



RECLAIM Sustainability!

Progress Report 2023

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SECTION 1

Strategic Analysis



1 READER'S GUIDE

The 2023 RECLAIM Sustainability! Progress Report highlights progress as a result of programme implementation for the last three years, since the start of the programme in January 2021. Our intention in this report is to describe both our progress on programme implementation and financial performance during the year 2023.

The report is organised into five sections. [Section 1](#) presents an introduction to the report highlighting the 2023 RS! aggregated results and our alignment with the relevant partners and initiatives. We also provide an analysis of the risks and impacts in the external and/or internal context of the RECLAIM Sustainability! Programme that significantly influenced implementation of our 2023 plan, and provide an update on the programmatic changes. We also provide an update on the Mid-Term Review (MTR) for the RS! Programme conducted during the year.

[Section 2](#) specifically outlines details of the 2023 progress and achievements of the RS! Programme implementation, categorised by global supply chain and further by country. We also take time here to highlight case stories from our programming in different geographic and sectoral contexts that provide tangible examples of our progress towards results in action. [Section 3](#) and [Section 4](#) outline the 2023 progress on innovation tracks and on Global Linking and Learning Agenda respectively. We present our 2023 Budget vs. Actual report by budget categories in [Section 5](#).

2 INTRODUCTION

Background

The RECLAIM Sustainability! Programme's Theory of Change is supported by three strategic pathways: 1. **Advocate through inclusive dialogues**; 2. **Amplify the voice of citizenry**, (both reported in [Section 2](#)) and 3. **Accelerate disruptive innovations** (further reported in [Section 3](#)), to obtain impacts on fair value distribution, decent work, sustainable natural resource management, and gender and social inclusion. In a joint collaboration between the programme's consortium partners (Trust Africa, Fair Food, Solidaridad East and Central Africa, Solidaridad West Africa, Solidaridad Southern Africa, Solidaridad Latin America, Solidaridad Asia, Business Watch Indonesia and Solidaridad Europe), we strive to strengthen civil society and foster inclusive sustainability in global value chains, elevating the voices of farmers, miners, workers and citizens, and ensuring that these voices are included and well represented in decision-making, sustainability processes and policies.

We set strengthening civil society as an important precondition to deliver our strategic RS! Programme objective, and apply a gender and social inclusion approach to challenge the underlying causes of gender inequality to enable women, youth, indigenous groups across supply chains to empower themselves. We also take an evidence-based advocacy approach where we use empirical evidence, gathered at the local level, to inform and trigger systemic change initiatives by influencing the decision makers at all levels.

We believe in the importance of an evidence base for the RECLAIM Sustainability! Programme success. This applies to our designed impact pathways that relate to the programme's aims and rationale, and to the programme's contribution to the desired outcomes. In [Section 4](#).

Global Linking & Learning, we present the programme progress in utilising the information and knowledge gathered to enhance implementation and smart programming in pursuit of our overall 2025 strategic objective.

The RS! programme involves 17 countries in its scope in four continents: Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe (The Netherlands and EU), across seven value chains i.e. cocoa, coffee, tea, palm oil, cotton & textiles, gold and food products, as presented in the figure below:

FIGURE 1. COUNTRY SECTOR TABLE

	Cocoa	Coffee	Tea	Palm Oil	Cotton/Textiles	Gold	Food Products
AFRICA	Côte d'Ivoire	Active		Active			
	Egypt				Active		Active
	Ethiopia				Active		
	Ghana	Active			Active		Active
	Kenya		Active				Active
	Malawi			Active			
	Mozambique			Active		Active	Active
	Sierra Leone	Active			Active		
	Uganda		Active	Active			Active
	Zambia					Active	
ASIA	Bangladesh		Active	Active	Active		
	China			Active	Active		
	India			Active	Active		
	Indonesia			Active	Active		
LATIN AMERICA	Honduras		Active	Active			
	Peru					Active	Active
OTHER	Global	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active
	the Netherlands	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active

Progress Summary

To assess the RS! Programme achievements during the past three years, this report reflects progress on our commitments, strategic collaborations and priorities set out in the 2023 RS! Annual Plan. The RS! Consortium has made significant progress in working towards systemic change by empowering civil society actors with increased capacities for advocacy and with strong relations with key stakeholders in the public and private sector. We highlight here our key achievements towards our main goals through our **three impact pathways**:

Advocate through inclusive dialogue: Our work focused on influencing the policy agenda and developing evidence-based solutions to address socio-economic and environmental shortcomings in trade and value chains. Key achievements include our work to strengthen civil society organisations in governance, lobby & advocacy skills, participation in decision making processes and the delivery of their mandates. Our work through multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) is one of the key strategies that allow for more inclusive dialogues and decision making. As a crosscutting intervention, we have successfully empowered women and contributed to their increased participation and engagement in producer organisations, as well as in higher level decision making dialogues, good examples for this are: the initiatives to

improve women's participation in cocoa cooperatives in West Africa; the creation of a [Gender and Social Inclusion Unit](#) within the Coffee Secretariat in Honduras; and the formation of the [National Association of Women in Tea](#) in Uganda. We have also contributed to their community mobilisation capacity, enabling Gender champions to develop bargaining and advocacy skills, and show significant confidence to raise awareness and stand for women's rights, as well as to influence social norms (see for example Cocoa [Sierra Leone](#), Coffee [Kenya](#) and [Uganda](#), Palm Oil [Cote d'Ivoire](#), Gold [Uganda](#) and [Peru](#)).

We have continued to work with other Civil society organisations (CSOs) to engage more effectively in debate with public and private sector decision-makers. Knowledge related to sustainable production and its enablers has improved among key stakeholders, and many projects made great progress towards the formulation, review and (improved) implementation of policies and regulatory frameworks that have more attention for smallholder needs such as the development of a [coffee farmer driven bill](#) and the validation of the [Tea Policy](#) in Uganda, the implementation of the [Palm Oil pricing mechanism](#) proposed in Ghana, the strengthening of the CSDDD and the amendment of the [Cotton Board Act](#) in Zambia. In addition, we have supported the implementation, enforcement and compliance of smallholders on national standards such as the adoption of [ISPO certification](#) for palm oil in Indonesia and the development and implementation of standards such as the [MozBopa](#) (Moçambique Boas Práticas) standard, as part of the country's good agricultural practices.

Amplify the voice of citizenry: To support our policy influencing work, we have mobilised citizens through campaigns to influence governments and companies to change or improve their policies and practices, as well as to challenge rooted customs that place specific groups in a disadvantaged position. Good examples of these campaigns are: our continued [Amplify work in Europe](#); the awareness raising media campaigns on the use of mercury and the need for investment in the ASM gold sector in [Ghana](#) and [Uganda](#); and the media campaign in [Sierra Leone](#) to improve women's ownership and access to land. In 2023, we also conducted local and international media campaigns in production countries to promote for example the consumption of smallholder produced [tea](#) and the sustainably produced [palm oil](#) in India and Indonesia.

Accelerate disruptive innovations: We improve the transparency of value chains, as well as the bargaining position of farmers and workers through the development of innovative tools. The digital innovations already contribute to traceability and transparency for downstream value chain actors. Some examples include [SOLITRACE app in India](#), Cocoa trace in [Sierra Leone](#) and Coffee trace in [Uganda](#) and [Honduras](#), as well as the [Farmer2Market tool in Mozambique](#). Going forward, we aim to prove that these tools contribute significantly to the bargaining position of smallholders and workers.



3 AGGREGATED RESULTS 2023





The table on the next page presents 2023 aggregated results for Key Performance Indicators.

Civil society demonstrated robust engagement, with 126 submissions of innovative solutions and recommendations, surpassing targets significantly. However, disruptive innovation targets fell short, with only 76,594 beneficiaries against the goal of 244,840, with improved bargaining position and the usage of the 31 developed tools reaching 314,900 users compared to the target of 221,206. Despite remarkable mobilisation efforts, with 22,232,617 individuals activated, awareness-raising campaigns fell short at 91 against the target of 100. Although the number of campaigns was less than envisioned, their reach was considerably higher. Conversely, capacity-building efforts in civil society exceeded expectations, with 264 demonstrating increased capacities and 366 supported, showcasing progress amidst challenges and opportunities for improvement.

The underachievement related to innovations usage is due to the low number of marginalised groups utilising innovations (partially due to limited digital literacy), which then contributes to low number of farmers with improved bargaining position, as a consequence of slow uptake of digital tools. We will work in complementarity with the Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) programme to ensure that the relevant tools and models, whose concepts have been proven, are inclusively adopted and scaled-up by improving digital literacy. Conversely, the remarkable engagement in civil society activities reflects the relevance of the project's focus areas, such as fair wages and policies that consider the needs of all value chain stakeholders. The successful engagement of civil society actors in decision making processes demonstrates the effectiveness of intensified support efforts in recent years.



FIGURE 2. AGGREGATED RESULTS FOR KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2023

	Key Performance Indicator	TARGET 2023	RESULTS 2023	TARGET 2025
 ADVOCATE THROUGH INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE Better, innovative and inclusive solutions that address issues in the value chain are co-developed and submitted to policy makers				
OUTCOME	# of innovative and inclusive solutions / recommendations that are submitted by civil society through inclusive dialogues to key public and private sector decision makers for adoption and implementation	97	126	65
OUTPUT	# of dialogues initiated, strengthened or joined to engage Civil Society and Civil Society's agenda in debate with public and private decision makers	132	202	118
	# of (governmental and private) policies for sustainable production, trade and consumption influenced	102	92	102
 ACCELERATE DISRUPTIVE INNOVATIONS Improved transparency and negotiation position for farmers and workers in the supply chain, by co-developing and implementing innovative digital and fair business models				
OUTCOME	# of farmers, miners and workers with improved bargaining position through equitable access to (digital) market intelligence or as a result of new and innovative business models	244,840	76,594	100,300
OUTPUT	# of farmers, miners and workers using the developed tools and business models being tested for sourcing, production, trade and investment	221,206	314,900	105,600
	# of tools and business models developed and being tested for sourcing, production, trade and investment	22	31	46
	# and kind private sector partners engaged to co-design, test and promote new tools and business models for sourcing, production, trade and investment	134	125	99
	# of other non private sector partners (knowledge, public, CSOs, others) engaged in co-design, test and promote new tools or business models for sourcing, production, trade and investment	119	104	111
 AMPLIFY VOICE OF CITIZENRY Citizens and CSOs are mobilised, activated and engaged to change norms and influence policy agendas				
OUTCOME	# of individuals activated and mobilised to raise their voice to push the policy agenda, influence societal (gender) norms, make informed decisions (consumer and corporate behaviour, e.g. on production and consumption practices)	336,241	22,232,617	54,000
OUTPUT	# of CSO led awareness raising campaigns	100	91	70
 STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY CSOs are strengthened to speak up and engage in policy dialogue				
OUTCOME	# Civil Society actors and target groups with increased L&A capacities	144	264	200
OUTPUT	# and type of Civil Society actors and target groups supported	229	366	200



4 MIDTERM REVIEW

The Mid Term Review (MTR) conducted for the period January 2021 - December 2022, marked a crucial milestone for the RECLAIM Sustainability! Consortium. This evaluative phase served as both a reflection on past achievements and challenges and a proactive step towards refining future strategies for greater impact. In 2023, the consortium engaged with external evaluators to revisit and refine the programme's processes and objectives, based on insights gained.

External evaluators conducted an in-depth review, merging desk research with field studies, and facilitated thirteen learning & reflection workshops worldwide. This participatory approach cultivated ownership and alignment among stakeholders, ensuring the feedback was evaluative, constructive and forward-looking. Post-evaluation in 2023, the consortium collaborated together with the external evaluators to enhance the MTR content, aiming to refine strategies and interventions for better alignment with ground realities and the overarching Theory of Change (ToC). Evaluators commended the programme's foundational work for systemic change, especially through smallholder engagement and leveraging multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) for policy influence. However, the MTR pinpointed improvement areas, such as enhancing coherence across programming levels, strengthening the Global Linking & Learning structure, and improving the Gender & Social Inclusion approach. Addressing these became the consortium's focus in 2023, leading to strategic revisions and adopting recommendations to improve programme effectiveness and sustainability.

Following the MTR, we seek to build on the achievements and the learnings in the remaining two years of the programme, as well as beyond 2025. In this report, we share some of the first actions that we have already taken to address the MTR recommendations, see [Section 2](#). We remain committed to our ToC, which is aligned to the MTR recommendations, and is highlighted to be one of the main strengths for the RS! Programme. For the innovation tracks, BopInc conducted a complementary MTR to align projects with strategic objectives and target group needs (see [Section 3](#)).

5 COMPLEMENTARITY & ALIGNMENT

Collaboration / Alignment with STITCH

We continued to work with Fair Wear Foundation (FWF) in **Europe**, on the topic of mandatory due diligence and purchasing practices. We share a joint position with Fair Wear and Ethical Trade Initiative UK (ETI) on mandatory environmental and human rights due diligence. This allows us to collaborate in a complementary way with STITCH partners adding expertise on human rights to our strong environmental portfolio. We are also collaborating with Fair Wear and ETI in the Common Framework for Responsible Purchasing Practices (CFRPP) and started research to explore how relevant the CFRPP is for tier 2, wet processing industry, to be able to expand responsible purchasing practices to other tiers.

In **Asia**, we continued to participate with STITCH in collaborative meetings and workshops organised by Fair Wear on labour and workers in the textile sector to share learnings. We continue to actively look for complementarity in covering the entire supply chains from cotton to clothing, especially in India, in order to better align our work and future prospects of collaboration.

Collaboration / Alignment with Fair for All and Fair Green and Global Alliance

In the **EU**, we have shared information about our European programme in textiles/garments with the Clean Clothes Campaign (SKC). We identified overlap in themes: Environmental and Human Rights Due Diligence, Living Wages and complementarity in approaches and strategies. We coordinate directly with SOMO and Clean Clothes Campaigns when relevant, in the framework of our textiles/garments programmes such as the Next Generation Agreement negotiations.

In 2023, the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme in **Ghana** participated in **Fair for All** project knowledge sharing in our community engagement process. The exchange focused on Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) processes in mining and cocoa communities. We also collaborated with Trees for Global Benefits (TGB) on the green livelihood alliance project to convene stakeholder dialogue on tree tenure, and exchanged learnings with Oxfam on FPIC as a stakeholder engagement approach to ensure inclusivity.

Collaboration / Alignment with Pathways to Prosperity

The Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) programme is a seven-year programme (2023-2029) being implemented by Solidaridad in partnership with the Dutch Ministry of foreign affairs (DDE), which aims to scale up sustainable and inclusive production as well as trade practices. In order to strengthen our systemic approach, we have built and maintain strong linkages between RS! and P2P programmes' ToCs. In the P2P programme, Solidaridad adopts a systemic approach, combining interventions at the level of the production system, with complementary interventions in the market system. The RS! Programme complements this by contributing to a strengthened enabling environment and civil society at all levels, to improve inclusive approaches to market governance in value chains. This dual pronged approach aims to positively influence the overarching governance system, which allows market actors, both public and private, to take up, copy and adopt mutually beneficial solutions.

Collaboration / Alignment with Dutch Embassies

We provide an update on the state of affairs with regard to RECLAIM Sustainability! Consortium partners' engagements and collaborations with relevant embassies as below:

- In **India, Indonesia** and **China**, we engaged the Dutch Embassies for Government to Government (G2G) discussions, facilitations and events in line with the Asian Palm Oil Alliance (APOA) agenda. In Indonesia, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs met with programme stakeholders (worker unions) and invited Business Watch Indonesia to promote and display the smallholder tea products at a national level event, the *Orange Market*.
- In **Bangladesh**, in collaboration with the Dutch Embassy, we are developing a draft policy to enable the environment for smallholder tea farmers and workers to participate in decision making processes. See more details on this under [Bangladesh Tea section](#).
- In **Mozambique** and **Zambia**, we participated in a workshop organised by the Dutch Embassy on programme alignment and synergies-building.
- In **Ethiopia**, the Dutch Embassy organised an information session covering various topics such as conflicts in Ethiopia and a heat map analysis. This provided a platform for stakeholders to exchange information, updates and experiences, which improved the working relationship among different parties.

- In **Kenya**, we hosted representatives from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kakamega to attend an RS! supported multi-stakeholder dialogue on health and safety in the gold mining sector, which included a joint visit to a mine site in our target area.
- In **Uganda**, we participated in the Harvest Money Expo and the 16 days of activism against Gender Based Violence (GBV) organised by the Dutch Embassy. Additionally, the Dutch Embassy hosted platforms such as the Netherlands Village at the Harvest Money Expo 2023, where RS! programme stakeholders, such as Mara Agribusiness and Kiganda Youth In Coffee, exhibited their products.
- In **Côte d’Ivoire**, the Dutch Embassy supported the implementation of the RS! programme by helping us arrange a cross-border exchange meeting of 10 gender champions from the CDI Palm Oil project with the Ministry of Agriculture in Liberia.
- We participated in all Embassies’ strategic meetings for the alliances under the Power of Voices in the different regions including **Dhaka, Maputo, Jakarta, Freetown, Lima, Cairo, Harare, Accra, Yamoussoukro, Pretoria** and **Beijing**.

6 RISK IMPACTS

Contextual Risks

Unstable local market dynamics, including fluctuations in global prices (eg. tea), can significantly affect the economic viability of smallholder farmers. These fluctuations pose a threat to the livelihoods of farmers and can impact the success of sustainability initiatives. To address this risk, the RS! programme has focused on advocating for building resilient farming communities and accompanying policies to protect farmers against extreme fluctuations. This includes government and private sector initiatives focusing on implementing diversification strategies, providing improved access to market information, and supporting value-added practices. By reducing dependency on volatile commodity markets, smallholder farmers are better equipped to withstand market fluctuations and improve their long-term sustainability.

Programmatic risks and programmatic changes

Despite ongoing efforts, we continue to encounter registration challenges in Egypt. Although this has led to the delay of implementation of programme activities, we continue to work through partnerships with local and international implementing organisations to deliver on our objectives. Establishing a solid presence and delivering on our programmatic ambitions poses challenges. That is why we have initiated a comprehensive process to assess the past programmatic performance, the current capacity and ability to deliver and the best way forward with regards to the RS! Programme in Egypt. As part of this initiative, we have engaged a third-party consultant to assess this situation and identify potential pathways forward. The assessment is expected to be finalised in May 2024. Upon completion, we will carefully evaluate the findings and make an informed decision, in consultation with the Ministry, regarding the implementation of RS! programme in Egypt.

SECTION 2

Global Supply Chain Programmes







1. Cocoa



Key milestones achieved in 2023:

- CSOs and producer organisations capacitated
- Policy recommendations published and submitted to policy decision makers
- Success stories documented and published
- TRACE Fully traceable bean-to-bar value chain launched
- Cocoa Barometer published, related campaign executed
- Research on fair pricing published
- European citizens reached and activated to push for change with policy makers

Total Actuals 2023: €877,599 for Ghana (27%), Côte d'Ivoire (26%), Sierra Leone (22%) and Europe (25%)



1.1 INTRODUCTION

In 2023, we targeted key issues within the cocoa sector of Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Europe, aiming to create a more sustainable and fair industry. Despite significant efforts, the dramatic rise in global cocoa prices¹ failed to translate into increased incomes for cocoa farmers, emphasising the need for our continued intervention. This disconnect underscores a broader challenge in ensuring fair compensation and sustainable practices in the cocoa industry. Our approach to addressing these issues has been multifaceted, focusing on education about land rights, fair pricing advocacy, combating child labour, and promoting gender equality. Central to our strategy is the differentiation between harmful child labour and permissible child involvement in farming, aiming to establish a balance that protects children while acknowledging the realities of family farming. This involves comprehensive efforts to raise awareness of regulatory frameworks, enhance enforcement capabilities, and refine definitions and regulations for child work.

To date, significant achievements include the establishment of the Land Sector Multi-stakeholder Platform and the Tree Tenure Community of Practice in Ghana, as well as the effective advocacy strategies carried out by the cocoa producer groups, signifying strides towards farmer rights and sustainability. Côte d'Ivoire has seen advancements in women's empowerment and the fight against child labour, notably through support for the women's cooperative federation and land access improvements. In Sierra Leone, the introduction of the Cocoa Trace tool marks progress in transparency and fairness. Together with our advocacy for responsible procurement in Europe, these initiatives represent concerted efforts to tackle the sector's complex challenges. Moving forward, our interconnected efforts are designed to address the multifaceted challenges facing the cocoa sector comprehensively. Our enduring goal is to foster a fair, sustainable and inclusive cocoa sector where farmers are justly compensated, and industry practices are transparent and equitable.

1.2 PROGRESS TOWARDS MILESTONES 2023

1.2.1 Ghana

In Ghana we aim to contribute to a sustainable and inclusive cocoa value chain, addressing fundamental problems in the supply chain, which include the lack of land and tree tenure security, the use of child labour for production, unfair cocoa price and gender inequality.

In 2021-2023, we have deepened farmers' knowledge on the **Land Act 1036** and we supported the Customary Land Secretariat to record transactions and ensure farmers' land security. In 2023, the Land Sector Multi-stakeholder Platform (LSMP) started to monitor the implementation of the Land Act, provided recommendations on land tenure registration, and started drafting the Legal Instruments that guide the Acts' implementation. We also continued enabling farmers' participation in the LSMP and put special emphasis on women's land rights. We engaged five cocoa companies² to support farmers from their operational areas, in the process of securing their land rights.

To address other **tree** species' clearing from farms due to the farmers' fear of timber contractors harvesting and destroying their cocoa plantations, in 2023 we supported the formation of the

1 <https://www.icco.org/cocoa-market-report-for-december-2023/>

2 Mondelez, Tuton, Cargill, Mars and Beyond Beans



Ghana Tree Tenure Community of Practice. This Community of Practice aims to discuss and submit an amendment proposal to the Act 124, focusing on safeguarding farmers' rights, together with an action plan informed by a study we conducted on incentive mechanisms for farmers to keep or maintain naturally occurring trees. In 2024, we will continue advocating for full ownership of on-farm trees to farmers.

Cocoa farmers in Ghana are not paid a **fair price**. The price is regulated by law and it is not dependent on the international market trends, hindering farmers from benefiting from a rise in the international price. The price determinant does not consider production costs and the representation of farmers in the Producer Price Review Committee that sets the prices is very weak. In 2023, we formed a cooperative apex body to advocate for a policy review and the establishment of a transparent and inclusive mechanism for setting farm-gate prices. To influence the 2023/2024 season price, we worked with the Ghana Civil Society Cocoa Platform (GCCP) to project and [announce a minimum price expected](#), ahead of the government official announcement. The official price ended up being only 5% lower than what the GCCP projected. With Ecocare, we are working on the development and piloting of a phone app to help farmers track their cocoa production costs. The data collected will be used to support the advocacy for a better pricing mechanism.

In adherence to ILO conventions, Ghana is implementing different Acts to regulate **child labour and child work**, which seek to clarify which farm activities are safe for children and which ones entail unsafe work according to the age category. However, the content of these provisions was not properly informed to the sector, leading to lack of compliance and conflicts. In 2023, we produced simplified communication materials and training manuals to disseminate knowledge on this matter among cocoa cooperatives and CSOs. We trained cooperative unions across six cocoa-growing regions, and we engaged in debates on child labour policy frameworks to provide recommendations for decision-makers' consideration.

Cocoa farmers refute accusations and initiate constructive dialogue

In 2023, the Cocobod issued a statement that farmers along the border of the country were facilitating the smuggling of cocoa to neighbouring countries, therefore they decided to cease the productivity enhancement programme in those areas. We worked together with farmer cooperatives to organise a press conference and meet the CEO of Cocobod and other directors for a dialogue. Even though the substantive topic for the advocacy initiative was cocoa smuggling, the executives also discussed child labour and low cocoa prices as threats to farmers' income. After these actions the statement was retracted and the programme was restored to benefit all farmers along the borders of the country.

Although women and youth are largely members of cocoa cooperatives, they are not involved in leadership positions and they have very little decision-making power. The cocoa sector in Ghana also lacks a **policy to address gender inequality and social inclusion**. In 2023, we continued working with cocoa cooperatives to improve their internal policies and mainstream gender in their operations. We also collected data on gender inequality from cocoa cooperatives to start formulating a gender policy for the sector. In 2024, we will continue working towards the mainstreaming of this policy and the development of a gender action plan for the cooperatives.



Cocoa Cooperative Forum: Representation for Farmers in Ghana



Over the years, cocoa farmers in Ghana have had little to no representation at the various levels of decision-making within the cocoa value chain. Due to this existing gap, their needs are not adequately addressed.

To tackle this challenge, Solidaridad brought together 78 representatives from 26 cocoa cooperatives across cocoa-growing areas, value chain actors and key stakeholders in a forum setting to discuss various issues related to cocoa pricing, living income, deforestation and child labour. The goal was to establish a strong and vibrant cooperative platform for collective advocacy actions, glean solutions from the rich resource pool of participants, and synergise approaches towards attaining sustainable cocoa production.

Generally, women's participation in cooperatives is around 38% to 40% across all cocoa cooperative unions. This increase in number is a result of the introduction of the Village Savings Loans Association scheme by Solidaridad and other non-governmental organisations. The increase of women's enrolment in cocoa cooperatives is due to improved financial access. However, despite this rise in membership, the percentage of women holding leadership positions remains below 20% of the total female membership within the cooperative.

The forum established a synergised cooperative front united on the issues that affect sustainable cocoa production and collectively focused on the actions required to mitigate those issues.

"The forum has highlighted the importance of leaving the silo approach behind and coming together to establish a quasi-union structure that advocates for our interests. This will benefit the entire cocoa cooperative," said Faustina Adu Boateng, Vice President of the Asunafo cocoa cooperative in Ghana and a participant. As Vice President, Faustina actively fosters partnerships and contributes to the development and implementation of strategic goals for the cooperatives. Additionally, she provides oversight for management activities and other committee functions. Faustina leads the livelihood improvement project within the cooperative and serves as chair of the credit union sub-committee, facilitating financial accessibility for women.

To demonstrate solidarity, the cooperatives signed a Memorandum of Understanding to signify their dedication towards building consensus and their commitment toward achieving the advocacy goals set out at the forum.



1.2.2 Côte d'Ivoire

In Côte d'Ivoire, we aim to contribute to a sustainable and inclusive cocoa value chain focusing on the correct implementation of different regulatory frameworks related to child labour eradication and land rights, which are key for the sector, as well as the gender inclusion in leadership positions and decision making.

Although women cocoa and coffee producers are organised since 2014 in a federation of cooperatives (FNFPC-CI), they have poor knowledge of the regulations for cooperative societies, and in particular of the **OHADA (Organisation for the Harmonisation of Corporate Law in Africa) regulation**. This leads them to be excluded from all the meetings aimed at small cocoa producers. With the aim of strengthening the capacities of the women leaders of FNFPC-CI and reduce the difference in treatment between these cooperatives and men's cooperatives, we advocate and support the involvement of the FNFPC-CI in all decision making meetings at the national level, and facilitate their participation in the "Plateforme Ivoirienne pour le cacao durable" (PICD) to voice out women cocoa producers' concerns, of which they have now become formal members. In 2023, we also started to execute the action plan to raise awareness on **women's access to land**, by providing local CSOs with information, communication and education materials on procedures for obtaining land certificates and for demarcating villages to conduct their own community awareness campaigns on women's access to land ownership and the process of land acquisition, resulting in two CSO-driven policy recommendations to decision makers. In addition, we organised a national dialogue on "Women's Access to Land and the New Forestry Law" resulting in a communique to the government that outlines women's concerns and a voluntarily pledge by male participants to support the women's land ownership rights campaign and confront sociocultural norms that hinder women's land ownership in their communities.

