

**Solidaridad**

**M&S**



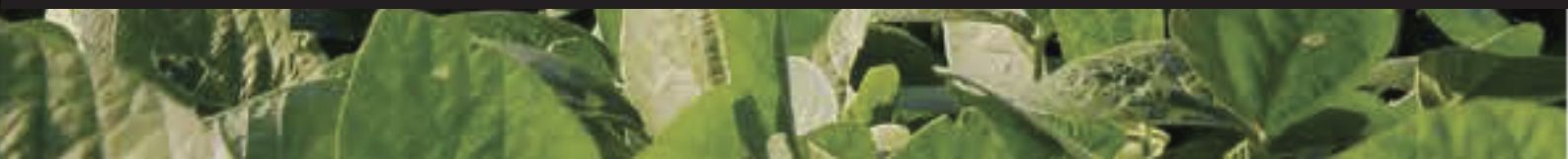
the sustainable  
trade initiative

EST. 1884

**PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY AMONG SOY FAMILY FARMERS  
IN PARAGUAY**



**2016**



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### Production:

Solidaridad

### Content:

Gert van der Bijl  
Lorena Ramírez  
Gustavo Ruíz Díaz

### Layout:

Rosario Abramo

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# INTRODUCTION

This report presents an overview of the Solidaridad and National Cooperative Union (UNICOOP) Soy Smallholder Sustainability project in East Paraguay, also called in brief: UniSol, which embeds sustainable agriculture by means of good agricultural practices. UniSol is a project that has been implemented from 2014 until early 2016 by UNICOOP (the national cooperative union of Paraguay), accompanied by Solidaridad and with support from UK retailers Marks & Spencer and the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH).

UniSol is the first of its kind and has aimed to create a peer group of farmers and farming organizations that would act as sustainability ambassadors. To quote Simona Cavazutti, the president of UNICOOP: “We have been wanting to work on this a few years ago and we finally had the opportunity”.

The project aimed to improve the production practices of 2,400 smallholder soy farmers by promoting:

- a. Good Agricultural Practices including integrated crop management
- b. Increased environmental responsibility and management including soil conservation
- c. Better compliance with forestry laws, including waterways protection.
- d. Good business practices and administration, including better compliance with labour regulations

Capacity building was an important element of the activities at all levels of the project.

When the project began, most of the participating farmers were not aware of even the most basic good agricultural practices.

The project was based on voluntary participation through awareness raising and was not about control or enforcement. In the project, Rural Horizons Rural Horizons, a data analysis tool developed by Solidaridad in Brazil, was introduced to support continuous improvement. With the use of Rural Horizons, producers evaluated themselves and discovered what actions they can take to improve productivity and achieve sustainability. The Round Table on Responsible Soy (RTRS) standard was used as a reference for improvement. Promoting certification was not an aim as such, but the hope was that the more advanced

cooperatives and farmers would be able to certify in the future. As such, improvements reached in the project would contribute towards smallholder inclusion in RTRS.

## BACKGROUND: SOY PRODUCTION IN PARAGUAY

Paraguay's economy rests very much on agricultural exports (soy, beef and corn). According to the USDA, soy production in Paraguay is expected to reach 9.2 million metric tons over 3.6 million ha in 2015/16, which makes Paraguay the sixth largest producer in the world. Soy accounts for as much as 12% of Paraguay's GDP and 40% of its exports. As domestic use of soybean, meal and oil is limited, as much as 95% of the soy is exported, half of it as beans, the other half as meal and oil. This makes Paraguay the world's fourth largest exporter of soy.

The region east of the Paraguay River occupies 40% of the country's land area but is home to 98% of the population. This area is part of the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest that was largely deforested in recent decades, leaving only 13% of the forest unmolested. Soy production in Paraguay has increased since 2000 by as much as 6% per year, mainly through area expansion.

## DISTRIBUTION OF SOY PRODUCTION IN PARAGUAY



>> *UNISOL IS A PROJECT ESTABLISHED BY UNICOOP (NATIONAL COOPERATIVE UNION) IN PARAGUAY IN 2014. THE PROJECT IS GUIDED BY SOLIDARIDAD, AND MADE POSSIBLE WITH THE SUPPORT OF IDH AND MARKS & SPENCER.*

## SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES IN SOY IN PARAGUAY

One of the most prominent sustainability issues of soy production in Paraguay is, without a doubt, illegal deforestation. But there are several other social and environmental concerns, as well.

