

Interim Performance Evaluation

Palma Futuro Project



Source: Partner of the Americas. Workers harvesting palm oil fruit bunches in Colombia

United States Department of Labor

Bureau of International Labor Affairs

Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking

Palma Futuro Interim Evaluation Report

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Interim Performance Evaluation Report of *Palma Futuro* Project

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This report presents the findings of the interim evaluation of the *Palma Futuro* project. IMPAQ International, LLC (IMPAQ) conducted remote fieldwork for this independent evaluation from May 24 to June 11, 2021, in collaboration with the project team and stakeholders, and prepared the evaluation report according to the terms specified in its contract with the United States Department of Labor. IMPAQ would like to express sincere thanks to all the parties involved for their support and valuable contributions.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACW	Acceptable Conditions of Work
CL	Child Labor
CMEP	Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DANE	National Administrative Department of Statistics (<i>Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística</i>)
FEDEPALMA	National Federation of Oil Palm Growers of Colombia (<i>Federación Nacional de Cultivadores de Palma de Aceite</i>)
FL	Forced Labor
GOC	Government of Colombia
ILAB	Bureau of International Labor Affairs
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMPAQ	IMPAQ International, LLC
JAA	J.E. Austin Associates
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOL	Ministry of Labor (Ministerio del Trabajo)
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OCFT	Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OTC	Outcome
OTP	Output
POA	Partners of the Americas
PROPALMA	National Federation of Oil Palm Growers of Ecuador (<i>Federación Nacional de la Cadena Productiva del Aceite de Palma</i>)
PSA	Pre-situational Analysis
RDQA	Routine Data Quality Assessment
SAI	Social Accountability International
SCS	Social Compliance System
SOTC	Sub-Outcome
ToR	Terms of Reference
TPR	Technical Progress Report
USDOL	United States Department of Labor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In November 2018, the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) awarded Partners of the Americas (POA) a four-year, \$6 million USD cooperative agreement to complete *Palma Futuro*, a multi-country project. *Palma Futuro* was intended to promote acceptable conditions of work (ACW) and reduce child labor (CL) and forced labor (FL) in palm oil supply chains in Colombia and Ecuador by improving the implementation of social compliance systems (SCS) and disseminating best practices in social compliance in the region, specifically in Peru and Brazil. Working with implementing partners JE Austin Associates (JAA) and Social Accountability International (SAI), POA aims to achieve the following project outcomes (OTCs):

1. Increase capacity of private sector partners in the palm oil sector to implement robust and sustainable SCSs.
2. Increase regional and global understanding of promising practices in SCSs in palm oil supply chains.

Evaluation Objectives and Approach

IMPAQ International, LLC (IMPAQ) conducted the interim evaluation (1) to assess the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objectives and the effectiveness of project implementation, and (2) to make recommendations to improve performance for the remainder of the project. An independent evaluation team from IMPAQ carried out the evaluation combining primary qualitative data with secondary quantitative data. Due to the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation team collected all primary data remotely. The team obtained quantitative data from available monitoring and evaluation (M&E) records and project reports.

Main Findings and Conclusions

The *Palma Futuro* project conducts the following key interventions: (1) technical assistance to three palm oil companies to develop and implement robust SCS throughout their supply chains; (2) capacity-building of palm oil industry associations, public sector entities and civil society organizations (CSOs) to support social compliance in Colombia and Ecuador; (3) studies highlighting promising practices in social compliance and business incentives for implementing SCS; and (4) implementation of a knowledge and learning network to disseminate promising tools and best practices in social compliance in Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil, and Peru. The evaluation team's findings address the ten evaluation questions approved in the Terms of Reference (ToR). The team organized this report around the questions by evaluation area: project relevance and coherence; project efficiency and effectiveness; and project sustainability.

Relevance and Coherence

- **Results Framework:** The results framework clearly showed the critical path to reach the project's OTCs and achieve the project-level objective of improving implementation of SCS that promote ACW and reduce CL and FL in the palm oil supply chains.
- **Project Design:** The *Palma Futuro* project design largely met the needs and expectations of private sector partners and their producers and suppliers who were interested in strengthening their social compliance management systems. Their familiarity with the RSPO certification process aided their understanding of the *Palma Futuro* SCS process and project goals.

Strategies during the second half of the project timeline are intended to satisfy the specific needs of small-scale producers who require a greater amount of technical assistance.

- **Multi-sectoral approach:** To date the project's multi-sectoral approach has largely focused on the needs of private sector partners and their suppliers to implement a SCS and develop their corresponding improvement plans. It has yet to address fully the specific needs of palm oil plantation workers throughout the supply chain such as labor formalization. The project also has not yet addressed the needs expressed by public sector institutions to have access to reliable data on labor conditions in the palm oil sector and the prevalence of CL and FL. The project will likely begin to address the needs of communities surrounding private sector partner companies through the implementation of Community Circles during the second half of the project.

Effectiveness and Efficiency

- **Project Achievement:** At the time of the interim evaluation, the *Palma Futuro* project had progressed on 10 of 21 active indicators; the pandemic was a significant impediment to additional progress on the other indicators. Project staff expected to achieve all targets related to the implementation of the SCS through Virtual Verification Visits. Social distancing requirements impeded the project's ability to achieve other indicators, such as the establishment of 60 Community Circles. The project did not achieve indicators related to project research and case studies because of issues that were only partially attributable to the pandemic, including different expectations or understanding (scope, approach, methodology) of project deliverables.
- **Project Response to Effects of COVID-19:** The project was able to pivot to remote platforms for activities related to the baseline SCS assessments in a relatively short period of time. The project responded appropriately to an observed communication gap by producing worker and community education materials on COVID-19 prevention.
- **Stakeholder Participation:** The roles of private sector partners, producers, and suppliers were clearly defined, and project strategies were designed to prioritize their participation. Palm oil industry associations clearly understood their role to engage their affiliates and promote promising practices. Civil society organizations participated in CL awareness events sponsored by the project. The project had yet to gain significant participation from community leaders, public sector institutions, or palm oil plantation workers within the partner companies' supply chain, in part due to COVID-19.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The project developed a M&E system that included the Pre-situational Analysis (PSA), Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Program (CMEP) and Routine Data Quality Assessment (RDQA). The project's **PSA** identified a wide range of key actors to consider in the implementation strategies. The project's **CMEP** was manageable and useful for tracking project progress with the inclusion of the "stop light" mechanism that provided quick alerts to management staff on project status in meeting indicator targets. The **RDQA** process was conducted before the interim evaluation and led to recalculations of any indicators that showed inconsistencies.
- **Efficiency of Staffing Structure:** The *Palma Futuro* staffing structure relied on the efforts of the two sub-grantees working in Colombia and Ecuador to complete the bulk of activities under Outcome 1. In this sense, the sub-grantees were the subject experts and POA provided management and oversight and secured private sector partnerships. The evaluation identified

the potential need of a labor specialist who could provide additional technical assistance to small-scale producers, and further promote ACW and labor formalization.

- **Strategic and Efficient Use of Time:** As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were delays in implementing the SCS in private sector partner companies. This created a domino effect and affected the capacity-building activities needed to scale and replicate the SCS throughout the supply chain. The project's relatively quick pivot to remote platforms will make it possible to achieve training and SCS baseline assessment targets by the end of the project. However, regarding the case studies, the different expectations between study authors, POA and USDOL resulted in excessive delays in the review and approval process, demonstrating an inefficient use of time.

Sustainability

- **Likelihood of Sustainability:** At the time of the interim evaluation, the project activities and initiatives that were most likely sustainable were the integration of the SCS into partner companies' management systems and the continuous improvement of social compliance processes. Private sector partner companies were expected to begin the process of training producers and suppliers on the SCS processes, in part as a guide to achieve RSPO certification. Whether the knowledge and learning network will be sustainable depends upon key stakeholders formally committing to maintaining and updating the Knowledge Platform on a continuous basis.
- **Factors Strengthening Sustainability and Scalability:** The close alignment of the SCS and the RSPO labor compliance standards increases the usefulness of the SCS. The development of in-house experts, such as social performance teams and SCS trainers, strengthens the scalability of the SCS processes throughout the supply chains. The strong engagement of the industry associations in both Ecuador and Colombia increases the likelihood of the dissemination of promising tools and scaling of best practices to other palm oil regions. Furthermore, private sector partners and industry associations want to differentiate their products from those of their competitors.
- **Factors Limiting Sustainability and Scalability:** Implementation and sustainability of the SCS may be more difficult for small-scale producers who have limited resources or reading skills or have received limited technical assistance to implement the SCS. Furthermore, insufficient time may limit the project's ability to ensure the continued operation of the Knowledge Platform, which is in jeopardy if a key stakeholder is not identified to maintain and update the contents.

Assessment of Project's Level of Achievement

The evaluation team assigned a rating for each of the four criteria established to assess the project's level of achievement to date: (1) adaptation of strategies to address COVID; (2) participation of key stakeholders; (3) achievement of indicators; and (4) coherence and viability of sustainability strategies. Each criterion was assigned a score, based on a four-point scale: low, moderate, above-moderate, and high. These scores were then averaged to obtain an overall project rating of **above moderate**.

Lessons Learned

1. Expectations for research and case studies must be clarified between donor and grantee from the onset to avoid excessive delays or discontinuation of work on important project outputs.
2. A communication strategy is an essential component of every successful project's design to keep all interested stakeholders informed of project progress and respond efficiently and effectively to major unexpected events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Major changes in the implementation context can affect the motivation of private partners to complete project activities when companies experience the effects of major unexpected events (such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the spread of bud rot in Ecuador).
4. Labor projects that successfully promote ACW take into consideration workers' perspectives and participation throughout the supply chain on issues related to labor compliance in the palm oil sector. This can help increase buy-in from workers and worker organizations on the implementation of the SCS process.

Promising Practices

5. Establishing clear expectations of the private sector partners increases their commitment to complete the SCS process and integrate the SCS into company management systems. The signing of MOUs stating their commitments to implement the SCS and to integrate it into larger management systems and processes helped increase their interest and buy-in.
6. Creating in-house social performance teams and a cadre of trainers provides a built-in mechanism to promote the scalability of the SCS process throughout the supply chain.
7. Implementation of a robust SCS has helped increase private sector partner commitment to sustainable work practices and a desire to "go beyond" the baseline standards required of the RSPO certification. The new practice of developing and implementing company improvement plans is expected to strengthen labor performance and management systems.
8. The SCS is not a "one size fits all" process. It is necessary to customize (adapt/simplify) the SCS tools and process to facilitate their implementation with small-scale producers who are responsible for all aspects of the farm operations and who may have limited literacy skills.

Recommendations

Immediate Recommendations to POA Staff Executing the *Palma Futuro* Project

1. **Finalize the implementation of the Knowledge Platform:** POA should immediately begin the process of implementing the Knowledge Platform to allow sufficient time for rollout, adjustments and technical assistance.
2. **Integrate a labor specialist into the staffing structure:** POA should add a labor specialist (consultant or staff) to address palm oil workers' top labor priorities, including labor formalization, and further promote ACW in both countries' palm oil sector.
3. **Analyze resources allocated to Ecuador:** POA should analyze whether the staffing resources allocated to Ecuador are sufficient to address the challenges and opportunities that have evolved.
4. **Strengthen the quality of Community Circles:** If the project is not extended, POA should consider reducing the number of Community Circles by up to half the end-of-project target to avoid administrative time setting up Circles and reserve time for programmatic work in a

smaller number of Circles. This will allow more time to implement a quality model leading to concrete actions to improve conditions in the community and in the workplace.

5. **Strengthen communication channels with project stakeholders:** POA should establish communication channels to inform key stakeholders of project highlights, anticipated results, and upcoming activities.
6. **Ensure sufficient review time for any remaining deliverable:** POA should identify any remaining project deliverables, such as the toolkit, that will require multiple levels of review and approval to ensure there is sufficient time for wide dissemination and the provision of technical assistance during rollout of the deliverables.
7. **Develop a contingency plan:** POA should develop a contingency plan for the possibility that any private sector partners are unable to carry out their commitment to scale and replicate the SCS process throughout the supply chain.

Recommendations to USDOL for Future Projects

8. **Address palm oil workers' labor priorities:** Future project implementers focusing on social compliance issues should make a concerted effort when designing activities to address palm oil workers' top labor priorities, including labor formalization.
9. **Include a public policy component:** Future project implementers should work collaboratively with public sector institutions to develop and adopt public policies that enhance labor compliance in the palm oil sector.
10. **Define the scope and expectations of project studies:** USDOL should examine the key causes of the delays in delivering research products to ensure that the product revision and approval procedures are completed with enough time to use and disseminate results.

1. PROJECT CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION

1.1 Project Description

The Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), an agency of the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) promotes a fair global playing field for workers in the U.S. and around the world by enforcing trade commitments, strengthening labor standards, and combating international child labor (CL), forced labor (FL), and human trafficking. Within ILAB, the Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT) works to combat CL, FL, and human trafficking around the world through international research, policy engagement, technical cooperation, and awareness-raising. Since OCFT's technical cooperation program began in 1995, the U.S. Congress has appropriated funds annually to USDOL for efforts to combat exploitive CL internationally. This funding has been used to support technical cooperation projects in more than 90 countries around the world. Technical cooperation projects funded by USDOL support sustained efforts that address CL and FL's underlying causes, including poverty and lack of access to education.

In November 2018, ILAB awarded a \$6,000,000 USD cooperative agreement to Partners of the Americas (POA) to implement *Palma Futuro*, a four-year (2019-2022), multi-country (Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil, and Peru) project designed to (1) improve the implementation of social compliance systems (SCSs) that promote acceptable conditions of work (ACW) and reduce CL and FL in palm oil supply chains in Colombia and Ecuador; and (2) disseminate best practices in SCSs in these and other palm oil-producing countries, particularly Brazil and Peru. Working with its implementing partners, JE Austin Associates (JAA) and Social Accountability International (SAI), POA aims to achieve the following outcomes (OTCs):

1. Strengthen capacity of private sector partners in the Colombian and Ecuadorian palm oil sector to implement a robust and sustainable SCS.
2. Increase understanding, at regional and global levels, of promising practices in SCSs in palm oil supply chains.

Specifically, *Palma Futuro* provides technical assistance to three palm oil companies in Colombia and Ecuador (BioCosta and Palmas del Cesar in Colombia, and Organic Supply in Ecuador) to develop robust SCSs using the components of ComplyChain.¹ The project also works collaboratively with national palm oil business associations, researchers, worker organizations, and civil society organizations (CSOs) to build capacity to support social compliance. Furthermore, the project conducts market analysis and value-chain mapping to identify the value of labor compliance and promotes the implementation of SCSs; and disseminates this research and best practices in social compliance in Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil, and Peru. This regional and

¹ ComplyChain is USDOL's eight-step approach to a social compliance system to help businesses address CL and FL within their supply chains.

global collaboration strategy includes participation in international forums, development of national workshops in the target countries, and knowledge management of lessons learned throughout the project.² Exhibit 1 lists project indicators by objective, OTC, sub-outcome (SOTC), and output (OTP).