Building on the work initiated in 2022, we capacitated 106 new law enforcement staff on basic concepts related to **child labour and child work**. Through community mobilisations, radio, town hall meetings and Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs), we continued sensitising cocoa communities on the compliance with the existing regulatory framework. We also developed a handbook on human rights in the cocoa sector, with emphasis on forced and child labour, to disseminate it among farmers. Additionally, the **ARS 1000 standard**, developed by the Côte d'Ivoire "Conseil du Café et Cacao" and the Ghana Cocobod aims to guarantee production of sustainable cocoa by presenting the requirements of a sustainable cocoa value chain. In past years, we have contributed to the development and the validation of the agroforestry guidelines and the operational guide of the standard for its implementation. In 2023, the operational guidelines and the training guide have been validated and in 2024, we will continue improving producers' knowledge on land registration, the ARS 1000 standard, as well as on the upcoming European regulations CSDDD and the EUDR.

1.2.3 Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, we aim to engage the civil society in inclusive dialogues to develop and submit recommendations on land rights, forest governance, living wages and child labour to the national authorities.

In 2022, the **Land Acts** (the National Land Commission Act and the Customary Land Rights Act) were passed by the national government, seeking to guarantee protection of customary land rights, the elimination of discrimination under customary law, and the management



and administration of land subject to customary law, and other related matters. In 2023, we organised community awareness campaigns reaching 291 community members from seven districts³. Through this sensitisation we put particular emphasis on the provisions for women in the Land Acts, and we raised awareness on the Forestry Policy and the Gender Empowerment law. In addition to our direct engagement with the farmer communities, in 2023 we also worked with **women champions**, CSOs and local media, to produce a [video](#) with a clear call to action: *Increase women's ownership and access to land, and ensure 30% representation of women in the land committee*. This was followed up through community and radio discussions to discuss and sensitise on how these issues affect women farmers. Working with local media has been a powerful means to expose land rights' violations, particularly instrumental for women to reclaim their heritage and to successfully challenge the male-centred land governance.

In 2023, we also started piloting the **Cocoa Trace** tool with the objective to make the cocoa value chain more transparent to ensure a more fair value distribution. This tool will help to cater for the high dependency of cocoa farmers on buying agents (middlemen), which take advantage of the lack of transparency in the transactions, and concentrate a large part of the profit and the premiums. We engaged with farmer groups and buying agents, connecting farmers to the traceability tool, we collected farmers' and buying agents' feedback on the app-card usage, the transactions' records and the synchronisation of data, and we traced 13,577 kilograms of cocoa. In 2024, we will continue working with local private sector companies to fully implement Cocoa Trace, and improve the technical knowledge of cocoa buying agents and farmers, regarding Cocoa Trace and its benefits. In 2024, we will also focus more on popularising the **National Cocoa Value Chain Policy** and its provisions on child labour and child work among cocoa producing communities to sensitise them and open the discussion on better definitions, seeking agreement on what kind of farming activities can children engage with, and under which conditions.

1.2.4 Europe

In Europe, we aim to contribute to a sustainable and inclusive cocoa value chain, in which European companies work towards living income for cocoa farmers, end child labour in cocoa fields, and embrace transparency.

Through our active participation in Dutch Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (DISCO) and Voice Network, in 2023 we shaped the Visioning Paper on Responsible Procurement Practices as guiding principles for DISCO members, including remuneration in the mix of principles for companies to adopt, and we contributed to and published the [VOICE Paper on Responsible Purchasing Practices](#). Both papers make key recommendations to companies and governments on how to make procurement and purchasing practices effective in enabling **living income** for farmers. In collaboration with Colruyt, Superunie, Impact Institute, Unilever and WageIndicator, we organised living wage & income lab sessions that drew participants from both public and private sectors, and we published engagement material on living income/wage, transparency, traceability and fair value distribution. Together with the Voice Network, we also issued a [paper](#) in support of the Côte d'Ivoire government's concern over cocoa companies' refusal to pay prices commensurate with the unprecedented high global prices reached in 2023. In 2024, we will continue advocating for the adoption of best practices by the private sector, specifically addressing pricing, procurement practices and living income.

³ Kenema, Kailahun, Kono, Bo, Bonthe, Moyamba, Pujehun



Following the publication of the [Cocoa Barometer 2022](#), we organised a number of media events to disseminate the results and key recommendations, using it as a reference point for strategic discussions on living income and responsible procurement practices. We are already working on the 2024 edition. Additionally, through our participation in the Cocoa Coalition, we made strategic recommendations to the European Commission and Parliament on both the EUDR and the CSDDD to ensure that smallholder farmers are not impacted negatively in their implementation. We also facilitated the **participation of cocoa farmers' representatives in the policy debates in Europe**. Together with the Women in Chocolate & Cocoa Network (WINCC), we enabled the participation of a woman cocoa farmer in two webinars and her selection as speaker in two international cocoa policy events planned for 2024.

Smallholder representatives take the stage to discuss smallholder-inclusive legislation



Photocredits: Steven de Winter/Solidaridad

In January 2023, Kpomin Edi (pictured here, left), president of the women's cooperative of cocoa farmers in Côte d'Ivoire, was one of the [smallholder representatives invited to speak at the European Parliament](#) in Brussels, addressing the urgent need to ensure a smallholder-inclusive Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). At the EU Parliament, she told of her experience of unfair purchasing practices, recounting

how the farmers in her cooperative were left with large volumes of unsold cocoa when traders didn't respect the contract they'd signed to buy sustainably-produced cocoa, which is more costly to produce. This left them with no option but to sell their product as conventional cocoa, at a lower price. These, and similar unfair practices, are common in many sectors characterised by uneven power relations across the value chain.

On this occasion, Kpomin Edi was joined at the EU Parliament by four other smallholder farmer representatives from Ghana, Uganda, Mozambique and Malaysia; and they also shared their perspectives about the value chains of coffee, cotton, cocoa and palm oil they produce for the European market, namely in the context of the CSDDD legislation. This ambitious directive has the potential to improve the working conditions and livelihoods of millions of workers and smallholder farmers, and their families.

This event was co-facilitated by Solidaridad, in cooperation with partners Fair Trade Advocacy Office, Fairtrade International, and Rainforest Alliance, under the invitation of EU parliamentarians Heidi Hautala (Greens/European Free Alliance) and Christophe Hansen (European People's Party). In a coalition of these above-mentioned partner organisations and in the realm of our RECLAIM Sustainability! advocacy work, Solidaridad has been actively lobbying for a smallholder-inclusive CSDDD legislation that prioritises the needs of producers.



A stronger CSDDD would require companies to take responsibility for human rights and environmental impacts throughout their value chains in a way that is inclusive of and beneficial to smallholder farmers, workers and miners. For example, the Directive should ensure meaningful stakeholder engagement in due diligence and prevent cut-and-run approaches. We also advocated for the need for companies to review the impact of their purchasing practices and business models on human rights and the environment, as well as the need to consider living income to be a human right under the law. In December 2023 the political trilogue negotiations for this file ended on a positive note, with a legal text that secured improvements on the priorities laid out above and that was better suited to address the issues brought forward by the smallholder representatives at the event in January.





In order to further develop and upscale the **Cocoa Trace** traceability tool, we established a partnership with Dutch cocoa trader Tradin Organic, extending their commitment beyond the pilot in Sierra Leone. The partnership agreement aims to bring fully traceable chocolate into the EU (and US) market, while increasing the income of 15,000 farmers in Sierra Leone (see [1.2.3 Cocoa Sierra Leone](#)). Together with BopInc, we refined the Trace value proposition, revenue model and corporate engagement strategy.





1.3 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR RESULTS 2023

FIGURE 3. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS COCOA PROGRAMME 2023

	Key Performance Indicator	TARGET 2023	RESULTS 2023	TARGET 2025
 ADVOCATE THROUGH INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE Better, innovative and inclusive solutions that address issues in the value chain are co-developed and submitted to policy makers				
OUTCOME	# of innovative and inclusive solutions / recommendations that are submitted by civil society through inclusive dialogues to key public and private sector decision makers for adoption and implementation	4	12	4
OUTPUT	# of dialogues initiated, strengthened or joined to engage Civil Society and Civil Society's agenda in debate with public and private decision makers	10	20	15
	# of (governmental and private) policies for sustainable production, trade and consumption influenced	14	14	12
 ACCELERATE DISRUPTIVE INNOVATIONS Improved transparency and negotiation position for farmers and workers in the supply chain, by co-developing and implementing innovative digital and fair business models				
OUTCOME	# of farmers, miners and workers with improved bargaining position through equitable access to (digital) market intelligence or as a result of new and innovative business models	0	92	10,000
OUTPUT	# of farmers, miners and workers using the developed tools and business models being tested for sourcing, production, trade and investment	600	1,645	10,000
	# of tools and business models developed and being tested for sourcing, production, trade and investment	1	2	5
	# and kind private sector partners engaged to co-design, test and promote new tools and business models for sourcing, production, trade and investment	5	4	7
	# of other non private sector partners (knowledge, public, CSOs, others) engaged in co-design, test and promote new tools or business models for sourcing, production, trade and investment	0	1	1
 AMPLIFY VOICE OF CITIZENRY Citizens and CSOs are mobilised, activated and engaged to change norms and influence policy agendas				
OUTCOME	# of individuals activated and mobilised to raise their voice to push the policy agenda, influence societal (gender) norms, make informed decisions (consumer and corporate behaviour, e.g. on production and consumption practices)	1,150	249	8,900
OUTPUT	# of CSO led awareness raising campaigns	5	3	6
 STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY CSOs are strengthened to speak up and engage in policy dialogue				
OUTCOME	# Civil Society actors and target groups with increased L&A capacities	17	69	41
OUTPUT	# and type of Civil Society actors and target groups supported	49	124	41





2. Coffee



Key milestones achieved in 2023:

- Policy papers published (East Africa)
- Media and consumer campaigns rolled out (East Africa)
- Submission of memoranda/recommendations for decision and policy influencing
- One Partnership created for living incomes benchmark and European citizens mobilised to push for policy change (Europe)
- Communities and households are involved in policy, political and economic spaces at local, national, regional and global levels (East Africa)
- New financial products developed (Honduras)*
- Fully traceable supply chain launched to advocate for traceable berry-to-cup value chains and inclusive business models (East Africa, Honduras and Europe)

Total Actuals 2023: €835,192, for Kenya (30%), Uganda (24%), Honduras (26%) and Europe (20%)

*Delayed and pushed to 2024, with a focus on Financial Literacy training.



2.1 INTRODUCTION

In 2023, our initiatives spanned Kenya, Uganda, Honduras and Europe, focusing on enhancing the sustainability and inclusiveness of the coffee value chain. Challenges in the coffee sector, including limited market access, gender imbalances, and insufficient policy support, were at the forefront of our mission to create a more equitable industry. Our overarching solution involved advocating for policy reforms, increasing market transparency, and promoting gender equality within the coffee sector. This included the introduction of legislative measures such as the Coffee Bill 2023 in Kenya, the facilitation of multi-stakeholder dialogues in Uganda, and the advocacy for gender and social inclusion units in Honduras. Additionally, we focused on leveraging technology and collaborative platforms to improve farmers' access to market information and strengthen their bargaining position.

To date, our efforts have yielded significant progress. In Kenya, we supported the Kenya Coffee Producers Association (KCPA) to advocate for policy reforms, and engaged in gender equality initiatives. Our collaboration with the BEYCO trading platform has been instrumental in enhancing market access for producers. In Uganda, our dialogue and policy recommendations to the Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) have promoted a more inclusive policy environment, with the formation of gender committees and empowerment of Area Marketing Enterprises (AMEs) marking notable achievements. In Honduras, we supported the creation of a Gender and Social Inclusion Unit within the Coffee Secretariat and the testing of the Coffee Trace tool, advancing fair value distribution and market access. In Europe, the publication of the Coffee Barometer and the implementation of the Coffee Trace tool in Uganda and Honduras underscore our commitment to sustainable practices and traceability. These collective actions across different regions are steps towards a future where coffee producers can achieve economic viability, underscoring our dedication to transforming the global coffee industry into a realm characterised by fairness, sustainability, and inclusivity.

2.2 PROGRESS TOWARDS MILESTONES 2023

2.2.1 Kenya

In Kenya, we aim to contribute to an inclusive sustainable coffee value chain and trade in an innovative way, in which the interests, voices and rights of farmers and citizens are represented and heard in decision making for sustainable use of natural resources, fair value distribution, and sustainable consumption. Kenya's coffee sector faces sustainability challenges such as the lack of a clear policy, low productivity, and limited fair value distribution. We aim to address these challenges by influencing policies and regulations, CSOs, advocating for gender equality, and improving producers' bargaining position and access to market information. Therefore, in 2021 and 2022, we concentrated on forming partnerships, conducting studies, and establishing platforms to address stakeholders' needs in the coffee sector. This included creating awareness on the sector's policies and regulations among farmers, providing technical support to local CSOs and producer groups, and promoting gender inclusivity initiatives to reduce inequalities at community level.

In 2023, the introduction of the **Coffee Bill 2023** by the new government, following the cancellation of the Coffee General Regulations (amendments) 2022, presented us with an opportunity to promote a farmer-led coffee bill. We supported the Kenya Coffee Producers Association (KCPA) in convening five multi-stakeholder platforms to develop the **Coffee**



Farmer driven bill, supported the Coffee Estate Processors Association (CEPA) in presenting a **Memo on the Coffee Bill** advocating for transparency and fair value distribution, and the inclusion of farmers in the management position of the Coffee Board of Kenya, the body that regulates and promotes the development of the coffee industry. We also facilitated **media campaigns** to create awareness of the introduction of farmers as the coffee brokers, to open up opportunities for farmers to participate in marketing their coffee and pricing, waste management practices and technologies. Additionally, we collaborated with the Kenya Coffee Platform (KCP) to organise a national-level platform addressing the implications of CSDD and the EUDR, and produced a **Coffee Producers Booklet** and other educational materials to inform farmers about policy gaps in the sector.

In response to **gender imbalances** highlighted in the **Gender Analysis of the Coffee Sector**, we trained 60 gender champions in 2022 to address gender and social norms. By 2023, these champions reached over 5,000 coffee farmers and 60 cooperatives through targeted campaigns using the [Start Awareness Support Action \(SASA!\)](#) methodology, advocating for equal division of labour, inclusion of women and youth in decision-making, and addressing resource access and control issues, and held **local campaigns** during International Women's Day and Cooperative (*Ushirika*) to advocate for women and youth coffee inclusion in the coffee value chain. To enhance coffee value chain **transparency and traceability**, we registered producers on the [BEYCO trading Platform](#), improving their access to market information, traceability and bargaining power by providing them with better information about current prices. Ten cooperatives, two unions, and eight large estate producers have been registered and will receive training to access market information and connect with buyers, enhancing their bargaining power through improved price information.

In 2024, we will continue to strengthen the participation of civil society organisations; Kenyan Coffee Platform, the Kenya Coffee Producers Association (KCPA) and the other sector actors to engage in dialogues geared towards adoption and implementation of the Coffee Bill 2023. The CSOs will be key in engaging the coffee farmers in the 32 coffee growing areas to provide their insights and recommendations on the coffee reforms.

2.2.2 Uganda

In Uganda, we aim to contribute to inclusive sustainable coffee value chain and trade in an innovative way for the promotion of interests, voices and rights of coffee farmers and their communities. In 2021 and 2022, we built partnerships with Uganda National Farmers Federation (UNFFE) and CSOs, conducted policy and needs assessments, established multi-stakeholder dialogues, supported six CSOs on technical and operational capacities, and conducted studies on fair value distribution, policy gaps, and gender mapping.

In 2023, we supported UNFFE to convene multi-stakeholder dialogues, bringing together five district farmers associations to discuss the emerging issues affecting the producers and to develop **recommendations on the coffee regulations**, which were submitted to the UCDA for consideration. The recommendations called for revision and/or removal of some clauses and penalties on the "after-farm" activities (particularly on the measures to address problems of quality control at the farm level) and for an improvement of the poor extension services. We also supported the Uganda coffee platform (Cafe Africa) to hold a national **multi-stakeholder dialogue** bringing together key sector stakeholders, to discuss and create awareness on the implications of the CSDDD and the EUDR in the coffee value chain, and to ensure their ability to comply with these regulations. In 2024, we will continue supporting



the review and advocate for the enactment of coffee regulations through multi stakeholder dialogues at national level, and convene national Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs) to forge a way forward for the implementation of the EUDR towards its compliance and support UNFFE and CSOs in providing recommendations to UCDA on the draft regulations required to comply with the EUDR.

In 2022, we facilitated the formation of collective action platforms dubbed as Area Marketing Enterprises (AMEs) in five districts, which act as a link between market dealers and farmers, improving **farmers' negotiation power on prices**. In 2023, we trained a further 32 AMEs on marketing and negotiation skills, and on how to access the [UCDA Market and Price information Platform](#). Additionally, UNFFE trained 50 farmer leaders on the [ICT4 Farmers Digital Platform](#) and are able to use the *ICT 4 farmers tool* to access market information to enable them to stay informed on the current market trends, prices, and demand and make informed decisions on production and marketing options, and also act as digital champions to support the last mile delivery of the tool to other farmers. We also trained a further 20 **gender champions** in 2023, comprising 12 women and 8 men, on the SASA! methodology and empowered them to conduct gender-inclusive dialogues across four districts, raising awareness on pertinent gender issues such as land ownership and women's participation. Additionally, Solidaridad facilitated the establishment of two gender technical assemblies, fostering women and youth leadership in coffee farming endeavours and encouraging their active engagement in decision-making platforms. The assemblies formulated an action plan to address gender disparities and promote women and youth participation in the coffee.

Finally, in December 2023, Fairtrade Original publicly launched the [Coffee Trace](#) Uganda pilot, using the Trace tool. The Dutch company is using Trace and working with the consortium to prove to coffee consumers that they are paying farmers a so-called Living Income Reference Price (LIRP), and that farmers are taking part in several projects aimed at raising their income. During the launch, more than 400,000 kilograms of coffee were traced through 2,800 farmer transactions from farmer to cooperative/union, and one container was exported to Europe with the LIRP claim. In 2024, we will continue testing Coffee Trace with 2,000 new coffee farmers and three companies. We aim to increase income for farmers by ensuring they are paid above the living income reference price for the coffee they deliver to the cooperatives, and furthermore receive additional premiums once coffee is exported and sold to international markets.





Pushing for traceability and transparency in coffee supply chains - bottom-up



To ensure compliance with new legislation, traditional coffee traders and intermediaries must adopt traceable sourcing practices, which creates a demand for data-driven supply chain operations. Whether you are mapping polygons for deforestation insights, or tracing payments to learn about value distribution, cooperatives play a pivotal role in bringing smallholders on board, while representing their interests. Moreover, serving as intermediaries between farmers and buyers, cooperatives have an opportunity to gain a competitive advantage by ensuring traceability and certifications driven by data outputs.

Our Ugandan partner Ankole Coffee Producers Cooperative Union (ACPCU) is well aware of this role, and of the challenges and opportunities ahead. In partnership with Solidaridad and Fairfood, they are turning the growing demand for data into market value and operational efficiency. Think of managing risks, productivity and the development of products that meet the demands of a changing market. Moreover, the partnership is exploring Fairfood's traceability tool Trace as an enabler for transparency on how value is distributed in the value chain.

Influencing price, in particular, is a challenge in coffee. The traceability efforts of this partnership therefore aim to attribute sustainably sourced coffee its actual value. For that, we mimic the specialty coffee approach, in which the quality commitment is built on data spanning from production to cupping score. Moreover, in this Ugandan-based partnership, traceability, implemented by Fairfood, is used to verify payments and sustainability promises made by brands.

The partnership reached its full potential when the social sustainability efforts from ACPCU appealed to the Dutch brand Fairtrade Original. As they commit to closing the living income gap among the cooperatives they work with, transparency on pricing allows both ACPCU and Fairtrade Original to communicate this effort in the Ugandan value chain. On top of existing premiums, for example, for quality, a pricing strategy was plugged into ACPCU's data sharing process in the form of a Living Income Reference Price paid to farmers. Traceability, thus, is used to verify payments and certifications that support Fairtrade Original's ambitions. Today, coffee consumers [trace the coffee](#) that made its way from ACPCU to Fairtrade Original themselves, plus get all the proof they need to substantiate their sustainability promises.

"Farmers are rational actors who will engage when requirements bring actual returns. The value of data lies in its potential to improve production and enhance farmers' lives. As the coffee industry transitions to digitisation, focusing on the tangible benefits and outcomes for farmers ensures active engagement involving supply chain challenges."
Derrick Komwangi, The Ankole Coffee Producers Cooperative Union



2.2.3 Honduras

In Honduras, we aim to contribute to the adoption of new public policies that strengthen the opportunity of women producers in an environment of equal opportunities, as well as the formulation of a public policy for the Honduras coffee sector, that addresses the issue of fair value distribution throughout the value chain.

In 2021, with the approval of the **Gender Policy** for the coffee sector of Honduras, a strategy for its implementation was developed, and began to be implemented in 2022, in collaboration with the National Coffee Council (CONACAFE). In 2023, we supported CONACAFE to hold **multi-stakeholder dialogues** with state secretaries and union presidents to address the importance of **gender and social inclusion**, and successfully advocated for the creation of the Gender and Social Inclusion Unit within the Coffee Secretariat, the government institution responsible for implementing the policy, linking to other stakeholders, such as civil society organisations and the private sector, to promote the adoption of the policy axes for the implementing institutions (Honduras Coffee Institute (IHCAFE), exporters, CSOs and AMUCAFE). Together with AMUCAFE, we supported the development and presentation of an action plan to the Coffee Secretariat for the implementation of the Gender Policy and strengthening of strategic alliances with relevant sector actors such as Civil Society, Public and Private Actors, IHCAFE. We also supported the **Women's Coffee Alliance of Honduras (AMUCAFE)** to improve their leadership skills, by promoting their active participation in policy formulation and its dissemination, as well as enhancing their institutional positioning. In 2024 we will continue strengthening the producer associations on social inclusion, gender policy and technical skills that allow them to increase their productivity and quality in production

Also in 2023, we continued testing the [Coffee Trace](#) tool with the aim to improve value distribution. As a result, four fully traceable containers of coffee from 275 producers (200 from Capucas Cooperative and 75 from Molinos de Honduras) were shipped to the European market to Matthew Algie, using blockchain technology. This has enabled the small coffee growers, members of Capucas and Molinos, to have greater access to the market and better position their products, contributing to compliance with the regulations of the European Union. The buyer, Matthew Algie, has also committed to measuring deforestation and carbon footprint, to better understand the environmental impact of the coffee production, and to better position the producers to remain competitive vis-a-vis market sustainability requirements. This also positions the buyer in a high-price niche of sustainability, allowing them to increase their income through better prices, as well as improve their terms of trade. This process started in 2023 and will continue in 2024, when we will engage in the **contract renewal negotiation for the sale of coffee under the traceability model** between Mathew Algie and Capucas.



Promoting innovation and transformation: women exchanging experiences to redesign their business model



As a result of the exchange of experiences between coffee growers from Honduras and Colombia, good practices and business strategies were identified to improve the competitiveness of women producers. The Café Brisas brand is the culmination of a process of strengthening 246 producers. With the technical

support and leadership of Scarlett Zerón, a partner of Solidaridad, they have managed to establish a collective brand of coffee produced exclusively by women.

"We showed them that they could create a coffee brand, and that they could also be leaders in the coffee chain," Scarlett tells us.

For Scarlett, one of the best strategies that a coffee farmer can use is to join a group of coffee producers where she feels that they have shared objectives and values to accompany each other in their development and growth. By being associated they can obtain greater training opportunities, field advice, access to revolving funds, micro-financing, entrepreneurship and access to fairer, more inclusive and specialised markets that value and pay according to their good practices and quality.

While developing the collective brand, all the producers agreed that they wanted their information to appear on the packaging. The QR codes present on the packaging provide the consumer with information about the producer and the traceability of the coffee from that lot. Now, the organisation is looking to obtain a fund and work with allies to advance entrepreneurship and replicate a revolving fund model.

A contract has already been signed with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to provide them with this coffee brand for a year and that is a great achievement for us. The next step is to establish new points of sale in local stores and supermarkets, and luckily we'll also be able to reach the international market. We also seek to obtain a competitive resale price, which will give producers extra income from the sale of their coffee.

"The launch of this collective brand marks a milestone in the history of Honduran coffee since it positions itself as a social project that empowers women in the coffee value chain, and also seeks to make this a platform that brings growth and development to the women, their families and their communities through a specialty coffee supported by digital technology that seeks to show final consumers the history of its origin and traceability, establishing solid and stable commercial relationships that provide fair income," tells Scarlett.



2.2.4 Europe

In Europe, we aim to contribute to a sustainable and inclusive global coffee value chain, in which European companies work towards living income for coffee farmers, while respecting the environment, and embracing transparency/traceability.

2023 was a year of consolidation for our interventions in the coffee sector. We continued raising awareness about **value distribution** through the Global Coffee Platform (GCP), the Sustainable Coffee Challenge (SCC) and the task forces of the International Coffee Organisation (ICO). We managed to move forward both with our advocacy agenda and with our work with companies to start to develop strategies to improve value distribution. We also launched the 7th edition of the [Coffee Barometer](#), which delivered a wakeup call for the sector to focus on sustainability issues that matter. Together with this edition, we launched a [Coffee Brew Index](#), which ranks the efforts in sustainability of the top 11 roasters in the world, to put pressure on companies' boards and investors, promoting a "race to the top" with regards to sustainable practices in the sector. The comparison of companies through the Index proved to be very effective, triggering great interest among the companies to improve their performance, with some companies reaching out to us to follow-up on their scores.

In collaboration with the GCP and the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH) we conducted and presented the first results of the Value Distribution research and model for the German market, which highlights the disconnection of value between upstream and downstream actors. The hotspots that concentrate value in the downward part of the German coffee supply chain (from importers to Europe to retailers) were presented to key German and global stakeholders. The research also includes a tool through which companies can model the value concentration or margins that different actors have in their own supply chains. In 2024, we will use the input from this research and the mentioned tool to work with companies on developing actionable initiatives to improve the value distribution in the supply chain.





Finally, at the company engagement level, we hosted several living income & wage lab sessions and managed to fully implement the **Coffee Trace** tool to promote traceability of transactions in both Uganda and Honduras. This work involved engaging with critical global actors, such as Volcafe, Sucafina and Fairtrade Original. In 2024, we will work towards getting commitment from private sector companies to adopt innovative tools and business models that aim to achieve value distribution, beyond the scope of these pilots. This will be achieved by onboarding new supply chains, different countries/origins and/or new groups of farmers. We expect at least two European companies to adopt alternative business models for value distribution.