Severe deforestation started in Paraguay in the 1960s in the Eastern region and continued in the 1970s with the so-called Green Revolution, which increased agricultural production worldwide through new technologies. This revolution opened up the best agricultural land in the country, known as Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest. This process of opening up agricultural land was often supported with European development aid. In the 70s Paraguay was the country with the highest deforestation rate in the world, seen both inside and outside Paraguay by most as a positive development. Before 2004, when the Zero Deforestation Law was enacted, government policies actively encouraged land clearing and agricultural expansion (as recently as the 90s farmers were actually required to clear land).

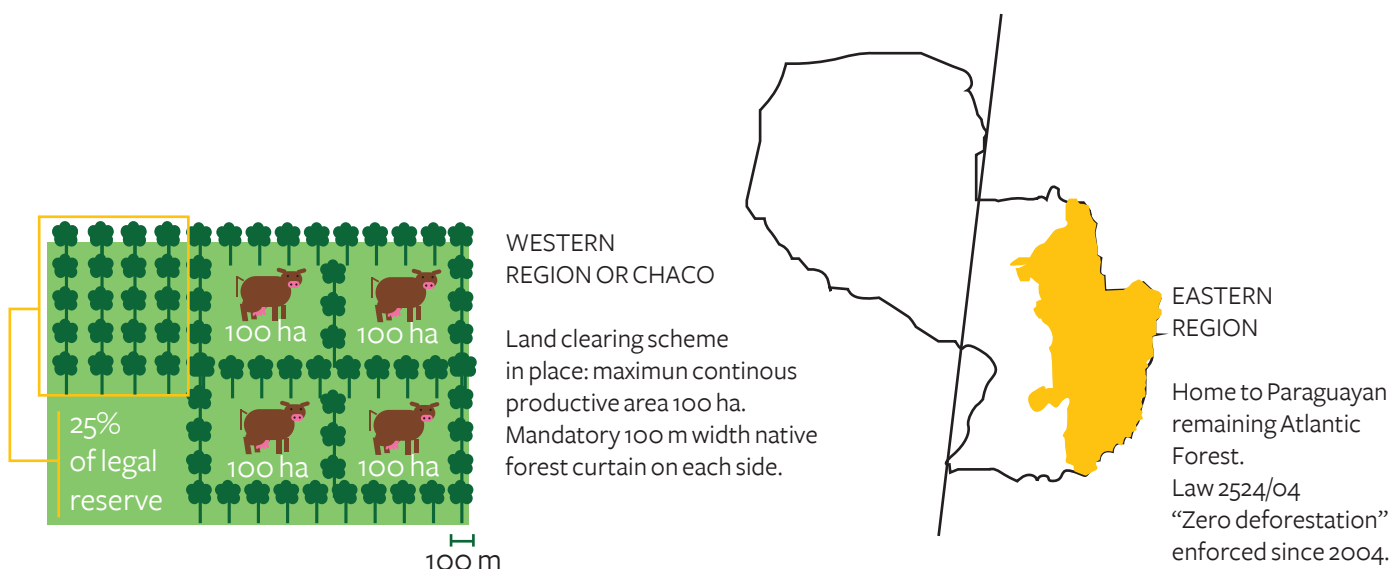
In 2004, the Zero Deforestation Law 2524/04 was adopted, making it illegal to clear any forested land in Eastern Paraguay. Since then, deforestation rates in the Upper Parana Atlantic

Forests have fallen dramatically – by 90% against a 2002 baseline. In spite of this reduction, illegal deforestation in the east still takes place.

However, over the past 10 years, soy expansion in the east has to a large extent taken place on grassland, which displaced the livestock sector to the west / Chaco region. In 2013, the government extended the Zero Deforestation Law to remain in effect until 2018.

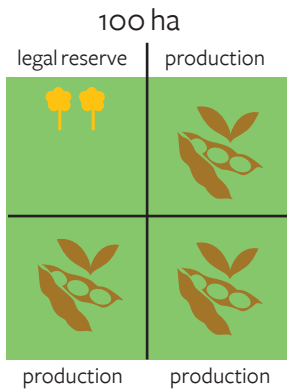
Most of the soy production in Paraguay is using the zero tillage system, which means no tillage during the crop season, and also no mechanical weeding. The advantage is lower energy use, reduced erosion and soil degradation, soil moisture conservation, increased organic matter, capture of CO<sub>2</sub> as mitigation strategy and minimum labor costs. The disadvantage is that the system increases dependence on herbicides for weed management. In Paraguay, the second soybean crop (known in Spanish as soja zafiña) is used as a residual crop in the ground. This is not a best practice because pest cycles are not fully suspended. Double cropping has been increasingly used since 2011, resulting in a significant production increase.

