



FINAL EVALUATION: Phase 1 of Palma Futuro: Preventing and Reducing Child Labor and Forced Labor in Palm Oil Supply Chains, Colombia and Ecuador

Evaluation Contractor: Integra Government Services International LLC (Integra) and Dexis Consulting Group

Project Overview:

Palma Futuro (PF) is a multi-country project in Latin America with the main objective of improving the implementation of social compliance systems (SCSs) that promote acceptable conditions of work (ACW) and reduce child labor (CL) and forced labor (FL) in the palm oil supply chains in Colombia and Ecuador. The project expanded activities to disseminate and share best practices in the region by including Peru and Brazil. Implementation for PF is ongoing through July 2024. The palm oil sectors in Colombia and Ecuador operate under different structures resulting in diverse challenges that necessitate unique implementation approaches.

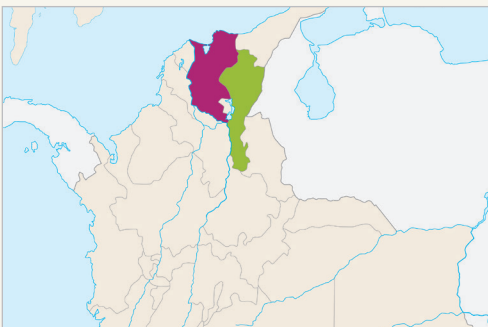
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Project Coverage:

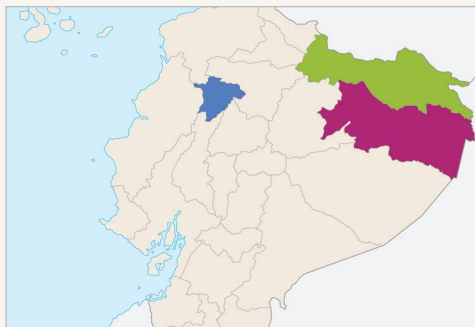
Colombia Regions:

Magdalena and Cesar



Ecuador Regions:

Amazon region – Sucumbíos, Orellana and Santo Domingo Provinces



Implementer:

Lead grantee, Partners of the Americas (POA), and sub-grantees JE Austin Associates (responsible for research and the development of three case studies) and Social Accountability International (responsible for private sector capacity development in implementing sustainable social compliance systems).

Period of Performance:

June 2019 – June 2024

Funding:

\$7,360,289

Evaluation Period Coverage:

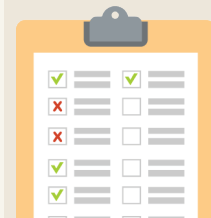
FY2019 – FY2023

Evaluation Fieldwork Dates:

April 24, 2023 – May 5, 2023

Key Partners:

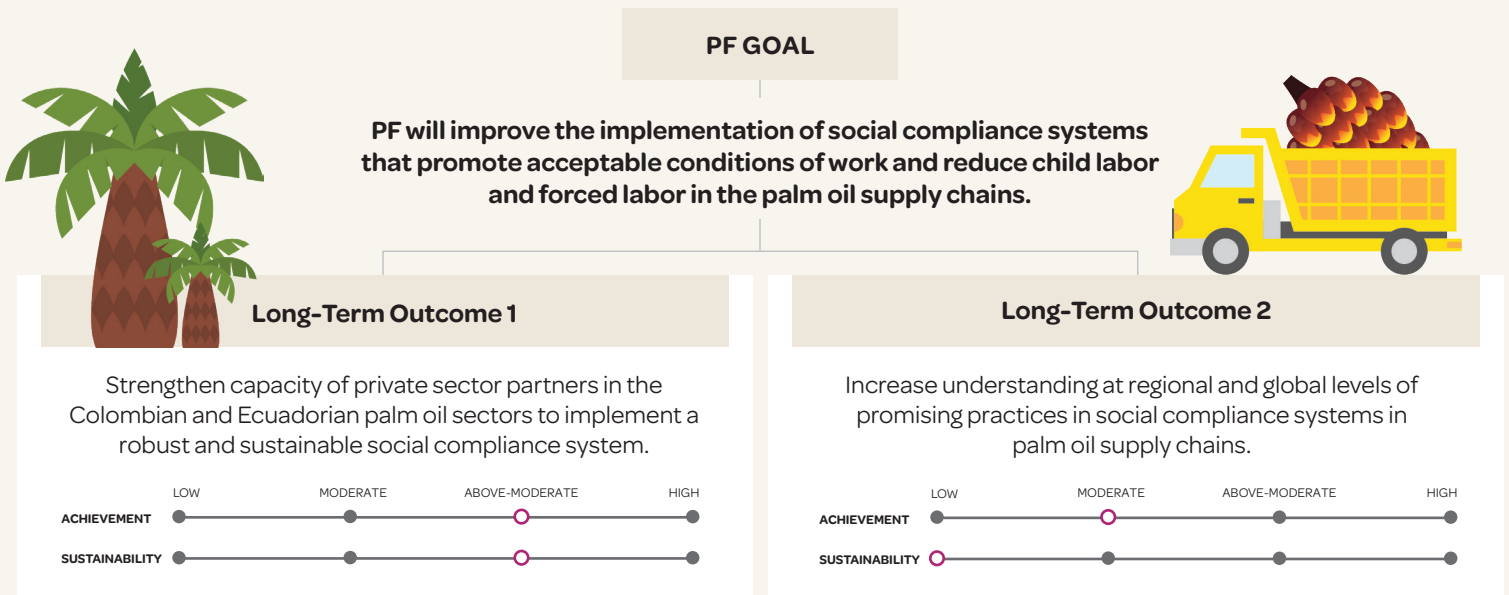
- National Association of Palm Oil Growers, Ecuador (ANCUPA)
- Amazonian Integral Forest Conservation and Sustainable Production Program (PROAmazonía)
- Palmas del Cesar (processing factory)
- Palmagro, S.A. (processing factory)
- Aceites, S.A. (processing factory)
- Palmaceite, S.A. (processing factory)
- Extractora El Roble (S.A.S.) (processing factory)