2.3 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR RESULTS 2023

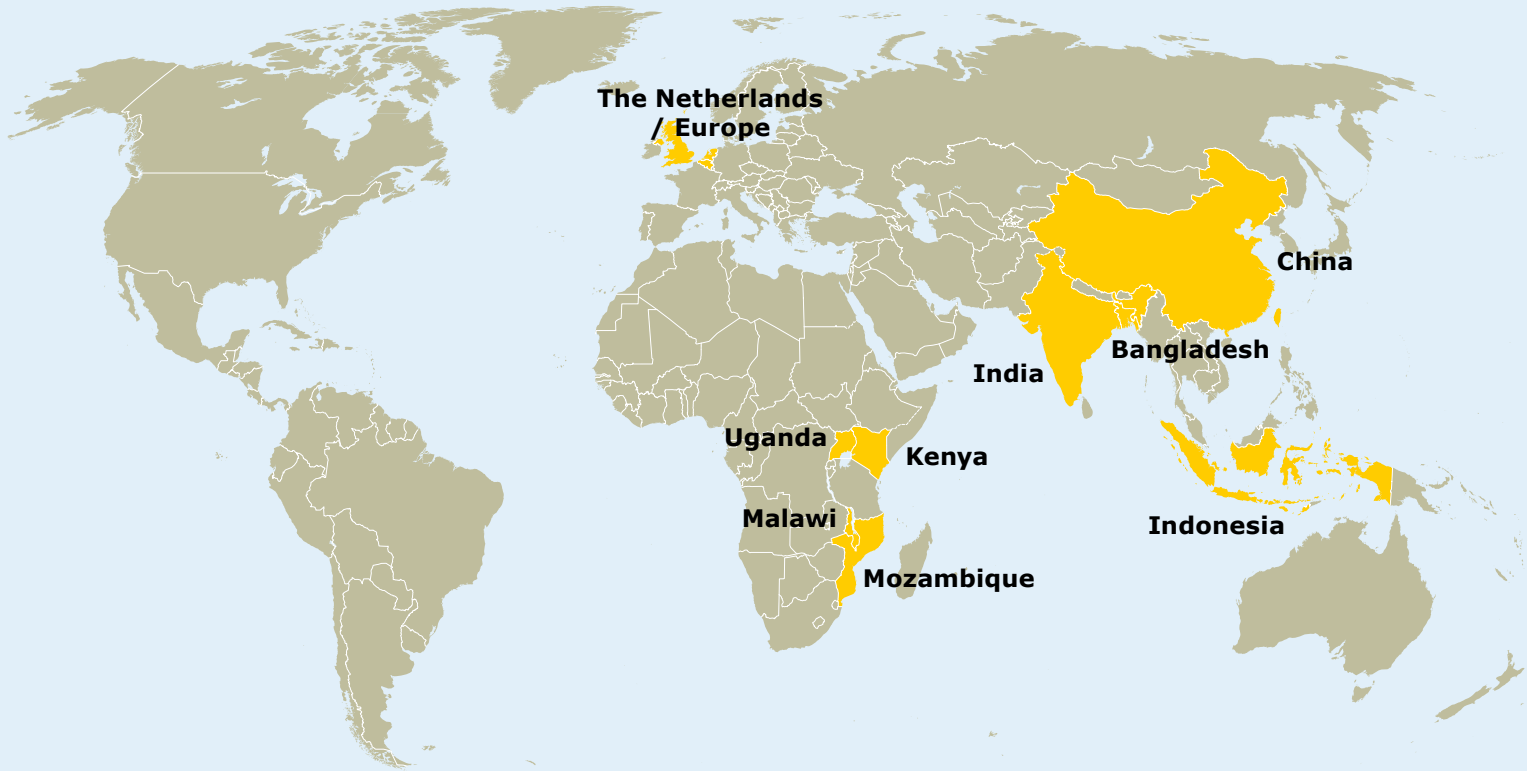
FIGURE 4. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS COFFEE PROGRAMME 2023

	Key Performance Indicator	TARGET 2023	RESULTS 2023	TARGET 2025
 ADVOCATE THROUGH INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE Better, innovative and inclusive solutions that address issues in the value chain are co-developed and submitted to policy makers				
OUTCOME	# of innovative and inclusive solutions / recommendations that are submitted by civil society through inclusive dialogues to key public and private sector decision makers for adoption and implementation	5	8	3
OUTPUT	# of dialogues initiated, strengthened or joined to engage Civil Society and Civil Society's agenda in debate with public and private decision makers	17	41	36
	# of (governmental and private) policies for sustainable production, trade and consumption influenced	7	7	7
 ACCELERATE DISRUPTIVE INNOVATIONS Improved transparency and negotiation position for farmers and workers in the supply chain, by co-developing and implementing innovative digital and fair business models				
OUTCOME	# of farmers, miners and workers with improved bargaining position through equitable access to (digital) market intelligence or as a result of new and innovative business models	400	3,600	0
OUTPUT	# of farmers, miners and workers using the developed tools and business models being tested for sourcing, production, trade and investment	5,100	3,722	11,900
	# of tools and business models developed and being tested for sourcing, production, trade and investment	4	6	3
	# and kind private sector partners engaged to co-design, test and promote new tools and business models for sourcing, production, trade and investment	6	10	4
	# of other non private sector partners (knowledge, public, CSOs, others) engaged in co-design, test and promote new tools or business models for sourcing, production, trade and investment	11	12	8
 AMPLIFY VOICE OF CITIZENRY Citizens and CSOs are mobilised, activated and engaged to change norms and influence policy agendas				
OUTCOME	# of individuals activated and mobilised to raise their voice to push the policy agenda, influence societal (gender) norms, make informed decisions (consumer and corporate behaviour, e.g, on production and consumption practices)	3,100	3,240	8,900
OUTPUT	# of CSO led awareness raising campaigns	5	6	4
 STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY CSOs are strengthened to speak up and engage in policy dialogue				
OUTCOME	# Civil Society actors and target groups with increased L&A capacities	18	16	19
OUTPUT	# and type of Civil Society actors and target groups supported	18	16	19





3. Tea



Key milestones achieved in 2023:

- Recognition granted by ATA to SSI and Fair Data (Asia)
- Common charter for Asia Tea Alliance improved (Asia)
- New STG business models for tea improved trading implemented (Asia)
- Policy recommendations submitted to the national and/or provincial governments
- New regulations that promote inclusive, decent work and fair value distribution in the value chain gazetted (Africa)
- Asian consumer campaigns mobilised to increase consumption of sustainable smallholder produced tea (Asia)
- FarmImpact operational (Southern Africa)

Total Actuals 2023: €2,016,568, for India (26%), Indonesia (15%), China (5%), Malawi (14%), Bangladesh (11%), Uganda (10%), Kenya (8%), Mozambique (8%) and Europe (3%)



3.1 INTRODUCTION

In 2023, our initiatives in Tea aimed to bolster the sustainability and livelihoods within the tea sector across Asia, Africa and Europe, focusing on eight key countries pivotal to global tea production. The year was dedicated to overcoming obstacles such as declining market prices, poor working conditions, and the impact of climate change on smallholder tea farmers. To date, we have achieved notable milestones, including recognition from Asia Tea Alliance (ATA) for Sustainable Sector Initiative (SSI) and Fair Data, the enhancement of the Common Charter for the ATA, the implementation of innovative Smallholder Tea Growers (STGs) business models in Asia, and the submission of policy recommendations to national and provincial governments. Despite some delays, we have also made headway in advocating for regulations promoting inclusive work and fair value distribution in Africa, spearheading consumer campaigns in Asia for sustainable tea consumption, and unveiling the Tea Footprint Report in Europe to evaluate the industry's environmental impact.

Our specific efforts in 2023 were multifaceted. In Asia, we aimed at empowering smallholder tea farmers in India through Farmer Producer Organisations, securing policy support for Indonesian STGs, and ensuring fair value distribution and supply chain transparency in Bangladesh. In Mozambique and Malawi, we focused on enhancing labour policies and fair wage practices. The initiatives in Uganda and Kenya centred on fostering equitable value distribution and sustainable practices. Meanwhile, in Europe, our efforts were directed towards influencing Corporate Social Responsibility policies for the sustainable sourcing and fair treatment of tea producers from smallholder backgrounds. Through these diverse activities, we pursued our programme goal of forging a more sustainable and fair tea industry, thereby steering the tea industry towards a more equitable and environmentally sustainable future.

3.2 PROGRESS TOWARDS MILESTONES 2023

3.2.1 Asia

At a regional level, we aim to tackle the hurdles confronting Asian tea-producing countries, which grapple with inequities in global tea sector governance, including unfair trading practices and economic disparities due to the absence of effective price-stabilisation mechanisms. To counter these challenges, we spearhead the Asia Tea Alliance (ATA), aimed at unifying industry stakeholders to advocate for sustainable production and fair trade policies, foster consumer awareness, disseminate data, and facilitate strategic partnerships, thereby addressing economic hardships and promoting equitable conditions across the tea industry. In the period 2021-2022, we laid the groundwork by **refining the Common Charter for ATA and empowering smallholder associations** in key tea-producing countries like India, China, Indonesia and Bangladesh through dialogues, SDG workshops, and the development of a joint IT portal for information sharing, fostering unity and knowledge exchange among tea-producing countries.

In 2023, ATA demonstrated significant progress in achieving its goals. Through the ATA platform, we organised two key meetings and a climate change webinar for its members, attracting new members and conducting seminars on value addition and challenges faced by small tea growers. We also implemented **innovative sustainable trading models**, such as Teh nDeso in Indonesia, and traceability through QR codes in South India (see [3.2.2 India](#)). In



2024, we will sustain momentum by refining sustainability models, expanding ATA membership and addressing legal and budgetary constraints, prioritising strategic collaborations through ATA to strengthen the collective voice of Asian tea-producing countries in the global tea sector.

3.2.2 India

In India, we aim to tackle the challenges in the tea sector, especially for marginalised small growers. They lack organisation and representation in policy, hindering collective strength. Exploitative value chains and gender inequalities further limit their engagement and earnings. We strategically address these challenges through policy initiatives at industry and government levels. Core strategies include policy reform, equitable pricing for sustainable practices, and empowering small tea growers. In 2021, we laid groundwork by conducting policy baselines, raising awareness, engaging stakeholders, and formulating a policy engagement strategy. Collaborations with partners set the stage for impactful interventions. By 2022, achieved milestones included introducing sustainable trading models and submitting policy recommendations.

In 2023, we made substantial achievements, especially around the collectivisation of small tea growers. Our continued roll out of the **'Solitrace' app** and **'Soil Probe'** demonstrated technological innovation, offering transparency in the supply chain and soil testing capabilities. We had achieved a significant milestone with 25% of contract growers onboarded, completing self-assessments and laying the groundwork for the full SoliTrace system. However, challenges arose due to organisational restructuring at Dole and the departure of key personnel, which temporarily slowed progress. In response, strategic realignment and efforts to deepen collaboration are underway, including intensive training for new teams and a planned review of the applications to ensure they meet the farmers' needs. Despite these obstacles, the commitment to the SoliTrace initiative remains strong, with plans to resume the rollout and continue enhancing the tea supply chain's transparency and fairness.

Our advocacy efforts yielded policy recommendations that expounded on the shortfalls of the existing price sharing formula and suggested ways and means for ensuring equitable sharing of the net sale price of tea between the growers and tea factories. In partnership with the Confederation of Small Tea Growers Association (CISTA), we **developed and submitted recommendations** to the Tea Board of India and the national government. The adoption of the recommendations by these decision makers is expected to contribute to enhancing the sector's sustainability. We also conducted **consumer campaigns** aimed at increasing the consumption of small-holder produced tea, which adheres to standard sustainability practices such as TRINITEA and sustainable business models. These campaigns further contributed to raising awareness and empowering small tea growers by creating increased demand for their sustainably produced tea.

In 2024, we will focus on mainstreaming Gender & Social Inclusion, combating cultural norms that perpetuate inequalities. Strengthening smallholder associations, expanding innovative technologies, and sustaining advocacy will be key. The goal is to enhance the impact of sustainable practices and equitable policies for lasting benefits to small tea growers.



3.2.3 Indonesia

In Indonesia, we tackle detrimental trends in the tea sector, aiming to foster inclusive and sustainable value chains by empowering farmers, workers and citizens in decision-making, promoting fair value distribution and sustainable consumption. Strategies include nationwide campaigns promoting smallholder tea products, policy advocacy, the creation of a national tea logo, and the engagement of stakeholders through events like the ATA meeting. In 2021 and 2022, we significantly increased public knowledge and preference for smallholder tea products, strengthened Teh nDeso's brand, and improved smallholders' bargaining position.

In 2023, a pivotal accomplishment was the **formulation of recommendations** in the form of an open letter by over 100 tea farmers, advocating crucial government support for sustainable tea development. We also gained recognition for our **STG business model**, Teh nDeso, that promotes a smallholder tea brand, and we also facilitated the establishment of additional trading partnerships sourcing tea from farmers at fair prices, contributing to economic viability and livelihood sustainability. **Media campaigns**, reaching 15 million daily viewers, significantly increased Teh nDeso consumption, with over 1.5 million choosing sustainably produced smallholder tea. This will allow smallholder tea producers to also have an equitable income share and benefit from the tea value. The initiation of a national tea logo and the **strengthened Asia Tea Alliance** network further contributed to achieving the project's goals of fostering a sustainable and inclusive tea sector.

In 2024, the project will sustain and expand successful interventions, focusing on strengthening smallholder businesses, replicating successful models, and advocating with the government. Post-general elections, we will submit policy recommendations, and we will continue working on developing a national tea logo. Gender and social inclusion will be prioritised, emphasising the engagement of women and marginalised groups.



Facilitating an improved bargaining position of tea smallholders in Indonesia



Photo: Mrs. Tarmuti/Business Watch Indonesia

Whilst smallholders are essential actors who have significant impact on the Indonesian tea sector, they have limited capacity to maintain the sustainability of the sector. The low productivity from an average 0.4 ha tea farm per smallholder and the low price they receive for their tea are challenges for smallholders to provide for their families' livelihoods, much less to allocate for maintaining their tea plantations. Their limited capacity and high dependency on private/state-owned processing factories have led them to a lower bargaining position in the supply chain.

Paguyuban Tani Lestari, the umbrella association of more than 40,000 tea smallholders in Indonesia, is at the forefront of smallholder tea sector improvement. They have initiated various advancements in smallholder tea plantations, such as improving agricultural practices, joint-farm management, and collective marketing of smallholders tea leaves. With the support from various stakeholders, mainly Business Watch Indonesia and Solidaridad Asia, Paguyuban Tani Lestari has developed their own brand, Teh nDeso. Despite being developed in a country with a strong tea-drinking culture and growing tea market, Teh nDeso faces many challenges in reaching consumers; among others, due to tight competition with both existing national and imported products that have immense capital for implementing varying marketing strategies.

Therefore, Paguyuban Tani Lestari developed an innovative approach by applying direct sales by empowering smallholders and rural women. This marketing model contributes to developing an emotional connection between consumers and Teh nDeso. With the support from Business Watch Indonesia and Solidaridad Asia, Paguyuban Tani Lestari has conducted several campaign strategies to increase the stakeholders' support to smallholder tea products, such as linking consumers to the information on the website of [Teh nDeso](#) and [movies](#) on tea smallholder profiles through the scan barcode embedded on the tea packaging; collaboration with many journalists and [media](#); as well as cooperation with various other parties. Furthermore, a series of campaigning activities have also led to a positive impact for tea smallholders.

"Our family's small tea farm has been our primary source of livelihood, providing us with a modest income from selling fresh tea leaves. However, the prices for tea leaves have been declining, making it increasingly difficult for us to maintain the farm. Fortunately, Paguyuban Tani Lestari has guided us to adopt better agricultural practices that have resulted in a higher yield of high-quality tea leaves. Together, we have also developed the "Teh nDeso" brand, which has helped us increase the value of our tea leaves, improve our household income, and preserve our tea plantation."

Mrs. Tarmuti, tea farmer from Banjarnegara Regency



3.2.4 Bangladesh

The tea industry in Bangladesh, integral to the national economy, faces challenges impacting smallholders and supply chains, including pricing issues and climate change. Through our interventions we aim to tackle these challenges by strengthening civil society actors' capacity building, fostering networking and policy advocacy, training smallholders, enhancing industry associations, and advocating for fair pricing and sustainability through workshops and awareness interventions. In the period 2021-2022, we laid foundational groundwork through assessing the policy landscape and the tea supply chain, local civil society's advocacy capacity, and forming partnerships, setting the stage for future comprehensive interventions.

In 2023, we conducted capacity development initiatives to **empower small tea garden owners and traders** to negotiate fair pricing inclusively with tea processors. We also conducted training of smallholder tea producers on good agricultural practices contributing to improved quality of tea leaves that may subsequently fetch higher prices for tea. We facilitated linkages between smallholder tea producers and finance service providers providing smallholders access to finance to service providers. And we established partnerships with local stakeholders and industry associations, and conducted policy advocacy initiatives, to enhance transparency and fair value particularly for smallholder tea producers in the tea supply chain. We further **drafted a policy paper** on the holistic development of the Small Tea in Bangladesh to address fragmentation in the tea sector. This paper will be submitted to the relevant government ministries for consideration.

Looking ahead to 2024, we will prioritise expanding capacity-building efforts, engaging stakeholders extensively, and promote the implementation of policy recommendations to tackle financial hurdles, enhance pricing mechanisms, promote technology uptake, and bolster climate resilience through collaboration with industry, government and the Dutch Embassy.

3.2.5 Africa

In the Southern African region, we aim to address pressing challenges in the tea industry, such as declining prices and ageing bushes, crucial for the regional economy. Manual auction systems in Malawi further complicate matters, while the lack of harmonisation and integration into the African Continental Trade Agreement poses sustainability threats. To work on this, we employ a multifaceted approach, including learning exchange visits, research-driven policy proposals, and capacity strengthening of national actors, to enhance competitiveness, sustainability, and engagement with regional certifying bodies. In 2022, we initiated a regional tea multi-stakeholder platform, fostering collaboration among researchers, growers, workers and packers, laying the groundwork for future interventions.

Significant progress in 2023 include the commissioning of Fair Value Distribution studies and the capacity strengthening of tea growers and workers. We also conducted a learning visit to the East Africa Tea Traders Association (EATTA) for the Malawi Tea Association, providing insights into e-auction systems that enhance transparency and fair pricing. We collaborated with the Purple and Specialty Tea Association of Kenya focusing on training smallholder tea growers to diversify their markets through specialty and cottage tea processing. We also engaged in discussions with Rainforest Alliance and Ethical Tea Partnership focusing on advancing collaboration for **decent work, harmonising fair value standards, and promoting gender and social inclusion**. These accomplishments laid the groundwork for impactful collaboration, with notable contributions to a national dialogue platform in Malawi,



and ensuring a connected regional tea sector that promotes fair labour prices, equitable distribution and inclusivity, especially for women and youth.

In 2024, we will enhance regional alliances and partnerships, focusing on fair value distribution and promoting gender and social inclusion, with ongoing engagement with key partners like Rainforest Alliance and Ethical Tea Partnership, along with participation in the EATTA convention.

3.2.6 Mozambique

In the tea sector of Mozambique we address challenge such as representation of small tea growers, value distribution, governance and gender inequalities, by establishing MSPs, formalising the National Tea Association, conducting studies, facilitating dialogues on gender inclusion, offering lobby and advocacy training to civil society actors, organising events such as the industry day commemoration, and learning sessions to enhance stakeholder engagement and enable sector discussions around sustainability issues. Between 2021 and 2022, we made significant progress, including completion of the policy baseline, establishment of a MSP, participation in regional dialogues, creation of a producer database, conducting an advocacy training for small tea growers, engaging the private sector, and empowering civil society actors to conduct policy advocacy.

In 2023, we achieved significant milestones, including the mobilisation of 560 farm workers into the Workers Union (OTM) and renewed commitment to living wages by both the public and private sector. Mozambique is currently facing challenges in producing seedlings in-country. As such, our synergistic approach with the Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) programme facilitated climate-resilient practices, such as sourcing tea seedlings from Malawi for a replanting exercise in Gurue. We facilitated the formation of the **Mozambique National Tea Association**, comprising nine private tea estates, strengthening dialogue and fair representation for small tea growers. Grassroots advocacy efforts led to the establishment of **Tea working groups** and **MSPs** to develop and submit comprehensive policy recommendations to address the challenges posed by for example policies that lead to high taxes. Our focus on events, like the International Tea Day Commemoration, highlighted the tea sector's economic and social value, aligning with our goal of amplifying voices for farmers, workers, women and youth and promoting inclusivity, fair labour laws, and living wages by 2025. We also concluded a study to develop and propose an inclusive business model for tea farmers selling to factories in Zimbabwe

In 2024, we will sustain achievements in Mozambique's tea industry, including continued support to the National Tea Association, enhancing stakeholder engagement, conducting gender awareness campaigns, advocating for equitable opportunities, and pursuing feasibility assessments for a tea factory to drive value addition and economic development.

3.2.7 Malawi

In Malawi, we aim to address challenges in the tea sector such as policy gaps, climate change impact, and weak farmer organisation by mobilising smallholder farmers through stakeholder engagement, development of disruptive innovative tools and models, and policy advocacy. Building on its foundation laid from 2021 to 2022, we have set the stage for subsequent achievements, fostering positive reception and commitments to address policy issues in the tea industry.



In 2023, we made positive strides, particularly in policy changes and commitments. Notable achievements include the recasting of the **Crops Bill** to include tea, the development of a specific **tea sector strategy**, and commitments to support smallholder tea production by the government. The inclusion of tea in the Crop Bill and a specific tea strategy will support regulation in the sector and ensure a shared common vision and standardisation of value chain processes. We advocated for production support mechanisms, equitable access to extension services, trade reforms, and the ratification of **ILO C190**. We developed and delivered multiple **policy recommendations** in significant forums, including events commemorating Labour Day and International Tea Day. The social dialogues and engagement with stakeholders we conducted, played a crucial role in securing a 31.2% wage increase for tea workers. The completion of the Climate Vulnerability Assessment empowered stakeholders to collaborate on an action plan for environmental sustainability. Our work to **strengthen associations** like the National Smallholder Tea Growers Association, contributed to a 45% increase in tea prices. Policy advocacy resulted in government attention to smallholder farmers' demands and commitments to rectify conventions affecting the tea industry.

In 2024, we will advance its achievements through the implementation of developed policies and strategies, emphasising continued collaboration with stakeholders like smallholder farmers, tea associations and government bodies, alongside sustained momentum in stakeholder engagement, disruptive innovations, and policy advocacy to realise long-term objectives.

3.2.8 Uganda

Uganda confronts systemic challenges in the tea sector, such as inadequate policy frameworks, unfair prices and wages, and climate change impacts. In response to these challenges, we aim to establish an inclusive and responsible value chain, ensuring fair distribution of value, improving working conditions and promoting sustainability. In the period 2021-2022, we mobilised stakeholders, enhanced gender policies, formed a national small tea growers association, empowered the tea workers union, launched media campaigns, and initiated a digital Market Information System for transparent and equitable market practices.

In 2023, we successfully validated **The Uganda Tea Policy** in regional and national meetings, with inputs from various stakeholders along the value chain. The policy, now under consideration at the cabinet level, represents a crucial step toward creating an enabling environment for a sustainable tea sector. We spearheaded **media campaigns**, raising awareness of the tea policy, decent work, gender inclusion and gender-based violence, with a substantial reach of over 40,000 viewers across various platforms. The development of a web and chat box application prototype for the **Market Information System** marked a technological advancement, contributing to transparency in the tea market. Additionally, we introduced and tested a **cottage and specialty tea business model**, engaging six farmers and facilitating an exchange visit to Kenya for 20 farmers to learn about the model. The **National Association of Women in Tea Uganda** was launched, empowering women in the sector, and we supported three youths to attend the Harvest Money Expo to expand their production and market networks.

In 2024, we will advance policy implementation, particularly the Uganda Tea Policy, through stakeholder collaboration, while prioritising monitoring, evaluation and initiatives such as carbon trading and support for cottage tea businesses, alongside sustaining efforts like strengthening the National Association of Women in Tea Uganda and awareness campaigns.



3.2.9 Kenya

In Kenya, we aim to tackle sustainability challenges in the tea sector, prioritising fair value distribution and decent working conditions. Through strategic advocacy and partnerships with CSOs and governmental bodies, we promote the development of sustainability policies, transparency, and gender and social inclusion. Between 2021 and 2022, we established foundational elements, including evidence generation to advocate for an inclusive regulatory framework, partnership building, stakeholder engagement, and the revitalisation of MSPs, paving the way for comprehensive interventions in subsequent years and preparing stakeholders for collaborative efforts in reshaping the tea sector.

In 2023, we strengthened the Kenya National Tea Platform (KNTP) through training, piloted a Digital Market Information Tool for smallholder farmers, tested a new biochemical method for tea quality grading, and conducted Decent Work campaigns to improve working conditions for tea workers. Additionally, we engaged in **multi stakeholder dialogues** focusing on priority sector issues, leading to the acknowledgment by the national government of the need for a **National Tea Policy** to regulate and harmonise the tea sector. The Tea Board of Kenya was entrusted with leading its development, signalling a crucial step toward sector-wide policy change. We convened MSP dialogues with government, CSOs, farmer associations, academia and the private sector. The MSP addressed key challenges, resulting in a common stakeholders' **Position Paper** submitted to the Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries. **Recommendations on sustainability standards and the formation of a National Tea Association** are other notable achievements. The sustainability standards are essential in ensuring that the tea value chain adheres to a common code of sustainability conduct. The National Tea Association will be essential for harmonising tea production processes, facilitating dialogue and common decision making between different stakeholders and value chain actors at national level, which is currently fragmented. Additionally, we formed the **Kenya Women in Tea Value Chain Association** that aims to empower women in the sector.

In 2024, we will focus on the development of the National Tea Policy while maintaining collaboration with stakeholders like government bodies, smallholder farmers and tea associations. We will also explore innovative solutions like the digital Market Information System prototype to enhance transparency and fair value distribution in the tea value chain.



Women in tea: gender-responsive measures in the tea supply chain



Photo: Women from Kericho county in Kenya during the launch of the Kenya Women in Tea Value Chain Association on 8 March 2023.

Solidaridad East and Central Africa partnered with women from Bushenyi district, Uganda, and Kericho county, Kenya, to establish the Women in Tea Value Chain Associations in Uganda and Kenya, respectively, on 22 and 8 March, 2023. The associations are set to address the interests of women working in tea companies.

"We will have all these women come onboard and fight against the inequalities present not only in the tea sector but also in other sectors," says Anne Njuguna, senior project officer, Solidaridad East and Central Africa.

Influenced by Solidaridad's RECLAIM Sustainability! project, the associations facilitate women's inclusion, bridging the underlying gap in the representation of women in decision-making processes. Since their inception, the associations have continued to advocate for the economic, social, and political rights of women, in addition to offering training in ethical and sustainable tea production. In Kenya, for example, the association actively engaged in the evaluation of the [Tea Act](#), paying particular attention to the article that addressed sexual violence on tea farms.

"We have successfully raised awareness among women working on smallholder farms, particularly at buying centres, and have mobilised men to campaign against any forms of injustices directed to women in the tea industry." Says Beatrice Tonui, director, Kenya Women in Tea Value Chain Association.





In Uganda, the association, which is now registered as the National Association of Women in Tea Uganda, has established a cottage industry specialising in the production of specialty teas.

"By being the first to produce some of these teas, we provide an alternative to the current tea crisis, in which teas are selling at a loss and are in high demand due to their health benefits," says Nyabuhara Julian, chairperson, National Association of Women in Tea Uganda.