Exhibit 1: Project Objectives, OTCs, and OTPs

Project Indicators by Objective, OTC, SOTC, and OTP
Project-Level Objective: To improve the implementation of SCSs that promote ACW and reduce CL and FL in the palm oil supply chains.
PO 1: Number of organizations in Latin America that promote SCS practices in the palm oil sector PO 2: Number of private sector partners and their suppliers with improved Social Fingerprint® performance scores
OTC 1 Strengthened capacity of private sector partners in the Colombian and Ecuadorian palm oil sectors to implement a robust and sustainable SCS
OTC 1.1.: Number of private sector partners and their suppliers with improved Social Fingerprint® management systems scores
SOTC 1.1 Increased understanding of labor practices and risks of CL and FL in the Colombian and Ecuadorian palm oil sectors
SOTC 1.1.1: Percentage of key stakeholders who attend annual sectoral workshops who demonstrate a change in their understanding of labor practices and risks in supply chain
OTP 1.1.1 Evidence compiled on labor practices and risks of CL and FL in palm oil supply chain
OTP 1.1.1.1: Final research report on CL and FL and labor conditions completed
OTP 1.1.2 Evidence compiled on promising practices in social compliance and benefits of SCSs to economic performance of companies
OTP 1.1.2.1: Number of reports on promising practices and benefits of social compliance and benefits completed
OTP 1.1.3 Evidence disseminated to relevant public and private stakeholders on labor conditions, promising practices in social compliance and benefits of SCSs to economic performance of companies
OTP 1.1.3.1: Number stakeholders reached with the findings of the project's research
SOTC 1.2 Increased application of social compliance processes at all levels of the private sector partner supply chains
SOTC 1.2.1: Number of suppliers trained by private sector partners SOTC 1.2.2: Number of private sector partners' suppliers that complete assessment process SOTC 1.2.3: Number of private sector partners' suppliers that develop an improvement plan
OTP 1.2.1 Social compliance tools adapted for local context
OTP 1.2.1.1: Social compliance toolkits completed
OTP 1.2.2 Technical assistance delivered to private sector partners, their supply chain and workers
OTP 1.2.2.1: Number of private sector partners provided technical assistance OTP 1.2.2.2: Number of people from private sector partners provided technical assistance OTP 1.2.2.3: Percentage of surveyed supply chain workshop participants who demonstrate a change in understanding of labor practices and risks of CL and FL
OTP 1.2.3 Technical assistance provided to external stakeholders to support SCS implemented by private sector partners
OTP 1.2.3.1: Number of stakeholder organizations provided training directly by the project OTP 1.2.3.2: Number of people from external stakeholders provided training directly by the project OTP 1.2.3.3: Number of communities reached through outreach events OTP 1.2.3.4: Number of Community Circles formed to cascade learnings from trainings

² <https://partners.net/palma-futuro>

Project Indicators by Objective, OTC, SOTC, and OTP
OTP 1.2.3.5 Number of actions taken by Community Circles to cascade learning
OTC 2: Increased understanding, at regional and global levels, of promising practices in SCSs in palm oil supply chains.
OTC 2.1: Number of organizations that participate in forums where the project presents promising practices and lessons learned
OTC 2.2: Percentage of surveyed regional study tour participants who demonstrate an increased understanding of SCS promising practices
OTP 2.1: Promising practices disseminated to palm oil stakeholders regionally and globally
OTP 2.1.1: Number of regional discussion forums organized in the Region
OTP 2.1.2: Number of instances in which project generated material is shared at international or regional forums, or published in reports
OTP 2.2: A Knowledge and learning network operational across the region and globally, of stakeholders in the palm oil sector
OTP 2.2.1: Number of webinars hosted by the project
OTP 2.2.2: Number of organizations that participate in webinars hosted or supported by the project
OTP 2.2.3: Number of organizations with formal agreements to participate in the network

Exhibit 2: *Palma Futuro* Intervention Areas



Source: IMPAQ.

Note: The project did not conduct any activities in Brazil and Peru. Instead, they will exchange promising practices in those countries via a Knowledge Platform.

1.2 Project Context

At the time the evaluation team conducted this interim evaluation, the project faced significant challenges in both Colombia and Ecuador, especially related to the COVID-19 pandemic. When countries mandated social distancing measures in March 2020, the *Palma Futuro* project rescheduled, suspended and/or adapted its strategies and activities. These changes especially affected activities that were designed to be carried out in person, such as the SCS trainings and the baseline assessments of participating palm oil companies and their supply chains. Given the slow administration of COVID-19 vaccinations, which at the time of this interim evaluation had not reached even 10 percent of the population in either country, the evaluation team assumes that the pandemic-related obstacles to project implementation will continue at least until the end of 2021.³

The COVID-19 health emergency resulted in economic deterioration in both countries. In 2020, Colombia experienced a 6.8 percent decrease

³ Johns Hopkins University, Coronavirus Resource Center, <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/region>

in its gross domestic product (GDP) and a 3.7 percent increase in the unemployment rate to 16 percent in December 2020.⁴ Economic decline was most critical in Ecuador, as the nation had been experiencing a recession for several years before the pandemic. The drop in GDP in the country was roughly 9 percent during 2020 and according to the most recent employment and unemployment survey (May 2021) of the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC), only 30 percent of eligible workers were adequately employed.⁵ These are some of the challenges facing the new President of Ecuador, Guillermo Lasso, who assumed power on May 24, 2021.⁶

Palm Sector in Colombia: Colombia is the leading nation in South American palm oil production and fourth in the world behind Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. Indonesia and Malaysia dominate global production with 84 percent of total production; Colombia supplies 2 percent.⁷ According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Colombia has more than 6,000 palm oil producers, of which 4,200 are small-scale palm growers (less than 50 hectares).⁸ Colombian palm growers are united through a robust and active industry association, the National Federation of Oil Palm Growers (FEDEPALMA), which plays an active role in the *Palma Futuro* project.

Palm Sector in Ecuador: Ecuador is the second largest palm oil producer in Latin America and sixth in world rankings. Ecuador's Ministry of Agriculture reports 6,568 oil palm growers, of which 87 percent are small producers with plantations of less than 50 hectares.⁹ The National Federation of Oil Palm Growers of Ecuador (PROPALMA), one of three industry associations in Ecuador, estimates that small producers make up nearly 96 percent of oil palm production.¹⁰ The palm sector in Ecuador has been severely affected since 2017 by bud rot, which has caused a loss of around 90,000 planted hectares (about 30% of the cultivated area).¹¹

⁴ Departamento Técnico y de Información Económica del Banco de la República, *Boletín de Indicadores Económicos*, Bogotá, 28 June 2021. <https://www.banrep.gov.co/economia/pli/bie.pdf>

⁵ Government of Ecuador, Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos, Quito, Ecuador. May 2021. <https://www.ecuadorencifras.gob.ec/estadisticas/>

⁶ Rafael Abuchaibe, "Guillermo Lasso: Ecuador's new leader faces uphill struggle," *BBC News*, May 24, 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-57228324>

⁷ United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, "Palm Oil World Production" Updated May 2021. <https://ipad.fas.usda.gov/cropexplorer/cropview/commodityView.aspx?cropid=4243000>

⁸ Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, "Palma de Aceite, Indicadores de Producción y de Mercado," 2019. <https://sioc.minagricultura.gov.co/Palma/Documentos/2019-09-30%20Cifras%20Sectoriales.pdf>

⁹ Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, "Palmicultores pueden beneficiarse de simplificación tributaria y BPA para el sector." August 2020. <https://www.agricultura.gob.ec/palmicultores-pueden-beneficiarse-de-simplificacion-tributaria-y-bpa-para-fortalecer-el-sector/#:~:text=En%20Ecuador%20existen%206.568%20palmicultores.Los%20R%C3%ADos%2C%20Guayas%20y%20Manab%C3%AD>

¹⁰ PROPALMA, "Importancia del Cutivo de Palma Aceitera en el Ecuador." <https://propalmaec.com/perfil-del-sector-palmicultor/>

¹¹ Reyes, Jorge, "El alto precio del aceite crudo de palma impacta en producción de comestibles y artículos de limpieza," *El Universo*, March 6, 2021. <https://www.eluniverso.com/noticias/economia/el-alto-precio-del-aceite-crudo-de-palma-impacta-en-produccion-de-comestibles-y-articulos-de-limpieza-nota/>

In June 2020, Ecuador's National Assembly approved a bill that regulates the cultivation, production and commercialization of palm oil and its derivatives and that includes measures to stimulate production, commercialization, and industrialization. The new legislation requires consultation with Indigenous communities so that producers obtain authorization prior to starting or extending the cultivation of oil palm trees in ancestral territories and that palm growers comply with national labor regulations.¹²

Palm Sector in Peru: Peru is the eighth largest palm producer in Latin America and 17th in the world. Palm cultivation in Peru mostly occurs in the Amazon region by small producers with plantations of up to 50 hectares. A representative of the national palm oil association of Peru, JUNPALMA, informed the evaluators of a recent decree issued by the Ministry of Agrarian Development¹³ that created a multisectoral working group whose objective is to develop the first national plan for sustainable use of oil palm in Peru, covering the period 2021 to 2030.

Palm Sector in Brazil: Brazil is the ninth largest oil palm producer in the world. As in Peru, the majority of producers are small and medium-sized, and 82 percent of plantations are located in the state of Pará. According to a representative of the Brazilian Association of Palm Oil Producers (ABRAPALMA), Brazil has long been the focus of environmentalists advocating for the protection of the Amazon rainforest. According to ABRAPALMA, strict environmental and labor laws have resulted in Brazil serving as a world reference for sustainable palm oil production.

¹² Registro Oficial No. 255, "Ley para el fortalecimiento y desarrollo de la producción, comercialización, extracción, exportación e industrialización de la palma aceitera y sus derivados", 28 July 2020. <https://www.derechoecuador.com/registro-oficial/2020/07/registro-oficial-no255-martes-28-de-julio-de-2020-segundo-suplemento->

¹³ Government of Peru, Ministry of Agrarian Development, Ministerial Resolution 0118, 10 May 2021, MIDAGRI. <https://www.gob.pe/institucion/midagri/normas-legales/1915297-0118-2021-midagri>

2. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Evaluation Objectives

The evaluation team had the following objectives in conducting the interim performance evaluation:

1. Assess the relevance of the project in the cultural, economic, and political context in the country, as well as the validity of the project design and the extent to which it is suited to the priorities and policies of the host government and other national stakeholders;
2. Determine whether the project is on track to meeting its objectives, identify the challenges and opportunities encountered in doing so, and analyze the driving factors for these challenges and opportunities;
3. Assess the effectiveness of the project's strategies and the project's strengths and weaknesses in project implementation and identify areas in need of improvement;
4. Provide conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations; and,
5. Assess the project's plans for sustainability at local and national levels and among implementing organizations and identify next steps to enhance its sustainability.

The evaluation provides evidence to inform decision-making, understanding of lessons learned and promising practices, and recommendations for future projects.

2.2 Methodology

In this section, the evaluation team provides the evaluation questions, data sources, and project schedule, and describes the site sampling, data collection, data analysis, and study limitations.

2.2.1 Evaluation Questions and Data Sources

To meet the evaluation objectives, ILAB, POA and IMPAQ agreed on 10 specific evaluation questions organized according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria. These criteria include Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability. The project evaluation questions are listed below in Exhibit 3.

The evaluation team addressed the evaluation questions using multiple sources of evidence, combining primary qualitative data with secondary quantitative data. Due to the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, IMPAQ, POA, and ILAB agreed that the evaluation team would collect all primary data remotely and implement protective measures when small groups of interview participants gathered in one place. The team obtained primary qualitative data through key informant interviews (KIIs) conducted remotely. The team obtained secondary quantitative data from the performance reporting data presented in the semi-annual Technical Progress Reports (TPRs) to ILAB, as well as from data gathered during evaluation fieldwork.

Exhibit 3: Evaluation Questions

#	Evaluation Questions
Relevance and Coherence	
1	To what extent was the project design logical and coherent? Where the objectives/OTCs, targets, and timing realistically set?
2	To what extent are the project's immediate objectives consistent with the needs of key stakeholders including, <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Private sector partners Producers and suppliers Palm oil associations Public sector Community leaders
Effectiveness and Efficiency	
3	At the time of the interim evaluation, is the project on track in terms of meeting its targets/objectives? What are factors driving or hindering project results thus far? Specifically, <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did COVID-19 affect the <i>Palma Futuro</i> project? How did the <i>Palma Futuro</i> project pivot strategies due to the COVID-19 pandemic? What were the results?
4	What is the nature of stakeholder participation, including their level of commitment to project implementation efforts and contribution to project objectives? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How effectively has the project engaged with each stakeholder group including private sector partners, producers and suppliers, palm oil associations, public sector, and community leaders?
5	How have the M&E systems (CMEP, PSA, etc.) been implemented and are they being used to identify trends and patterns, adapt strategies, and make informed decisions? Has the project used findings from the RDQA to formulate and implement measures to improve data quality?
6	Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically and efficiently to achieve project OTCs?
Sustainability	
7	Which project initiatives are most likely sustainable and/or scalable beyond the life of the project? Does the project have a strategy in place to sustain these elements?
8	How is the project promoting sustainability/scalability of expected OTCs with the following stakeholders? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Private sector partners (BioCosta, Palmas de Cesar, Organic Supply) Producers and suppliers Industry associations
9	What additional actions should be taken in order to promote sustainability of project OTCs?
10	What emerging project practices or experiences are worth highlighting as holding potential to become good practices or lessons learned at the end of the project?

2.2.2 Evaluation Schedule

In collaboration with the POA team, the evaluation team developed the site sampling plan, confirmed the list of stakeholders to be interviewed, and scheduled the interviews and focus

groups. The team conducted interviews and focus groups from May 24 to June 11, 2021. The team convened the stakeholder workshop on June 10, 2021. Most of the data analysis and report writing occurred from June 14 to July 8, 2021.

2.2.3 Data Collection Methods

Data sources: To answer the evaluation questions proposed for each analytic evaluation area, the evaluation team collected data from three sources: KIIs, document reviews and secondary project data.

The KIIs obtained stakeholders’ perspectives on the project’s implementation and effectiveness. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, IMPAQ and the evaluation team considered fully the risks associated with in-person meetings and consulted with POA and USDOL, and ultimately decided to conduct all interviews with stakeholders remotely. The evaluation team carried out KIIs using a variety of remote platforms according to the preference of each stakeholder—Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp, or telephone. Exhibit 4 indicates the stakeholder groups interviewed, the number of participants interviewed, participant genders, and sample characteristics.

Exhibit 4: Stakeholders Interviewed for Interim Evaluation

Stakeholder Group	Characteristics
Project Staff from POA: HQ, Colombia, Ecuador	Project personnel and POA headquarters personnel
Project staff from SAI	Sub-grantee responsible for development and implementation of the SCS and related training
Project staff from JAA	Sub-grantee responsible for research and development of case studies and market analysis
Private sector partners in Colombia and Ecuador	Palm oil companies participating in project activities
Palm oil industry associations in Colombia, Ecuador, Perú & Brasil	Representatives from FEDEPALMA in Colombia; PROPALMA in Ecuador; JUNPALMA in Peru; ABRAPALMA in Brazil
Palm oil producers and suppliers in Colombia	Producers supplying palm fruit to palm oil companies
Palm oil Producers and suppliers in Ecuador	
Institutions in the Government of Colombia (GOC)	Representatives of national government institutions in Colombia (MOL)
Institutions in the government of Ecuador	Representatives of national government institutions in Ecuador (MOL)
External stakeholders (CSOs and national and international labor organizations)	Representatives of civil society and community organizations that focus on CL issues, sustainable palm certification, and a national trade union school, the agricultural workers’ trade union, and the International Labor Organization (ILO)

Stakeholder Group	Characteristics
Representatives of the U.S. government	Representatives from ILAB and U.S. Department of State
Total	56

Stakeholder meeting. The evaluation team held an online stakeholder meeting on June 10, 2021, during which the evaluators presented the preliminary findings, addressed questions, and received clarifications from participating project staff and stakeholders. A total of 24 participants attended from POA, SAI, JAA, and from private sector partners in Colombia and Ecuador.

