costs- 5%</li> </ul>
1.2 Convening / facilitating an established MSP at landscape or national level	94.151	151.457	33.241	
1.3 Participating in an MSP at landscape or national level	94.152	89.641	25.865	
1.4 Convene a multi-stakeholder event	37.661	62.055	17.577	
1.5 Convene a session in a multi-stakeholder event	18.830	98.137	24.478	
<b>2. Lobbying</b>	<b>54.583 – 6%</b>	<b>129.756 – 25%</b>	<b>74.893 – 23%</b>	<b>181,810 = 24%</b>
2.1 Direct lobby of decision-maker, without partners	19.104	21.525	7.676	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff costs- 60%</li> <li>• Hired persons - 20%</li> <li>• Logistics- 15%</li> <li>• Material costs- 5</li> </ul>
2.2 Direct lobby of decision-maker, with partner	21.833	15.465	41.604	
2.3 Capacity building of a CSO on lobby skills	13.646	92.766	25.614	
<b>3. Policy Advocacy</b>	<b>246.803 – 27%</b>	<b>312.386 – 15%</b>	<b>95.018 – 29%</b>	<b>281,320 = 37%</b>
3.1 Policy / sector review study	72.672	133.943	42.052	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff costs- 30%</li> <li>• Hired persons - 40%</li> <li>• Logistics- 10%</li> <li>• Material costs- 20%</li> </ul>
3.2 Formulation of a policy briefing paper/ policy recommendation	72.672	81.579	17.151	
3.3 Demonstration visit to a pilot or activity	40.898	21.525	5.926	
3.4 Exchange visit – local or national	24.224	43.051	12.151	
3.5 Exchange visit – international	36.336	32.288	17.738	
<b>4. Stakeholder engagement</b>		<b>55.171 – 7%</b>	<b>12.377 – 3%</b>	<b>89,783 = 12%</b>
4.1 Mediating a conflict between stakeholders	nil	55.171	12.377	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff costs - 60%</li> <li>• Hired persons - 25%</li> <li>• Logistics- 10%</li> <li>• Material costs- 5</li> </ul>
<b>5. Pilot demonstrations</b>	<b>236.271 – 26%</b>	<b>208.642 – 18%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>60,603 = 8%</b>
5.1 Conducting a pilot to demonstrate evidence and sound business case	236.271	208.642	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff costs- 20%</li> <li>• Hired persons - 20%</li> <li>• Logistics- 10%</li> <li>• Material costs- 50%</li> </ul>

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