3.3 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR RESULTS 2023

FIGURE 5. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TEA PROGRAMME 2023

	Key Performance Indicator	TARGET 2023	RESULTS 2023	TARGET 2025
 ADVOCATE THROUGH INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE Better, innovative and inclusive solutions that address issues in the value chain are co-developed and submitted to policy makers				
OUTCOME	# of innovative and inclusive solutions / recommendations that are submitted by civil society through inclusive dialogues to key public and private sector decision makers for adoption and implementation	23	19	21
OUTPUT	# of dialogues initiated, strengthened or joined to engage Civil Society and Civil Society's agenda in debate with public and private decision makers	24	30	12
	# of (governmental and private) policies for sustainable production, trade and consumption influenced	24	13	19
 ACCELERATE DISRUPTIVE INNOVATIONS Improved transparency and negotiation position for farmers and workers in the supply chain, by co-developing and implementing innovative digital and fair business models				
OUTCOME	# of farmers, miners and workers with improved bargaining position through equitable access to (digital) market intelligence or as a result of new and innovative business models	122,200	40,905	85,000
OUTPUT	# of farmers, miners and workers using the developed tools and business models being tested for sourcing, production, trade and investment	127,250	70,363	64,600
	# of tools and business models developed and being tested for sourcing, production, trade and investment	5	9	8
	# and kind private sector partners engaged to co-design, test and promote new tools and business models for sourcing, production, trade and investment	22	22	15
	# of other non private sector partners (knowledge, public, CSOs, others) engaged in co-design, test and promote new tools or business models for sourcing, production, trade and investment	16	30	22
 AMPLIFY VOICE OF CITIZENRY Citizens and CSOs are mobilised, activated and engaged to change norms and influence policy agendas				
OUTCOME	# of individuals activated and mobilised to raise their voice to push the policy agenda, influence societal (gender) norms, make informed decisions (consumer and corporate behaviour, e.g. on production and consumption practices)	204,800	21,000,000	3,200
OUTPUT	# of CSO led awareness raising campaigns	30	24	12
 STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY CSOs are strengthened to speak up and engage in policy dialogue				
OUTCOME	# Civil Society actors and target groups with increased L&A capacities	24	51	36
OUTPUT	# and type of Civil Society actors and target groups supported	48	78	36





4. Palm Oil



Key milestones achieved in 2023:

- New Traceability model for palm oil developed for IPOS & ISPO (Asia)
- China Sustainable Palm Oil (CPOS) launched (Asia)
- Mutual recognition of CPOS and ISPO (Asia)
- CSOs and producer organisations capacitated (Africa)
- Policy recommendations published and submitted to policy decision makers (Africa)
- Media campaigns rolled out, success stories documented and published (Africa)
- Awareness raised at communities and household level (Africa)
- Report on decent work and gender inclusivity published (LatAm)
- Decent work, gender inclusivity regulatory frameworks implemented by private and public sector (LatAm)
- Workers and palm oil producers' awareness raised about gender inclusion, no discrimination, living wage, labour rights (LatAm)
- Citizens mobilised in Europe to influence the policy agenda (Europe)
- 2 additional private sector partners adopt recommendations (Europe)
- Business Case of Smallholder RSPO certification improved; (Global)

Total Actuals 2023: €1,605,704, for Ghana (16%), Côte d'Ivoire (15%), Sierra Leone (12%), India (13%), Indonesia (14 %), China (7%), Honduras (18%) and Europe (5%)



4.1 INTRODUCTION

In 2023, the palm oil industry faced significant challenges, including the EUDR, which threatened to sideline smallholders due to compliance difficulties, amid broader issues like labour rights, deforestation, and the need for sustainable production practices. This situation underscored the critical need for a strategic approach to foster a sustainable palm oil industry that benefits smallholders, protects workers' rights, conserves forests, and rewards sustainable practices. To effectively harness the benefits of the EUDR for smallholders, Solidaridad and its partners have emphasised facilitating their integration into European value chains. This involves engaging in strategic dialogue and developing resources to understand and adapt to the EUDR's framework positively. Efforts to promote equitable and sustainable practices involved establishing a Joint Task Force for inclusive EUDR implementation, advocating for fair value distribution, supporting pricing mechanisms in Ghana, enhancing natural resources management and climate resilience, and accelerating certification for Indonesian smallholders.

To date, significant achievements include the advancement of labor, gender, and social inclusion strategies; the development of training programmes to promote gender equality and decent work; the introduction of tools like the 'Bentang Sawit' app; and contributions to sustainable consumption dialogues in Asia and Europe. Solidaridad's support for the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) has been instrumental in strengthening smallholder representation and enhancing certification standards. Through these comprehensive efforts, the RS! Palm Oil programme aims to transform the palm oil sector into a more inclusive, sustainable, and equitable industry, navigating the complex dynamics of production and trade in the face of regulatory challenges.

4.2 PROGRESS TOWARDS MILESTONES 2023

4.2.1 Asia

At a regional level our objective is to strengthen the palm oil sector governance, coordination, cooperation and alignment of the Asian sustainability standards for palm oil production and trade between the Asian countries. In 2021-2022, we supported the formation and launch of the Asian Palm Oil Alliance (APOA), a **regional MSP** comprising key stakeholders from major palm oil consuming countries and the Solvent Extractor's Association (SEA) of India. Aiming to safeguard economic interests and promote sustainable palm oil consumption, the alliance focuses on increasing consumption in member countries.

Building on this, In 2023, we facilitated key multi-stakeholder dialogues from major palm oil consuming countries to address common interests and promote cooperation and enable policies for inclusive, sustainable oil palm development and trade relations between India and Indonesia. We collaborated with the Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries (CPOPC) to promote sustainability in the palm oil supply chain, enhance smallholder inclusivity, foster industrial cooperation, and develop trade policies. Together with CPOPC and MVO (The Netherlands Oils and Fat Industry), we produced a briefing paper outlining the challenges faced by oil palm smallholders in meeting sustainability requirements and the potential impacts of the EUDR. To address these concerns, APOA proposed policy recommendations, including an inclusivity quota for smallholders in EU markets and support for EUDR compliance through the Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) and Indonesia Sustainable Palm Oil Standard (ISPO) standards, promoting smallholder inclusivity.



In 2024, we will continue supporting the alliance to facilitate dialogues for the alignment of **Asian sustainability standards** (IPOS-ISPO-CPOS) on palm oil production and trade, and to facilitate a **benchmarking** exercise to compare the **MSPO** and **ISPO** standards against the EUDR and RSPO.

4.2.2 India

In India, we aim to strengthen the sector governance, CSOs and smallholders' associations through a National Platform for coordination, cooperation and alignment with the India Palm Oil Sustainability (IPOS) standard for production and trade. In 2021-2022, we facilitated multi-stakeholder dialogues in India to promote a sustainable palm oil supply chain and emphasise the significance of the (IPOS) standard. As a result, Godrej Agrovet Ltd., a major Indian industry player, embraced the IPOS standard within its supply chain and trained over 2,000 smallholder farmers in IPOS production practices, aligning with India's goal of achieving self-sufficiency in edible oils. Therefore, in 2023, we supported the SEA-IPOS Council to facilitate dialogues on **IPOS standard revision** and benchmarked the IPOS with the other available standards, **MSPO**, **ISPO** and **RSPO**, and as a result of the benchmarking, we have began the process of modifying the standard to incorporate the missing indicators. In 2024, we will continue the stakeholders' consultations, with the endorsement and launch of the IPOS revised standard expected in the year 2024.

In 2022, we held consultations with the key supply chain players to develop a framework for a **traceability model** for sustainable palm oil, which would ensure that palm oil is being sourced and produced, under the environmental and social conditions, following IPOS and ISPO principles. In 2023, we started engaging with Godrej Agrovet Ltd, to integrate the **IPOS-ISPO aligned traceability tool** within its supply chain. Godrej is expected to adopt and roll out the tool in 2024, to improve traceability of the Palm Oil produced within its supply chain. In addition to Traceability, to counterbalance the negative image of palm oil consumption among consumers, in 2022, we organised a study on Palm Oil health benefits. In 2023, we also engaged a professional agency, who launched **national consumer campaigns** to promote the consumption of sustainable palm oil, based on the outcomes of the study. These consumer campaigns are expected to continue in 2024.

4.2.3 Indonesia

In Indonesia, we aim to strengthen the governance of the Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO) standard, which serves smallholders, businesses and consumers. We also aim to enhance the capacity of CSOs to influence policy, and achieve greater inclusivity of smallholders in the palm oil sector.

Under the sustainable palm oil framework, the Indonesian government requires ISPO certification by 2025 for all entities involved in the oil palm plantation industry, including independent farmers. Despite this mandate, the attainment of ISPO certification for independent smallholders advances slowly and faces significant challenges. Factors such as legality issues, organisational structure, knowledge gaps, and financial constraints hinder their ability to meet ISPO standards and gain certification. Therefore in 2022, we initiated a **multi-stakeholder dialogue** engaging key players in the palm oil sector to enhance the governance of the ISPO standard and advocate for the inclusion of smallholders in the sector. In 2023, we built on this and focussed on supporting the development of an **action plan** to accelerate the **adoption of ISPO certification by smallholders** to ensure that



traceable, high-quality palm oil from Indonesia meets the standards of importing countries. This was facilitated through **Multi-stakeholder dialogues** which brought together key sector stakeholders including government representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Private sector actors, academics, Farmer Associations representatives and ISPO Secretariat to identify challenges and barriers to ISPO certification for independent smallholders.

Furthermore, to provide farmers with better guidance on sustainable production practices and to improve transparency and connection in the value chain, we finalised the development of a **Traceability Model**, an Android-based tool available in Google Play Store, which is a combination of traceability and farmer electronic learning tool. The Android-based tool assesses farm management practices, agricultural practices, compliance to the principles and criteria of sustainable palm oil, and good agriculture and better farm management knowledge resources. The tool will be rolled out to smallholder organisations (groups, association, alliance, unions) in 2024. In 2024, we will also roll out **national consumer campaigns** to create awareness on the goodness of palm oil and promote consumption of sustainable palm oil.

Collaboration to promote sustainable palm oil industry and smallholder inclusivity



To advance the development and sustainability of oil palm cultivation and trade, Solidaridad Asia and the Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries (CPOPC), an intergovernmental organisation for palm oil-producing countries, entered into a strategic collaboration,

signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Jakarta in July 2023.

This partnership will focus on fostering cooperation among palm oil producing and consuming countries, with a shared objective of ensuring long-term benefits to farmers and consumers, including the following priorities:

Capacity Building and Sustainability: The organisations will provide resources and support to enhance the capacity of oil palm smallholders to adopt regenerative agriculture practices, and establish a practical and economically feasible carbon verification system.

Promotion of National Sustainability Standards: The collaboration will engage key stakeholders of the Asian Palm Oil Alliance (APOA) and the European Union (EU) to promote acceptance and recognition of national sustainability standards, such as the Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO) and Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO).

Benchmarking and Policy Advocacy: Solidaridad and CPOPC will conduct a comprehensive benchmarking exercise to compare the MSPO and ISPO standards against the EU Deforestation-Free (EUDR) regulation.



4.2.4 China

In China, we aim to create the conditions to contribute to smallholder inclusive sustainable palm oil production and trade, in which workers in plantations and mills work under decent working conditions, forests and land rights are equally protected, and smallholders are rewarded for the investments made to produce under sustainable conditions. In 2022, we mobilised the China National Vegetable Oil Association (CNVOA), the South China Agricultural University (SCAU) and other relevant stakeholders to join in a dialogue process and support the **set-up of a national China MSP** to develop the **National Standard for Sustainable Palm Oil Production (CPOS) standard**.

In 2023, we engaged the SCAU to carry out research to understand the current situation of palm oil trade and trade policy for sustainable palm oil and the development of CPOS. In 2024, we will continue our collaboration with SCAU, to finalise the policy framework and recommendations for the establishment of the CPOS framework.

4.2.5 Ghana

In Ghana, we aim to contribute to smallholder inclusive sustainable palm oil production and trade, in which workers in plantations and mills, work under decent working conditions, forests and land rights are equally protected, and smallholders are rewarded for the investments made to produce under sustainable conditions.

The challenges related to the Land Act, 2020 (Act 1036) that affect small cocoa farmers in Ghana (see [Section 1.2.1](#)), also affect small scale oil palm farmers in a similar way. Despite the adoption of the Land Act, 2020 (Act 1036), its effective implementation has been hindered by technical gaps among the primary stakeholders in the sector. In 2023, we supported our partner COLANDEF in mobilising and compiling inputs from stakeholders in the land sector, including traditional authorities, queen mothers and farmers, which will be used to influence the drafting of the ongoing **Legislative Instrument (LI) of the Land Act 2020 (Act 1036)**. When passed, the LI will provide clarity to the technical and operationally broad provisions in the Land Act to facilitate easy implementation. Furthermore, to address quality assurance issues related to seedling production, we, together with the Oil Palm value chain actors, developed a **Seedling Production and Distribution Policy** which will regulate how seedlings are produced and distributed in the country, which will be shared with the Tree Crops Development Authority (TCDA) for their endorsement and implementation. Complementing this, the implementation of the **pricing mechanism policy**, which determines floor prices for fresh fruit bunches, started in January 2023 and has been used by the [TCDA](#) to ensure fair prices for all.

We have also noticed that the participation of women in governance and leadership in the National Oil Palm Value Chain Association has been low over the years. Therefore, in 2022 we developed, together with OPDAG, a **gender strategy** which among other things, sought to increase participation of women in governance and leadership in the association. In 2023, after the completion of the strategy, we organised a dialogue workshop together with the stakeholders of the OPDAG to refine and adopt the final strategy for implementation. After the development and adoption of the gender policy, OPDAG organised elections for new executives in their zones. Prior to the elections, there were less than 5 women in executive roles, out of 38 zonal executives, however in 2023, 16 women were elected, following the adoption of the gender strategy. We also supported the **capacity building** of the newly elected zonal executives, in total 36 executives participated in this training.



In 2021, we also started to develop an innovative digital solution to improve price transparency between buyers and producers: [Harvest Alert](#). The app aims to improve transparency allowing the producers to harvest only when buyers are ready to evacuate harvested fruits the same day, to ensure a fair value for the harvested fruits. This will increase smallholders' bargaining power for the right amount according to the weight at harvest, which is registered in the app at the moment the buyer makes the request. In 2023, together with private sector partners⁴, we onboarded over 2,900 oil palm farmers to test the app. During the testing various recommendations were made, with one of the recommendations, particularly significant for the aggregators and mills, to customise sender names for all SMS notifications sent to farmers' phones. This feature has been successfully incorporated into the platform, allowing aggregators and mills to personalise the SMS notifications. In 2024, we will set up the tool to start sending monthly market price information on Fresh Fruit Bunches to 1,500 farmers and stakeholders. This will **strengthen the farmers' bargaining power** when negotiating with the mills and collectors.

4.2.6 Côte d'Ivoire

In Côte d'Ivoire, we aim to contribute, in an innovative way, to a sustainable inclusion in the palm oil value chain by taking into account the interests, voices and rights of producers, workers and citizens who need to be represented and listened to in the decision-making relating to the sustainable management of resources, decent working conditions, equitable distribution of value and sustainable consumption.

In 2021, we learned that the provisions of the law prohibiting child trafficking and the worst forms of child labour are not known for most of the palm oil stakeholders, because they are usually associated with other sectors such as cocoa and coffee, where exports to Europe play a more prominent role. This has led to high incidence of child labour in palm oil plantations. In 2022, we **capacitated and sensitised** 473 palm oil producers on these child protection provisions. Building on this, in 2023 29 facilitators and managers of 6 cooperatives were capacitated on the international and national regulation of **child protection** and the national legal framework on **child labour** mitigation and remediation systems. This training will help in the enforcement of decent work and child labour free oil palm production and the implementation of international and national regulation of child protection.

In 2023, we have built on the work done in 2021 and 2022 on the development of the AIPH sustainable development plan including a **gender inclusion strategy**. This year 10 women oil palm producers from six cooperatives were capacitated to engage in sectoral dialogue, advocate for gender inclusion in the sector and get ready for leadership positions and the AIPH received capacity building in good governance, transparency and gender inclusion. These women also got an opportunity to participate in SARA (Agriculture and Human Resources Exhibition) where they were able to voice their concerns as female smallholders, particularly regarding access to land, during the event held by the AIPH to present their sustainable development plan and gender strategy. Aligned with this, we conducted awareness raising campaigns on **land rights** through local radio stations with the messages in local languages, breaking down some key articles contained in the forestry code for ease of understanding. Furthermore, to contribute to addressing the issues with the land acquisition process, we developed and shared a [video documentary](#) with stakeholders including farmers, government institutions and media on the land acquisition processes, challenges encountered by smallholder farmers,

4 BOPP, TOPP, AgroQuorum, NORPALM, GOPDC, Assin Oil mills, Juabeng Oil mills, B-BOVID, NATK ventures



women and recommendations. The video documentary will serve as an additional source of evidence regarding recent developments in the land space, enabling stakeholders to review and identify corrective actions to address gaps that hinder land acquisition for productivity.

4.2.7 Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, we focus on addressing policy and other regulatory frameworks, through advocacy, lobbying, women's inclusion, and natural resource management along the oil palm value chain.

In 2021, we supported the establishment of the National Oil Palm Platform (NOPP) to jointly develop with stakeholders a National Oil Palm Policy. To build on this, in 2023 we convened two national **multi-stakeholder dialogues** on the formulation of the first ever **Oil Palm Value Chain Policy** in the country and its validation, which contributed to the formulation of **policy recommendations**. Additionally, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, we organised a Validation workshop that gave key stakeholders from the government, private companies, smallholder farmers and CSOs the opportunity to make meaningful contributions on the draft of the policy and its implementation plan. This fostered dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders at national and regional levels to harmonise and align policies and regulations of the oil palm sector.

The **Forestry Policy (2010)**, is being slowly implemented and most farmers are not aware of the policy. In 2023, we focused on raising awareness among palm oil farmers and communities, and strengthening the capacity of local actors to ensure effective implementation. 60 CSOs and smallholder farmers were trained on Community Forest Management and protection for effective environmental management. In 2024, we will continue raising awareness among palm oil farmers and communities, highlighting the importance of this policy to comply with the **RSPO standard** and the **EUDR**, through radio discussions. Palm industries are seeking to be RSPO certified so that they can meet international standards. In this regard EUDR plays a key role and farmers and actors must ensure compliance.

Finally, following the passage of the Land Commission Act, Customary Land Rights Acts, and Gender Act in 2022, we intensified our work to raise citizens' awareness on these legislations through a **media awareness campaign** and **community sensitisation** activities. We collected testimonies from both radio listeners and participants of field sensitisations about the positive impact of this action, and compiled them into a success story titled **The Power of Radio**. We also facilitated the **capacity building training** for 30 Civil Society Organisations, **gender champions**, Ministry of Agriculture personnel, private sector partners and smallholder farmers on these regulatory frameworks to take up advocacy on policies and key sustainability issues in the oil palm sector at national, district and community levels. We will continue working on this in 2024.

4.2.8 Honduras

In Honduras, we aim to build an inclusive model to achieve decent work conditions based on evidence, increase the knowledge and implementation capacity of producers, workers, the private and public sectors, to achieve decent working conditions for workers in the palm oil sector and to strengthen the capacity of CSOs to promote decent work in the sector.



In 2023, we continued our work to **lobby the private sector for the adoption and implementation of the Decent Work model**. The palm oil sector is highly dominated by men, with women working in precarious conditions, struggling against gender stereotypes and lack of awareness from workers at all levels of organisation. Although there was a Gender Committee, represented by both male and female workers including middle management and field personnel, it lacked clarity regarding its scope and actions to be taken as part of its functions. In 2023, we supported the Gender Committee to formulate an annual operational plan for 2023 which aimed at enhancing the capabilities and knowledge of both men and women about equal opportunities and grievance mechanisms. This plan is aligned with the principles outlined in the Decent Work framework and **RSPO Principles & Criteria**, with a focus on promoting **gender equality** and ensuring equal opportunities for all employees. We also conducted workshops which trained more than 2,000 workers across 3 companies (JAREMAR, COAPALMA ECARA, and ACEYDESA), on the three **principles of decent work** (non-discrimination, gender inclusion and reproductive rights, and the elimination of child labour). This intervention will enable employees to have strengthened capacities and better understanding of decent work and their labour rights to establish dialogues with their employers.

Additionally in 2023, to promote compliance with the European market regulations, we facilitated a **multi stakeholder dialogue on the EUDR** with associated producers of the Independent Agricultural Producers Association of African Palm in Guaymas (Paiguay) and HONDUPALMA, delving into aspects of Zero Deforestation, traceability, and Due Diligence, as well as opportunities for the use and adoption of digital tools for georeferencing and multi-temporal analysis. The sector presented significant progress towards complying with EU regulations and shared information for government validation and various political dialogues were held between the sector and stakeholders to establish a roadmap as the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the **EUDR** regulation.

4.2.9 Europe

In Europe, we aim to contribute to the development of more sustainable and inclusive global palm oil value chains by influencing both public and corporate policies in the areas of value distribution, decent work and natural resources management.

In 2023, the implementation of the EUDR dominated the activities of the European actors in the palm oil value chain. In order to ensure an inclusive implementation, a better mutual understanding between parties proves to be essential (see [Section 8. Advocate & Amplify in Europe](#)). During the year, we continued to stimulate the Government-to-Government (G2G) dialogues between palm oil producing and consuming countries, following up on the conversations initiated in 2022. By raising awareness on the [implications of the EUDR for oil palm smallholders](#), together with Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries and MVO, we contributed to the set up of a formal Joint Task Force between the EU and the governments of Indonesia and Malaysia, through which concerns on the implementation of the EUDR can be addressed and practical solutions can be found. We also established close cooperation with the NISCOPS programme, which is starting its second phase, and where the dialogue between the Dutch government and the governments of Indonesia and Malaysia is also stimulated, to reach a better mutual understanding between the EU and producing countries.



Additionally, following-up on the [Palm Oil Barometer](#) launched in 2022, and through our collaboration with companies in the Sustainable Palm Oil Choice (SPOC), we continued to raise interest among private sector companies to develop more smallholder inclusive value chains. As a result of this work, **Sime Darby-Colgate included a component to reward smallholders for their environmental performance.** We also published a [research](#) on internalising external cost (fair price) of palm oil production. Furthermore, in our work within the **MSI Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)**, 2023 proved to be a year of steady hard work. We contributed to the review of the RSPO Principles & Criteria, giving inputs on issues like free, prior and informed consent, living wage and women's rights. The adoption of the updated standard is postponed to 2024. We also participated in the RSPO Complaints Panel, contributing to the settlement of cases, where we successfully advocated for the relaunch of the RSPO Smallholder Support Fund (RSSF), and we supported more active representation of smallholders in the RSPO Executive Board.





4.3 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR RESULTS 2023

FIGURE 6. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS PALM OIL PROGRAMME 2023

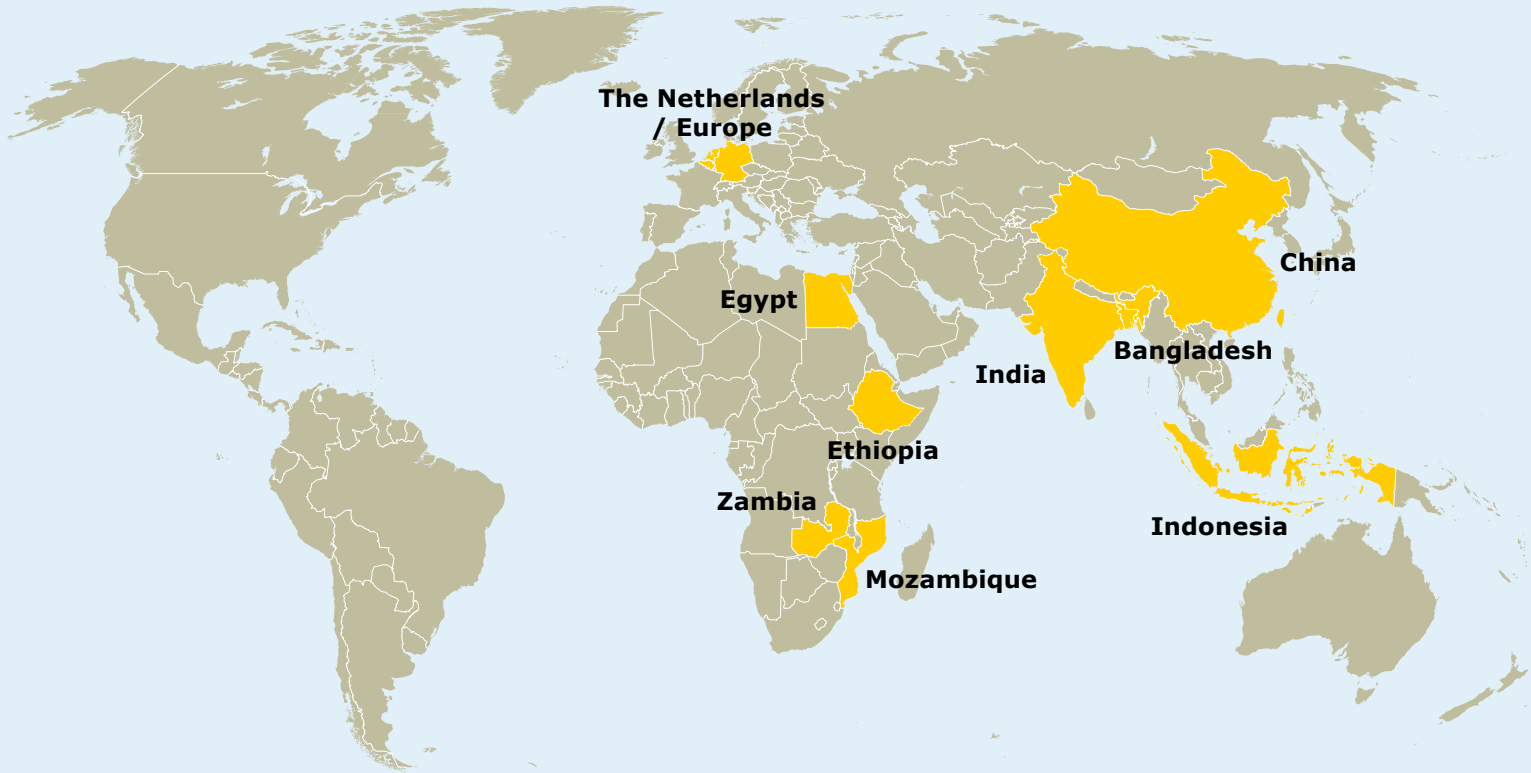
	Key Performance Indicator	TARGET 2023	RESULTS 2023	TARGET 2025
ADVOCATE THROUGH INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE Better, innovative and inclusive solutions that address issues in the value chain are co-developed and submitted to policy makers				
OUTCOME	# of innovative and inclusive solutions / recommendations that are submitted by civil society through inclusive dialogues to key public and private sector decision makers for adoption and implementation	14	16	7
OUTPUT	# of dialogues initiated, strengthened or joined to engage Civil Society and Civil Society's agenda in debate with public and private decision makers	21	26	22
	# of (governmental and private) policies for sustainable production, trade and consumption influenced	21	22	22
ACCELERATE DISRUPTIVE INNOVATIONS Improved transparency and negotiation position for farmers and workers in the supply chain, by co-developing and implementing innovative digital and fair business models				
OUTCOME	# of farmers, miners and workers with improved bargaining position through equitable access to (digital) market intelligence or as a result of new and innovative business models	100	2,900	200
OUTPUT	# of farmers, miners and workers using the developed tools and business models being tested for sourcing, production, trade and investment	5,774	6,990	2,500
	# of tools and business models developed and being tested for sourcing, production, trade and investment	4	5	6
	# and kind private sector partners engaged to co-design, test and promote new tools and business models for sourcing, production, trade and investment	16	10	12
	# of other non private sector partners (knowledge, public, CSOs, others) engaged in co-design, test and promote new tools or business models for sourcing, production, trade and investment	34	12	17
AMPLIFY VOICE OF CITIZENRY Citizens and CSOs are mobilised, activated and engaged to change norms and influence policy agendas				
OUTCOME	# of individuals activated and mobilised to raise their voice to push the policy agenda, influence societal (gender) norms, make informed decisions (consumer and corporate behaviour, e.g. on production and consumption practices)	280	268	2,500
OUTPUT	# of CSO led awareness raising campaigns	8	6	10
STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY CSOs are strengthened to speak up and engage in policy dialogue				
OUTCOME	# Civil Society actors and target groups with increased L&A capacities	17	44	47
OUTPUT	# and type of Civil Society actors and target groups supported	43	54	47







5. Cotton & Textiles



Key milestones achieved in 2023:

- ECI campaign finished and if successful legislative proposal handed in at EU level
- Recommendations on legislative proposal for regulatory frameworks and reducing unintended consequences at EU level for fashion sector
- Sustainable Cotton Ranking published, and related PR campaign executed in Europe
- Consumer campaigns carried out in Asia
- European citizens mobilised to push for change with policy makers
- Asia Advocacy Charter Developed for Textile and Garment Sector
- In Egypt Textiles: business case developed; Cotton - road map agreed

Total Actuals 2023: 2,597,819, for Bangladesh (19%), Indonesia (11%), India (17%), China (11%), Mozambique (14%), Zambia (12%), Ethiopia (6%), Egypt (3%) and Europe (7%)



5.1 INTRODUCTION

During 2023, the global cotton and textiles industry found itself at a critical crossroads, influenced by significant legislative changes in the EU and US, such as the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). These regulations mandate a shift towards sustainable, ethical and environmentally friendly production and consumption practices. Amidst this backdrop, smallholder cotton farmers and garment workers in Asia and Africa face challenges of accessing decent employment, earning fair wages, and preserving their natural ecosystems. In response to these challenges, we champion an integrated strategy focused on creating a responsible, inclusive, and environmentally conscious cotton and textiles sector; emphasising improved purchasing practices within the industry, fostering partnerships with European brands, and engaging in MSIs that advocate for better living conditions for farmers and workers.