“When the study tours came, the small producers showed their organized folders with payroll, and the producers proudly showed their achievements, their internal regulations, and workers of their endowment.”

– MILLS AND PROCESSING FACTORIES STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWED

PF High-Level Results and Performance Summary of Achievements



“The training we have received has allowed us to better manage our farms. Improved maintenance of palm crops. [...] Topics such as washing, safety, signage, spill kits, and the provision of a bathroom for workers. A new area is being set up for an additional shower, and proposals for tables and chairs. Keeping a record of everything, even water bottles, to ensure they don’t get mixed up among the workers.”

– FARMERS AND SUPPLIERS STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWED

PF Evaluation Results

Relevance and Coherence

1. Private sector partners in Colombia benefitted from capacity development activities and tools that strengthened their skills and knowledge of Social Compliance Systems (SCSs).
2. PF stakeholders who were already familiar with the SCS processes are on track to identify and close knowledge gaps regarding SCSs.
3. Technical themes and curricula in the PF methodology are relevant for advancing awareness of the labor rights of workers.

Effectiveness

4. Strategic engagement of private sector partners by POA and ILAB aids local stakeholders who are advocating for labor rights.
5. Managing information platforms to exchange promising practices and lessons learned among local partners and across the region was inconsistently implemented but there is evidence of renewed efforts to improve communications.
6. Geographic, cultural and demographic differences in the region make it imperative to customize approaches, tools and training activities for local partners in each country.

Efficiency

7. External risks and shocks related to COVID-19, disruptions in supply chains, and socio-economic challenges caused delays in implementation and necessitated revisions to the workplan and timelines.
8. PF activities that supported and empowered women workers had a multiplier effect in local communities; several stakeholders stated that women workers became more visible and recognized as important employees in the palm oil sector.
9. Resource allocation of funds and the deployment of local and regional experts did not fully meet the magnitude of the needs, according to some stakeholders.

Sustainability

10. Achieving long-term sustainability of investments in SCSs is more likely in Colombia due to the large number of private sector firms that already integrate social compliance into their business practices.
11. Smaller producers, primarily in Ecuador, benefit from strong linkages to anchor companies, unions, trade associations, and non-governmental organizations for sustained capacity enhancement, which makes it important for PF to include all these stakeholders in their strategic outreach efforts.

Evaluation Team Recommendations

To PF

- 1** Engage more local staff, consultants, or subgrantees to leverage localization approaches, promising practices and lessons learned regarding labor issues that are specific to farmers and processors in each country of the region.
- 2** Invest in developing information exchange platforms that can disseminate curated information about SCSs and provide access to training materials that are relevant to the characteristics of different stakeholder groups; identify local partners who can host these platforms in the future.
- 3** Promote sustainability by expanding relationships with critical stakeholders, such as employers' associations, NGOs, and international organizations relevant to the palm oil sector and labor rights topics.
- 4** Integrate the obtainment of global certifications and other industry standards into technical approaches because this will incentivize palm oil producers, processors and key actors in supply chains to adapt SCSs into their business practices.
- 5** Consider conducting country-level stakeholder mappings that illustrate specific stakeholder technical and information needs at the project close to capture critical information for follow-on activities.

To ILAB

- 6** Conduct learning events for new partners and grantees to explain the significance of certain performance monitoring indicators, setting targets and reporting results. These indicators should align with the overarching goals and priorities of USDOL/ Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB).
- 7** Orient partners to new administration priorities, such as the United States Executive Order for Advancing Equity and Racial Justice Through the Federal Government that are relevant to USDOL/ILAB programs and projects.
- 8** Develop and curate information tools that capture promising practices and lessons learned in supporting SCSs and disseminate these tools to new and current partners and grantees.
- 9** Prioritize the inclusion of local partners and implementers from established networks to boost the strengthening of local capacity and sustainability, and reduce costs



Photo Credit: Palma Futuro Project, Social Compliance Systems for the Palm Oil Industry Handbook, 2022.