Document review. The evaluators reviewed numerous project documents, including the Proposal Submission, Notice of Award and Award Modification, the Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (CMEP), TPRs, and other supporting project materials obtained during fieldwork. Appendix B contains a complete list of the documents reviewed.

2.2.4 Data Analysis

The document review and stakeholder interviews generated a substantial amount of raw quantitative and qualitative data. The evaluation team categorized, synthesized, and summarized the raw qualitative data for an analysis driven by the evaluation questions using a matrix in Excel. Evaluators looked for common responses to questions to identify themes, patterns, and relationships. By drawing out areas of overlap and divergence, the team could better understand the implementation context and the effectiveness of the project’s implementation and management. These findings informed the interpretation of the quantitative data, drawn from project beneficiary data, to assess how the project has performed in achieving expected results to date.

We also reviewed any external factors, such as other projects in the region and the current COVID-19 pandemic and assessed the extent to which these factors influenced the results revealed by each type of data. The qualitative data provided contextual information to interpret the quantitative results in an iterative process through which we revised and strengthened our assessment of the project’s performance.

2.2.5 Limitations

The findings presented in this evaluation are based on information the evaluation team collected from project reports, background documents, and interviews with project staff and stakeholders. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation team did not conduct site visits and conducted all evaluation interviews remotely via telephone or with the use of video conferencing platforms. While the remote interview process enabled the collection of primary data, physical observations and interactions achieved with in-person interviews were lacking.

To ensure quality remote fieldwork, the evaluators worked with POA to understand how COVID-19 affected program participants and what adjustments to data collection protocols and methods needed to be made accordingly. This included determining participant access to cell phones and

virtual platforms and requesting that participants find a quiet place with good reception. It was also important to clearly explain the purpose of the call, receive consent, and ensure that the interviewer conducted the call in a secluded location to respect the privacy of the participant.

The range of stakeholders interviewed lacked sufficient representation from the Ministry of Labor (MOL) in both Colombia and Ecuador, community leaders, workers and/or worker representatives, as these stakeholders had limited participation in project activities to date. Activities targeting community members were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby limiting their participation.

To ensure quality remote fieldwork, the IMPAQ evaluation team implemented the following actions to reduce the effects of poor connectivity or biased responses:

- Coordinated with POA to understand how COVID-19 has affected program participants and adjusted data collection protocols and methods accordingly
- Determined whether participants had access to cell phones and virtual platforms and verified accuracy of phone numbers
- Requested that participants find a quiet place with good reception, clearly explained the purpose of the call and received consent, and ensured that the interviewer conducted all calls in a secluded location to protect the privacy of the participants
- Conducted pilot video conferencing interviews to test connectivity and data quality.

It should be noted that this evaluation does not constitute a formal impact assessment. Evaluation results are based on information collected from background documents and interviews with stakeholders, project staff, and project participants. The accuracy of the evaluation results is determined by the integrity of information provided to the evaluator from these sources.

3. FINDINGS

In this section, the evaluation team presents the key findings for each evaluation question category: relevance and coherence, effectiveness and efficiency, and sustainability.

3.1 Relevance and Coherence

Question 1: To what extent was the project design logical and coherent? Were the objectives/OTCs, targets and timing realistically set?

The *Palma Futuro* project design responded to the requirements of the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) issued by USDOL, including the two pre-determined objectives, priority countries of implementation, and participation and alliances within the private sector.

As stipulated in the FOA, project design centered on the implementation of robust and sustainable SCS in palm oil supply chains. The *Palma Futuro* SCS combines the eight critical social compliance elements identified in USDOL’s Comply Chain tool¹⁴ with nine core labor performance elements: CL, FL, wages, occupational health and safety, working hours, discrimination, freedom of association, regular employment, and disciplinary practices.

The project design also integrated research to increase understanding of labor practices and risks of CL and FL in the Colombian and Ecuadorian palm oil sectors. A market analysis to understand business incentives has already occurred. Other planned research included case studies on labor practices in both countries and a study to better determine the prevalence of CL and FL in the palm oil sector to identify SCS promising practices, which will be shared regionally and globally.

The project’s Results Framework depicted a logical sequence of events among activities, products, results and objectives, showing the critical path to reach project OTCs and the project-level objective, which was to improve the implementation of SCS that promote ACW and reduce both CL and FL in the palm oil supply chains.

Realistic expectations for completing project activities: *Palma Futuro* project staff and private sector partners interviewed in Colombia and Ecuador all agreed that as conceived, the project design offered realistic expectations for a four-year project. The expected feasibility of achieving project objectives was partially attributed to the commitment of the participating palm oil companies. At the same time, the research study to determine the prevalence or characterization of CL and FL and labor conditions was viewed as “ambitious” by project management staff.

Question 2: To what extent are the project’s immediate objectives consistent with the needs of key stakeholders including,

- a. private sector partner
- b. producers and suppliers
- c. palm oil associations

¹⁴ USDOL, “Comply Chain: Business Tools for Labor Compliance in Global Supply Chains.” <https://www.dol.gov/general/apps/ilab-comply-chain>

- d. public sector
- e. community leaders

The evaluation team interviewed project stakeholders to identify their social compliance needs and priorities, and those of their constituents. These needs and priorities were compared to the project activities listed in the CMEP to assess the extent to which project activities met stakeholder needs.

Exhibit 5: Stakeholder Needs/Priorities Identified and Relevance of Project Activities Listed in Project CMEP

Stakeholders	Needs or Priorities Identified	Relevant Project Activities Addressing Need
Private Sector Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reinforce compliance with the requirements of certifications (RSPO) for the company and its suppliers ▪ Strengthen compliance with national and international labor regulations ▪ Strengthen compliance throughout the value chain ▪ Generate evidence to demonstrate that the company is complying ▪ Strengthen internal teams in charge of sustainability tasks ▪ Differentiate private-sector efforts to comply from those in Asian palm-growing countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A-1.2.2.1 Deliver training on SCS to private partner companies and their suppliers ▪ A-1.2.2.2 Provide mentoring on SCS to private partner companies and their suppliers ▪ A-1.2.2.3 Deliver the train-the-trainer program to private partner companies ▪ A-1.2.2.4 Conduct a baseline and end-line evaluation of the private sector partners' SCS and their performance implementing the system ▪ A-1.2.2.5. Gain leadership commitment and establish social performance teams in partner companies and their suppliers ▪ A-1.2.2.14 Deliver technical assistance to partner companies and their suppliers ▪ A-1.2.2.16 Conduct trainings for private partner companies' workers on social compliance and labor rights ▪ A-1.2.2.17 Develop monitoring plan for both company-level compliance and supply chain ▪ A-1.2.2.18 Train private partner companies and suppliers to implement monitoring plans
Palm Oil Industry Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collect and disseminate specialized information on international markets (characteristics, requirements, potential niches) ▪ Exchange experiences and good practices at the regional level ▪ Demonstrate evidence of concerted efforts at social compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A-1.1.2.2: Conduct a market and value chain analysis for socially compliant palm oil value chain participants' processes, including labor practices ▪ A-1.2.3.1. Conduct training and Training of Trainers for stakeholders such as extensionists, FEDEPALMA, PROPALMA, local consultants, technicians, among others ▪ A-1.1.2.5. Prepare a case study of FEDEPALMA focusing on the Sustainable Palm Program, targeted to the economic, labor and environmental sustainability in the palm oil sector in Colombia ▪ A-2.2.1.1 Participate in international conferences and present relevant findings of the Project about the sector.

Stakeholders	Needs or Priorities Identified	Relevant Project Activities Addressing Need
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technical capacity to assist affiliates in developing and managing a SCS ▪ Strengthen and provide evidence of labor compliance on issues related to labor formalization, occupational safety and health (OSH), CL, and FL ▪ Greater accountability of the entire supply chain in complying with all national and international labor laws ▪ Strengthen relations with the public sector and promote policies to strengthen social compliance in palm oil sector (JUNPALMA, Peru) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A-2.2.1.2 Identify and document promising practices from leading private sector entities in target countries that have strong and/or exemplary human rights programs/standards in their supply chain. ▪ A-2.2.1.6 Disseminate case studies, methodologies, tools, resources, research and data available in the region and globally through international connections. ▪ A-2.2.1.7 Hold meetings with stakeholders (primarily in Colombia and Ecuador) to highlight issues of CL, FL, and promotion of workers' rights during the development of the agenda for the International Palm Oil Conference ▪ A-2.2.1.8 Participate in the International Palm Oil Conference organized by FEDEPALMA in Colombia ▪ A-2.2.2.2 Promote a learning network among stakeholders in the four countries to share experiences, tools, promising practices, and provide networking opportunities among peers to help find solutions to challenges in improving the labor rights of children and workers in the palm oil sectors.
Palm Fruit Producers and Suppliers (Medium and Large)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate social commitment; implement corrective actions ▪ Be able to show concrete evidence of social responsibility ▪ Comply with labor regulations ▪ Improve labor relations and community relations ▪ Open new markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A-1.2.2.17 Develop monitoring plan for both company level compliance and supply chain ▪ A-1.2.2.18 Train private partner companies and suppliers to implement monitoring plans ▪ A-1.2.2.8 Organize community events, for example, town halls, exhibitions, shows, dances, pot-luck parties, etc., with the community members identified (farmers, leaders etc.), to raise awareness on labor issues ▪ A-1.2.2.9 Develop Community Circles in Colombia and Ecuador with farmers and community members and leaders
Palm Fruit Producers (Small)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategies to reduce costs associated with labor formalization and other compliance requirements ▪ Accessible information, technical assistance and accompaniment to comply with labor formalization in family-owned and -operated businesses that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A-1.2.2.17 Develop monitoring plan for both company level compliance and supply chain ▪ A-1.2.2.18 Train private partner companies and suppliers to implement monitoring plans ▪ A-1.2.2.8 Organize community events, for example town halls, exhibitions, shows, dances, pot-luck parties, etc., with the community members identified (farmers, leaders etc.), to raise awareness on labor issues

Stakeholders	Needs or Priorities Identified	Relevant Project Activities Addressing Need
	<p>hire seasonal and temporary workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technical assistance to comply with labor regulations within the reality of family-owned and operated businesses ▪ Help with organizing family-owned and operated businesses to obtain the RSPO certification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A-1.2.2.9 Develop Community Circles in Colombia and Ecuador with farmers and community members and leaders
Public Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greater opportunity to provide agricultural-sector consulting services, such as education and training, rather than taking on an adversarial role as an enforcement agency ▪ Greater knowledge about the prevalence of CL in the palm sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A-1.1.1.2 Conduct a study about the prevalence, nature and risk of CL or FL, and labor conditions in the palm oil sector in Colombia and Ecuador ▪ A-1.2.3.4. Create and train Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Committees or consultative structures to support systems
Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The community representative selected by the project to participate in the evaluation interviews was also a small-scale producer and did not necessarily represent the needs and interests of the community. 	
Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formalizing workers throughout the palm oil supply chain ▪ Raising awareness on legal and illegal forms of contracting in the palm oil sector ▪ Ensuring compliance with national and international labor laws throughout the supply chain ▪ Holding the small producers accountable to the same labor standards as larger producers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A-1.2.2.5. Gain leadership commitment and establish social performance teams in partner companies and their suppliers ▪ A-1.2.2.9 Develop Community Circles in Colombia and Ecuador with farmers and community members and leaders ▪ A-1.2.2.16 Conduct trainings for private partner companies' workers on social compliance and labor rights ▪ A-1.2.2.19 Develop and/or enhance grievance mechanisms and remediation policies and procedures for partner companies and their supply chains ▪ A-1.2.2.21 Conduct worker and community-based programs on access to grievance mechanisms

Stakeholders	Needs or Priorities Identified	Relevant Project Activities Addressing Need
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improving labor relations and communication 	<p>and community-based solutions for remediating violations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A-1.2.3.3. Train CSOs to help workers and communities' access to grievance mechanisms ▪ A-2.2.2.3 Develop webinars to cover topics such as decent work, social dialogue, human rights, and due diligence in the palm oil sector.

Discussion of Exhibit 5: Based on the needs and priorities identified by stakeholders, the project activities were designed adequately to address the needs and priorities of the stakeholders regarding labor conditions, social compliance, and management systems.

The eight **private sector partner** representatives interviewed from the three participating private sector companies all mentioned the need to strengthen social compliance management systems, with the RSPO certification serving as their main reference. This observation was echoed by the **palm oil industry associations in Colombia and Ecuador**, describing their desire to help their affiliates strengthen compliance with national and international labor laws to enhance their eligibility for RSPO certification, among other certifications.

RSPO tells you what you have to have in place in terms of social compliance, but we need to build our capacity to know how to integrate these practices into our management system.

-Private sector partner

A representative of the **palm oil industry association in Peru**, JUNPALMA, mentioned a need to strengthen relations with the public sector and to work together on policies to strengthen social compliance in the palm oil sector. A public policy component was not included in the *Palma Futuro* project design; however, representatives from the MOL participated in project trainings.

The **medium and large palm fruit producers and suppliers** interviewed stated that there is increased pressure to obtain the RSPO certification as part of the companies' commitment to "transparency" and "tracking" to ensure the entire supply chain is in compliance. While the task of conforming with the entire spectrum of social compliance issues is daunting for medium and large producers, one representative simply stated, *"We just need to learn what to do and make the necessary changes."*

The **small-scale producers** expressed the greatest need to understand national labor laws and navigate legal pathways to compliance. A small-scale producer in Ecuador stated, *"Before we used to only harvest fruit and deliver it,"* highlighting the new requirements they must now meet to sell their palm oil fruit. The producer described how they hire workers only during certain harvest periods each month, according to the lunar phases (harvesting occurs only during the crescent lunar phases), and that the laws do not allow them to hire workers by the hour or permit affiliating workers to the social security system for short periods of time.

A small-scale producer in Colombia agreed with the Ecuadorian counterpart on the need to focus on small-scale producers and to provide them assistance to *"get their house in order."* This need

is for training and technical assistance on labor laws and on using a system to manage and track the companies' social compliance.

Workers and external stakeholders that provide Colombia's palm oil workers with legal assistance concurred that the project intentionally should target small-scale producers for assistance and provide specific consideration for the needs of workers. For the past decade, labor formalization throughout the palm oil supply chain has been a top priority in Colombia. However, over this same period of time, the International Labor Organization (ILO) has documented the misuse of subcontracting, collective pacts, and other "ambiguous or disguised" labor relations throughout Colombia's palm oil supply chain. These types of employment arrangements often violate workers' rights, including minimum wage, freedom of association and the right to negotiate working conditions.¹⁵ The ILO emphasized that there is still a great need to promote labor formalization actively throughout the palm oil supply chain.