Our efforts extend to addressing local challenges and exploring innovative solutions in Africa, with initiatives aimed at promoting the sustainability of cotton production and facilitating dialogues in Zambia. In Asia, our focus shifts towards environmental sustainability and economic recovery, complementing and contributing to interventions that promote regenerative practices and platforms connecting textile products with buyers. To date, our work has led to notable achievements: strengthening collaborations with European brands to improve industry purchasing practices, launching targeted initiatives in Africa and Asia to address specific regional challenges, and advocating for fair labour practices, environmental stewardship, and equitable value distribution. Through these concerted efforts, we are making strides towards transforming the global cotton and textiles industry into one that is sustainable, ethical and beneficial for all stakeholders, reflecting the increasing consumer demand for sustainably produced goods and the necessity for robust private and public sector engagement.

5.2 PROGRESS TOWARDS MILESTONES 2023

5.2.1 Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, we aim to address sustainability challenges in the textile industry by enhancing worker safety, efficiency and reducing negative environmental impacts. Through worker empowerment, gender inclusivity and advocacy, we aim to improve manufacturing processes and promote technological advancements for a resilient and equitable supply chain. In the period 2021-2022, we established the foundation for our advocacy work by conducting policy studies, engaging stakeholders and promoting sustainable practices in the sector.

In 2023, we successfully collaborated with partners like EQMS Consulting Limited, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), ESTex International and Bangladesh Labour Foundation to execute various activities. We made progress by implementing targeted interventions such as the development of **gender inclusivity tools**, consultations with workers' federation representatives for just transition, and **workshops on sustainable business growth**. We also developed a **position paper on energy efficiency**, contributing to the long-term sustainability of Bangladesh's apparel industry. We have also taken steps to firm up partnership with The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association to enhance the well-being of women workers in the textile industry and develop a policy framework for companies and industry associations for upskilling and

reskilling of 3,000 women workers to improve their competitiveness in the work space. In 2024, we will leverage 2023 achievements, prioritising capacity building of civil society actors, policy advocacy, stakeholder engagement, integrating gender and social inclusion, strengthening partnerships, and addressing challenges such as political instability and wage fixation through continued dialogues.

Fostering sustainability in apparel industry through Due Diligence legislation workshop



Together with the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, Solidaridad organised a workshop on the impact of the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) legislation on the apparel industry in Bangladesh in December 2023.

This workshop brought together industry leaders, government representatives, development partners, brands, and other key stakeholders to engage in informative discussions and exchange insights on how to effectively integrate sustainability measures into the Bangladesh apparel sector. It provided a platform for participants to network, share challenges, and explore potential solutions to collectively advance sustainability goals.

As the Bangladesh apparel industry plays a vital role in the international garment sector, industry participants need to comprehend the requirements set forth by the EU CSDDD. Key topics covered during the workshop included an overview of the EU CSDDD, implications for the Bangladesh apparel industry, best practices for implementing due diligence in supply chains, stakeholder perspectives and collaboration opportunities for sustainable development.

Selim Reza Hasan, country manager at Solidaridad Bangladesh, highlighted the industry’s commitment to economic sustainability through innovation, digitisation, product diversification, and efficiency enhancement. Furthermore, Sheikh H M Mustafiz, Chair at the Standing Committee on Sustainability, BGMEA; and Managing Director at Cute Dress Industry Ltd. shared:

"Sustainability goes beyond climate, and the role that businesses can play in protecting both the environment and supporting broader issues such as human rights needs the attention of policy-makers, investors, consumers, and other stakeholders."



5.2.2 Indonesia

In Indonesia, we aim to address sustainability challenges in the textile industry, including environmental impacts, poor working conditions, and market access issues. By implementing policies, promoting worker empowerment, and enhancing supply chain transparency, we seek to foster a sustainable fashion industry, while collaborating with local partners to raise awareness and strengthen CSOs. In the period 2021-2022, we conducted a policy study and set-up a MSP to explore CSR commitments in the cotton and textiles sector.

We made substantial progress in 2023, leveraging partnerships and implementing targeted initiatives. In collaboration with our local partner TORAJAMELO, we conceived and developed the digital platform [AHANA.co](#) serving as a direct link between textile products and buyers. This platform **facilitates market access, while raising awareness about the working conditions of textile artisans**. The AHANA.com marketplace connected more than 4,244 Indonesian artisans with buyers and promoted AHANA sustainability standards. The development and successful launch of [KUBU.id](#), a digital tool for workers, garnered 75,000 downloads since May 2023. This platform provides workers with **access to information, skills improvement and networking opportunities, reinforcing their voices** and contributing to a more sustainable textile sector. We also actively engaged in **capacity building for weaving communities**, launched **public campaigns** on community-based eco-products, and advocated for sustainable artisanal traditional textiles. Indigenous weavers showed enthusiasm for learning sustainable practices, emphasising the potential positive impact of sustainable fashion on local communities. Moreover, we **strengthened civil society** organisations like PBI Gerbangmassa to encourage the formation and support of textile village clusters, promoting sustainability at the grassroots level.

In 2024, we will continue advocating for CSR policies, facilitating digital market access, empowering workers, and forming coalitions for sustainable textile initiatives, while expanding efforts to enhance transparency, traceability, and sustainability standards like AHANA.com.

5.2.3 India

In India, we address complex issues in the cotton and textile industry, including disruptions, organic cotton fraud, traceability, and environmental concerns, by advocating policies and fostering sustainable practices throughout the supply chain. Central to our strategy is the formation of the Alliance of Cotton and Textile stakeholders in regenerative cotton (ACRE), which leads awareness raising programmes, pilot proposals and participates in national and international forums related to regenerative practices. In the period 2021-2022, we established a robust foundation through policy analysis, while advocating for economic recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic, and integrating pollution control measures in the value chain.

The achievements in 2023 reflect significant strides towards sustainable recovery in the cotton and textile industry. A notable accomplishment was the active role played by ACRE, convening high-level awareness programmes and submitting a pilot proposal in Maharashtra on regenerative practices in the cotton and textile sector, essential for the sustainable production of cotton. We enrolled a total of 17,000 farmers onto the [SOLITRACE app](#), facilitating traceability and integrating data from farm to processing through various trials. This creates transparency in the value chain and allows for smallholder cotton producers to bargain for better prices and advocate for incentives for implementing regenerative agriculture practices. We established a **MSP** with smallholder farmers, ACRE, smallholder producer associations,



CSOs and academia among others, we engaged in **national conferences**, and established viable business cases contributing to creating a sustainable pathway for the Indian textile industry. Crucially, we integrated a Gender & Social Inclusion approach, with more than 5,000 women farmers directly enrolled in sustainable cotton programmes.

In 2024, we aim to advance policy advocacy, bolster ACRE and enhance the digital traceability portal, aligning with major brands' sustainability goals, while fostering collaboration across the supply chain for the adoption of regenerative practices.

5.2.4 China

In China, we aim to address environmental and labour challenges within the cotton and textiles sector, characterised by conventional practices leading to environmental degradation and poor working conditions. With a focus on developing the China Sustainable Cotton (CSC) framework and empowering farmers and workers, we aim to mitigate environmental impacts, enhance working conditions and promote sustainability throughout the supply chain.

In 2023, the **CSC framework** was finalised, marking a significant milestone. The CSC framework is a voluntary standard that guides cotton producers to adopt sustainable production and operation, meet the demand for high-quality and sustainable cotton products, address the problem of unbalanced industry development, promote ecological civilisation, increase cotton farmers' income and improve the level of rural economic development. We conducted various meetings and workshops, with a wide range of stakeholders (local government agencies, research institutions, agriculture companies, and cotton planting and producing enterprises) to mobilise resources and engage in cross-learning on the best approaches to implement the CSC framework. We also facilitated a **MSP** between local farmers, local ginneries and experts in Gansu, to share findings from the rural revitalisation case study in this province, which is a summary report about sustainable development of the cotton industry. Our emphasis on **gender and youth inclusiveness**, as reflected in the training of women workers and the identification of **female champions**, contributed to broader community empowerment, paving the way for women to have a competitive edge against their male counterparts at work.

In 2024, we aim to strengthen the MSP, advocate for the implementation of the CSC framework, empower women and youth in agriculture, enhance partnerships with key stakeholders, and adapt to evolving legal and civic landscapes.

5.2.5 Africa

East and Southern Africa confront significant hurdles in the cotton and textile sector, including low productivity and limited market access, hindering the competitiveness of the region in the global market. In the early stages of 2021-2022, we conducted policy baseline studies, facilitated the establishment of an active MSP, and conducted tailored capacity-building training to address advocacy capacity gaps within the civil society. In this period, media engagement became crucial for repositioning associations within the sector.

In 2023, we revived the Regional Cotton MSP, and established a steering committee, enhancing the visibility and recognition of the Eastern and Southern Africa Cotton farmers organisation at the International Cotton Advisory Council. One of our key highlights was linking our interventions and outcomes in Zambia, Mozambique and Ethiopia to the regional



platform, as case studies of how inclusive MSPs are proving effective in achieving inclusivity in the cotton sector, and how farmers have become central to the reforms taking place in the sector. Gender & Social Inclusion (GSI) was a key topical issue of discussion, reflecting on the challenges women cotton farmers are facing, especially in accessing extension services, markets and financial services. Due to the awareness created on the GSI issues, a decision was made in the regional steering committee, resulting in a female chairperson being elected. We leveraged the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) podcast to amplify the voice of cotton farmers in advocating for issues that affect them including input supply, extension services, fair value distribution and inclusive business models. We also funded the Eastern and Southern African Cotton Organisation's (ESACO) chairperson and secretary to participate in the 81st ICAC Plenary meeting in Mumbai, following their recent ICAC membership. The event fostered collaborations with industry peers, enhancing ESACO's network and support within the cotton community.

In 2024, we will bolster the regional MSP, fostering active involvement of farmers and workers in policy formulation, while enhancing engagement with regional bodies like the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) to advocate for fair value distribution and sustainability amidst global market dynamics and climate uncertainties.

5.2.6 Mozambique

In Mozambique, we aim to address sustainability challenges in the cotton sector, including issues of decent work, gender inequality, unfair value distribution, climate change, and governance. Between 2021 and 2022, we conducted baseline studies, engaged policymakers, revitalised multi-stakeholder dialogues, empowered smallholders, equipped CSOs with advocacy skills, and conducted a scoping exercise on cotton workers.

In 2023, we established the Committee to Rescue the Sustainability of Cotton Producers (CORESPA) at the provincial level. CORESPA is expected to be a sustainability mechanism that will continue with advocacy initiatives at provincial level beyond 2025. We therefore trained and coached CORESPA, and as result the committee spearheaded dialogues addressing local challenges within the cotton sector and bringing key stakeholders together. We also collaborated with **Kitovu (Africa Tech Hub)** leading to the adoption of the **Farmer2Market** digital platform, with the aim of improving supply chain efficiency and transparency. To advance the rollout of the digital platform, we initiated collaborations with ginners, such as JFS, which will be the conduits for the deployment on the ground. The initiation of seed multiplication pilots generated **evidence supporting advocacy** to the Ministry of Agriculture for better seed supply mechanisms for smallholder farmers. Additionally, the project actively engaged in advocacy **capacity building** of CSOs and farmer leaders contributing to the success of the **2023 Cotton Price negotiations**, where the government agreed to cushion the local price of cotton against the prevailing global price decline.

Collaborating for policy reform in Zambia's cotton sector



Cotton Stakeholders in Zambia including Solidaridad, Cotton Development Trust, Cotton Board Of Zambia and Ministry of Agriculture

Zambia's cotton industry has faced challenges hindering its growth and sustainability, as the sector is heavily dominated by multinational ginneries, with a monopolistic grip on cotton procurement, processing, and marketing. This has left farmers vulnerable to exploitation, resulting in lower crop yields and unstable incomes. The RECLAIM Sustainability! cotton programme, implemented by Solidaridad and TrustAfrica, is now paving the way for a more

sustainable and supportive regulatory framework with the amendment of the Cotton Act of 2005, which is among the existing - though proven inadequate - policies in place to try and tackle the situation.

The RECLAIM Sustainability! project brings together farmers, ginneries, input suppliers, and regulatory bodies like the Ministry of Agriculture and the Cotton Board of Zambia (CBZ) through Multi Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs), which serve as a space for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and collective action to address farmers' challenges and has provided extensive support and resources to smallholder cotton farmers in Zambia which they did not have before. Together with these MSPs, the programme supported the review of the Cotton Act to align it with current market conditions and international standards. On 1 June 2023, the Cabinet approved the amendment to the Cotton Act of 2005. This amendment comes at an ideal time, as the new government begins its term. This highlights the government's commitment to improving the cotton sector as a driver of job creation and economic growth. The amendment seeks to broaden the mandate of the Cotton Board of Zambia (CBZ), a regulatory body responsible for overseeing seed cotton production, ginning, and marketing. The proposed changes will strengthen industry regulation, address existing legal gaps and ensure regulations remain in line with international best practices.

As part of the revision process, CBZ has invited key stakeholders and the general public to submit comments on relevant issues to be included in the amended Act. This provides an opportunity for individuals and organisations to contribute their insights and perspectives and helps to ensure that the revised act reflects the diverse needs and concerns of all stakeholders in the cotton sector. While this is a step in the right direction, there is still work to be done. For these initiatives to be fully utilised for the industry's benefit, all stakeholders must demonstrate ongoing commitment and collective action.



5.2.7 Zambia

In Zambia, we aim to address sustainability challenges in the cotton sector, including policy gaps, weak dialogue, gender disparities, and unfair value distribution, aiming for sustainability and inclusivity. Between 2021 and 2022, we conducted policy studies, established an MSP, addressed civil society's advocacy capacity gaps through capacity-building, catalysed the review of the 2005 Cotton Act, supported the Cotton Association of Zambia to increase visibility, and aided civil society with advocacy plans, leading to multi-level policy dialogues and media engagements, that allowed for the amplification of farmers' voices.

In 2023, the established MSP that includes the government, the Cotton Association of Zambia, ginners, and other CSOs played a pivotal role in advocating for policy change, particularly in pushing for the amendment of the **2005 Cotton Act**. We continued to actively support consultative meetings, legal reviews, and technical recommendations, which successfully led to the government prioritising the final drafting stage of the amended Cotton Act. Collaborating with the Cotton Association of Zambia, we successfully addressed the organisation's visibility and empowered farmers to actively participate in the sector. The project's **engagement with the media** by inviting them to the MSP and the cotton commemoration days, also proved instrumental in raising awareness and ensuring farmer issues and proposals for change were highlighted in the Cotton Act. By **supporting civil society** actors with technical and financial assistance, we facilitated the implementation of advocacy action plans, including multi-level policy dialogues, which allowed local organisations to engage in improved self-driven advocacy initiatives.

5.2.8 Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, we aim to address sustainability challenges in the cotton and textile sector, including the absence of a national minimum wage policy and limited workers' rights, aiming to enhance sustainability, empowerment and decent work. In the period 2021-2022, we conducted policy studies, and developed a strategic plan with the Industrial Federation of Textile, Leather, and Garment Workers' Trade Unions, resulting in the formation of six trade unions with 7,000 members, equipped to facilitate peaceful dispute resolution and promote workers' rights.

During the course of 2023, we achieved substantial milestones in advocating for **minimum wage policies, empowering new trade unions**, and **strengthening local CSOs** to engage in advocacy on labour rights, market systems, and decent work. Notably, we empowered six new basic trade unions, with 80% female members, enhancing their capacity in leadership and grievance handling, enabling them to address issues of **fair labour**. **Gender champions** from worker unions were trained to advocate for gender equality and empowerment, directly reaching workers and indirectly impacting a significant number of individuals. We also supported the development of the **Contract farming-proclamation** in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture. This legislation will stimulate market uptake for organic cotton, benefiting both cotton growers and ginners by ensuring fair market prices and income for farmers.

Through a **national MSP**, we also explored waste management solutions, and signed Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Industry, the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH) and GiZ to develop **sustainable standards and guidelines for textile companies**. The MSP included participants and researchers from academia, government and the private



sector. We also supported the trade unions to advocate for a minimum wage policy. This advocacy has started to yield results, provoking the government to establish a committee to review the labour market assessment, particularly affected by high inflation rates.

5.2.9 Egypt

In Egypt, we aim to tackle sustainability challenges in the textile and apparel sector, including low wages, poor working conditions, and environmental degradation. In the period 2021-2022, we established the foundation by conducting baselines, selecting project commodities, and exploring collaborations with the ILO and UNIDO, paving the way for further strategic planning.

In 2023, the completion of the **cotton value chain policy, the gender & social inclusion analysis**, and the stakeholders mapping, provided a comprehensive foundation for our advocacy work. We facilitated one Policy workshop *From Farm to Fabric: creating sustainable Cotton and Textiles Value Chains*. The workshop brought together the expertise of interdisciplinary entities to bear on relevant policy issues and challenges in both sectors. These dialogues resulted in policy recommendations for the cotton sector, focusing on fair **labour issues** affecting informal and seasonal workers, and gender equity in payments. In textiles, we developed **recommendations** centred on organic cotton industrialisation, sustainability, traceability, decent working conditions, and women's inclusion. The recommendations were shared with government officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and sparked engagement with key stakeholders like UNIDO, the Agriculture Research Centre, and textile factories.

In 2024, we will sustain collaboration with key stakeholders, including cotton cooperatives and government bodies, while exploring synergies with other programmes like Pathways to Prosperity to translate policy recommendations into tangible improvements for working conditions and environmental sustainability in the cotton sector.

5.2.10 Europe

In Europe, we aim to tackle critical sustainability challenges in the textile and apparel sector, focusing on value distribution, decent work and natural resources management. The sector confronts imbalances in supplier-buyer relationships, and we advocate for living wages, and solutions to address environmental impacts caused for example by pesticide use and water consumption. We collaborate with CSOs and engage in MSIs to influence public policies and corporate practices, ensuring a comprehensive approach to sustainability in line with the EU Strategy for Sustainable Textiles. Between 2021 and 2022, we established foundational activities, including engagement in MSIs, development of training materials, and advocacy for improved practices, influencing corporate policies and expanding responsible purchasing practices within the textile industry.

In 2023, the cotton and textiles industry faced a pivotal moment, driven by substantial legislative shifts in the EU and US. Key initiatives like the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (**CSDDD**) compelled the industry to transition towards more sustainable, ethical, and eco-friendly production and consumption methods. We therefore contributed to influencing the **EU Strategy for Sustainable Textiles** to be modified to include references to social topics (incl. Freedom of Association, Decent Work, Living Wage and Income), moving beyond its initial environmental focus. We actively participated in the development of criteria for increasing the net income



of farmers within BCI, contributing to the organisation's commitment to addressing the living income issue. However, challenges arose, such as the non-finalisation of the Next Generation Agreement negotiations, due to far apart ambitions of the negotiating parties, particularly companies, and unforeseen complexities in the development of the forced labour chapter of the Cotton Barometer. Together with PAN UK, we decided to split the Barometer into different thematic papers and launch the [Sustainable Cotton Hub](#) with the [Cotton Ranking](#) and the first two Cotton papers. The Sustainable Cotton Hub was received positively and gained a lot of attention publicly providing a platform that can be used continuously to raise awareness on urgent cotton production related issues.





In 2024, we will sustain our involvement in MSIs, prioritise Decent Work in corporate policies, leverage the evolving legislative landscape, and foster holistic approaches while adapting strategies to ensure continued impact in the European textile and apparel sector.





5.3 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR RESULTS 2023

FIGURE 7. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS COTTON AND TEXTILES PROGRAMME 2023

	Key Performance Indicator	TARGET 2023	RESULTS 2023	TARGET 2025
 ADVOCATE THROUGH INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE Better, innovative and inclusive solutions that address issues in the value chain are co-developed and submitted to policy makers				
OUTCOME	# of innovative and inclusive solutions / recommendations that are submitted by civil society through inclusive dialogues to key public and private sector decision makers for adoption and implementation	19	18	16
OUTPUT	# of dialogues initiated, strengthened or joined to engage Civil Society and Civil Society's agenda in debate with public and private decision makers	31	47	10
	# of (governmental and private) policies for sustainable production, trade and consumption influenced	20	20	20
 ACCELERATE DISRUPTIVE INNOVATIONS Improved transparency and negotiation position for farmers and workers in the supply chain, by co-developing and implementing innovative digital and fair business models				
OUTCOME	# of farmers, miners and workers with improved bargaining position through equitable access to (digital) market intelligence or as a result of new and innovative business models	118,000	28,200	3,100
OUTPUT	# of farmers, miners and workers using the developed tools and business models being tested for sourcing, production, trade and investment	77,602	230,944	3,100
	# of tools and business models developed and being tested for sourcing, production, trade and investment	5	10	10
	# and kind private sector partners engaged to co-design, test and promote new tools and business models for sourcing, production, trade and investment	26	35	14
	# of other non private sector partners (knowledge, public, CSOs, others) engaged in co-design, test and promote new tools or business models for sourcing, production, trade and investment	16	38	30
 AMPLIFY VOICE OF CITIZENRY Citizens and CSOs are mobilised, activated and engaged to change norms and influence policy agendas				
OUTCOME	# of individuals activated and mobilised to raise their voice to push the policy agenda, influence societal (gender) norms, make informed decisions (consumer and corporate behaviour, e.g. on production and consumption practices)	118,353	250,723	3,500
OUTPUT	# of CSO led awareness raising campaigns	32	34	23
 STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY CSOs are strengthened to speak up and engage in policy dialogue				
OUTCOME	# Civil Society actors and target groups with increased L&A capacities	26	45	18
OUTPUT	# and type of Civil Society actors and target groups supported	25	43	18





6. Gold



Key milestones achieved in 2023:

- Local champions identified, capacitated and activated to conduct local awareness campaigns
- CSOs and Producer Organisations capacitated
- Local and International Media campaigns rolled out, aimed at ASM communities to promote safety in mining work are implemented
- Public policy recommendations for optimising ASM formalisation are prepared and submitted to policy makers
- Toolkits for local authorities to promote ASM formalisation, monitoring and guidance designed
- Private actors start to implement pilots of disruptive innovations leading to ASM formalisation
- Responsible ASM Producers / Processing Plants are connected to the Dutch Gold Sector
- European citizens reached and activated to push for change with policy makers

Total Actuals 2023: €1,151,038, for Ghana (20%), Kenya (21%), Uganda (19%), Peru (34 %) and Europe (6%)



6.1 INTRODUCTION

In 2023, the artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) sector faced persistent challenges, including irresponsible mining practices, gender disparities, and the need for policy reforms and sector formalisation. These issues are compounded by the sector's significant role in global mineral production, with women constituting 30% of the workforce, underscoring the urgency for sustainable and responsible mining practices. Our objectives led us to adopt a comprehensive strategy aimed at transforming the ASM sector. This strategy encompassed local awareness campaigns on responsible mercury use, land rights and safety, alongside promoting gender inclusion, policy advocacy and formalisation efforts. Initiatives included empowering local gender champions and women-led mining groups to advocate for inclusive policies and improve the sector's environmental and social footprint.

To date, our achievements include successful campaigns, raising awareness of the risks associated with irresponsible mining, support for women in mining to highlight their contributions and bridge gender gaps, and significant strides in policy influence and sector formalisation. In 2023, we provided training to CSOs and Producer Associations that led to enhance their advocacy skills, and to improve their participation in policy discussions. In Ghana, introducing ASM operators to the Code of Risk-mitigation for ASM engaging in Formal Trade (CRAFT Code) marked a significant step toward ethical business practices, with plans for national integration by 2024. Additionally, our policy development work across Ghana, Kenya and Uganda, aligned with the Africa Mining Vision, facilitated international dialogue and aimed at reforming the ASM sector to ensure responsible development and access to formal markets. Through these efforts, we are steering the ASM sector towards a more sustainable, inclusive and regulated future, reflecting our commitment to responsible mining practices and sustainability.

6.2 PROGRESS TOWARDS MILESTONES 2023

6.2.1 Africa

At a regional level, we target critical challenges in the mining sector, particularly focusing on artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM), addressing issues such as informality, socio-economic challenges, and environmental degradation. To tackle these challenges, we promote the adoption and implementation of the Africa Mining Vision (AMV), utilising strategies like research, multi-stakeholder dialogues, advocacy, and citizen engagement to advocate for transparent, equitable and sustainable exploitation of mineral resources and ASGM formalisation. Continued advocacy for the domestication and implementation of the AMV in national policies is expected to lead to formalisation and an end to illegal mining in ASGM sectors across Africa. Additionally, we conduct campaigns to promote a responsible and reduced use of mercury, following the Minamata Convention on Mercury in national regulatory frameworks, ultimately curbing further environmental degradation caused by unsustainable mining practices.

In 2023, we made significant progress in addressing irresponsible mining practices through a partnership with Inspirers & Advocates in Ghana, focusing on **awareness campaigns to promote responsible mining among ASM stakeholders**. We produced and disseminated video documentaries in collaboration with local media and journalists, highlighting the adverse effects of mercury in mining, contributing to a continent-wide effort to eliminate harmful



mining practices. At the [Alternative Mining Indaba](#), we presented **policy recommendations** for the ASM sector in Ghana and Uganda and shared preliminary findings for Kenya, based on research on integrating the AMV into national policies. Furthermore, our collaboration with organisations like Southern Africa Resource Watch allowed us to conduct research and develop policy briefs, advancing advocacy for the full domestication and implementation of the AMV in national frameworks. These concerted efforts aim to enhance ASM governance, foster stakeholder collaboration, empower communities, and facilitate cross-learning on ASM rights, leveraging the insights from these initiatives.

6.2.2 Ghana

In Ghana, efforts are underway to combat the widespread use of mercury in artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM), which poses significant environmental and public health risks, emitting over 700 tonnes of mercury annually. Through initiatives like the documentary “Poisoned for Gold” we aim to raise awareness about the dangers of mercury use and promote mercury-free alternatives while also addressing broader ethical issues in the ASGM sector, such as child labour, deforestation and human rights violations, advocating for safer and more sustainable mining practices.

In 2023, we made significant progress in promoting ethical practices and addressing the use of mercury in ASGM through a **multimedia campaign**, including the release of the documentary ‘[Poisoned for Gold](#)’, which prompted citizen calls for a public health emergency declaration. Additionally, a zonal MSP led to stakeholder commitments to undertake actions to end mercury use in gold mining and promote environmentally friendly innovations. We also provided technical support to the Minerals Commission in Ghana to develop a **National Child Labour Eradication Framework**, specifically focused on the ASGM sector. This framework was validated in 2023, and it sets the stage for capacity-building efforts aimed at implementing child labour eradication measures. Moreover, we **trained 33 small-scale mines in the CRAFT Code**, a set of global standards promoting ethical practices in mining. These mines are being supported to meet CRAFT Code requirements progressively.

