

U.S. Department of Labor

OCFT Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning Division

The Palma Futuro project is 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. Specifically, Palma Futuro provides technical assistance to three palm oil companies in Colombia and Ecuador to develop robust SCSs. This four-year, \$6 million project was awarded by ILAB to Partners of the Americans (POA) in November 2018.



January 2019-2022



\$6 million

Project Intervention Sites

Objective: To improve the implementation of SCSs that promote ACW and reduce CL and FL in the palm oil supply chains

Outcome 1: Strengthened capacity of private sector partners in the Colombian and Ecuadorian palm oil sectors to implement a robust and sustainable SCS

Outcome 2: Increased understanding, at regional and global levels, of promising practices in SCSs in palm oil supply chains



Promising Practices

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

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

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.



Lessons Learned

A communication strategy is an essential component of every project design. Projects 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 efficiently and effectively to major unexpected events.

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. It is important to continuously monitor these events and to mitigate their potential impacts on the project.

OVERALL OUTCOME ACHIEVEMENT



RATIONALE

Based on the achievement of indicator targets, stakeholder perception of results achieved, potential for sustainability of key outcomes, and analysis of expenditures vs. results achieved, *Palma Futuro's* level of achievement is **above moderate**.



Criteria: Adaptation Strategies
Achieved High Ranking

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.



Criteria: Participation and Commitment of Key Stakeholders
Achieved: Moderate

The project has had limited participation from palm oil plantation workers, community leaders, and public sector institutions.



Criteria: Achievement of Indicators
Achieved: Moderate

The project is making progress on 10 of 21 indicators, with the pandemic factoring as an important impediment to greater progress.



Criteria: Coherence and viability of sustainability strategies
Achieved: Above Moderate

The project initiatives that are most likely sustainable to date are the implementation of the SCS in private sector companies

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



Finalize the implementation of the knowledge platform to allow sufficient time for rollout, adjustments, and technical assistance, as well as a plan for continued operation after project closeout.



Develop a contingency plan for the possibility that any private sector partner is unable to carry out their commitment to scale and replicate the SCS.



Address palm oil workers' labor priorities. Future project implementers focusing on social compliance issues should make a concerted effort when designing activities to address this group's top priorities.



Define the scope and expectations of project studies. 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.

*Due to the outbreak and rapid spread of COVID-19 to nearly every country in the world, including Bangladesh, USDOL, IMPAQ, and POA International decided to conduct all interviews remotely in May and June 2021. Funding for this evaluation was provided by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) under Contract Number: GS-10F-0240U. This material does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of USDOL; mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations does not imply endorsement by the US government.