Public sector stakeholders in CL prevention units in the Ministries of Labor (MOL) of both Colombia and Ecuador agreed that there is a need for additional research to understand the prevalence and nature of CL and FL in the palm oil sector. One MOL representative stated that the MOL needs to be considered as an active participant in projects that focus on labor compliance, stating, "*MOL officials need to have the opportunity to raise awareness on labor compliance issues in the palm oil sector.*" Other MOL priorities may not have been fully captured since the evaluation interviews were limited to the CL prevention units in both countries. POA stated that the project emphasized the collaboration and articulation with public entities, and that they consider the MOL as an active participant in the *Palma Futuro* project.

3.2 Effectiveness and Efficiency

Question 3: At the mid-term, is the project on track in terms of meeting its targets/objectives? What are factors driving or hindering project results thus far? Specifically,
a. To what extent did COVID-19 affect the *Palma Futuro* project?
b. How did the *Palma Futuro* project pivot strategies due to the COVID-19 pandemic? What were the results?

3.2.1 Project Achievement

The project's CMEP identified a total of 26 indicators, two of which correspond to project-level objectives; 17 indicators correspond to OTC 1; and the remaining 7 indicators correspond to OTC 2. Five indicators were assigned baseline values (PO2, OTC 1.1, SOTC 1.1.1, OTP 1.2.2.3, OTC 2.2). All indicators were assigned end-of-project target values. At the time of the interim evaluation, 21 of 26 indicators were considered active, and of the 21 active indicators, 10 reported progress. The remaining five indicators measured OTCs at the project end. Appendix A provides a summary of *Palma Futuro*'s performance results as of April 2021.

¹⁵ ILO, "Direct Hires Opens up New Horizons in Palm Oil Sector," 2017. <https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/features/colombia/lang--en/index.htm>

The CMEP project monitoring system incorporated a “stop light” mechanism to monitor progress in meeting indicator targets: green for indicators that met targets or showed progress above expectations (greater than or equal to 90 percent); yellow for indicators showing less progress than expected but not critical (from 70 percent to 90 percent); and red for indicators that showed less than 70 percent progress. The project evaluation team also used a “stop light” mechanism to classify the project’s progress on indicators, or lack thereof, that was attributable or partially attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis sought to identify the factors driving or hindering project results. In the following sections, the evaluation team provides the results of the analysis of progress on the various indicators in each of the stoplight categories.

3.2.1.1 Indicators that met targets or exceeded expectations (greater than or equal to 90 percent of end-of-project target)

Exhibit 6: Indicators that met targets or exceeded expectations

Indicators that met targets or exceeded expectations (greater than or equal to 90 percent of end-of-project target)
OTP 1.2.2.1 Number of private sector partners provided technical assistance
OTP 1.2.2.2 Number of people from private sector partners provided technical assistance
OTP 1.2.3.1 Number of stakeholder organizations provided training directly by the project
OTP 1.2.3.2 Number of people from external stakeholders provided training directly by the project
OTP 1.2.3.3 Number of communities reached through outreach events

Discussion of Exhibit 6: The five indicators that show a high level of progress are associated with the training, technical assistance and outreach activities delivered by the project to private sector partners and their supply chains. Over 100 palm oil private sector partners, suppliers and stakeholder organizations in Colombia and Ecuador participated in direct trainings (OTP 1.2.2.1 and OTP 1.2.3.1) to introduce the purpose and scope of SCS. Furthermore, 84 individuals within private sector partner companies received technical assistance as part of the baseline social compliance assessment process and the development of social compliance improvement plans centered on the baseline assessment results (OTP 1.2.2.2). The community outreach events (OTP 1.2.3.3) consisted of meetings with community leaders to discuss the challenges their communities were facing with respect to labor conditions, CL and FL, and to provide opportunities for residents to engage with the project. In addition, the project developed educational materials on COVID-19 and conducted at least 14 trainings with workers and community members to raise awareness on preventing COVID-19 and the increased risks of CL during the pandemic.

Factors Contributing to Project Progress: According to the SAI trainers, the commitment of the three private sector partner companies facilitated advancements in the direct trainings. Their approach also included the installation of **Social Performance Teams** (SPTs), which supported their interaction with participating company management. According to the SAI training team, administrative personnel who formed part of the SPTs were especially effective at setting up technical assistance trainings and meetings with company management.

3.2.1.2 Indicators that showed a significant lack of progress (less than 70 percent) **not attributable or only partially attributable to COVID-19**

Exhibit 7: Indicators that showed a significant lack of progress not attributable to or partially attributed to COVID-19

Indicators that show a significant lack of progress (less than 70 percent) not attributable to or only partially attributable to COVID-19

OTP 1.1.2.1 Number of reports on promising practices and benefits of social compliance and benefits completed

OTP 1.1.3.1 Number of stakeholders reached with the findings of the project's research

Discussion: The two indicators that are identified as significantly lacking progress, which was not attributable or only partially attributable to COVID, were all related to the targeted research and case studies that support **SOTC 1.1: Increased understanding of labor practices and risks of CL and FL in the Colombian and Ecuadorian palm oil sectors.**

The reports on promising practices and benefits of social compliance (OTP 1.1.2.1) consisted of three case studies and a market and value chain analysis in the palm oil sector in Colombia and Ecuador. As described in the October 2019 TPR, the **case studies** were designed to “raise awareness and expand knowledge of good practices within the global palm oil industry” in terms of “compliance with international standards including the social conditions of its workers and the communities in which they operate.”¹⁶ The three case studies were drafted by *Palma Futuro* sub-grantee J.E. Austin and Associates (JAA) which were subsequently reviewed by both POA and USDOL.

POA's technical staff stated that the ultimate goals of these case studies as well as the necessary inclusion of labor issues were repeatedly explained to study authors. However, according to JAA representatives, there was a “misunderstanding” between USDOL, POA and JAA regarding the purpose and scope of the case studies.

According to USDOL, case study authors were provided extensive feedback via email and conference calls. USDOL representatives commented that there were concerns regarding the studies' limited discussion of labor issues in the sector, as well as other aspects of their technical execution. The feedback provided by USDOL was not adequately reflected in subsequent drafts; therefore, two of the three case studies were discontinued in bilateral agreement between USDOL and POA.

The **market and value chain analysis** of the palm oil sector in Colombia and Ecuador was drafted and forwarded to USDOL on April 24, 2021. USDOL provided comments to study authors on May 25, 2021, but as of June 2021, the study had not yet received final approval. The analysis was intended to better understand the business incentives and potential obstacles for producing palm oil under ACW and free of CL and FL, particularly for small and medium size enterprises.

Factors Inhibiting Project Progress: The team identified the following factors that contributed to delays in disseminating the project's targeted research and case studies:

¹⁶ Partners of the Americas, *Palma Futuro*, Technical Progress Report submitted to USDOL, October 2019.

- The scope and purpose of the case studies, as defined in the sub-grantee’s scope of work, were not strictly adhered to by study authors. The lack of final approval was due to the need for substantial revision and insufficient resolution of USDOL’s feedback on the draft products.
- After completion of the draft research products, multiple rounds of feedback and revisions resulted in long periods of “wait time,” and prevented project staff from disseminating study results.

3.2.1.3 Indicators that showed a significant lack of progress (less than 70 percent) mostly attributable to COVID-19

Exhibit 8: Indicators that showed significant lack of progress, mostly attributable to COVID-19

Indicators that show a significant lack of progress (less than 70 percent) mostly attributable to COVID-19
PO1 Number of organizations in Latin America that promote SCS practices in the palm oil sector
SOTC 1.1.1 Percentage of key stakeholders who attend annual sectoral workshops who demonstrate a change in their understanding of labor practices and risks in supply chain
OTP 1.1.1.1 Final research report on CL and FL and labor conditions completed
SOTC 1.2.1 Number of suppliers trained by private sector partners
SOTC 1.2.2 Number of private sector partners’ suppliers that complete assessment process
OTP 1.2.3.4 Number of Community Circles formed to cascade learnings from trainings
OTP 1.2.3.5 Number of actions taken by Community Circles to cascade learning
OTP 2.1 Promising practices disseminated to palm oil stakeholders regionally and globally
OTP 2.2 Percentage of surveyed regional study tour participants who demonstrate an increased understanding of SCS promising practices
OTP 2.1.1 Number of regional discussion forums organized in the Region
OTP 2.1.2 Number of instances in which project generated material is shared at international or regional forums, or published in reports
OTP 2.2.1: Number of webinars hosted by the project
OTP 2.2.2: Number of organizations that participate in webinars hosted or supported by the project
OTP 2.2.3: Number of organizations with formal agreements to participate in the network

Discussion: A total of 14 indicators showed significant lack of progress (less than 70 percent) mostly attributable to COVID-19 and the social distancing measures imposed by Colombia and Ecuador. As a result of the health pandemic, there were delays in implementing SCS practices, which negatively affected the outreach activities to share and disseminate good practices (PO1, SOTC 1.1.1, OTC 2.1, OTP 2.1.1, OTP 2.1.2).

The final research report on CL and FL and labor conditions, also referred to as the “characterization study” or “prevalence study” (OTP 1.1.1.1), was expected to begin in 2019, and was to be led by researchers at a local Colombian university. Project staff delayed the execution of the prevalence study until private sector partners were fully engaged in implementing a SCS. This was to enable staff to gain the necessary trust and recognition in the sector before beginning such a study. The TPRs submitted to USDOL in October 2019 and April 2020 both mentioned the development of the study’s Terms of Reference (ToR) and the early choice of UniNorte in Colombia to carry out the study; however, these actions never resulted in a concrete study design or execution. Due to the COVID-19 social distancing protocols still in effect at the time of the

interim evaluation, project staff stated that it was unlikely the prevalence study would be executed within the project's timeframe. POA and USDOL are currently discussing alternatives to the quantitative prevalence study.

The postponement of the planned training-of-trainers in private sector partner companies led to a delay in partner companies training their suppliers (SOTC 1.2.1) and completing supplier baseline assessments (SOTC 1.2.2).

The restrictions due to COVID-19 also affected the formation of 60 Community Circles in the targeted palm regions (OTP 1.2.3.4). At the time of the interim evaluation, the project had formed a total of five Community Circles. The focus was clearly on reaching the remaining 55 Community Circles rather than facilitating training and development activities that could lead to concrete actions (OTP 1.2.3.5).

Factors Inhibiting Project Progress: The COVID-19 pandemic delayed training and assessment activities with private sector partners, suppliers and community leaders. Key actions taken to mitigate the effects on project progress are discussed in Section 3.2.2

3.2.2 Project Response to the Effects of COVID-19

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global health pandemic related to COVID-19 on March 11, 2020, and soon after, the governments of Colombia and Ecuador issued strict social distancing measures and travel prohibitions. This mandate required the *Palma Futuro* project to postpone anticipated in-person trainings, forums, and technical assistance, and to pivot to remote platforms for communications. Project partners and allies had to manage the COVID-19 emergency in all of its different manifestations, and the *Palma Futuro* project activities were deferred until alternate methods could be developed to engage with project stakeholders.

By late 2020, SAI *Palma Futuro* developed an alternate method to conduct the Labor Performance assessment, which is a critical component of the SCS assessment, using a new virtual assessment methodology developed by SAI known as **Virtual Verification Visits (VVV)**.¹⁷ A detailed VVV methodology protocol, which was adopted by the SAI *Palma Futuro* training team, described the three phases of analysis of the performance of private sector partner companies using the Labor Performance Elements of the SCS local law and/or additional requirements. This evaluation included a management interview, a virtual tour of the premises, a detailed review of documents, and interviews with workers and suppliers. The virtual visits by project staff were confirmed by private sector partners. One company representative commented that the SAI trainers managed very well with the switch to remote assessments, training, and technical assistance.

¹⁷ SAI, *Palma Futuro*, "Social Compliance System Performance, Virtual Visit Methodology" V2-12 November 2020.

The *Palma Futuro* project team also carried out a **survey to assess the effects of COVID-19 on workers**, specifically addressing working conditions and labor rights. The primary mode for participating in the survey was via an interactive voice recording (IVR). The project team received a total of 473 participant recordings. The worker surveys found that employees working in private sector partner companies had not been negatively impacted by the pandemic with respect to their economic status, working conditions or labor rights. Company employees cited an effective response by private sector partners. At the same time, project staff noted the possibility that results were skewed more positively due to the direct involvement of company personnel in promoting the surveys. Despite the generally positive results, project staff identified some areas for improvement, which were subsequently incorporated into the company’s SCS improvement plan process.

Exhibit 9: Worker and community education material, COVID-19 prevention



Source: POA

Communication Materials: Palm oil production and cultivation were not affected by social distancing measures in either Colombia or Ecuador. The need for COVID-19 awareness information was quickly identified by project staff. *Palma Futuro* produced and printed 2,000 copies of infographics to distribute to workers employed by small and medium palm oil producers and community members in the targeted palm regions in Colombia. The content was developed by *Palma Futuro* and FEDEPALMA with an emphasis on promoting ACW and preventing child labor in the midst of the COVID-19 health emergency. Project staff also developed 11 different text messages to send to FEDEPALMA affiliates’ mobile phones with guidelines on preventing the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. Most recently, the project developed and printed 4,000 copies of a one-page COVID-19 awareness flyer to reinforce measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These flyers were distributed to private sector partner company employees.

Question 4: What is the nature of stakeholder participation, including their level of commitment to project implementation efforts and contribution to project objectives? How effectively has the project engaged with each stakeholder group, including private sector partners, producers and suppliers, palm oil associations, public sector, and community leaders?

Project staff and stakeholders were asked to describe their participation in and level of commitment to the *Palma Futuro* project. The findings for each of the key stakeholder groups listed are described below.

Private Sector Partners: The three private sector partner companies—Palmas del Cesar and Grupo Biocosta in Colombia, and Organic Supply in Ecuador—signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with POA *Palma Futuro*, demonstrating their commitment to serve as project partners and to implement a robust SCS. Company representatives expressed a desire to learn and to strengthen organizational capacity in sustainable practices. Others mentioned a wish to “go beyond” the baseline standards required of the RSPO certification. All seven

representatives interviewed felt surprised by the results of the baseline assessment conducted by SAI *Palma Futuro*, with one company representative stating, “*We did not realize we had that much room for improvement.*” The private sector partner companies are all now in the process of developing improvement plans to strengthen their labor performance and management systems.

Producers and Suppliers: The large palm fruit producers and suppliers expressed a commitment to improve social compliance and take full advantage of the training and learning opportunities provided by the *Palma Futuro* project. Several suppliers interviewed had recently completed a fully remote training on SCS conducted by the SAI *Palma Futuro* trainers. They stated that their experience with labor compliance issues helped them understand the labor concepts presented, but that the management system concepts were more difficult to grasp. Small-scale palm fruit producers in Ecuador and Colombia expressed concerns about the feasibility of full compliance with labor laws. With the delays caused by the pandemic, at the time of the interim evaluation, producers and suppliers had just begun the remote baseline assessment process, a process led by SAI *Palma Futuro*.

Palm Oil Industry Associations: Palm oil industry associations—FEDEPALMA in Colombia and PROPALMA in Ecuador—had participated actively in project activities up to the time of the interim evaluation.

A MOU between FEDEPALMA in Colombia and POA was signed in October 2019. It highlighted key areas of participation:

- (1) **Training workshops** on labor issues and social compliance, as well as assistance to recruit the participation of affiliates.
- (2) **Training of trainers (ToT)** program to enable FEDEPALMA staff to replicate training workshops and provide technical assistance to affiliates.
- (3) **Case study** to assess FEDEPALMA’s leadership role in promoting sustainable palm oil production based on the good practices implemented by affiliates.
- (4) **Knowledge Platform** to share experiences, tools, lessons learned and best practices in sustainable palm oil production.