Additionally, we undertook efforts to promote gender and social inclusion in the ASGM sector, including convening stakeholder dialogues to gather evidence for the preparation of a draft **Gender Policy**. This policy is under development, using gender-sensitive methodologies and tools, and it aims to ensure gender inclusivity in resource allocation and provide direction to capacitate women miners to take leadership roles in the association. The culmination of these efforts will be the submission of a petition document to the Parliament, advocating for the integration of gender-inclusive practices within the ASGM sector.

In 2024, we will focus on further capacity-building efforts to ensure the implementation of the National Child Labour Eradication Framework, continued support for mines to meet ethical standards outlined in the CRAFT Code, and the finalisation and implementation of the Gender Policy. Continuous advocacy and awareness-raising activities will also be crucial to ensure sustained progress in promoting responsible and ethical practices in the ASGM sector.



Promoting Responsible Mining through Mercury-Free Advocacy Campaign



In the course of the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme, TrustAfrica embarked on a comprehensive initiative to address the growing concern of irresponsible mining and formalisation of artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) in Ghana. This effort began with a capacity assessment training and subsequent capacity building sessions for various stakeholders, including civil society organisations (CSOs), media outlets, women's groups, and youth organisations.

Through these trainings, participants were equipped with advocacy and policy influencing skills, specifically tailored to advocate for responsible mining practices. Utilising the problem tree methodology to map and understand the challenges within the ASGM sector, it became evident that mercury use was escalating, posing significant environmental and public health risks. In response, TrustAfrica collaborated with Multimedia Ltd Ghana to produce a compelling documentary titled "[Poison for Gold](#)".

This documentary shed light on the harmful effects of mercury use in gold mining and provided evidence for advocacy efforts, which garnered widespread attention, with eight major media outlets in Ghana featuring it, reaching over 8 million people. This increased awareness has led to heightened public pressure on the government to effectively implement existing laws and invest in alternative mining methods that are mercury-free. Moreover, the documentary caught the interest of international donor partners, such as Voice of America (VoA), and the US Agency for Global Media (USAGM) media project addressing environmental crimes in Ghana, supported by the US department bureau of Oceans and International Scientific Affairs.

Building on the momentum generated by the documentary, TrustAfrica convened a country level multi-stakeholder dialogue involving key actors from government agencies, civil society, mining associations, and affected communities. During the dialogue, stakeholders collectively **COMMITTED** to undertaking 30 specific actions aimed at phasing out the use of mercury in gold mining and promoting environmentally friendly alternatives. One notable commitment came from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which pledged to intensify the enforcement of Regulation 473, prohibiting the use of mercury in mining operations without approval from the chief mine's inspector. This evidence of stakeholder commitment will serve as a cornerstone for TrustAfrica's upcoming regional campaign against mercury use in ASGM. A key takeaway from this initiative is the pivotal role of media and community engagement in advocacy efforts. By mobilising these stakeholders as change agents, TrustAfrica aims to contribute to the government's goal of reducing mercury use in ASGM by up to 50% by 2025.



6.2.3 Kenya

In Kenya, we address sustainability challenges in the ASGM sector by empowering miners and their representatives to engage in decision-making, promoting occupational health and safety, and advocating for gender and social inclusion. Key initiatives include the development of a **Self-regulatory Framework**, the formation of the Artisanal and Small-Scale Miners Association in Kenya (ASMAK), and conducting sensitisation meetings and multi-stakeholder dialogues. These efforts foster environmental best practices and improve access to funding, technologies and sustainable markets, while addressing regulatory issues in the ASGM.

In 2023, we achieved significant milestones in enhancing sustainable practices within the ASGM sector. We conducted sensitisation sessions among 98 small scale gold miners, fostering understanding of mine site rehabilitation and environmental best practices. Additionally, **local champions** and regional committee leaders were equipped with knowledge to engage in multi-stakeholder discussions on occupational health and safety, gender inclusion and decent working conditions. We also mobilised miner representatives to participate in the review process of the **Mining Act 2016 amendment bill**, enabling them to develop recommendations for the Ministry of Mining. These recommendations highlighted the need for clarity regarding artisanal miners' exemption from royalties and advocated for refining inconsistencies in the definition of communities outlined in the Mining Act 2016 and the draft mining (Mineral Royalty Sharing) Regulations 2023.

We also launched **multimedia campaigns on fair value distribution**, mobilising mining communities for climate dialogues, and creating networking platforms for miners and CSOs to engage in decision-making and address gender issues in ASM. We made significant strides in collaborating with organisations like the Centre for Environment Justice and Development (CEJAD) and government entities, and we established multi-stakeholder forums. These forums provided platforms for addressing sectoral issues through dialogue and collaboration. Moreover, we facilitated miner representatives' participation in key events such as the Kenya Mining Week conference, enhancing their visibility and influence. Studies conducted during this period aimed to inform policy changes for a more inclusive and sustainable mining sector.

6.2.4 Uganda

In Uganda, we aim to address various pressing issues within the artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector in the Lake Victoria Goldfields, including inadequate regulation, unfair wealth distribution, and environmental degradation. To tackle these challenges, we employ a comprehensive approach, conducting Gender & Social Inclusion Analysis, advocating for policy reviews, supporting the adoption of self-regulatory mechanisms, and fostering multi-stakeholder dialogues to promote inclusivity and participation of women and youth.

In 2023, we achieved notable milestones. We trained **gender champions** to raise awareness and map social inclusion issues, facilitated study visits to progressive mines to enhance knowledge of best practices, and organised **multi-stakeholder dialogues** to provide input into mining regulations. We initiated the 'Start' phase of the Start Awareness Support Action (SASA!) methodology with 50 gender champions, engaging their communities in dialogues to raise awareness about power relations and gender-based violence. Additionally, a Gender Assembly convened stakeholders from the mining sector, including miners, civil society, and local and central government representatives, to address gender and social exclusion issues in the ASM sector. The assembly identified gender-based violence against women as a primary



concern affecting mining communities, recognising that addressing gender inequality in the mining sector is essential for achieving SDG 5 on gender equality. These efforts have the potential to propel fair labour practices and improve community relations, contributing to broader sustainable development objectives.

Additionally, the expansion of the **self-regulatory tool** to additional mine sites and the development of a digital production tracking and traceability tool laid the groundwork for improved monitoring and responsible mining practices. By extending the self-regulatory tool to more mine sites, stakeholders can better enforce compliance with environmental regulations and safety standards, ensuring the sustainable extraction of resources. Moreover, the implementation of a digital production **tracking and traceability tool**, enhances accountability throughout the supply chain, promoting ethical sourcing practices and mitigating the risk of illicit activities such as conflict mineral exploitation. We also conducted a **media campaign** that resulted in three stories published in print media and one news piece on television⁵, which highlighted the plight of mine workers and the need for investment into mining equipment to improve safety and efficiency. Ultimately, these initiatives represent a proactive approach towards fostering greater sustainability and ethical conduct within the mining sector, contributing to long-term environmental conservation and community well-being.

6.2.5 Peru

In Peru, we aim to address critical sustainability challenges within the ASM sector, which despite employing over 400,000 individuals and contributing significantly to the rural economy, faces pervasive informality, links to illicit activities, limited state oversight, gender-based discrimination, and environmental damage such as deforestation and child labour. Early achievements from 2021 and 2022 set a strong foundation, including the formulation and publication of Peru's first national policy for responsible ASM development. Additionally, the establishment of the National Network of Women in ASM (NNW/ASM) amplified women's voices within the sector, advocating for their rights and participation.

In 2023, we made collaborative efforts with mining companies and financial institutions that led to the **launch of the first formal credit product tailored for the ASM sector**, fostering financial inclusion. The credit product was tailored for ASM through advocacy with a rural bank, accompanied by the formulation of initial credit regulations specific to ASM needs. Additionally, we amplified awareness and discourse on ASM financial inclusion by hosting a dedicated session at a prominent Latin American mining event. This initiative addresses the glaring gap in financial support for ASM, a sector of significant economic importance often marginalised due to perceived associations with illegality, thereby unlocking potential for sustainable development and improved working conditions within ASM mines.

Early in 2023, disruptions due to social protests and governmental changes highlighted the challenges in the ASM sector, particularly the need for price transparency and the processing plants' reluctance to share pricing information. In response, we continued the development and roll-out of **Oro Justo 2.0** to promote transparent interactions, but the initial reception led to a strategic overhaul. In collaboration with Minera Orex, the Swiss Responsible Gold Association, and CrediGob, we refined Oro Justo 2.0 to provide direct

⁵ See for example www.monitor.co.ug on investments in ASM; www.monitor.co.ug on women miners' concerns.



benefits to processing plants, fostering a digital ecosystem for sustainable sourcing. This shift was complemented by the successful **"Mi Labor Segura" campaign**, which enhanced working conditions in 23 ASM mines through collective investments in safety improvements. The initiative's success also birthed **"PrestaMAPE,"** a tool aimed at helping miners access formal financing, leading us to nearing a partnership with a local financial institution, a significant step towards integrating ASM miners into the formal financial ecosystem. Simultaneously, a **comprehensive safety and health awareness campaign raised awareness** of critical risks and promoted safer working conditions, demonstrating the power of collective action in addressing sector-wide challenges. The campaign specifically targeted artisanal mines supplying a partnering processing plant, encouraging them to enhance their Occupational Health and Safety conditions. Further, in 2023, we **documented the creation of NNW/ASM with a powerful film** (to be released in 2024) on the realities and challenges of women miners in Peru, setting the stage for a national campaign in 2024 to introduce the network to key ASM communities, empowering women miners and fostering equity within the sector. Strengthening NNW/ASM led to impactful dialogues at regional events and Latin America's leading mining exposition, culminating in the **approval of the first gender plan for the ASM sector**, which will begin implementation in 2024.

6.2.6 Europe

In Europe, we aim to contribute to a responsible global gold value chain through committing gold sourcing companies to implement responsible sourcing practices for ASM gold and to invest in the development of a responsible ASM sector. We also advocate the public sector to adopt and implement regulatory frameworks that are ASM inclusive, and address decent work, fair value distribution and sustainable natural resources management in international supply chains for gold.

Following up on the consensus reached in 2022 within the European Partnership for Responsible Minerals (EPRM), in 2023 we contributed to the development of a joint positioning towards policy debates around responsible mining. The EPRM entered into discussions with European policy makers and metal trade association to advocate for ASM inclusive supply chains, and we facilitated the EPRM engagement with stakeholders in mining countries (Peru, Tanzania, Zimbabwe). We also issued a joint [NGO statement](#) describing how the EU Conflict Minerals Regulation is failing to reach its goals because of its limited scope (only mineral importers and high volumes), and calling on the EU to set up its enforcement and adopt new measures. As we see the CSDDD as an opportunity to change this because it will require a significantly larger number of companies across the supply chain in Europe to implement due diligence, in 2023 we continued **advocating EU policy makers for an inclusive ASM legislation** that enables ASM miners to sell their gold through formal international supply chains linked to the EU, and help to address the root causes of sustainability issues in producing countries. Together with International Peace Information Service (IPIS), we issued a [paper](#) to explore lessons learnt from existing European and American legislation on minerals due diligence that can inform a better CSDDD.

To facilitate investments from downstream industry in ASM gold mines, we continued the **development and promotion of the Responsible Minerals Credits scheme**. This scheme offers a mechanism for engagement between downstream and upstream value chain actors, and it focuses on managing risks upstream, rather than physical integration of gold into complex supply chains. The mineral credit fees paid by downstream buyers under this scheme, will be reinvested directly into activities which drive improvements for mining







communities. In 2023, Bruna, a small Italian ethical jeweller, agreed to purchase the first responsible mineral credits for ASM gold from Tanzania. Additionally, we continued working with **Women's Rights and Mining (WRM)** to advocate for women's rights in mines and in mining affected communities. In 2023, we organised two events with WRM about gender justice and gender impacts linked to the energy transition. One was during the OECD Forum on Responsible Mineral Supply Chains, and the other one during the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF).





6.3 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR RESULTS 2023

FIGURE 8. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS GOLD PROGRAMME 2023

	Key Performance Indicator	TARGET 2023	RESULTS 2023	TARGET 2025
 ADVOCATE THROUGH INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE Better, innovative and inclusive solutions that address issues in the value chain are co-developed and submitted to policy makers				
OUTCOME	# of innovative and inclusive solutions / recommendations that are submitted by civil society through inclusive dialogues to key public and private sector decision makers for adoption and implementation	12	18	5
OUTPUT	# of dialogues initiated, strengthened or joined to engage Civil Society and Civil Society's agenda in debate with public and private decision makers	14	16	10
	# of (governmental and private) policies for sustainable production, trade and consumption influenced	16	14	14
 ACCELERATE DISRUPTIVE INNOVATIONS Improved transparency and negotiation position for farmers and workers in the supply chain, by co-developing and implementing innovative digital and fair business models				
OUTCOME	# of farmers, miners and workers with improved bargaining position through equitable access to (digital) market intelligence or as a result of new and innovative business models	1,590	835	2,000
OUTPUT	# of farmers, miners and workers using the developed tools and business models being tested for sourcing, production, trade and investment	2,780	1,165	3,000
	# of tools and business models developed and being tested for sourcing, production, trade and investment	6	7	8
	# and kind private sector partners engaged to co-design, test and promote new tools and business models for sourcing, production, trade and investment	48	37	30
	# of other non private sector partners (knowledge, public, CSOs, others) engaged in co-design, test and promote new tools or business models for sourcing, production, trade and investment	32	7	15
 AMPLIFY VOICE OF CITIZENRY Citizens and CSOs are mobilised, activated and engaged to change norms and influence policy agendas				
OUTCOME	# of individuals activated and mobilised to raise their voice to push the policy agenda, influence societal (gender) norms, make informed decisions (consumer and corporate behaviour, e.g. on production and consumption practices)	758	540	4,000
OUTPUT	# of CSO led awareness raising campaigns	12	7	7
 STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY CSOs are strengthened to speak up and engage in policy dialogue				
OUTCOME	# Civil Society actors and target groups with increased L&A capacities	29	20	31
OUTPUT	# and type of Civil Society actors and target groups supported	29	32	31





7. Africa Food



Key milestones achieved in 2023:

- Recommendations from the MSPs submitted to decision makers (Kenya, Uganda, Egypt)
- Recommendations from the MSPs adopted by decision makers into the competition law and local GAP (Zambia and Mozambique)
- Co-designed disruptive innovations validated and submitted to the MSPs for further advocacy (Zambia, Mozambique and Egypt)
- Champions identified and supported with needed skills to join gender and social inclusion advocacy and campaigns (Kenya and Uganda)
- CSOs and Producer Organisations capacitated (Kenya, Uganda and Egypt)
- Policy papers published (Kenya and Uganda)
- Media campaigns rolled out (Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique and Zambia)

Total Actuals 2023: €647,950, for Mozambique (21%), Zambia (31%), Uganda (16%), Kenya (22%) and Egypt (10%)



7.1 INTRODUCTION

In 2023, we addressed key challenges in the food value chains across Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique, Zambia and Egypt, focusing on improving conditions for smallholder farmers, especially women. These farmers faced numerous hurdles, including unfavourable policies, gender imbalances, and unsafe food practices, which limited their market participation and earnings. Our comprehensive strategy aimed to reform policies to support local produce, ensure food safety, and promote gender inclusion, thereby empowering women and youth in the agricultural sector.

Throughout 2023, we made significant progress in establishing sustainable, inclusive and safe food value chains across Africa, enhancing the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. Achievements encompass the adoption of food standards and sector strategies, including Kenya's Potato Strategy and the facilitation of horticulture-focused MSPs in Uganda. Zambia saw the approval of Good Agricultural Practices, while Mozambique benefited from workshops on standards and market access. In Egypt, discussions on soybean production safety were prioritised. The project effectively raised food safety awareness through consumer campaigns, notably on World Food Safety Day in Kenya, and fostered community and media engagement across the participating countries. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion efforts ensured the active involvement of women and youth in decision-making, complemented by the rollout of digital platforms improving farmers' market information access.

Moreover, capacity-building and the strengthening of CSOs were key to drive forward sustainable and inclusive agricultural practices. These accomplishments in 2023 mark critical progress towards equitable agricultural practices, fair farmer compensation, and enhanced food safety and sustainability across Africa.

7.2 PROGRESS TOWARDS MILESTONES 2023

7.2.1 Mozambique

In Mozambique, we target critical agricultural challenges, notably high Maximum Levels of Residues (MLR) in produce, by fostering connections among farmers, buyers, and the government through the Farmer2Market tool, and promoting public health and sustainable practices. Advocacy for MozBopa standards, capacity building for extension officers, and educational efforts via media are key strategies.

In 2023, we held a crucial midterm review in Maputo, leading to strategic adjustments focused on adopting and implementing the MozBopa standards. These changes aim to improve food safety, productivity and market access for farmers. A key initiative was a workshop for government extension staff on **MozBopa standards**, emphasising safe food practices and efficient farming, which is expected to enhance sustainable agriculture and establish stable, lucrative market connections, benefiting farmers with fair compensation for their produce. Lessons learned from the current MozBopa pilot with farmers and consumer champions to raise public awareness of the importance of safety standards, have shown that farmers in targeted areas, including those in the 25 de Setembro Association in Maputo, are embracing good agricultural practices such as crop rotation and proper use of agrochemicals, marking a significant shift towards production that is in balance with nature. This shift led to their successful contract with Nando's to supply bird's eye chili, showcasing the dual benefits



of such practices: securing preferred market access and enhancing health outcomes. This development reflects a growing awareness among farmers of the importance of adopting GAPs, not just for market benefits, but also for their well-being and environmental sustainability.

Furthermore, the [Farmer2Market](#) tool's introduction garnered positive feedback from key stakeholders, including government officials, potential buyers, and farmer associations, for its promise to enhance market linkages. This platform is set to boost market competitiveness and fairness by improving transparency, increasing bargaining power, and promoting fair value distribution. It also aims to improve product accountability and traceability, motivating farmers towards adopting superior production practices. Additionally, we conducted workshops on **gender training** and the SASA! methodology to ensure proper involvement of women in agricultural activities.

7.2.2 Zambia

In Zambia, we tackle critical sustainability issues in agriculture, such as unsafe practices, unfair value distribution, low production of fruits and vegetables, high toxic residues, lack of standards, limited market access for smallholders, and adverse policies. Employing strategies like training extension officers, partnering with entities like CUTS International for safe production advocacy, and collaborating with academic bodies for chemical analysis, we have made significant strides.

In 2023, we made significant progress in collaboration with the Zambia Bureau of Standards, we facilitated the implementation of a **MSP for Zambia Good Agricultural Practices (ZAMGAP)**, specifically for fruits and vegetables, significantly contributing to safer and more sustainable food systems. This platform was instrumental in drafting and refining the country's first ZAMGAP document for fruits and vegetables, which, after thorough review and final input, was officially **approved, gazetted and published by the Zambia Bureau of Standards**. This achievement is pivotal in fostering more inclusive local food value chains and ensuring the sustainable consumption of safe and healthy produce in Africa, addressing crucial aspects of food safety and sustainability within the agricultural sector.

We also convened a consultative meeting in partnership with the Center for Trade Policy and Development, involving key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Commerce, Zambia Development Agency, Ministry of Small Scale and Medium Enterprises, and smallholder farmers specialised in fruits and vegetables. This meeting examined the current state of Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) market integration and the progress of incorporating the agreement into Zambian laws. The discussions aimed at creating a fairer value market distribution for smallholder farmers, identifying investment and financing opportunities for these producers, and thereby ensuring that they, the majority of whom are women, receive fair value for their produce. Furthermore, in a concerted effort to promote food safety, we collaborated with CUTS International to launch the **"Safe Food for Zambia"** campaign across several selected marketplaces in Lusaka, while also working alongside Food for Africa to champion safe food initiatives. These strategic partnerships aimed to raise awareness and practices around food safety within the capital's marketplaces, thereby contributing significantly to the development of sustainable and inclusive local food value chains across Africa.



7.2.3 Kenya

In Kenya, we target the multifaceted challenges in the agricultural sector, including unfair value distribution, insufficient policy representation, health risks due to high residue levels in food, and the impact of climate change, which disproportionately affects smallholder producers, particularly women and youth. We implement strategies such as ensuring food safety, creating spaces for meaningful dialogue, strengthening civil society organisations, and promoting gender inclusion.

In 2023, significant advancements were made in improving the potato value chain and food safety, highlighted by the collaborative efforts of MSPs, government agencies and various stakeholders. Key achievements include the **development and submission of a five-year potato strategy** for Meru County, the proposition of a National Implementation Committee by the National Potato Council (NPCK) to enhance sector coordination, and the formation of a Community of Practice on food safety. Additionally, recommendations for national policy engagement, including food redistribution guidelines, were proposed to the Ministry of Health. These efforts aimed at mitigating food loss, enhancing sectoral collaboration, and ensuring compliance with relevant standards, notably through the **adoption of the KS1758 training guide**. The engagement in **consumer awareness campaigns**, especially during World Food Safety Day, and the emphasis on gender inclusion and farmer empowerment through **digital marketing training** for better market access underscored a holistic approach to sectoral development.

Furthermore, the **establishment of a Marketing Information System (MIS)** by the Kenya National Farmers' Federation (KENAFF), connecting over 261,703 farmers across 25 counties with essential resources and market information, marked a significant stride towards improving market dynamics and farmer livelihoods. These initiatives collectively aim to streamline agricultural processes, enhance food safety and promote sustainable production and consumption practices, ultimately contributing to the sector's accountability, inclusivity and effectiveness.

7.2.4 Uganda

In Uganda, we aim to address critical sustainability challenges in the horticulture sector, including unfavourable policies, inadequate stakeholder representation, weak producer organisations, gender imbalances and unhealthy food sales due to high residue levels. In the period 2021-2022, we made significant strides through the establishment of MSPs at district and national levels, we foster dialogue and collaboration among various stakeholders, strengthen CSOs and promote gender inclusion.

In 2023, we advanced food safety and sustainability in the agricultural sector. By forming a Community of Practice with stakeholders from the private sector, producer groups and the Ministry of Agriculture, we facilitated pivotal discussions on pesticides and organic farming. This group, supported by **MSPs**, was essential in raising awareness and tackling key issues in the sector, leading to the **development of a policy paper on Minimum Residue Limits (MRL)** that was presented to parliamentary committees. These collaborative efforts were crucial in driving regulatory improvements and fostering a safer, more sustainable food industry.



We also played a crucial role in strategic development within the horticulture sector, by supporting the **formulation of the 10-year National Horticulture Strategy**, establishing a secretariat within the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, and forming a multi-sectoral technical committee. This initiative promoted discussions on emerging sector issues, including taxation and standard units of measure, aligning with the Ministry's objectives and ensuring comprehensive sector growth. Additionally, through organised **food safety campaigns and media engagements** on radio and TV, we raised public awareness about food safety, contamination issues and sustainable practices.

Furthermore, we enhanced the capacity of local farmers and stakeholders through the use of the **"ICT 4 farmers"** tool, which improved access to market information and supported informed agricultural decisions. Training in Value-Added Processing and direct-to-consumer business models empowered participants, particularly highlighting the achievements of youth in innovative agricultural practices. We further advocated for a **policy brief on fair value distribution** to ensure equitable practices. We shared this policy brief through national forums like the Uganda National Farmers Federation show. Together, these educational and developmental initiatives significantly contributed to creating a more knowledgeable, sustainable and equitable agricultural community.

7.2.5 Egypt





In Egypt, we address sustainability challenges in the food production sector by reducing reliance on imported soybeans, improving local food safety and quality, and encouraging private sector involvement in the value chain. We advocate for policies that support local soybean production, aiming to boost economic growth, stabilise prices and maintain high quality. Building on the success of prior initiatives like the Kuyveno-Danone project, in 2021-2022, we engaged soybean farmers in resilience activities and conducted market analyses on soybeans to guide future interventions.

In 2023, we maintained stakeholder engagement, convened multi-stakeholder dialogues to support national food safety policy implementation, and conducted GESI analysis to promote women's inclusion in value chains. We conducted a **policy dialogue** workshop *"Seeds of Prosperity: Enhancing food security through agricultural and legumes value chains focused on drawing a better future for Soybeans Value chains in Egypt"*. The roundtable discussion was attended by participants from the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, the Agriculture Research Center, Universities, Food Technology Research Institute and Civil Society to highlight the challenges affecting the value chain of soybeans in Egypt. Hosting a policy dialogue with diverse stakeholders, centred on safe soybean production and trade regulations, gender inclusion and enhancing market access for smallholders was an important milestone. This forum led to actionable **recommendations for value addition, gender inclusion and market development**, poised to guide policy formulation and implementation. Furthermore, by integrating a **Gender and Social Inclusion** approach, we fostered employment for women through the development of value-added soybean products like oil, milk, tofu, sauce, and flour. These efforts not only aimed to raise women's awareness of soybeans as a vital source of high-quality protein for family nutrition, but also to enhance their income opportunities and working conditions, thus contributing significantly to economic empowerment and gender equality.



7.3 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR RESULTS 2023

FIGURE 9. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AFRICA FOOD PROGRAMME 2023

	Key Performance Indicator	TARGET 2023	RESULTS 2023	TARGET 2025
 ADVOCATE THROUGH INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE Better, innovative and inclusive solutions that address issues in the value chain are co-developed and submitted to policy makers				
OUTCOME	# of innovative and inclusive solutions / recommendations that are submitted by civil society through inclusive dialogues to key public and private sector decision makers for adoption and implementation	6	11	6
OUTPUT	# of dialogues initiated, strengthened or joined to engage Civil Society and Civil Society's agenda in debate with public and private decision makers	10	15	10
	# of (governmental and private) policies for sustainable production, trade and consumption influenced	8	8	8
 ACCELERATE DISRUPTIVE INNOVATIONS Improved transparency and negotiation position for farmers and workers in the supply chain, by co-developing and implementing innovative digital and fair business models				
OUTCOME	# of farmers, miners and workers with improved bargaining position through equitable access to (digital) market intelligence or as a result of new and innovative business models	2,550	62	0
OUTPUT	# of farmers, miners and workers using the developed tools and business models being tested for sourcing, production, trade and investment	2,100	71	10,500
	# of tools and business models developed and being tested for sourcing, production, trade and investment	2	4	6
	# and kind private sector partners engaged to co-design, test and promote new tools and business models for sourcing, production, trade and investment	11	7	17
	# of other non private sector partners (knowledge, public, CSOs, others) engaged in co-design, test and promote new tools or business models for sourcing, production, trade and investment	10	4	18
 AMPLIFY VOICE OF CITIZENRY Citizens and CSOs are mobilised, activated and engaged to change norms and influence policy agendas				
OUTCOME	# of individuals activated and mobilised to raise their voice to push the policy agenda, influence societal (gender) norms, make informed decisions (consumer and corporate behaviour, e.g. on production and consumption practices)	7,800	883,431	13,000
OUTPUT	# of CSO led awareness raising campaigns	8	7	6
 STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY CSOs are strengthened to speak up and engage in policy dialogue				
OUTCOME	# Civil Society actors and target groups with increased L&A capacities	13	19	8
OUTPUT	# and type of Civil Society actors and target groups supported	17	19	8





8. Advocate and Amplify in Europe



8.1 INTRODUCTION

In Europe, we advocate for inclusive supply chains, through the implementation of a smart mix of voluntary and mandatory measures for European companies, as well as government policies to support producing countries. We do this by engaging policy makers directly, as well as via engagement in multi-stakeholder initiatives and sector policy dialogues. To support this, we activate citizens through campaigns, encouraging them to demand public and private sector policy makers for more sustainable and inclusive supply chains. Building on the progress made in 2021-2022, in 2023 we continued focusing our efforts primarily on the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) and the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). This advocacy work towards European legislation, accompanied by some of the campaigns described below, are complementary and boost the one-on-one work we carry out in Europe with our corporate partners through the Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) programme.