# PARAGUAY ENVIRONMENTAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK

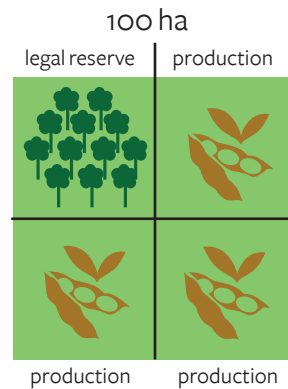


1. EASTERN REGION, LAW 422/73

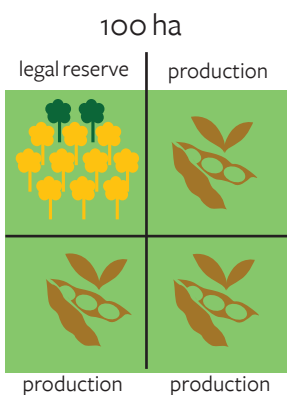
ARTICLE 42: ALL RURAL PROPERTIES WITH MORE THAN 20 HA SHOULD MAINTAIN 25% OF ITS ORIGINAL NATIVE FOREST CONCENTRATED IN ONE SINGLE CONTINUOUS BLOCK. THE BASELINE YEAR FOR ESTABLISHING THE AMOUNT OF ORIGINAL NATIVE FOREST IS 1986.



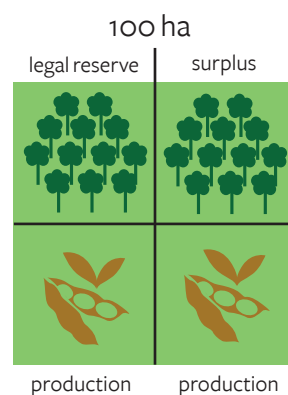
**Case 1**  
The producer buys the land with 0% of the native forest existent in 1986.  
The producer should reforest 5% of the original native forest area in 1986.




**Case 3**  
The producer has 25% of the native forest existent in 1986.  
He cannot clear any further land.



**Case 2**  
The producer has **LESS** than 25% of the native forest existent in 1986.  
The producer should reforest or leave for regeneration up to 25% of the original native forest area in 1986.



**Case 4**  
The producer has **MORE** than 25% of the native forest existent in 1986.  
He can certify the surplus forest and receive environmental service payment under the environmental service legislation.

 Reforestation may be with native or exotic species.

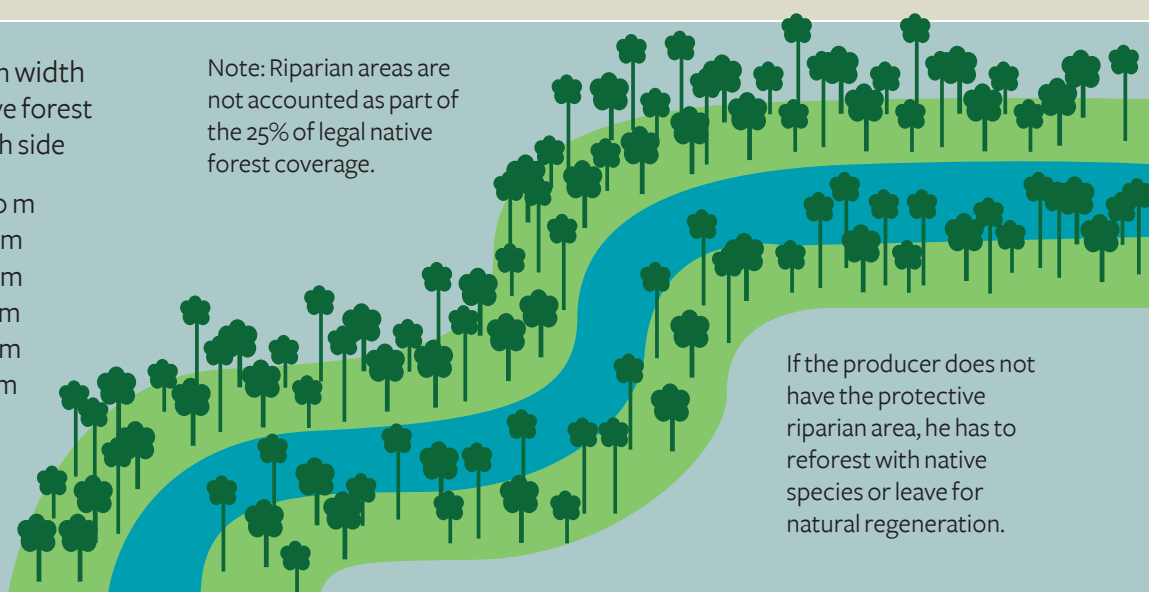
THE ENVIRONMENTAL SECRETARIAT (SEAM) EVALUATE EACH CASE INDIVIDUALLY TO DICTAMINATE.