At the time of the interim evaluation, FEDEPALMA representatives had participated in the training workshops carried out by the SAI *Palma Futuro* trainer and the case study completed by JAA *Palma Futuro* researchers. FEDEPALMA’s participation in the ToT was expected to take place during the third quarter of 2021. Representatives also stated that they would participate and use the project’s planned Knowledge Platform; however, they expressed concerns regarding any expectations of sustaining the Knowledge Platform. One spokesperson commented, “*We are committed to sharing good practices, but we cannot commit to assuming the responsibility for maintaining the Knowledge Platform once the project ends.*” POA representatives explained that they are currently focusing on the technical aspects of establishing a functional platform. They are also exploring options, in close consultation with USDOL, regarding organizations interested in hosting the Knowledge Platform.

By the time of the interim evaluation, an MOU had not been finalized between POA and PROPALMA, the palm oil industry association in Ecuador. However, PROPALMA had

participated in the project and was committed to participating in the same activities as FEDEPALMA, with the exception of the case study.

Public Sector: MOL stakeholders interviewed in Colombia and Ecuador both represented the CL prevention units. They expressed a strong commitment to promoting project activities, including the dissemination of research studies, and participating in project trainings. A letter of commitment from the MOL in Ecuador was obtained in September 2019, stating MOL's intention to participate and to promote project activities. However, the MOU since expired and to date it has not been renewed due to the recent change of government leadership in Ecuador. The project did not pursue a MOU with the MOL in Colombia. Representatives of both of the Ministries' CL units stated that there should be increased opportunity for the MOL to participate in an official capacity and to collaboratively execute specific project activities. Project representatives stated that they have made numerous attempts to collaborate with MOL officials in the departments of Magdalena and Santander and to convene a labor subcommittee with relevant actors to discuss the scope and results of this project. At the time of the interim evaluation, the MOL had not responded to POA's requests.

Communities: Project evaluators did not have the opportunity to verify the commitment or participation of community leaders or members of Community Circles, as the project was just beginning to form Community Circles. The one community stakeholder interviewed was also a palm fruit producer and spoke to evaluators from a producer's point of view rather than on behalf of the community. The delays in obtaining greater commitment and participation of community leaders can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the project moves forward, several stakeholders suggested that the project widen community participation to include women leaders and workers who may labor under precarious sub-contracting arrangements. SAI representatives clarified that they had already begun to engage a wider participation of female stakeholders in community outreach events, including teachers, school principals and school psychologists. Palm oil workers also participated in the project's initial outreach events (OTP 1.2.3.3).

Question 5: How have the M&E systems (CMEP, PSA, etc.) been implemented and are they being used to identify trends and patterns, adapt strategies, and make informed decisions? Has the project used the findings from the RDQA to formulate and implement measures to improve data quality?

The *Palma Futuro* M&E systems included a Pre-situational Analysis (PSA), CMEP, and RDQA. Their descriptions and their use for adapting strategies and making informed decisions during project implementation are discussed below.

3.2.3 Pre-situational Analysis

The project's PSA was designed to analyze the current implementing environment to ensure that the project focused resources on activities and strategies that represented the greatest potential for success. The PSA process included identifying the most promising entry points, the relevant actors, and appropriate methods to engage them, potential risks that might affect project OTCs, and actions that may be taken to mitigate risks. The PSA was completed in January 2020.

Stakeholder Mapping: The PSA contained information on a wide range of key actors to consider in the project’s implementation strategies, based on their potential influence on project OTCs and interest in the success of the proposed project. At the top of the list were private sector partners, their supply chains, and the palm oil industry associations in Colombia and Ecuador. However, the stakeholder mapping identified several other priority groups including (1) public sector institutions at the national, departmental and local levels; (2) CSOs, including academia and labor unions; and (3) international organizations such as the RSPO and the ILO.

Application of Stakeholder Mapping: At the time of the interim evaluation, the project was engaged closely with private sector partners and their supply chains, as they were the entities implementing the SCS and generating promising practices. The project also involved palm oil industry associations and the regional RSPO office through project training activities and webinars. In Ecuador, the project engaged with the external stakeholder *Proamazonía*. This organization promotes environmental and social compliance in the agricultural sector, including palm oil, and works collaboratively with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment. Stakeholders identified in the PSA that were minimally engaged at the time of the interim evaluation included the ILO, labor unions, worker organizations, community leaders, and a wider range of public sector institutions. Social distancing measures imposed in both countries contributed to the limited engagement with community leaders and other stakeholders.

3.2.4 Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

The CMEP frames the project’s M&E system. The CMEP aims to track the project’s progress toward the project-level objective and to provide evidence of the links between activities, OTPs, and OTCs. The *Palma Futuro* CMEP was completed in November 2019 as a joint effort of *Palma Futuro* staff, external consultants, and USDOL ILAB M&E officials.

Within the CMEP, the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) defines the qualitative and quantitative indicators used for monitoring and measuring progress. The 26 indicators in *Palma Futuro*’s PMP include 2 to measure the project-level objective, 7 to measure OTCs and SOTCs, and 17 to measure OTPs. For each indicator, the PMP provides the definition; describes the units of measurement, disaggregation, data collection tools, frequency of data collection, and verification; and identifies the responsible parties associated with data collection and verification efforts.

Application of CMEP: The *Palma Futuro* monitoring system integrated a “stop light” mechanism to track project progress. Indicators that showed good progress were given a green light, those showing some progress a yellow light, and those with a lack of progress a red light. The project’s M&E team in Colombia and Ecuador discussed the ongoing monitoring of project progress and how the stop light mechanism alerted project management to areas showing slow progress. Project staff adjusted their focus from activities that had met their targets (Exhibit 6) to those that needed reinforcement to ensure their completion (Exhibits 7 and 8).

The stop light mechanism did not include ways to show indicators that lacked progress as a result of the pandemic. As a result, the majority of indicators showed a red light, limiting the full potential for the stop light mechanism to be used as designed. However, the stop light mechanism includes

a qualitative field that indicates reasons for non-fulfillment of the targets, which were largely attributed to the pandemic.

3.2.5 Routine Data Quality Assessment (RDQA)

Beginning in 2020, USDOL required grantees to carry out an RDQA at least once before the project's interim evaluation in order to verify the quality of reported data for key indicators (data verification) and the ability of the project's data management system to collect, manage, and report high quality data (systems assessment). Findings from the data quality assessment can be used to develop and implement measures to strengthen the data management and reporting system and eventually to improve data quality.

Application of RDQA: The project's M&E team walked the evaluators through *Palma Futuro's* Data Quality Assessment completed in November 2020. The data verification process involved selecting three project indicators, reviewing the available data or documentation, and recounting reported results. The following three indicators were selected by project staff for assessment:

- OTP 1.2.2.1 Number of private sector partners and suppliers provided technical assistance
- OTP 1.2.2.2 Number of people from private sector partners provided technical assistance
- OTP 2.2.2 Number of organizations that participate in webinars hosted or supported by the project

The data verification process resulted in one red alert. For OTP 1.2.2.2, indicator values needed to be recalculated, which required a review of the data source and the indicator definitions in the CMEP/PMP. The project M&E staff found the cause of the inconsistency and provided a written comment explaining why this occurred.

The M&E systems assessment consisted of a review of the M&E structure, functions, and capabilities; the project's data collection and reporting forms and tools; and the project's data entry process. Some of the assessment questions were not applicable since the *Palma Futuro* project did not provide direct services to project beneficiaries. *Palma Futuro* M&E staff stated that the systems assessment was a good reminder of the need to review the data collection processes of sub-grantees conducting project activities to ensure the integrity of the reported data.

Question 6: Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically and efficiently to achieve project OTCs?

To assess *Palma Futuro's* efficiency in response to question 6, the evaluators reviewed: (1) allocation of resources; (2) allocation of human resources and expertise; and (3) stakeholders' perceptions regarding timeliness and sufficiency of project resources to effectively execute project activities. This review comprises part of the overall assessment of project effectiveness presented at the end of the findings.

3.2.6 Allocation of Resources

The *Palma Futuro* project has a total budget of \$6,000,000 USD over the 48-month execution period, of which \$4,687,500 represents direct costs and \$1,312,500 indirect costs, with an approved indirect cost rate of 28 percent. The allocations for direct costs are shown in Exhibit 9.

Exhibit 10: *Palma Futuro*'s budget allocations for direct costs.

Budget Line Item	Percentage of Total Direct Costs
Direct labor and fringe benefits	26.99%
Travel	4.98%
Equipment	0.21%
Supplies and office expenses	5.62%
M&E	6.40%
OTC 1 (including subcontracts, travel expenses, per diem, consultants, and other related costs)	50.23%
OTC 2 (including subcontracts, travel expenses, per diem, consultants, and other related costs)	5.57%
Total Direct Costs	100%

Discussion of Exhibit 10:

- In general terms, the budget allocations are appropriately distributed, with 50 percent of resources directed to OTC 1. The 42 activities under this OTC are mostly related to the research and case studies and to the implementation of SCS in private sector companies and their supply chain. These activities are linked to 17 of the 26 project indicators (65 percent).
- Under OTC 2 there are 12 activities that are related to the dissemination of tools and promising practices of SCS to palm oil stakeholders and the implementation of a sustainable knowledge platform. These activities are linked to nine project indicators (35 percent).
- Since the *Palma Futuro* project is being executed in two countries, there was a need to have managerial positions in both countries for coordination and monitoring. Even so, the administrative costs are reasonable. Costs are relatively low for the operation of offices and equipment.
- In response to the requirements of USDOL's grant solicitation, the *Palma Futuro* project allocated a greater proportion of its funding to activities in Colombia. USDOL required that funding for Ecuador be allocated as project resources allow after budgeting for project activities in Colombia. However, the resources allocated to Ecuador may not be sufficient to effectively address the challenges facing this nation, including those needed to scale up the implementation of SCS in private sector companies and their supply chains, strengthen the coordination with external stakeholders, and ultimately guarantee the sustainability of project initiatives.

- There was nominal funding allocated to project communication activities, but project travel savings enabled the reallocation of funding toward a COVID-19 awareness campaign as well as specific communication products identified by project staff.
- The two sub-grantees that had specific responsibilities under OTC 1 both agreed that financial resources assigned to the execution of the corresponding activities were adequate and sufficient for their development.

3.2.7 Strategic and Efficient Use of Human Resources and Expertise

The *Palma Futuro* staffing structure included personnel from POA and personnel from the two subgrantees, SAI and JAA. The project’s staffing structure is depicted in Exhibit 11. A discussion of its efficiency follows.

Exhibit 11: *Palma Futuro* staffing structure



Source: IMPAQ, adapted from *Palma Futuro* project

Discussion of Human Resources and Expertise

In August 2019, POA requested a project modification to realign the staffing structure. The project made significant changes but did not change the total budget allocated to direct labor. By the time of the interim evaluation, POA had reassigned project employees and implemented more staffing changes, including important positions, such as project director and the research, monitoring and learning (RML) officer. Furthermore, several part-time positions were increased to full-time positions and a part-time communications specialist and full-time social compliance coordinator were added. This second project modification was submitted on April 27, 2021 and approved by USDOL on June 1, 2021.

Each participating institution was responsible for specific activities or project components, with POA responsible for overseeing all technical, administrative, and financial components of the project, including M&E. SAI was responsible for all activities related to developing and implementing the SCS in private sector partner companies and for training in-house staff to replicate the process throughout the supply chain. JAA was responsible for developing the market

and value chain analysis and the case studies that highlighted promising practices in social compliance in the palm oil sector.

Analysis of Staffing Structure: The project design required staff to be based in Colombia and Ecuador. POA's management team was split between the two countries, with the project director and senior technical advisor in Colombia and deputy director in Ecuador. POA's staff in Colombia also included a technical social compliance team, although SAI's staff was directly responsible for technical assistance related to SCS. The only other staff person based in Ecuador was the RML coordinator. With the challenges and opportunities that had evolved in Ecuador by the time of the interim evaluation, the project evaluation team considered the number of staff based in Ecuador potentially to be insufficient.

In Colombia, POA originally employed several staff who split their time between two USDOL-funded projects. POA later determined this to be less effective than having staff focused on just one project. Several external stakeholders noted that POA was more experienced with issues related to CL than to labor compliance in the palm oil sector, and that a labor specialist who could provide technical assistance to small producers would have been a good complement to POA's staff. However, POA staff stated that SAI staff offers expertise on all issues related to labor compliance.

The private sector partners most frequently mentioned their interactions with SAI's SCS trainers based in Costa Rica, as they were central to the development and implementation of the SCS. The geographic separation was not mentioned by private sector partners as an impediment, especially given the requirement at the time for practicing social distancing. The four-person SAI team was responsible for carrying out the vast majority of activities under OTC 1 (31 of 42). JAA was responsible for eight activities under Outcome 1, including the market and value chain analysis and the case studies that highlighted promising practices in the area of social compliance in the palm oil sector. POA was responsible for two activities under Outcome 1 and all activities under Outcome 2, in addition to their managerial responsibilities.

3.2.8 Strategic and Efficient Use of Time

Two practices essential to promoting the strategic and efficient use of time became apparent during stakeholder interviews: (1) ensuring that project strategies built upon previous labor compliance advancements in the palm oil sector; and (2) streamlining the review and approval process of project research and case studies.

Building Upon Previous Advancements: USDOL has funded several labor compliance projects over the past 10 years as part of its commitments in the bilateral trade promotion agreement with Colombia to protect workers' rights. In 2011, USDOL's Office of Trade and Labor Affairs awarded the ILO in Colombia a seven-year project to promote compliance with international labor standards. This project contributed to the first formalization agreement between palm oil

enterprises and workers, who often labor as third-party subcontractors.¹⁸ External stakeholders interviewed who were familiar with labor advancements in the sector emphasized the importance of building upon these achievements: “*Projects focusing on labor compliance issues in the palm oil sector must consider the historical context and build upon the labor advances made by other projects.*” At the same time, USDOL clarified that *Palma Futuro* was intended to promote private sector social compliance rather than advancements in public governance to improve labor conditions.

The ILO described the recent “diploma” course it co-sponsored with the MOL in Colombia and FEDEPALMA that focused on labor compliance issues in the palm oil sector. The 84-hour course offered employers a pathway to formalizing their workers. A total of 320 employers successfully completed the diploma course in February 2021.

Review and Approval Process: The review and approval process of the project research and case studies was identified by project researchers as an inefficient use of project time. Due to the complexities involved in developing the cases studies and the fact that POA and JAA had different visions on the relevance and understanding of labor formalization in these deliverables, the result was that no studies had received final authorization by the time of the interim evaluation, aside from the PSA. Interviews with project staff and donor representatives revealed that draft research products did not meet expectations, and both POA and USDOL provided extensive feedback to project authors, further delaying the goal of timely deliverables.

3.3 Sustainability

Question 7: Which project activities/initiatives are most likely to be sustained before the project ends? What factors contributed to or limited this sustainability?

The *Palma Futuro* sustainability matrix identified four project activities or initiatives that likely are sustainable: (1) an operational knowledge and learning network; (2) continued improvement of private sector partners’ social compliance processes; (3) the scaling and replication of social compliance tools and materials generated by the project; and (4) the wide dissemination of promising tools and best practices. The milestones to monitor progress toward sustainability are listed in Exhibit 12.