8.2 PROGRESS TOWARDS MILESTONES 2023

Following the Commission Proposal and the Council General Approach in 2022, 2023 was a decisive year for the **EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)**. We advocated for the CSDDD to require companies to take responsibility for their human rights and environmental impacts throughout their supply chains, in a way that is inclusive of and beneficial to smallholder farmers. In 2023, we conducted a lobby campaign with the EU Parliament ahead of its vote on the Directive, as well as a campaign targeting the Parliament, the Council and the Commission ahead of the closing trilogue negotiations. This process initiated with the information and evidence gathered from cocoa, coffee and palm oil farmers through the Solidaridad teams working in producing countries, ended in December 2023 with a successful outcome for our four advocacy priorities: 1) recognition of the right to a living income as a human right; 2) inclusion of clauses on the review of lead company's purchasing practices; 3) inclusion of meaningful stakeholder engagement as a step of due diligence; and 4) inclusion of responsible disengagement as a last resort to prevent cut-and-run approaches. We are happy to see these points integrated in the final political agreement.

The **EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR)** was finally published in June 2023, after years of debate. As we advocate for this regulation to actually contribute to sustainable development, our main agenda is to avoid smallholders' exclusion from the supply chains linked to EU markets, and to make sure that the needed measures are taken to avoid that the costs involved are borne by smallholders. In 2021-2022, we worked on agenda-setting and actively lobbied with the EU Parliament, which supported most of the amendments proposed by our Smallholder Deforestation coalition. Our advocacy message in Europe was informed by the evidence and substantiation provided by farmers and Solidaridad teams working in producing countries. In 2023, we shifted our emphasis towards influencing implementation, including accompanying measures to support smallholders. This led us to work closer with stakeholders in different sectors and in producing countries, as well as with policy makers from EU member states. We collaborated with the teams working on coffee (Uganda, Kenya, Honduras), cocoa (West Africa) and palm oil (West Africa, Asia and Honduras) to raise awareness among public and private actors on the implications of the EUDR regulation, and we organised a workshop in Brussels, with smallholder representatives from 5 different countries and 4 different sectors, to discuss the consequences of EUDR and how accompanying measures could improve positive impact. After bilateral and collective engagement with companies to build consensus on the need for clear EUDR implementation guidelines, we also provided our input through developing key questions and proposing solutions.

Overall, we are making strides towards the goals of 2025 by successfully **connecting realities of supply chain actors in the Global South with legislation and policy being developed at the European Union** on the field of corporate accountability.


Finally, to reinforce our advocacy work, in 2023 we undertook the following campaigns to mobilise European citizens and put pressure on European governments and companies to make their policies and practices more sustainable and inclusive.

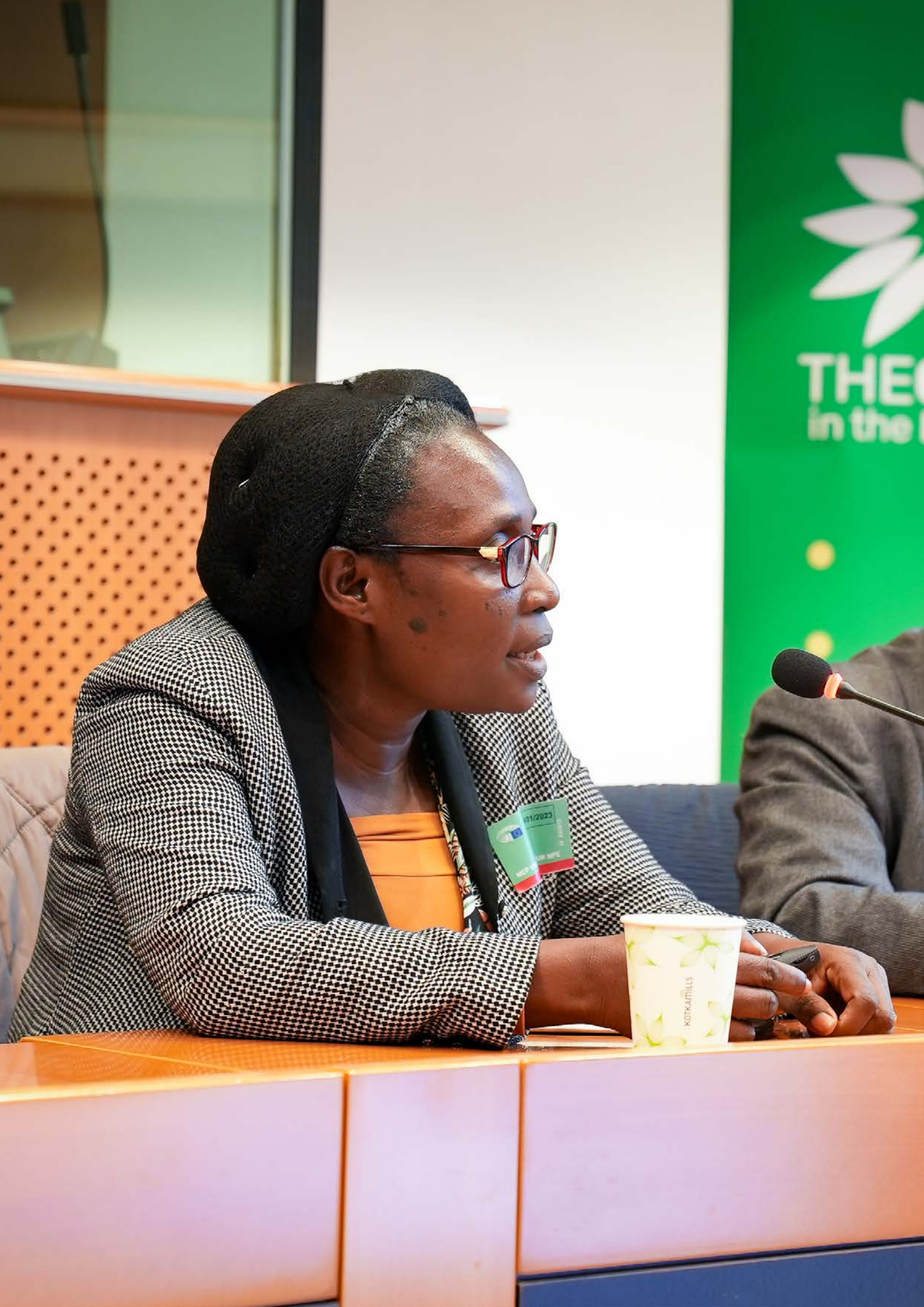
- Building upon the publication of the **Coffee Barometer** and **Brew Index**, we undertook a campaign with the aim to mobilise press and put pressure on coffee companies (see [Section 2.2.4 Coffee Europe](#)). We capitalised on this publication to mobilise Dutch citizens through a campaign on the International Coffee Day, raising awareness on how climate change is affecting coffee cultivation. The campaign urged citizens to put pressure on coffee companies to pay coffee farmers a **good price** to be able to make the needed investments to adapt to climate change.
- We replicated in [Germany](#), the 'Good Clothes Fair Pay' campaign launched in 2022 in the Netherlands. This campaign aims to advocate for **EU living wage legislation** in the garment industry, and to collect one million signatures from EU citizens to support this claim. Although the campaign did not reach its target, it contributed to raise awareness on this topic and reach influential policy makers that got involved with the petition.
- We carried out a campaign addressed to the trade press and global media for the launch of the Sustainable Cotton Hub and the cotton papers (see [Section 5.2.10 Cotton & Textiles Europe](#)).



8.3 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR RESULTS 2023

FIGURE 10. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS EUROPEAN POLICY ADVOCACY PROGRAMME 2023

	Key Performance Indicator	TARGET 2023	RESULTS 2023	TARGET 2025
 ADVOCATE THROUGH INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE Better, innovative and inclusive solutions that address issues in the value chain are co-developed and submitted to policy makers				
OUTCOME	# of innovative and inclusive solutions / recommendations that are submitted by civil society through inclusive dialogues to key public and private sector decision makers for adoption and implementation	14	24	3
OUTPUT	# of dialogues initiated, strengthened or joined to engage Civil Society and Civil Society's agenda in debate with public and private decision makers	5	7	3
	# of (governmental and private) policies for sustainable production, trade and consumption influenced	2	2	0
 AMPLIFY VOICE OF CITIZENRY Citizens and CSOs are mobilised, activated and engaged to change norms and influence policy agendas				
OUTCOME	# of individuals activated and mobilised to raise their voice to push the policy agenda, influence societal (gender) norms, make informed decisions (consumer and corporate behaviour, e.g. on production and consumption practices)	0	94,166	10,000
OUTPUT	# of CSO led awareness raising campaigns	0	4	2



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SECTION 3

**Global
Digitalisation
& Innovation**



1 INNOVATION TRACKS

The 'RECLAIM Sustainability!' programme leads this initiative, focusing on utilising digital technologies, implementing eco-friendly initiatives, and endorsing equitable trade practices. Our goal is to "disrupt" market access and increase the bargaining power of farmers and workers, striving for fairer profit distribution within supply chains. Essential to our approach is the creation of a solid framework for accurately assessing the effectiveness of these innovations, aiming to enhance sustainability and equity.

In 2023, a significant step was taken with the Mid Term Reviews (MTRs) conducted by Bopinc, which complemented the programme's overall MTR. These evaluations were crucial in ensuring the alignment of our projects with strategic objectives and the needs of our target groups. Despite being in the early stages of the innovation cycle, the insights from the MTRs are promising, including the trial of an innovative impact measurement tool aimed at enhancing our impact assessment capabilities. Our strategy focuses on developing Minimum Viable Products (MVPs) that meet fundamental needs, with subsequent enhancements carefully integrated. Recent progress in organising, designing, and preparing for pilot tests of our MVPs is encouraging.

The BopInc MTRs highlighted several key insights:

- A need for each innovation track to focus on a singular objective to effectively contribute to the programme's goals.
- The benefits of involving end-users more deeply in the development process and adopting lean practices.
- The importance of forming dedicated product teams, including roles like product managers and UX designers, to enhance product desirability.
- An adaptable reporting structure that allows for flexibility and continuous adjustment based on real-world insights, aligning with the unpredictable nature of innovation projects.

Following the insights from the 2023 Midterm Review (MTR), we're enhancing digital solutions to improve traceability, transparency, and sustainability, with a specific focus on empowering smallholders. The strategy for 2024 emphasises a centralised, user-centred approach to innovation, prioritising clear value propositions and robust product development to meet the needs of both donors and market players effectively.

Progress Across Key Innovations

SoliTrace and Tea Supply Chain Transparency

Our initiative, SoliTrace, set out to enhance transparency and empower farmers in the tea supply chain in [India](#) by providing them with actionable data. The project, featuring advanced technology and a user-friendly design, aimed to demonstrate its value to tea factories and resonate with farmers. Recognising the importance of technology in addressing the real-world challenges of its users, we are refocusing SoliTrace with clearer, measurable goals and increasing farmer involvement in its development.

Trace Cocoa and Coffee: Establishing Baselines for Traceability

In 2023, Fairfood's TRACE initiative made significant strides in enhancing the traceability of cocoa and coffee supply chains, with remarkable achievements in [Sierra Leone](#), [Honduras](#),

and [Uganda](#). The platform, designed for both traceability and storytelling about product origins, also facilitated the payment of data quality premiums to farmers. Key to this success was the direct data collection from the field using innovative card/app systems and storytelling partnerships with companies like Molinos in Honduras. Despite challenges in project implementation and the preference of off-takers and brands for 'in-kind' contributions, TRACE is preparing a comprehensive final report for Q4 2024, which will outline the initiative's achievements, challenges, and future plans to enhance traceability in cocoa and coffee supply chains, underscoring Fairfood's commitment to more transparent, equitable, and sustainable global supply chains.

FarmImpact: Facilitating Access to Carbon Markets

FarmImpact made notable advancements in connecting farmers to carbon markets, integrating with external systems like the Cool Farm Tool, and beginning engagements with organisations such as Oxfam and Boomitra to validate desirability and viability. These strides reflect our commitment to developing innovative solutions that directly benefit farmers, underscored by collaborations aimed at broadening FarmImpact's results and reinforcing our dedication to fostering sustainable, transparent, and equitable supply chains globally (see progress in [Section 7.2.2 Tea Zambia](#)).

Harvest Alert: Revolutionising the Oil Palm Supply Chain

Harvest Alert is pioneering a shift in oil palm supply chain management with its IT-based platform, designed to give farmers better, more transparent market access by ensuring the prompt delivery of oil palm fresh fruit bunches to processing facilities. This initiative is set to promote pricing transparency, ensuring fair farmer compensation, efficiency for aggregators, and higher quality fruit at factories (see progress in [Section 4.2.5 Palm Oil Ghana](#)).

KUBU: Empowering Workers in Indonesia

KUBU.id, is a cornerstone innovation of the RS! programme, designed to transform the way textile industry workers in [Indonesia](#) connect, network, and empower themselves digitally. Going beyond a mere job-finding application, KUBU.id has evolved into a rich ecosystem for information sharing, knowledge enhancement, and professional networking. Its journey from an internal launch in February 2023 to a public release in May 2023 underscores its role in empowering workers and reshaping labour relations within the textile sector. The platform supports workers through expert-led inquiries and content tailored to current industry trends and issues, with a strong emphasis on informal job opportunities. The BopInc Midterm Review confirmed KUBU.id's impact on worker education in critical areas such as legal rights, financial literacy, gender issues, and HR management, enhancing the platform's role in strengthening the networking and bargaining power of workers and trade unions. As KUBU.id continues to evolve, it remains focused on meeting user needs and positively influencing Indonesia's labour landscape.

Oro Justo

Oro Justo 2.0 is an online platform/app to promote transparent interactions between artisanal miners and processing plants that buy their ore (see progress in [Section 6.2.6 Gold Peru](#))

2 KITOVU (AFRICA TECH HUB)

In 2023, Kitovu made substantial progress towards sustainable agriculture by deploying an open ICT system, which played a crucial role in amplifying farmers' contributions to sustainability and underscoring the importance of rewarding their eco-friendly practices. Despite the critical nature of these practices for sustainability goals, farmers traditionally lacked direct compensation. Addressing this, Kitovu's introduction of the **Circles management platform** marked a pivotal advancement. By digitally organising farmers into groups or "circles," the initiative strengthened their bargaining power and streamlined supply chains for buyers, ensuring better pricing and improved agricultural productivity and coordination.

Within the Circles initiative, the communal smartphone system connects two to three dozen farmers in each target area to key services and information through a web application, enhancing data use across agricultural value chains and supporting traceability. To support this, the Hakiki system was introduced to allow farmers an easy way to verify identity and safeguard against the loss of their farmer IDs, ensuring continued participation in the Circles Initiative. Additionally, the ongoing use of the **Z'wardy** rewards programme encourages sustainable farming practices by rewarding the use of organic fertilisers and water-saving methods, complementing the Circles initiative by providing a platform for farmers to voice their needs and achievements, thus aligning incentives with their needs. This combination of initiatives promotes ownership, accountability, and the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices through technology and community effort.

Farmer2Market platform

Market linkages are crucial for fair value distribution to farmers and the Farmer2Market platform is focused on enhancing market access and fairness by empowering farmers to voice their needs, ensuring transparency, accountability, and equitable value distribution, aiming for fair farmer compensation. More information see [Section 1.2. Progress Towards Milestones](#).





SECTION 4

**Global Linking
& Learning**



1 OVERARCHING LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The year 2023 marked a period of significant advancement for the RS! Consortium, particularly through the enhancement of our Global Linking and Learning (GLL) strategy. Achieved by strengthening support, encouraging active participation, and facilitating knowledge exchange among Thematic Learning Groups (TLGs) and other teams, such as the Communities of Practitioners (CoPs), these efforts represented a strategic shift towards better resource alignment with our core areas. Leading up to this, in previous years, our focus was on understanding and enhancing the impact of our programmes in Climate and Natural Resource Management, Fair Value Distribution, Decent Work, Gender Equality, and Inclusion. Key developments in 2023 include a thorough review and the subsequent adoption of recommendations from a comprehensive Mid-Term Review (MTR), alongside the appointment of a new dedicated Global Linking and Learning Coordinator. In response to the MTR, the work of the Global Linking and Learning (GLL) team included three brainstorming and strategic sessions to adapt the 2024 work plans to MTR recommendations. The action points can be found in the [Annex 3. RS! MTR Recommendations - Action plan](#) with overarching activities focusing on enhancing cross-learning and connections among groups. A planned joint GLL event will concentrate on strategic decisions, cross-learning with Communities of Practitioners (CoPs), innovations, and a strategic discussion on integrating Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) across TLGs, reflecting a committed pivot towards bolstering impact and efficiency.

2 MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS 2023 PER LEARNING THEME

2.1 Fair Value Distribution

In 2023, the Fair Value Distribution (FVD) Thematic Learning Group (TLG) within the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme significantly advanced the understanding and implementation of equitable value distribution mechanisms, focusing on pricing, traceability, and collective action to strengthen smallholder farmers' bargaining power. Collaboration with Fairfood and TrustAfrica since September aimed to boost progress. The TLG's work included disseminating findings from the FVD Position Paper, engaging in discussions on fair value distribution, and advocating for living income and wage solutions through position papers and policy briefs. Research and case studies explored digital innovations for better transparency and traceability in value chains. The group also held workshops and webinars to share insights and refine FVD implementation strategies, working alongside other RS! thematic learning groups to tackle global value chain complexities through a unified approach. Notable achievements featured the publication of initial findings from RS! Innovation pilots in Sierra Leone and Uganda, demonstrating the impact of digital tools on equitable value distribution. This year's efforts marked significant progress in promoting sustainable and equitable global value chains, with plans to continue this momentum with innovative solutions and collective action.

2.2 Climate and Natural Resource Management

In 2023, the Climate and NRM track under RS! emphasised the Locally-Led Adaptation (LLA) principles, building on the commitment solidified in October by Solidaridad. This involvement extended to significant participation in LLA-focused events, including a notable presentation at an IIED-hosted event, alongside webinars and the creation of a dedicated online space for LLA information sharing. The approach underscored the value of LLA in Solidaridad's advocacy, particularly within the context of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, setting the stage for increased international engagement in 2024. Post-COP28, a learning

session in January 2024 aimed to integrate conference insights into organisational strategies, reflecting a commitment to global climate dialogue. The year also focused on navigating the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), enhancing understanding through sessions and exchanges to assess its practical implications. Efforts in policy influencing and advocacy continued, especially around fair carbon practices, alongside studies in Malawi, Mozambique, and Ghana to explore sustainable practices and climate resilience among smallholder farmers. These studies aim to guide RS! implementation in the following years.

2.3 Decent Work

The International Labour Organization defines decent work as “productive work for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity”. In general, work is considered as decent when it pays a fair income, it guarantees a secure form of employment and safe working conditions, it ensures equal opportunities and treatment for all, it includes social protection for the workers and their families, it offers prospects for personal development and encourages social integration, and when workers are free to express their concerns and to organise. Increasing employment and ensuring decent work for all are essential aspects of sustainable development. Quality employment and decent work conditions help to reduce inequalities and poverty, and empower people, especially women and youth.

To define our position in this broad field of work, a number of knowledge products were developed in 2022 that analysed the effectiveness of interventions in current and previous programmes to address issues of living wage. We analysed our efforts to combat child labour by documenting our approach and achievements from 9 cocoa, gold, palm oil, sugar and cotton projects that builds on our key strength to ensure living wages for workers and thereby reducing and preventing incidence of child labour. This is complemented by a more holistic approach of capacity strengthening and policy influencing at all levels to educate companies, consumers and communities on child labour issues and prevention. We also explored opportunities for decent Green Jobs to provide insights and recommendations for our Decent Work positioning and policy influencing strategies. In 2023, we will focus on a number of selected case studies (RECLAIM Sustainability! projects) to test some of the programme’s assumptions in relation to decent work and understand their preconditions.

2.4 Gender and Social Inclusion

In 2023, the RS! Consortium advanced its Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) efforts through six learning tracks designed to scrutinise the assumptions of its Theory of Change (ToC) with a GESI lens. Building upon the groundwork laid in 2022, a significant move was the initiation of Phase II of a consultancy to create an online training package. This development was aimed at empowering RS! staff to recognise, analyse, and advocate on gender and social inclusion issues effectively. This led to the creation of the GESI ideation and tracking tool, a comprehensive framework to guide advocacy efforts for identified gender and social issues. Additionally, the introduction of a research guide and learning guide, underpinned by the Systematised-based Learning (SBL) strategy, marks a strategic approach towards leveraging intersectional feminist research methodologies. Developed in collaboration with research professionals from the Global South, these guides are designed to support staff in managing evidence-based knowledge products efficiently. Externally, the GESI TLG’s efforts to share its work and engage with broader communities included participation in various forums, including global events on development aid, sector-level conferences, and macro policy meetings, where the TLG contributed insights on feminist methodologies and the empowerment of women in business.



SECTION 5

**Budget &
Actuals 2023**



FIGURE 11. TOTAL BUDGET VS 2023 EXPENDITURE

Budgetline	Budget 2023	Adjusted Budget 2023	Actuals 2023	Deviation
A. Strategic Supply Chain Programmes	€9,260,786	€10,360,321	€10,161,655	-1.9%
B. Global Digitalization & Innovation	€607,313	€652,564	€561,085	-14.0%
C. Global Linking & Learning	€1,047,156	€1,171,769	€986,124	-15.8%
D. Partnership Management and Coordination	€500,083	€718,185	€466,844	-35.0%
TOTAL	€11,415,338	€12,902,839	€12,175,708	-5.6%

Figure 11: The available budget for 2023 amounted to EUR 12,902,839 which includes the 2022 partial budget balance of Eur 1,487,501 and the approved 2023 budget of Eur 11,415,338. In 2023, the majority of Strategoc Supply Chain projects realised remarkable milestones resulting in almost full absorption of 2023 budget and accumulated carryover from previous period. The **Global Digitalization and Innovation Budgetline**, has an underspend of 14% resulting from a delay in the development of some innovation tracks which are in their early stages of the innovation cycle, hence the low absorption. In addition, the innovation tracks also needed to have their business plan approved (with proper value proposition) and receive support from BoPinc for the rollout and implementation of the respective innovations. In 2024, the focus is to develop the value proposition for viability of the various tracks. (See [Global Digitisation & Innovation](#)).

The Global Linking & Learning as well as Partnership management and coordination budgetline underspend relates to activities deferred to 2024.

The overall underspend of the 2023 budget is about 6% which is as a result of recorded significant achievements of the main milestone in the programme as evidenced in sections 1-3 above.

Figure 12 shows **actual expenditure per continent**: 39.8% was spent in Africa, 26.4% Asia, 7.4% in LATAM America and 9.9% in Europe. The remaining 16.5% was spent on the global budget lines; Innovation & Digitalisation, Global Linking and Learning, and Partnership Management and Coordination.

FIGURE 12. EXPENDITURE PER CONTINENT

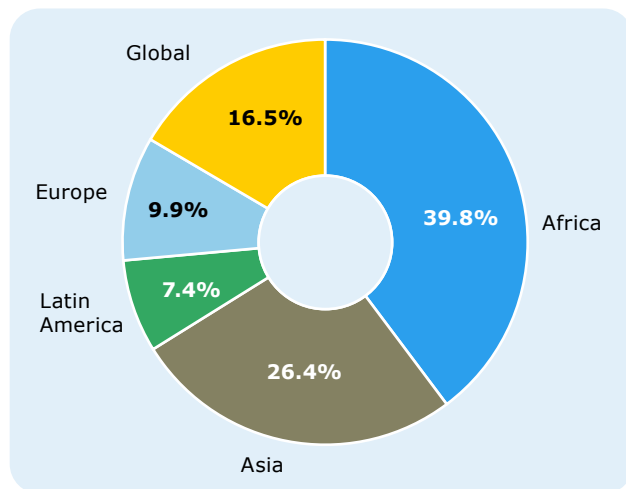


Figure 13 below shows the **budget versus actual per country**, as well as per continent. Overall deviation accounts to -5.6% (€ 727,131) of the total 2023 budget.

In **Africa**, the spend is above the available 2023 budget by 3%. This is a reflection of the implementation peak phase which resulted in higher spend than planned in the majority of the projects. Notably, in **Uganda** the overspend of 19% is attributable to accelerated implementation of programme activities such as finalisation of tea policy, some activities planned for year 2024 were executed in 2023. Similarly, there was a need to support Uganda National Farmers Federation to organise a national MSP as well as facilitate the established Gender committee's in national and regional dialogues in 2023 which would yield tangible impact in achieving the 2023 target. In **Kenya**, a deviation of 12% arises from increased cost of running the MSPs for various sectors. In Gold sector the approach bring together the Gold stakeholders which include the formation of the Artisanal and Small-Scale Miners Association in Kenya (ASMAK), collaboration with key stakeholder in the sector as well as formation of county based MSP, resulted to higher investment of resources in 2023 on Gold related activities. There were also accelerated implementations in Coffee and Freshfood products than planned in 2023 creating ground for achievement of milestones set in the future periods. Egypt, the deviation was -31% is attributable to slow implementation due to the delay in office registration related hurdles as well as the accumulated carry over from the previous periods. In addition, the RS! project team in **Egypt** was onboarded in 2023 and most of the time was invested on understanding the programing and developing suitable implementation strategies. Despite this, some achievements were realised, such as completion of value chain and policy analyses, stakeholder mapping in the cotton and textile sector. We also held policy dialogues involving various stakeholders which will inform policy development in relation to value addition, gender inclusion, and market creation.

Asia had a deviation of -6%, this is mainly attributable to the delayed registration of the China Solidaridad country office resulting in slow implementation of key activities. In addition, the country has reported substantial budget balance from previous periods. In **Bangladesh**, underspend was due to a significant budget balance in the prior periods. However, in 2023 most of the delayed activities gained momentum recording significant achievement on key milestones (See [3.2.4 Bangladesh](#) & [5.2.1 Bangladesh](#)).

In **LATAM**, the region reported an underspend of -16% attributable to political instability in Peru at the beginning of year preventing any execution of the project activities in the first months of 2023. This led to some activities being deferred to quarter 1 of 2024.



FIGURE 13. BUDGET VS ACTUAL 2023 PER COUNTRY

	Budget 2023	Adjusted Budget 2023	Actuals 2023	Deviation
Africa	€4,485,866	€4,678,908	€4,840,510	3%
Ghana	€707,152	€718,072	€718,420	0%
Kenya	€721,844	€718,246	€803,951	12%
Uganda	€646,602	€603,991	€716,363	19%
Mozambique	€590,373	€653,461	€653,702	0%
Cote d'Ivoire	€462,031	€464,445	€471,399	1%
Zambia	€401,101	€495,122	€513,514	4%
Sierra Leone	€405,614	€386,485	€385,622	0%
Egypt	€163,908	€188,749	€129,465	-31%
Malawi	€240,877	€279,262	€281,265	1%
Ethiopia	€146,364	€171,075	€166,809	-2%
ASIA	€2,637,177	€3,430,506	€3,212,156	-6%
India	€976,252	€1,175,552	€1,174,234	0%
Indonesia	€720,582	€783,192	€835,168	7%
China	€363,738	€593,426	€491,656	-17%
Bangladesh	€576,605	€878,336	€711,098	-19%
Central and South America	€936,660	€1,072,076	€903,407	-16%
Peru	€495,640	€541,022	€388,851	-28%
Honduras	€441,020	€531,054	€514,556	-3%
Europe	€1,201,084	€1,178,831	€1,205,581	2%
Europe	€1,201,084	€1,178,831	€1,205,581	2%
Global	€2,154,551	€2,542,518	€2,014,053	-21%
Global	€2,154,551	€2,542,518	€2,014,053	-21%
TOTAL	€11,415,338	€12,902,839	€12,175,708	-6%

FIGURE 14. AGGREGATE EXPENDITURE AND ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE FOR THE REMAINING PERIOD

	Aggregated expenditure (2021-2023)	Estimate expenditure remaining grants (2024-2025)	Total 2021-2025
Europe	€3,321,192	€2,563,808	€5,885,000
Honduras	€1,276,164	€773,836	€2,050,000
Peru	€1,131,571	€918,429	€2,050,000
Bangladesh	€1,173,176	€1,173,251	€2,346,427
India	€2,555,982	€1,848,574	€4,404,556
Indonesia	€2,037,927	€1,340,267	€3,378,194
China	€1,021,097	€1,019,726	€2,040,823
Egypt	€556,113	€368,887	€925,000
Zambia	€1,211,871	€689,479	€1,901,350
Malawi	€655,380	€430,249	€1,085,629
Mozambique	€1,776,448	€971,852	€2,748,300
Ghana	€2,242,907	€1,211,977	€3,454,884
Ivory Coast	€1,308,384	€949,206	€2,257,590
Sierra Leone	€1,228,810	€743,539	€1,972,349
Ethiopia	€449,754	€312,085	€761,839
Kenya	€2,266,082	€882,457	€3,148,539
Uganda	€1,925,318	€683,702	€2,609,020
Global	€6,114,577	€4,578,335	€10,692,912
TOTAL	€32,252,753	€21,459,661	€53,712,412

Figure 14 above shows the aggregate expenditure per country and the estimated expenditure for the remaining period of the grant.