2. LAW 4241/10 WATERWAYS PROTECTION IN THE EASTERN REGION

Waterways width	Minimum width protective forest on each side
100 m or more .....	100 m
50 to 99 m .....	60 m
20 to 49 m .....	40 m
5 to 19 m .....	30 m
1,5 to 4,9 m .....	20 m
Less than 1,5 m .....	10 m

ONLY NATIVE SPECIES

Note: Riparian areas are not accounted as part of the 25% of legal native forest coverage.



If the producer does not have the protective riparian area, he has to reforest with native species or leave for natural regeneration.



## SMALL PRODUCERS AND SOY

Large scale farming is predominant throughout South America, with only 18% of the land under family farming. This is even more true in soy farming as soy is relatively easy to mechanize. Most soy (63% of the 3.6 mln ha) in Paraguay is cultivated on farms with more than 500 ha.

On the other hand, there are over 10,000 family farmers with an area of mostly between 10 and 100 hectares. Most family farmers are descendants of immigrants coming from Western Europe (early 20th century), Japan (mid 20th century) or Brazil (since 1970s).

A large number of family farmers are organized in cooperatives. Some of these cooperatives are increasingly becoming aware that their poor environmental situation and ongoing non-compliance with laws in Paraguay are counterproductive. Several of these cooperatives are united within UNICOOP, National Cooperative Union.



UNICOOP is an umbrella organization of eight member cooperatives in the Eastern Region of Paraguay with around 3,800 members and 330,000 hectares of soy and other crops such as wheat, corn, sunflower and canola. Members are family farmers with an average area of 70 ha of soy.

UNICOOP created an environmental committee to share on-farm experiences for safeguarding natural resources in order to build a common plan on land-water-forestry-air management. One of the first initiatives by the committee was to create a model farm and organize a forestry event to disseminate best environmental practices during one of the biggest agriculture conferences in Paraguay – the Agrosow Copronar.

### ROUND TABLE ON RESPONSIBLE SOY (RTRS) AND SMALL PRODUCERS

Since 2006, soy farmers, industry and NGOs have worked together in RTRS to promote responsible soy production and use. In practice, this involved the development of a globally applicable standard for responsible production and developing a certification system to build a market for certified responsible soy. Solidaridad and Marks & Spencer are active members of RTRS. IDH is an observer.

In 2015, RTRS certification increased by as much as 70% to 2.3 million tons of which 95% in four countries in South America. In 2012, CYTASA was the first soy producer in Paraguay to certify RTRS. In 2015, two Paraguayan producers (Grupo DAP and Agrosow) certified 34,000 tons from almost 17,000 hectares.



*Location of the cooperative members of UNICOOP: Naranjito, Colonias Unidas, Cooperalba, Coopasam, Unión Curupaty, Copronar, Pindó and Raúl Peña. During the project period 3 other cooperatives active in the same zone, but not member of UNICOOP, turned to be so positive about the activities that they joined the project as well: Santa Teresa, Yguazú and Santa Fe.*

This rapidly growing amount of RTRS certified soy creates a group of frontrunner producers that can act as example for the sector.