Exhibit 12: Milestones to monitor progress toward sustainability of initiatives or activities

Sustainable Initiatives or Activities	Sustainability Milestones
1. Operational knowledge and learning network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation of case studies in international forums ▪ Development of Knowledge Platform ▪ Formalization of alliances between project and private sector partners

¹⁸ ILO, “Direct Hiring Opens up New Horizons in Colombia’s Palm Oil Sector,” 2017, <https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/features/colombia/lang--en/index.htm>

2. Continued improvement of private sector partners' social compliance processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trainings on SCS for private sector partners ▪ Technical assistance on SCS processes ▪ Private sector partner commitment to maintaining the SCS components that were implemented with the support of the project ▪ Social compliance processes incorporated into the private sector partners' management systems according to their capacities
3. Scaling and replication of social compliance tools and materials generated by the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Private sector partners provide training on SCS tools to producers and suppliers not included in the project – encouraging widespread use of the tools ▪ ToT for private sector partners and supply chains ▪ Training of external stakeholders to provide continuous reinforcement of promising practices ▪ Community Circles established and focused on transforming community-based dialogue into improved social compliance practices
4. Promising tools and best practices disseminated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transfer leadership and administration of the Knowledge Platform and network to FEDEPALMA and PROPALMA ▪ Develop agreements with palm oil associations to incorporate the new knowledge and tools into their existing training plans with agriculture extensionists and palm oil growers and their workers ▪ Develop and align the results of the project with the content of RSPO's certification and their regional and global training plans. ▪ Adapt SCS as part of RSPO's certification process in Colombia and Ecuador and promote its application at the regional level.

Source: *Palma Futuro* Sustainability Matrix

Discussion of Exhibit 12:

Knowledge and Learning Network: The *Palma Futuro* project intended to establish a Knowledge and Learning Network to facilitate the exchange of information, experiences, and promising practices across the region and globally. The project sustainability strategy identified three milestones to measure progress toward the network and platform. A report of progress toward these milestones follows:

- **Presentation of case studies in world class forums:** *Palma Futuro* JAA staff presented the case study focusing on *Palmas del Cesar* at a forum hosted by the Harvard Business School in December 2019. JAA had received approval from the company to present the business case for social compliance; however, this case study had not yet received final approval from USDOL, pending further revisions to highlight labor perspectives. The other two case studies were not approved by USDOL for the reasons described in Section 3.2.1.2.
- **Development of Knowledge Platform:** POA developed a preliminary plan for the development of a knowledge and learning network, comprised of three phases: (1) development of the platform that would serve as a repository for the products produced by the project (case studies, market analysis and SCS toolkit) as well as promising practices related to social compliance in the palm oil sector; (2) development of remote events and forums; and (3) development of a training program to strengthen capacity on social compliance issues. These steps were expected to be initiated in August 2021.

- **Alliances formalized with private sector partner:** By the time of the interim evaluation, *Palma Futuro* had formalized alliances with all three private sector partners, Palmas del Cesar, Biocosta, and Organic Supply, and palm oil associations in Colombia and Ecuador. The project also had formalized alliances with RSPO, the main certification program in the world for sustainable palm oil production. The execution of the MOUs with each of these stakeholders was an important step in confirming their commitment to the project's objectives. At the time of the interim evaluation, project staff were focused on the technical aspects of developing an operational platform; a project stakeholder had not yet been identified to maintain and update the Knowledge Platform after the project has ended.

Continued Improvement of Social Compliance Processes Implemented by Private Sector Partners: All three private sector partner companies formalized their commitments to incorporate the SCS into company management systems, in accordance with organizational capacities. The commitments also included completing the SCS process, involving project training, technical assistance, and continued improvements.

Scale and Replicate Social Compliance Tools and Materials Produced: A ToT for private sector partners was planned for the second half of 2021 to build a team of trainers in each company who could then scale and replicate social compliance tools and training. At the time of the interim evaluation, the project planned for its "SCS toolkit" to be completed during the final year of the project. Palm oil associations expressed concern about waiting until the end of the project to finalize key products, as this would leave little time for the project to provide technical assistance as the SCS process is scaled and replicated. SAI clarified that many of the tools and guidance documents will be completed and used by private sector partners and suppliers in 2021. In this sense, private sector partner trainers will pilot tools before they are finalized and published as a toolkit.

Promising Tools and Best Practices Disseminated Through Stakeholders' Initiatives: The project's sustainability plan for disseminating the promising tools and best practices relies on the project successfully transferring leadership and administration of the Knowledge Platform and network to FEDEPALMA and PROPALMA. However, neither industry association could commit to such an undertaking, and assignment of this responsibility was not included in the MOU that was signed by FEDEPALMA. The MOU with PROPALMA had not yet been finalized at the time of the interim evaluation. However, the MOU with RSPO mentioned promoting the SCS and promising practices to its members.

3.3.1 Factors Contributing to Sustainability of Project Initiatives

Usefulness of the SCS: Private sector partners all agreed on the high degree of usefulness of the SCS. They stated that the certification protocol told them "what" was required, but the SCS provided them with a clear pathway for "how" to comply. The project also provided the tools for scaling up this process throughout the supply chain.

Differentiation: Private sector partners and palm oil industry associations expressed great interest in strengthening social compliance and "going beyond" what was required for certification. This was important for differentiating palm oil from Colombia and Ecuador from that of Asian

competitors. Statements about the value of this incentive—to differentiate their products from those of Asian competitors—were also made by palm oil industry associations in Peru and Brazil.

RSPO: RSPO is the main certification program in the world of “sustainable” palm oil. The SCS is closely aligned with the RSPO certification and can help guide private sector partners and their supply chain to manage social compliance requirements. The close alliance that the project has developed with RSPO may facilitate further alignment of the SCS with the content of RSPO’s certification.

In-house Experts: To help build ownership and sustainability, *Palma Futuro* established social performance teams and a pool of trainers in each company, comprised of administrative and technical personnel and workers. This will enable companies to implement and monitor continuous improvement plans and to replicate trainings without the assistance of the project.

3.3.2 Factors Limiting Sustainability of Project Initiatives

Limitations of SCS: Although the SCS has demonstrated its usefulness as a pathway to achieving RSPO certification, not all suppliers were interested in certification or in having the necessary conditions to complete the process. This was the case in the 60 percent of suppliers associated with Organic Supply, according to company management. In cases such as this, “adherence” to the compliance system is more difficult to achieve and, therefore, to sustain over time. In Colombia, private sector partners and suppliers all agreed on the usefulness of the SCS. Furthermore, SAI project staff clarified that SCS is not just a pathway to meet certification requirements but can also help suppliers comply with local law.

Knowledge Platform: The proposed Knowledge Platform was in its very early stages of development at the time of the interim evaluation. While the project had developed a preliminary plan for developing the platform mechanism, the project was lagging in developing the contents, including, case studies, a prevalence study, and a market and value chain analysis. Furthermore, promising practices have not had sufficient time to form, which delays the sharing of these practices in forums or through the proposed Knowledge Platform. Palm oil industry associations expressed concern regarding who would maintain and update the Knowledge Platform once the project ended. Neither palm oil industry association would commit to maintaining the administration of the Knowledge Platform without additional resources.

Finalization of the SCS Toolkit: SAI clarified that many of the SCS tools and guidance documents will be completed and used by private sector partners and suppliers in 2021. In this way, private sector partner trainers will pilot tools before they are finalized and published as a toolkit. SAI expressed confidence in having sufficient time to provide technical assistance during the broader tool kit rollout.

Time: The COVID-19 pandemic caused delays to all project activities that required in-person contact. This included the Community Circles that were to be established as social dialogue mechanisms between private sector partners and surrounding communities. With the shortened project timeline resulting from the pandemic, at the time of the interim evaluation project staff had just begun the process of establishing the Community Circles, leaving little time for the training

and developing actions that would promote social dialogue. Furthermore, there was little time for the project to disseminate promising tools and best practices at the regional and global levels.

Question 8: How is the project promoting sustainability/scalability of expected OTCs with the following stakeholders: a) private sector partners, b) producers and suppliers, and c) industry associations?

At the time of the interim evaluation, *Palma Futuro* had focused its project activities on three key stakeholder groups: private sector partners, producers and suppliers, and industry associations. A discussion of the project strategies to promote sustainability and scalability with each of these stakeholders follows. Question 9, addressed later in the report, examines what additional measures should be taken to promote sustainability with these stakeholders as well as others.

a. Private sector partners (BioCosta, Palmas del Cesar, Organic Supply)

Project strategies to promote sustainability and scalability of expected OTCs among private sector providers included the following:

- **Formalized alliances:** POA formalized alliances with all three private sector partners during the first half of the project timeline. Each of the partners agreed to complete the design, implementation, and adoption of the SCS. Both project and company representatives expected full integration of the SCS into company management systems by the end of the project.
- **In-house experts:** To help build ownership and sustainability, *Palma Futuro* established Social Performance Teams in each company to lead the development of social compliance improvement plans and to monitor the milestones reached by their respective companies. The project was also planning a training-of-trainers to scale up and replicate the SCS tools and training throughout the supply chain.

b. Producers and suppliers

Project strategies to promote sustainability and scalability of expected OTCs among producers and suppliers included the following:

- **Promotion of SCS throughout the supply chain:** Crude palm oil international buyers often require exporters to have one or more certifications verifying sustainable and social standards throughout the supply chain. The *Palma Futuro* project will train a pool of trainers representing workers and management from the private sector partners. These trainers will be equipped to deliver technical assistance and training for producers and suppliers in the area of social compliance, thus, increasing their eligibility for certifications such as RSPO. The project is generating a tool kit with resources to scale up and replicate the SCS process.
- **Adapting SCS for small producers:** Palma Futuro SAI trainers have adapted the compliance model for different types and scales of providers. In the case of small producers, for example, they focused on the core labor standards and provided more in-depth technical assistance.

c. Palm oil industry associations

- **Capacity building:** The *Palma Futuro* project has made a concerted effort to strengthen the capacity of palm oil industry associations from Colombia and Ecuador to address social compliance issues and implementing SCS. Industry associations from both countries have been involved in all stages of the capacity-building process, including training workshops, training-of-trainers program, communication strategy, and the Knowledge Platform. *Palma Futuro* is expected to transfer SCS tools to FEDEPALMA so they can expand the social compliance capacity of members that were not part of the project.
- **Formalized alliances:** *Palma Futuro* received a signed MOU from FEDEPALMA in Colombia that committed FEDEPALMA to disseminate promising tools and best practices generated by the project to its affiliates. The MOU does not reference any kind of role FEDEPALMA may play as the administrator of the Knowledge Platform and network. Project staff explained that FEDEPALMA is only one of the options being considered for this purpose. The alliance with PROPALMA had not yet been finalized at the time of the interim evaluation.

Question 9: What additional actions should be taken in order to promote sustainability of project OTCs?

As a result of the interim evaluation, the team identified a number of actions that could strengthen the sustainability of project initiatives. These actions are summarized in Exhibit 13.

Exhibit 13: Strengthening the sustainability of project initiatives

Sustainable Project Initiatives	Project Actions to Strengthen Sustainability
1. Knowledge and Learning Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clarify roles, levels of responsibility, and resources required to maintain the Knowledge and Learning Network and Platform
2. Social compliance processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthen the participation of external stakeholders, including public sector and labor organizations, in social compliance processes to strengthen third-party verification and to increase awareness of promising practices ▪ Strengthen community engagement by focusing on the quality of the Community Circles rather than the quantity
3. Scale the SCS throughout the supply chain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide closer technical assistance to smaller producers on issues related to labor compliance; strengthen the consultative role of MOL inspectors ▪ Develop and disseminate a simplified roadmap to assist small producers to meet SCS labor compliance standards ▪ Establish a more detailed coordination plan with RSPO to utilize the SCS as a mechanism to fulfill RSPO social standards
4. Disseminate promising practices and tools, regionally and globally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore opportunities to scale up promising tools and best practices through existing stakeholder networks

Discussion of Exhibit 13:

Knowledge and Learning Network: Stakeholders familiar with the Knowledge and Learning Network recommended that the project develop and implement an operational Knowledge Platform with adequate time to troubleshoot problems and provide the necessary technical assistance. These stakeholders added that they needed more information to understand the resources and funding sources necessary to maintain and update the Knowledge Platform.

Social Compliance Processes: External stakeholders suggested increasing the number of public sector and labor organizations participating in the social compliance processes to strengthen third-party verification and to increase buy-in of these important actors. Community engagement was just starting to occur at the time of the interim evaluation. The project intends to establish 60 Community Circles, but only 5 were established at the time of the interim evaluation. Given the limited time left in the project, the evaluation team anticipates that it will be difficult to carry out the processes of community training and development of action plans to improve workplace and community conditions for all 60 Community Circles.

Scaling SCS: The majority of stakeholders agreed that smaller-scale producers need greater technical assistance in order to successfully implement SCS processes. *Palma Futuro* SAI staff commented that they tailored their approach for small producers to simplify the process, recognizing that many have limited literacy skills. Stakeholders from *Proamazonía* mentioned the launch of a new pilot project focusing on social and environmental compliance of small producers in the palm oil sector, which may offer an opportunity to collaborate with *Palma Futuro* staff.

Another strategy suggested by several project stakeholders for scaling up the SCS focuses on strengthening the alliance and coordination with RSPO to promote the implementation of SCS as a way to fulfill RSPO social standards. These stakeholders concurred that if *Palma Futuro* and RSPO could agree on the usefulness of the SCS in providing a roadmap toward compliance, then the expanded use of the SCS in the palm oil sector would almost certainly occur.

Dissemination of Promising Tools and Best Practices: External stakeholders recommended that the project take advantage of existing stakeholder networks, such as Ecuador's Business Network against Child Labor, that reach a wide range of affiliates on issues of corporate social responsibility. Periodic bulletins focusing on issues related to corporate social responsibility are disseminated by several private sector stakeholder groups associated with the project.

3.4 Summary Assessment of Project Progress and Achievements

Summary Assessment: How would you objectively rate the level of achievement for each of the project's major OTCs on a four-point scale (low, moderate, above-moderate, and high).

USDOL's OCFT has implemented a rating system to summarize the achievements of projects on a four-point scale: low, moderate, above-moderate, and high. The evaluation team established the following four criteria upon consultation with USDOL to evaluate the achievements of the *Palma Futuro* project at this interim stage:

1. Adaptation of strategies to address COVID, overcome difficulties and delays
2. Participation and commitment of key stakeholders
3. Achievement of indicators in light of delays caused by the health pandemic

4. Coherence and viability of sustainability strategies

The evaluation team assigned a rating for each of the four criteria established to assess the project's level of achievement to date. The assigned rankings presented in Exhibit 14 take into account the delays that are mostly attributable to the pandemic.