Single Share Value
Cycle Number 1
GH¢ 5.00

Brought Per Meeting

GH¢ 5.00

Single Share Value
Cycle Number 1

Annexes





ANNEX 1

FINANCIAL REPORT 2023 - PER BUDGET LINE

		Global Supply Chain Programmes	Global Innovation & Digitalisation	Global Linking & Learning	Partnership Management & Coordination	Total
I	Direct staff costs (country/regional/continental/global)					
I.1	Staff costs	€2,347,082	€184,739	€221,401	€0	€2,753,222
I.2	Local staff costs	€1,267,057	€37,775	€142,147	€0	€1,446,979
I.3	Consultants and advisers	€572,292	€85,651	€18,169	€0	€676,112
	Subtotal I	€4,186,431	€308,165	€381,717	€0	€4,876,313
II	Other direct programme costs (country/regional/continental/global)					
II.1	Activity costs	€3,849,505	€178,319	€380,903	€281,241	€4,689,968
II.2	Costs relevant to consortium partners	€0	€3,007	€0	€156,294	€159,301
II.3	Activity-related travel costs	€653,881	€19,532	€11,030	€9,309	€693,752
II.4	Project office costs	€211,576	€0	€0	€0	€211,576
II.5	Equipment and investments	€58,850	€2,364	€0	€0	€61,214
II.6	Monitoring, evaluation and auditing	€337,361	€16,249	€212,473	€20,000	€586,083
	Subtotal II	€5,111,174	€219,471	€604,407	€466,844	€6,401,896
	Total of I and II	€9,297,605	€527,636	€986,124	€466,844	€11,278,209
III	Overheads/indirect costs					
III.1	Costs of support staff	€384,732	€0	€0	€0	€384,732
III.2	Not directly allocable administrative costs	€235,529	€21,401	€0	€0	€256,930
III.3	Other non-allocable costs	€243,789	€12,048	€0	€0	€255,837
	Total III	€864,050	€33,449	€0	€0	€897,499
	TOTAL	€10,161,655	€561,085	€986,124	€466,844	€12,175,708

ANNEX 2

FINANCIAL REPORT 2023 - PER COUNTRY

	Countries	Europe	Honduras	Peru	Bangladesh	India	Indonesia	China	Egypt	Zambia	Malawi	
I Direct staff costs (country/regional/continental/global)												
I.1	Staff costs	€655,254	€153,865	€214,764	€65,151	€79,795	€37,599	€112,738	€32,635	€101,154	€62,886	
I.2	Local staff costs	€0	€84,172	€19,339	€93,615	€217,117	€203,167	€107,192	€38,308	€83,673	€33,000	
I.3	Consultants and advisers	€158,151	€15,235	€13,185	€17,972	€92,598	€10,908	€42,543	€33,567	€53,814	€13,734	
	Subtotal I	€813,405	€253,272	€247,288	€176,738	€389,510	€251,674	€262,473	€104,510	€238,641	€109,620	
II Other direct programme costs (country/regional/continental/global)												
II.1	Activity costs	€243,648	€189,932	€57,371	€418,544	€647,077	€360,869	€83,811	€1,495	€110,479	€97,963	
II.2	Costs relevant to consortium partners	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	
II.3	Activity-related travel costs	€28,771	€30,637	€24,724	€23,545	€48,297	€69,822	€30,297	€6,241	€71,395	€33,917	
II.4	Project office costs	€0	€0	€2,819	€40,990	€0	€54,271	€42,055	€6,099	€17,200	€2,073	
II.5	Equipment and investments	€0	€8,164	€1,874	€4,517	€1,535	€6,051	€0	€0	€9,855	€970	
II.6	Monitoring, evaluation and auditing	€10,000	€5,070	€7,628	€2,988	€15,528	€28,934	€42,753	€0	€11,066	€6,817	
	Subtotal II	€282,418	€233,803	€94,417	€490,584	€712,437	€519,947	€198,916	€13,835	€219,995	€141,740	
	Total of I and II	€1,095,823	€487,075	€341,705	€667,322	€1,101,947	€771,622	€461,389	€118,345	€458,636	€251,360	
III Overheads/indirect costs												
III.1	Costs of support staff	€0	€8,319	€30,951	€15,148	€25,014	€35,059	€10,474	€0	€5,354	€6,316	
III.2	Not directly allocable administrative costs	€0	€6,621	€8,457	€14,080	€23,252	€12,504	€9,734	€11,120	€48,243	€22,079	
III.3	Other non-allocable costs	€109,758	€12,541	€7,737	€14,548	€24,021	€15,983	€10,059	€0	€1,281	€1,510	
	Total III	€109,758	€27,481	€47,146	€43,776	€72,287	€63,546	€30,267	€11,120	€54,877	€29,905	
	TOTAL	€1,205,581	€514,556	€388,852	€711,098	€1,174,234	€835,168	€491,656	€129,465	€513,514	€281,265	

	Mozambique	Ghana	Ivory Coast	Sierra Leone	Ethiopia	Kenya	Uganda	Global Digitalisation & Innovation	Global Linking & Learning	Global Partnership Management & Coordination	TOTAL
	€146,324	€186,685	€114,982	€102,365	€24,240	€159,957	€96,687	€184,739	€221,401	€0	€2,753,222
	€110,182	€52,002	€34,666	€34,666	€31,610	€49,332	€75,016	€37,775	€142,147	€0	€1,446,979
	€31,538	€34,571	€24,398	€22,444	€1,226	€3,446	€2,962	€85,651	€18,169	€0	€676,112
	€288,044	€273,258	€174,046	€159,475	€57,075	€212,735	€174,666	€308,165	€381,717	€0	€4,876,313
	€190,941	€266,003	€171,201	€116,727	€74,847	€422,876	€395,722	€178,319	€380,903	€281,241	€4,689,969
	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€3,007	€0	€156,294	€159,301
	€59,055	€61,357	€51,931	€45,882	€12,365	€34,477	€21,168	€19,532	€11,030	€9,309	€693,753
	€17,656	€10,891	€6,678	€5,472	€1,123	€2,124	€2,124	€0	€0	€0	€211,576
	€12,917	€6,758	€1,880	€1,164	€611	€1,277	€1,277	€2,364	€0	€0	€61,214
	€15,276	€31,907	€20,747	€18,469	€1,768	€64,960	€53,450	€16,249	€212,473	€20,000	€586,083
	€295,845	€376,916	€252,437	€187,714	€90,714	€525,714	€473,741	€219,471	€604,407	€466,844	€6,401,896
	€583,889	€650,174	€426,483	€347,189	€147,789	€738,448	€648,407	€527,636	€986,124	€466,844	€11,278,209
	€12,121	€61,700	€41,412	€36,243	€12,042	€42,776	€41,802	€0	€0	€0	€384,732
	€54,793	€1,299	€698	€436	€2,867	€10,011	€9,335	€21,401	€0	€0	€256,930
	€2,899	€5,246	€2,806	€1,753	€4,110	€12,716	€16,820	€12,048	€0	€0	€255,837
	€69,813	€68,245	€44,916	€38,433	€19,019	€65,503	€67,957	€33,449	€0	€0	€897,499
	€653,702	€718,420	€471,399	€385,622	€166,809	€803,951	€716,363	€561,085	€986,124	€466,844	€12,175,708

ANNEX 3

RS! MTR RECOMMENDATIONS - ACTION PLAN

Background

In 2023, a Mid Term Review was conducted for the RECLAIM Sustainability! Programme, covering the first two years of implementation (2021-2022). This MTR elaborates on the main findings and provides recommendations to the RECLAIM Sustainability! Partners to address and improve different aspects of the programme in the remaining period 2024-2025 and beyond 2025.

Based on these recommendations and the MTR management response, the RECLAIM Sustainability! Consortium with the support of the Global Linking & Learning (GLL) Coordinator and the Partnership Coordination Unit (PCU), has elaborated the following action plan.

	Recommendation	RS! Consortium's level of agreement	Action	Who? How?	When?
RELEVANCE					
1	Enhance understanding of the full programme ToC and some of the key concepts and drivers of sustainability (e.g. Fair Value Distribution). Ensure that all project staff and stakeholders are aware about the global ToC and are able to align their projects with it.	Agree	Ensure that key project staff and stakeholders understand the programme ToC and how it fits in their contexts.	RS! consortium partners through their Managing Directors, RS! Liaisons and PMEL staff.	Along 2024
2	Gender & Social Inclusion could be even more integrated in all interventions. Review and adapt the ToC assumptions based on lessons learned, and add an explicit assumption related to GSI.	Agree	Revise the ToC assumptions, and give them attention when we discuss programme ToC and project progress with project staff and stakeholders. -Although GSI is integrated in all current assumptions, we will add an explicit GSI assumption.	GSI TLG leading with GLL coordinator, together with all TLGs.	Along year 2024 and 2025
3	Encourage the development of contextualized project ToCs together with key stakeholders, and organize annual learning & reflection workshops to jointly reflect on the ToC and ensure it is relevant and effective at project level.	Disagree	We will not develop ToCs for each individual RS! Project. Annual reflection and learning workshops will be organized during the annual planning process. During these workshops, project teams and stakeholders reflect on project interventions, their effectiveness and their alignment with the programme ToC. PMEL advisors will provide guidelines for these annual reflection & learning workshops and support/facilitate where necessary.	-	-

4	Increase understanding of key concepts that are crucial for implementation.	Agree	-Focus on this during the second part of the programme. TLGs will organize workshops to disseminate concepts clarified during the first part of the programme. -The TLG for Climate & NRM will continue its focus on accessible climate finance and locally led adaptation. -The TLGs for Decent Work and Fair Value Distribution will promote clear concepts and policy propositions, ensuring intersections e.g. with GSI strategies.	All TLGs supported/ guided by the GLL coordinator	In Q1 and Q2 of 2024, all TLGs conducted learning sessions and strengthened concepts. Cross-learning and intersectional activities will take place from Q3-Q4 in 2024 until the end of the programme
5	PMEL should focus more on learning, not just on accountability.	Agree	Stimulate learning at project level (together with stakeholders) and improve related PMEL processes, to enable the flow of learning from projects to TLGs and CoPs to contribute to the RS! Learning agenda.	PCU will discuss with the PMEL local staff the different ways in which learning is being stimulated at project level, provide recommendations where needed and share it with the GLL coordinator.	-Inventory finalized in May 2024 -Learning stimulation at project level + flow to TLGs and CoPs along the last two years (2024-2025)
COHERENCE					
6	Strengthen local to national to global linkages and alignment of advocacy strategies. Programming strategies could be more linked and harmonized at regional and global level to have an even more strategic and coherent value chain approach, ensuring that interventions in the global South inform interventions in the global North and vice versa.	Agree	-Follow up on this and ensure more coherence between the policy agendas of the various RS! Projects and RS! Consortium partners. Improve these linkages to align our advocacy strategies (especially related to EUDR & CSDDD). -TLGs and CoPs will map advocacy strategies, identify opportunities for better alignment and take the lead in strengthening these linkages between project staff.	-Consortium partners will take action to improve these linkages across the portfolio. -PCU will monitor it through plans and reports and flag it to the PSC where needed. GLL coordinator will guide TLGs and CoPs through joint strategic and learning sessions to identify opportunities for collaboration	Along the last two years (2024-2025) Identification and learning joint sessions Q2-Q3 in 2024 work on alignment of specific opportunities from Q4 2024 until the end of the programme
7	Designed structure for Global Linking & Learning needs realignment to support this better.	Agree	See programme management section below.	-	-

EFFECTIVENESS					
8	Continuously assess developing capacity needs of CSOs and focus capacity building of CSOs more on L&A skills, governance, membership, financial sustainability, networking, and delivering on mandate to members.	Agree	Put more attention on supporting CSOs and farmer organizations' strategic and organizational capacity needs.	Managing Directors of the different consortium partners are taking action on these recommendations through the Project Managers. <i>Also see action on the recommendation #22</i>	Along the last two years (2024-2025)
9	Further expand the Training of Trainers approach to ensure scalability and sustainability of program results.	Partially agree	Look into effective and more scalable approaches for capacity development, of which ToT could be one.		
10	Extend capacity building to government, private sector, and other key stakeholders.	Agree	Continue and scale up capacity development of government staff to support enforcement / implementation of existing regulatory frameworks.		
11	The gender champions approach should be continued and scaled up, making gender champions part of a larger gender-transformative approach.	Agree	Continue and scale up our gender champion approach as part of a broader effort to adopt a more intersectional and transformative approach to gender and social inclusion across the RS! programme.	GSI CoP supported by GSI TLG and GLL coordinator	Ongoing until the end of the programme
12	Monitor the enforcement of existing regulatory frameworks and focus more on ensuring their implementation.	Agree	-Focus more on the enforcement and implementation of existing regulatory frameworks. PMs will monitor challenges related to the enforcement and implementation, and support governments through capacity building. -PMs will raise awareness among CSOs and producer organizations about existing regulatory frameworks and involve them in holding governments accountable for implementation.	PMEL local staff is supporting the Project Managers to gather evidence on enforcement and implementation of regulatory frameworks	Along the last two years (2024-2025)

13	Keep track of effective interventions in the Advocate pathway through PMEL methodologies / case studies.	Agree	Scale up our Outcome Harvesting methodology. This can be integrated in the planned annual reflection and learning sessions and related methodology that will be developed by PMEL.	<p>- (linked to the point above about monitoring enforcement) PCU is discussing with the PMEL local staff and documenting the methodologies in place to gather qualitative data from different stakeholders and their perceptions about change processes. How do they keep track of 1) what are the effective advocacy interventions, and 2) the level of enforcement of the new/improved regulatory frameworks. It will provide recommendations where needed.</p> <p>-PCU will organize OH training for the consortium partners.</p>	<p>-Inventory finalized in May 2024</p> <p>-OH training planned for June 2024</p>
14	Given the few examples found in the programme where companies have actually improved their sustainability performance, the evaluators recommend to explore other more disruptive strategies to engage and pressure the private sector into committing to sustainability norms. Increase engagement with the private sector to influence their business practices towards sustainability. Make a power analysis and work with influential stakeholders to disrupt conventional business models.	Partially agree	<p>Our focus in RS! is on multilateral engagement with the private sector in MSPs and in sector platforms related to voluntary standards as well as on developing regulatory frameworks through which the government sets standards for the private sector. Direct engagement with individual companies through partnerships will be done in other programmes of consortium partners (like the Pathways to Prosperity programme of Solidaridad). Therefore we will:</p> <p>-Continue to test innovative strategies at a small scale, but based on the hesitance of companies to implement sustainability policies at scale.</p> <p>-Focus more on monitoring the enforcement of the regulatory frameworks by companies.</p>	<p>-Project Managers will continue engaging corporate partners to test innovative tools and models.</p> <p><i>Also see action on the recommendation #13</i></p>	-Along the last two years (2024-2025)

1 Although OH is one of these methodologies, it is not the only one in use, and other methodologies can fit better specific contexts. PCU will encourage PMEL local staff to share their experiences across the portfolio

15	Focus more on disruptive innovation models and tools that pressure the private sector into behavioral change and spark systemic change.	Partially agree	Disruptive models by nature will be niche. We focus mostly on the adoption of tools that provide for business intelligence needs. In addition, we will gather examples of effective disruptive technologies by working with a limited number of (smaller) companies on them.	GLL coordinator together with BopInc will guide all innovations to adopt new tools and have a tangible business value proposition for the paying customer. This includes adopting practical tools to increase the viability of the business implementation and scalability	Ongoing, adapted propositions submitted in Q1 implementation start in Q2. Q3 and Q4 focusing on technical support and refinement together with BopInc
16	For all innovation projects, improve the user-centered design, value proposition and product development, and integration of the innovations in larger interventions	Partially agree	Ensure these elements get attention in all innovation projects. For some of the innovation projects this is already done.	As mentioned above, the GLL Coordinator and BopInc will collaborate to tailor the business model proposition for all innovations.	Proposal and technical evaluation done through Q1 and Q2 of 2024. Implementation and monitoring until the end of the programme
17	Improve data interoperability and governance, so data generated by innovations can be used more for advocacy messages.	Agree	Develop internal clarity on the value proposition.	Integrated into the explanation above, which will be monitored by BopInc on the business side and the GLL Coordinator to ensure alignment with the overall Theory of Change (ToC) and program objectives.	As above
18	Re-evaluate the role of digital tools in improving the bargaining position of farmers and workers, considering their impact on sustainability.	Agree	Continue to test the assumption, so we have collected learning by the end of the programme on how the tools contribute to bargaining power (and fair value distribution).	The TLG FVD Lead and members with close monitoring by the GLL coordinator to ensure attaining this goal through the 2024 work plan activities	Through 2024 work plan already ongoing and until the end of the programme
19	Continue the effective work through MSPs Involve media more in MSPs, learning events and training to develop understanding among journalists.	Agree	Involve the media more in these MSPs to develop the understanding of sustainability issues among journalists and amplify key sustainability messages.	Managing Directors of the different consortium partners are taking action on these recommendations through the Project Managers.	Along the last two years (2024-2025)
20	For learning, measure the effect of campaigning on knowledge and behavior of citizens (in partnership with marketing-gearred partners).	Disagree	Continue to monitor media coverage / reach, but will not consistently monitor behavioral change as a result of campaigning, as this is considered not to be plausible under the current funding for the RS! programme.	PCU is discussing with the PMEL local staff and documenting the methodologies used to monitor this, as well as the distinction between the different types of campaigns conducted. It will provide recommendations and alignment where needed.	-Inventory finalized in May 2024 -Targets for the # campaigns and the # of citizens activated / mobilized will be revised for the annual plan 2025

21	Adopt a more structured, scaled-up and integrated global GSI approach that can be adapted to local contexts, is gender transformative in nature and focuses on inclusivity of marginalized groups in programme governance & interventions.	Agree	The existing gender policy (of Solidaridad) is a bit outdated (2016-17), focuses solely on gender mainstreaming and does not fully take into account or define an intersectional gender transformative (or socially inclusive) approach. Some RS! consortium partners have developed their own strategies, but they have not been coordinated at the global level in RS!. Therefore we will: -Explore the most effective way to develop a 'common GSI approach' that guides our global strategy on inclusion, which can then be contextualized for guidance to RS! project implementation.	The GSI Community of Practice (CoP) within Solidaridad, with the support and expertise from the GSI TLG and under the guidance of the GLL Coordinator, aims to align the approach at various strategic levels.	Gathering evidence and identifying the key components of the GSI approach Q-Q3. In August 2024 the GLL event will take place with a link to GSI NEXUS approach and a follow up Policy workshop
22	Review KPI target for CS strengthening and related monitoring methodology.	Partially agree	Review the target based on actuals, but not necessarily increase the number too much. We do not aim to strengthen a lot of new CSO, but rather focus on further improvement / sustainability of targeted CSO. We will revise our monitoring methodology accordingly.	PCU is discussing with the PMEL local staff and documenting the methodologies used to gather evidence on CS strengthening. It will provide recommendations and alignment where needed.	-Inventory finalized in May 2024 -Reflection on the target 2025 for the # of Civil Society actors and target groups with increased L&A capacities will be included in the annual plan 2025 if needed.
23	Review KPI target and monitoring methodology for campaigning.	Agree	PMEL will clarify monitoring methodology for # citizens activated / mobilized. Based on improved methodology, reported numbers and target will be revised.	<i>See action on the recommendation #20</i>	
24	Review KPI target for the Advocate pathway.	Partially agree	We will review the target based on actuals, but not necessarily increase the number too much. We will focus on further improvement / implementation.	<i>See action on the recommendation #13</i> Also note that as part of the MTR, the RS! Consortium already reviewed the targets at higher impact level: # of new or improved governmental policies implemented for sustainable production, trade and/or consumption (linked to SCS 012); # of new and improved private sector policies for sustainable sourcing, production, trade and investment developed and Implemented (linked to SCS 013)	Revision done in October 2023

25	Review KPI target and monitoring methodology for the Accelerate pathway.	Partially agree	PMEL will revise where necessary.	PCU is discussing with the PMEL local staff and documenting the methodologies used to gather evidence on improved transparency and farmers' or workers' bargaining position through the models and tools developed and tested under this pathway. It will provide recommendations and alignment where needed.	-Inventory finalized in May 2024 -This is expected to feed the discussion of the GLL workshop planned for August 2024
SUSTAINABILITY					
26	Explore the possibility of gradually shifting the focus of the CSO capacity development to more strategic organizational capacity needs, like developing their membership base, delivering on their mandates to members, networking and holding governments accountable for implementation of regulatory frameworks.	Agree			
27	Explore avenues for making MSPs operate more independently (where relevant) after the closure of the programme, as part of an exit strategy.	Agree	Explore which MSPs have potential to become sustained platforms (with civic space), focus on this in our capacity development strategies, and make a strategy with other CSOs and NGO partners on how to sustain them beyond the programme.	-Managing Directors of the different consortium partners are taking action on these recommendations through the Project Managers. -Project Managers will reflect on the viability of MSPs, as well as on the exit strategies.	-Along the last two years (2024-2025) -Reflection on the viability of the MSPs, as well as on the exit strategies, will be included in the annual plan 2025.
28	Explore appropriate innovative financing models for smallholders.	Partially agree	This is more of a P2P strategy, but in RS! this could be explored in relation to the capacity of farmer groups to negotiate for better financing /production investments with e.g. input suppliers, concessions and tariffs.		
PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT					
29	Ensure a more equal partnership between the Solidaridad consortium partners and the smaller consortium partners (TrustAfrica, Fairfood and Business Watch Indonesia) with recognition of expertise they bring to the consortium, and prevent working in silos.	Partially agree	The PSC indicated this was not recognised as a major issue, but agreed to keep this as a recurrent point of attention on their agenda.	PSC	Along the last two years (2024-2025)

30	The Innovation Facility needs to provide more central guidance on user-centered design, value proposition and product development, and integration of innovations in larger interventions.	Agree	<p>-Give more guidance about the steps that need to be taken in each stage of the innovation process, e.g. user centered design during the Minimum Viable Product stage.</p> <p>-For each innovation, explore various business cases.</p> <p>-Stimulate adoption of successful innovations into project interventions.</p>	The innovation tracks have been transferred under the coordination of the GLL to better align with the program's outcomes/objectives, starting in 2024. BopInc continues to provide technical support through one-on-one monitoring. The design thinking implementation strategy for the minimum viable product/business is in place and is closely supported by the GLL and coaches at BopInc.	From 2024 ongoing
31	Ensure that RS! Global Linking & Learning structures capture opportunities for exchange and surfacing of learning, and collection of evidence to prove solutions and to develop aligned policy propositions.	Agree	<p>-The PSC will develop clear assignments for TLG and CoP Leads, communicate these assignments to them, ensure they have the time/resources/skills to deliver, and PSC (MDs) will monitor their performance and hold them accountable for the agreed deliverables.</p> <p>The RS! assignment of TLG Leads is to collect and capture evidence of effective RS! programming related to their theme, develop a clear evidence-based policy proposition that can be used in RS! projects, develop guidance materials to build the capabilities of staff on this policy proposition, and promote this policy proposition / common approach externally (thought leadership).</p> <p>The RS! assignment of CoP Leads is to ensure alignment in commodity programming, facilitate exchange of learning across their commodity programme (ideally contributing to the TLG learning plans), test and provide feedback on policy propositions & guidance materials developed by the TLGs and innovation tools developed through the IF (so CoPs can become a channel for uptake and scaling). In addition they will continue to have a leading role in annual planning & reporting on the commodity programme.</p>	PSC, in collaboration with the GLL Coordinator and supported by Solidaridad's executive team, aims to ensure structural change and improved governance, particularly in the functioning of groups such as CoPs.	Proposal of a better functioning CoPs and TLGs submitted in Q1. Evaluation and decision to be expected in Q3

32	Ensure better linkages between the learning structures (CoP, TLGs, IF, PMEL).	Agree	<p>-PMEL staff of consortium partners will focus more on collecting learning at project level that can help the development of policy propositions in the TLGs.</p> <p>-PMEL staff of consortium partners, supported by PCU, will develop stronger processes and tools for this.</p> <p>-CoPs will share learning across their commodity programme and identify relevant learning that can be used by the TLGs. They will also test policy propositions developed by TLGs and innovations developed through the IF.</p> <p>-TLGs will actively link with CoPs, IF and PMEL to collect input/evidence for the development of their policy propositions and related guidance materials to build capabilities of staff.</p>	<p>Following the above activity, the GLL Coordinator has gathered feedback and recommendations to improve the functioning of the various structures. Annual Plans for 2024 have been developed, incorporating these suggestions and including a more tailored approach to collect project learnings across all groups. A specific GLL Action Plan, aimed at facilitating cross-learning structures and activities, has been established in line with the MTR recommendations by the end of 2023. Starting in 2024, the GLL Coordinator will facilitate several learning and marketplace sessions. Including a knowledge product identification during the GLL event.</p>	From 2024 and until the end of the programme
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ANNEX 4

GLOSSARY

Abbreviation	Full Name
ACRE	Alliance of Cotton and Textile stakeholders in Regenerative cotton
AMEs	Area Marketing Enterprises
AMV	Africa Mining Vision
APOA	Asian Palm Oil Alliance
ASGM	Artisanal and Small-Scale gold mining
ASM	Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining
ATA	Asia Tea Alliance
CPOS	China Palm Oil Standards
CRAFT	Code of Risk-mitigation for ASM engaging in Formal Trade
CSC	China Sustainable Cotton
CSDDD	Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DISCO	Dutch Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa
EATTA	East Africa Tea Trade Association
EPRM	European Partnership for Responsible Minerals
ETI	Ethical Trade Initiative
EUDR	European Union Deforestation Regulation
FVD	Fair Value Distribution
GCCP	Ghana Civil Society Cocoa Platform
GCP	Global Coffee Platform
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
IHCAFE	Honduran Coffee Institute
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPOs	Indian Palm Oil Sustainability Standard
ISPO	Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil standard
MSIs	Multi-Stakeholders Initiatives
MSPO	Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil
MSPs	Multi-Stakeholder Platforms
MTR	Mid-Term review
MVP	Minimum Viable Product
OPDAG	Oil Palm Development Association of Ghana
P2P	Pathways to Prosperity Programme
RSPO	Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil
SEA	Solvent Extractor's Association
STG	Small Tea Growers
STITCH	Sustainable Textile Initiative: Together for Change
TLGs	Thematic Learning Groups
ToC	Theory of Change
UCDA	Uganda Coffee Development Authority
UNFFE	Uganda National Farmers Federation
ZamGap	Zambia Good Agricultural Practices

COLOPHON

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