Exhibit 14: Assessment of Project Achievements and Sustainability

OTCs	Assessment Based on Criteria	Ranking for Each Criteria
<p>OTC 1: Strengthened capacity of private sector partners in the Colombian and Ecuadorian palm oil sectors to implement a robust and sustainable SCS</p> <p>OTC 2: Increased understanding, at regional and global levels, of promising practices in SCSs in palm oil supply chains.</p>	<p>1. The relatively quick pivot to remote platforms that was achieved will make it possible to achieve training and SCS baseline assessment targets by the end of the project.</p>	High
	<p>2. The role of private sector partners, producers, and suppliers has been clearly defined and project strategies have prioritized their participation. Palm oil industry associations also understand clearly their role of engaging their affiliates and promoting promising practices. At the time of the interim evaluation, the project has had limited participation from palm oil plantation workers, community leaders, and public sector institutions. This engagement is expected to improve during the second half of the project timeline.</p>	Moderate
	<p>3. The <i>Palma Futuro</i> project is making progress on 10 of 21 active indicators, with the pandemic factoring in as an important impediment to greater progress. The implementation of the SCS continued after the remote verification system was implemented. The SAI SCS implementers are confident they will achieve targets and implement key activities. Delays in producing project research and case studies are attributable to a myriad of issues and only partially to the pandemic. Unlike the SCS, where evaluators were able to verify a detailed adaptation strategy to achieve the original targets, a pathway for completing the remaining studies was under discussion and had not been determined. Evaluators verified the project strategy for the development of the Knowledge Platform contributing to OTC 2; however, a sustainability strategy for the platform is under discussion and had still not been determined.</p>	Moderate
	<p>4. The project initiatives that most likely are sustainable to date are the implementation of the SCS in private sector companies and the continuous SCS improvements. The strategies to build in-house capacity, such as ToTs and social performance teams, increase the likelihood of scaling the SCS process throughout their supply chains. It is not feasible</p>	Above moderate

	<p>to determine whether the knowledge and learning network will be sustainable until key stakeholders formally commit to maintain and update the Knowledge Platform on a continual basis. However, if the sustainability strategies to maintain the Knowledge Platform are further defined and undergo continuous improvement, there is a higher likelihood that the knowledge and learning network will be sustained.</p>	
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Discussion: The evaluation team assigned a rating for each of the four criteria established to assess the project’s level of achievement to date. These scores were then averaged to obtain an overall project rating of **above moderate**.

4. LESSONS LEARNED AND PROMISING PRACTICES

The evaluation team based the following lessons learned and promising practices on the evaluation's findings and conclusions with respect to project relevance and coherence, project efficiency and effectiveness, and the sustainability of project OTCs.

4.1 Lessons Learned

1. Expectations for research and case studies must be clarified between donor and grantee from the onset to avoid excessive delays or discontinuation of work on important project outputs.

The different expectations or understandings regarding the case study deliverables contributed to excessive delays in disseminating final products or even worse, discontinuing work on important outputs of the project.

2. A communication strategy is an essential component of every successful project's design.

Projects such as Palma Futuro that work with multi-stakeholder groups need to have a communication plan to develop and disseminate information on ACW, CL, and FL in the palm oil sector; keep all interested stakeholders informed of project progress; and respond quickly and effectively to major unexpected events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Major changes in the implementation context can affect the motivation of private partners to complete project activities.

Participation in project activities will always take second place in priority when companies experience the effects of major unexpected events (such as the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic and the spread of bud rot in Ecuador, for example). It is important to continuously monitor these events and to mitigate their potential impacts on the project.

4. Labor projects that successfully promote ACW take into consideration workers' perspectives and participation throughout the supply chain.

The inclusion of workers' perspectives and participation throughout the supply chain on issues related to labor compliance in the palm oil sector can result in an increase in buy-in from workers and worker organizations on the implementation of the SCS process.

4.2 Promising Practices

5. Establishing clear expectations of the private sector partners increases their commitment to complete the SCS process and integrate the SCS into company management systems.

There was clear communication from the beginning of the project regarding the role of the private sector partners. The signing of MOUs stating their commitments to implement the SCS and to integrate it into larger management systems and processes helped increase private sector partner interest and buy-in.

6. Creating in-house social performance teams and a cadre of trainers provides a built-in mechanism to promote scalability of the SCS process throughout the supply chain.

The project created Social Performance Teams in each private sector company at the start of the SCS process. This provided time to train and mentor team members to enable them to assume leadership in developing and monitoring company improvement plans. A ToT that will be conducted in the second half of 2021 will establish a group of company trainers with the capacity to scale and replicate the SCS process throughout the supply chain.

7. Implementation of a robust SCS has helped increase private sector partner commitment to sustainable work practices.

Private sector partners cited a desire to “go beyond” the baseline standards required of the RSPO certification. The new practice of developing and implementing company improvement plans is expected to strengthen labor performance and management systems.

8. The SCS is not a “one size fits all” process. It is necessary to adapt and simplify the SCS tools and process to facilitate their implementation with small producers.

Project staff highlighted the importance of customizing (adapting/simplifying) the SCS assessment tools and processes for small-scale producers who are responsible for all aspects of the farm operations and who may have limited literacy skills.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In this section, the evaluation team presents its conclusions about the project's performance with regard to each of the evaluation criteria: relevance and coherence, effectiveness and efficiency, and sustainability.

5.1 Relevance and Coherence

- **Results Framework:** The project's results framework clearly showed the critical path to reach the project's outcomes and achieve the project-level objective of improving implementation of SCS that promote ACW and reduce CL and FL in the palm oil supply chains.
- **Project Design:** The *Palma Futuro* project design largely met the needs and expectations of private sector partners and their producers and suppliers who were interested in strengthening their social compliance management systems. Their familiarity with the RSPO certification process aided their understanding of the *Palma Futuro* SCS process and project goals. Strategies during the second half of the project timeline are intended to satisfy the specific needs of small-scale producers who require a greater amount of technical assistance and training and additional adaptation of compliance tools.
- **Multi-sectoral Approach:** To date the project's multi-sectoral approach has largely focused on the needs of private sector partners to implement a SCS and develop their corresponding improvement plans. It has yet to address fully the specific needs of palm oil plantation workers throughout the supply chain such as labor formalization. The project also has not yet addressed the needs expressed by public sector institutions to have access to reliable data on labor conditions in the palm oil sector and the prevalence of CL and FL. The project will likely begin to address the needs of communities surrounding the private sector partner companies through the implementation of Community Circles during the second half of the project.

5.2 Effectiveness and Efficiency

- **Project Achievement:** At the time of the interim evaluation, the *Palma Futuro* project had progressed on 10 of 21 active indicators; the COVID-19 pandemic was a significant impediment to greater progress. Under OTC 1, the evaluation team anticipates that the indicators related to the implementation of the SCS will be achieved now that the VVVs are in place. The evaluation team found that the achievement of other indicators, such as the establishment of 60 Community Circles, were impeded by social distancing requirements and likely will not be fully achieved without compromising quality. The project did not achieve indicators related to project research and case studies because of issues that were only partially attributable to the pandemic, including different expectation or understanding (scope, approach, methodology) of project deliverables.
- **Project Response to Effects of COVID-19:** The project was able to pivot to remote platforms for activities related to the baseline SCS assessments in a relatively short period

of time, allowing for the continuation of this core component of the project design. The project responded appropriately to an observed communication gap by producing worker and community education materials on COVID-19 prevention.

- **Stakeholder Participation:** The roles of private sector partners, producers, and suppliers were clearly defined, and project strategies were designed to prioritize their participation. Palm oil industry associations clearly understood their role to engage their affiliates and promote promising practices. Civil society organizations participated in CL awareness events sponsored by the project. The project had not yet had any significant participation from community leaders, public sector institutions, or palm oil plantation workers within the partner companies' supply chain, in part due to COVID-19.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The project developed a M&E system that included the PSA, CMEP, and RDQA. The project's **PSA** identified a wide range of key actors to consider in the implementation strategies; to date several stakeholder groups had been only minimally engaged, including palm oil plantation workers and worker organizations, community leaders, and a wider range of public sector institutions. The project's **CMEP** was manageable and useful for tracking project progress. The "stop light" mechanism provided quick alerts to management staff on project status in meeting indicator targets. The **RDQA** process was completed before the interim evaluation, as required by the donor. The data verification process was appropriately applied and led to recalculations of any indicators that showed inconsistencies.
- **Efficiency of Staffing Structure:** The *Palma Futuro* staffing structure relied on the efforts of the two sub-grantees working in Colombia and Ecuador to complete the bulk of activities under OTC 1. In this sense, the sub-grantees were the subject experts and POA provided management and oversight and secured private sector partnerships. The evaluation identified the potential need of a labor specialist (consultant or staff) who could provide additional technical assistance to small-scale producers and further promote ACW and labor formalization.
- **Strategic and Efficient Use of Time:** COVID-19 delayed the implementation of the SCS in private sector partner companies. This created a domino effect and affected the capacity-building activities needed to scale and replicate the SCS throughout the supply chain. The project's relatively quick pivot to remote platforms will make it possible to achieve training and SCS baseline assessments targets by the end of the project. However, regarding the the case studies, the different expectations of deliverables between study authors, POA and USDOL resulted in excessive delays in the review and approval process and demonstrated an inefficient use of time.

5.3 Sustainability

- **Likelihood of Sustainability:** At the time of the interim evaluation, the project activities and initiatives that were most likely sustainable were the integration of the SCS into partner companies' management systems and the continuous improvement of social compliance processes. Private sector partner companies were also likely to begin the process of

training their supply chains (producers and suppliers) to establish SCS processes, in part as a guide to achieve RSPO certification. Whether the knowledge and learning network will be sustainable depends upon key stakeholders formally committing to maintaining and updating the Knowledge Platform on a continuous basis.

- **Factors Strengthening Sustainability and Scalability:** The close alignment of the SCS and the RSPO labor compliance standards increases the usefulness of the SCS, as companies are already motivated to comply with the RSPO labor standards. The development of in-house experts, such as social performance teams and SCS trainers, strengthens the scalability of the SCS processes throughout the supply chains. The strong engagement of the industry associations in both Ecuador and Colombia increases the likelihood of the dissemination of promising tools and scaling of best practices to other palm oil regions. Furthermore, private sector partners and industry associations want to differentiate their products from those of their competitors.
- **Factors Limiting Sustainability and Scalability:** Implementation and sustainability of the SCS may be more difficult for small-scale producers who have limited resources or reading skills or have received limited technical assistance to implement the SCS. Another factor that may limit overall project sustainability is insufficient time to ensure the continued operation of the Knowledge Platform, which is in jeopardy if a key stakeholder is not identified to maintain and update the contents.

5.4 Summary Assessment Rating

The evaluation team assigned a rating for each of the four criteria established to assess the project's level of achievement to date: (1) adaptation of strategies to address COVID; (2) participation of key stakeholders; (3) achievement of indicators; and (4) coherence and viability of sustainability strategies. Each criterion was assigned a score based on a four-point scale: low, moderate, above-moderate, and high. These scores were then averaged to obtain an overall project rating of **above moderate**.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the evaluation findings presented in Section 0 and the lessons learned and promising practices presented in Section 0, the evaluation team provides the following recommendations.

Immediate Recommendations to POA

1. **Finalize the implementation of the Knowledge Platform:** POA should immediately begin the process of implementing the Knowledge Platform to allow sufficient time for rollout, adjustments, and technical assistance. POA should develop a plan for the continued operation of the Knowledge Platform after the project ends. The plan should include the expectations of the institution or organization that operates the platform and any costs that might be incurred for its operation and maintenance.
2. **Integrate a labor specialist into the staffing structure:** POA should add a labor specialist (consultant or staff) to the project staffing structure. The labor specialist can provide expertise in labor law compliance and ACW in the palm oil sector; analyze labor standards in Ecuador and Colombia; and develop a simplified labor compliance roadmap for small producers, including guidance on selecting the appropriate types of legal hiring contracts, incorporating fringe benefits, and complying with social security obligations. The labor specialist will also help to strengthen engagement with the external stakeholders identified in the PSA, including the MoLs in Colombia and Ecuador, the ILO, labor unions, and the CSOs providing legal assistance to palm oil workers. The labor specialist should make a concerted effort to address palm oil workers' top labor priorities, including labor formalization.
3. **Analyze resources allocated to Ecuador:** POA should analyze whether the staffing resources allocated to Ecuador are sufficient to address the challenges and opportunities that have evolved. POA should further explore the opportunity to collaborate with *Proamazonía* on its pilot project for small producers, because of the pilot project's focus on compliance with RSPO's social and environmental criteria.
4. **Strengthen the quality of Community Circles:** If the *Palma Futuro* project is not extended, POA should consider reducing the number for Community Circles by up to half the end-of-project target to avoid administrative time setting up Circles and reserve time for programmatic work in a smaller number of Circles. This will allow more time to implement a quality model leading to concrete actions to improve conditions in the community and in the workplace. In addition, POA project staff should ensure that Community Circles are tied to an existing civic organization to strengthen their sustainability and make a concerted effort to include in the Community Circles a diverse set of community participants, including women leaders and labor leaders.
5. **Strengthen communication channels with project stakeholders:** POA should establish communication channels to inform key stakeholders of project highlights, anticipated results, and upcoming activities. These could take the form of periodic project bulletins or press releases that are integrated into existing stakeholder communication networks.

6. **Ensure sufficient review time for any remaining deliverable:** POA should identify any remaining project deliverables, such as the toolkit, that will require multiple levels of review and approval to ensure there is sufficient time for wide dissemination and the provision of technical assistance during rollout of the deliverables.
7. **Develop a contingency plan:** POA should develop a contingency plan for the possibility that any private sector partners are unable to carry out their commitment to scale and replicate the SCS process throughout the supply chain.

Recommendations to USDOL for Future Projects

8. **Address palm oil workers' labor priorities:** Future project implementers focusing on social compliance issues should make a concerted effort when designing activities to address palm oil workers' top labor priorities, including labor formalization.
9. **Include a public policy component:** Future project implementers should work collaboratively with public sector institutions to develop and adopt public policies that enhance labor compliance in the palm oil sector.
10. **Define the scope and expectations of project studies:** USDOL should examine the key causes of the delays in delivering research products to ensure that the product revision and approval procedures are completed with enough time to use and disseminate results.

APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF PALMA FUTURO PERFORMANCE RESULTS

Indicator	Baseline/ Target	April 2019	Oct. 2019	April 2020	Oct. 2020	April 2021	Midterm Progress toward End-of-Project Targets/Comments
PO 1: Number of organizations in Latin America that promote SCS practices in the palm oil sector.	Baseline: 0 Target: 5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1 0	0%
PO 2: Number of palm oil entities with improved Social Fingerprint® performance scores.	Baseline: 0 Target: 105	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	TBD at end of project
OTC 1: Strengthened capacity of private sector partners in the Colombian and Ecuadorian palm oil sectors to implement a robust and sustainable SCSs							
OTC 1. Number of palm oil entities with improved Social Fingerprint® management systems scores.	Baseline: 0 Target: 105	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	TBD at end of project
SOTC 1.1: Increased understanding of labor practices and risks of CL and FL in the Colombian and Ecuadorian palm oil sectors							

Indicator	Baseline/ Target	April 2019	Oct. 2019	April 2020	Oct. 2020	April 2021	Midterm Progress toward End-of-Project Targets/Comments
SOTC 1.1.1: Percentage of key stakeholders who attend annual sectoral workshops who demonstrate a change in their understanding of labor practices and risks in supply chain.	Baseline: 0 Target: 80%	0 0	0 0	0 0	80% 0	0 0	0%
OTP 1.1.1: Evidence compiled on labor practices and risks of CL and FL in palm oil supply chain							
OTP 1.1.1.1 Final research report on CL and FL and labor conditions completed.	Baseline: 0 Target: 1	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 0	0 0	0% Considerando las problemáticas asociadas a la metodología y el tamaño de muestra requerido para el estudio de prevalencia, la recomendación fue cambiar el enfoque y a marzo 2021 estaba en proceso de definición un estudio cualitativo alternativo que provea información relevante para el proyecto.
OTP 1.1.2: Evidence compiled on promising practices in social compliance and benefits of SCSs to economic performance of companies							
OTP 1.1.2.1 Number of reports on promising practices and benefits of social compliance and benefits completed.	Baseline: 0 Target: 4	0 0	0 0	2 0	2 0	0 0	0% PalCesar: Está en revisión para aprobación por parte del USDOL. Fedepalma: Se determinó no publicar el resultado y buscar una alternativa. DANEC: Caso descartado por no ser pertinente para el proyecto.

Indicator	Baseline/ Target	April 2019	Oct. 2019	April 2020	Oct. 2020	April 2021	Midterm Progress toward End-of-Project Targets/Comments
							Estudio de Mercado: El documento se encuentra en proceso de ajuste.
OTP 1.1.3: Evidence disseminated to relevant public and private stakeholders on labor conditions, promising practices in social compliance and benefits of SCSs to economic performance of companies							
OTP 1.1.3.1 Number of stakeholders reached with the findings of the project's research	Baseline: 0 Target: 100	0 0	0 0	15 0	15 0	15 0	0% Dado que los estudios se encuentran en proceso de aprobación, ajuste o redefinición, no se cuenta con material de conocimiento relevante para diseminar entre las partes interesadas.
SOTC 1.2 Increased application of social compliance processes at all levels of the private sector partners supply chains							
SOTC 1.2.1 Number of suppliers trained by private sector partners	Baseline: 0 Target: 340	0 0	0 0	0 0	105 0	45 0	0% La pandemia no ha permitido a SAI iniciar con el ToT para los Social Performance Teams. SAI está adaptando la metodología para realizar las capacitaciones de manera virtual a partir de mayo de 2021.
SOTC 1.2.2 Number of private sector partners' suppliers that complete assessment process	Baseline: 0 Target: 340	0 0	0 0	0 0	105 0	45 46	31% Debido a las restricciones para viajar, SAI adaptó la metodología para realizar las evaluaciones de manera virtual, pero no pudo realizar la totalidad de las evaluaciones planeadas para los PSPs suppliers

Indicator	Baseline/ Target	April 2019	Oct. 2019	April 2020	Oct. 2020	April 2021	Midterm Progress toward End-of-Project Targets/Comments
SOTC 1.2.3 Number of private sector partners' suppliers that develop an improvement plan	Baseline: 0 Target: 170	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	TBD at end of project
OTP 1.2.1 Social compliance tools identified, enhanced and/or adapted for local context							
OTP 1.2.1.1 Social compliance toolkits completed	Baseline: 0 Target: 1	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	TBD at end of project
OTP 1.2.2 Technical assistance delivered to private sector partners, their supply chain and workers.							
OTP 1.2.2.1 Number of private sector partners and suppliers provided technical assistance	Baseline: 0 Target: 347	0 0	0 0	7 6	23 44	70 44	94%
OTP 1.2.2.2 Number of people from private sector partners provided technical assistance	Baseline: 0 Target: 70	0 0	0 0	30 40	5 44	20 0	153%
OTP 1.2.2.3 Percentage of surveyed supply chain workshop participants who demonstrate a change in understanding of labor	Baseline: 0 Target: 80%	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	TBD at end of project

Indicator	Baseline/ Target	April 2019	Oct. 2019	April 2020	Oct. 2020	April 2021	Midterm Progress toward End-of-Project Targets/Comments
practices and risks of CL and FL							
OTP 1.2.3 Technical assistance provided to external stakeholders to support SCS implemented by private sector partners.							
OTP 1.2.3.1 Number of stakeholder organizations provided training directly by the project.	Baseline: 0 Target: 22	0 0	0 0	3 0	2 0	5 13	130% 11 Stakeholders in Colombia and 2 in Ecuador.
OTP 1.2.3.2 Number of people from external stakeholder groups provided training directly by the project.	Baseline: 0 Target: 70	0 0	0 0	5 0	10 0	15 60	200% 50 people from Colombia and 10 people from Ecuador.
OTP 1.2.3.3 Number of communities reached through outreach events.	Baseline: 0 Target: 21	0 0	0 0	0 0	7 0	3 13	130% Dadas las restricciones para viajar, hubo limitado para realizar eventos de participación de la comunidad. No obstante, a través de un Coordinador Comunitario, se realizaron actividades virtuales y presenciales en 13 comunidades

Indicator	Baseline/ Target	April 2019	Oct. 2019	April 2020	Oct. 2020	April 2021	Midterm Progress toward End-of-Project Targets/Comments
OTP 1.2.3.4 Number of Community Circles formed to cascade learnings from trainings	Baseline: 0 Target: 60	0 0	0 0	0 0	20 0	9 5	17% Se logró el lanzamiento de 5 círculos comunitarios en Colombia. Por falta de acceso de la comunidad a computadoras y teléfonos inteligentes, no fue posible lanzar círculos comunitarios virtuales.
OTP 1.2.3.5 Number of actions taken by Community Circles to cascade learning	Baseline: 0 Target: 60	0 0	0 0	0 0	15 0	10 0	0% Por los atrasos en la conformación de círculos comunitarios, ninguno ha tomado “acciones” oficiales.
Outcome 2: Increased understanding, at regional and global levels, of promising practices in SCSs in palm oil supply chains.							
OTC 2.1 Number of organizations that participate in forums where the project presents promising practices and lessons learned.	Baseline: 0% Target: 100	0 0	0 0	0 0	30 0	15 0	0% Las restricciones para viajar y los procesos de revisión del material que podría ser presentado en los eventos, han generado retrasos en esta actividad.
OTC 2.2 Percentage of surveyed regional study tour participants who demonstrate an increased understanding of SCS promising practices.	Baseline: 0% Target: 80%	0 0	0 0	0 0	80% 0	0 0	0% Las restricciones para viajes no permitieron la realización de los Study Tours. El proyecto estudia utilizar diferentes formatos para su realización.
OTP 2.1: Promising practices disseminated to palm oil stakeholders regionally and globally							

Indicator	Baseline/ Target	April 2019	Oct. 2019	April 2020	Oct. 2020	April 2021	Midterm Progress toward End-of-Project Targets/Comments
OTP 2.1.1 Number of regional discussion forums organized in region	Baseline: 0 Target: 2	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 0	0 0	0% Las restricciones para viajar y los procesos de revisión del material que podría ser presentado en los eventos, han generado retrasos en esta actividad.
OTP 2.1.2 Number of instances in which project generated material is shared at international or regional forums or published in reports.	Baseline: 0 Target: 12	0 0	0 0	2 2	2 0	2 0	33% Las restricciones para viajar y los procesos de revisión del material que podría ser presentado en los eventos, han generado retrasos en esta actividad
OTP 2.2: A Knowledge and learning network operational across the region and globally, of stakeholders in the palm oil sector.							
OTP 2.2.1 Number of webinars hosted by the project	Baseline: 0 Target: 6	0 0	0 0	0 0	2 2	1 0	67% A la fecha, Palma Futuro no cuenta con suficiente material relevante para socializar con los actores del proyecto. Los productos de investigación están en proceso de redacción y aprobación, y la implementación de SCS con los socios del sector privado se ha retrasado debido a la pandemia.

Indicator	Baseline/ Target	April 2019	Oct. 2019	April 2020	Oct. 2020	April 2021	Midterm Progress toward End-of-Project Targets/Comments
OTP 2.2.2 Number of organizations that participate in webinars hosted or supported by the project	Baseline: 0 Target: 50	0 0	0 0	0 0	10 13	10 0	65% Palma Futuro no cuenta aún con suficiente material para socializar con los actores interesados.
OTP 2.2.3 Number of organizations with formal agreements to participate in the network	Baseline: 0 Target: 12	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	3 0	0% No se muestra avance cuantitativo en la meta, dado que solo se tiene el diseño inicial de la Plataforma de conocimiento.

APPENDIX B: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Subject	Document	Author	Date	Format
TOR	Notice of Availability of Funds and Funding Opportunity Announcement for Reducing Child Labor and Forced Labor in Palm Oil Supply Chains	USDOL	August 2018	PDF
	Award Modification No. 0 IL-32820-18-75-K-	USDOL	November 2018	PDF
	Management Procedures and Guidelines for Cooperative Agreements	USDOL	2017	PDF
Project	Palma Futuro Project Document with Ecuador changes	POA	March 2021	Word
	Modifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mod # 1: This modification formalizes changes to Palma Futuro's personnel structure to facilitate human resource sharing with the Colombia Avanza project (IL-31475-17-75-K), for greater efficiency and effectiveness on both projects. In addition, these changes strengthen Palma Futuro's staffing plan for Ecuador. ▪ Palma Futuro_Aproved Budget 	USDOL		PDF
	Annex B: Work Plan	POA	December 2018	PDF
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Activity mapping Palma Futuro ▪ Aclaración Activity mapping 	POA	2019	Word
	Palma Futuro Presentation Interim-Evaluation	POA	May 2021	PPT
TPRs	April 2019: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TPR ▪ Annex B - Updated Work Plan ▪ Annex E – Status of VAT Exemption ▪ USDOL comments 	POA	April 2019	PDF; Word
	October 2019: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TPR ▪ Annex A – Palma Futuro Data Reporting ▪ Annex B - Updated Work Plan ▪ Annex C – Response to donor comments from Last TPR ▪ Annex E – Status of VAT Exemption ▪ Annex H-1 – MOU Between Partners and Organic Supply ▪ Annex H-2 – Palma Futuro_COVID-19 Upcoming Activities 4 months ▪ Annex H-3 – Palma Futuro_COVID-19 Upcoming Activities 6 months ▪ Checklist for Reporting on Estandar Indicators-MidYear 2020_5-20-2020 ▪ USDOL comments 	POA	October 2019	PDF; Word; Excel
	October 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technical Progress Report ▪ Annex A – Data reporting form ▪ Update Annex A – Data Reporting Form ▪ Annex B - Updated Work Plan ▪ Annex E – Status of VAT Exemption 	POA	October 2020	PDF; Word; Excel

Subject	Document	Author	Date	Format
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annex F – Updates Sustainability Strategy Matrix ▪ Annex H-1 – MOU Partners-RSPO ▪ Annex H-2 COVID-19 Guidance Document ▪ Annex H-3 COVID-19 Risk Assessment ▪ Annex H-4 COVID-19 Guidance Document (Used for Training) ▪ Annex H-5 COVID-19 Risk Assessment Training for PSP ▪ Annex H-6 Sponsor Plan Course Hiring Module ▪ Annex H-7 Sponsor Plan Course Labor Conditions and Social Compliance Module ▪ Annex H-8 Organic Supply On-ÇCoarding training ▪ Annex H-9 Assessment-MS and Performance ▪ Annex H-10 Worker Survey Template ▪ Annex H-11 Agenda Webinar Labor Conditions and SCS ▪ Annex H-12 Agenda Webinar COVID-19 - Challenges Child Labor in Colombia and Ecuador ▪ Annex H-13 SMS Communications campaign ▪ USDOL comments ▪ USDOL Additional Comments ▪ Status of Labor Code and Tripartite Commission 			
	<p>April 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TPR ▪ Annex A – Data reporting form ▪ Annex B - Updated Work Plan ▪ Annex C – Response to donor comments from last TPR ▪ Annex E – Status of VAT Exemption ▪ Annex H-1 Attendance List Annual Sectoral Workshop ▪ Annex H-2 Workshop Survey ▪ Annex H-3 Workshop Agenda ▪ Annex H-4 Analysis of the answers provided by respondents through the survey ▪ Annex H-5 Virtual Verification Visit Methodology ▪ Annex H-6 Executive Report Presentation Aceites ▪ Annex H-7 C Executive Report Presentation Palmaceite ▪ Annex H-8 Executive Report Presentatios Palmagro ▪ Annex H-9 Aceites SCS Baseline Assessment Report 	POA	April 2021	PDF; Word; Excel

Subject	Document	Author	Date	Format
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annex H-10 El Roble SCS Baseline Assessment Report ▪ Annex H-11 Organic Supply SCS Baseline Assessment Report ▪ Annex H-12 Palmaceite SCS Baseline Assessment Report ▪ Annex H-13 Palmagro SCS Baseline Assessment Report ▪ Annex H-14 PDS SCS Baseline Assessment Report ▪ Annex H-15 SCS Training and Assessment ▪ Annex H-16 Colombia PSP worker survey ▪ Annex H-17 BioCosta Worker Engagement Survey Report ▪ Annex H-18 Aceites Worker Engagement Survey Results Report ▪ Annex H-19 El Roble Worker Engagement Survey Results ▪ Annex H-20 Palmaceite Worker Engagement Survey Results ▪ Annex H-21 Palmagro Worker Engagement Survey Results ▪ Annex H-22 Palmas del Cesar Worker Engagement Survey Results ▪ Annex H-23 SAI Colombia supplier survey ▪ Annex H-24 Colombia Supplier COVID-19 Survey Results ▪ Annex H-25 Ecuador PSP Worker and Supplier survey ▪ Annex H-27 Stakeholders Workshop Palma Futuro ▪ Annex H-28 Communities Workshop Palma Futuro ▪ Annex H-29 Community Visit Guide ▪ Annex H-30 Palma Futuro Brochure ▪ USDOL comments 			
Document	Fases de implementación de la Plataforma de Gestión del Conocimiento. Proyecto Palama Futuro	POA	June 2021	Word
CMEP	Palma futuro CMEP - FINAL	POA	November 2019	Word
	Tablero Control Seguimiento CMEP Palma Futuro Octubre 2020 – Marzo 2021	POA	April 2021	Excel
RDQA	5 – Routine Data Quality Assessment Template - FINAL	USDOL		Excel
	5 – Routine Data Quality Assessment Palma Futuro VF	POA	November 2020	Excel
Studies	Palma Futuro PSA Draft 2 Narrative Report Submitted	POA	January 2020	Word
	Colombian and Ecuadorian Palm Oil Market and Value Chain Analysis (Revised March 2021)	JAA	May 2020	Word
Legal Framework	Palma de Aceite, Indicadores de Producción y de Mercado.	MIDAGRI	2019	PDF

Subject	Document	Author	Date	Format
	Resolución Ministerial 0118	MIDAGRI	May 2019	PDF
	Ley para el fortalecimiento y desarrollo de la producción, comercialización, extracción, exportación e industrialización de la palma aceitera y sus derivados	Asamblea Nacional del Ecuador	July 2020	PDF
Secondary information	Importancia del cultivo de Palma Aceitera en Ecuador	PROPALMA		Web
	Interpretación Nacional de los principios y criterios para la producción de aceite de palma sostenible en la República de Ecuador	RSPO ETIN Ecuador	July 2016	PDF
	EUTOPIA – 2 Cadenas Productivas y Territorio. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ La industria de la palma en Ecuador<. ¿un buen negocio para los pequeños agricultores? ▪ La palma africana en la provincia de Los Ríos: negocio agro-empresarial, prebendas estatales y violaciones de derechos campesinos 	FLACSO Ecuador	October 2011	PDF

APPENDIX C: EVALUATION INTERVIEWS

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APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE PALMA FUTURO INTERIM EVALUATION

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APPENDIX E: TERMS OF REFERENCE

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