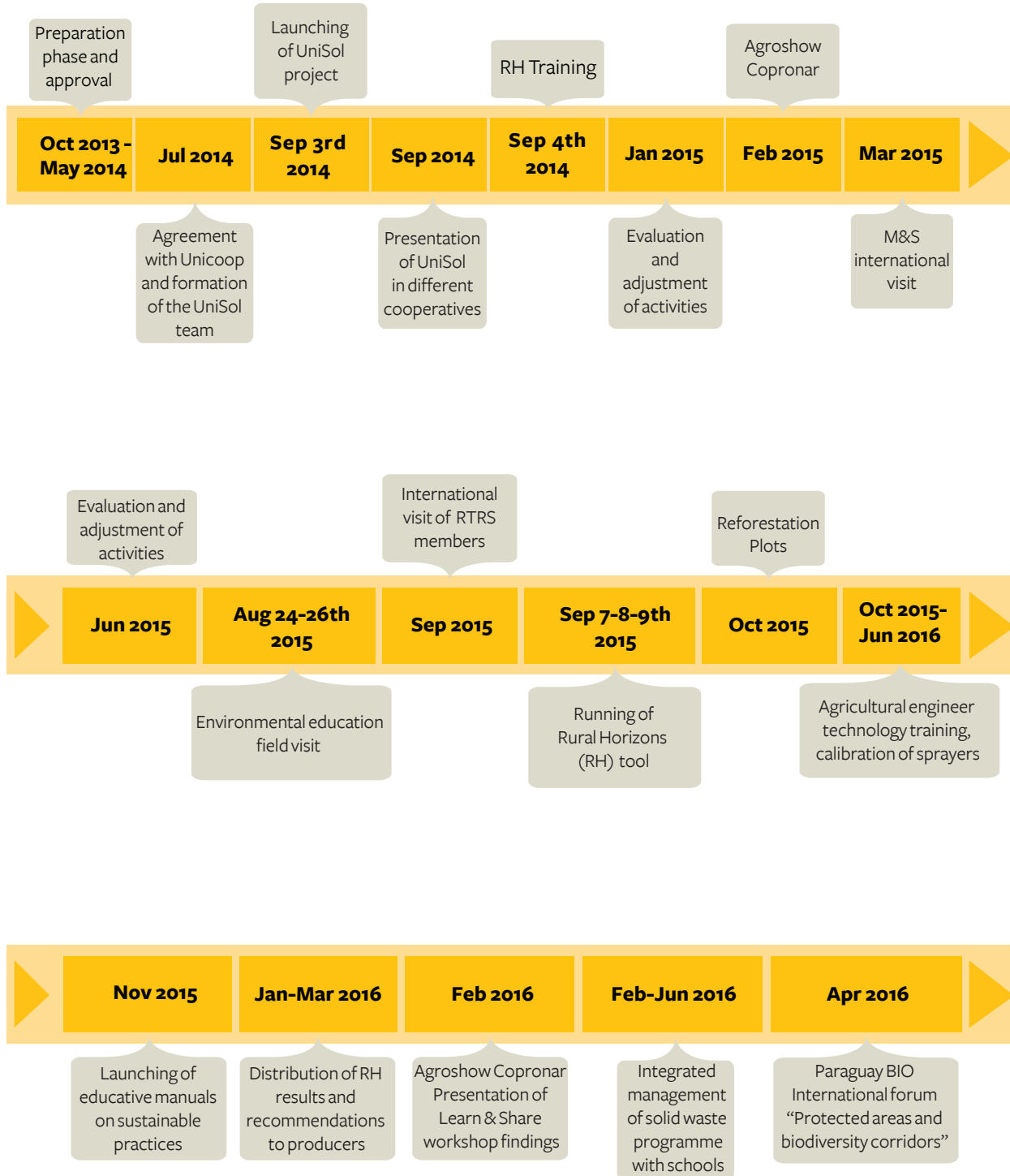
Most of the RTRS certified soy is from large-scale farms. In 2015 in South America, the 139 soy farmers that were RTRS certified had an average area of 4,800 ha. But with the right incentives and support, RTRS certification on small farms is also possible. In India, thousands of smallholders with 1-2 ha certified RTRS with support of Solidaridad. Additionally, in 2013, 163 family farmers in the Paraná state of Brazil were the first family farmers in South America to certify. This certification was the result of a 2009 – 2013 project together with farmers' cooperative COOPAFI and (organic) trader GEBANA, supported by dairy companies FrieslandCampina and ARLA, among others. The conclusion of the project was that RTRS certification is doable for smallholders, but more difficult and costly than for large producers, among others because of the amount of administrative requirements and needed guidance and training, among other factors.

One conclusion that Solidaridad drew from the project was that the RTRS standard may have more value as a clear benchmark or horizon. For family farmers, it might be more efficient to initially focus on supporting a continuous improvement mindset. This is exactly the approach used by UNICOOP in the Paraguayan UniSol project.



UniSol  
Agricultura Sustentable

## Project Timeline 2014-2016



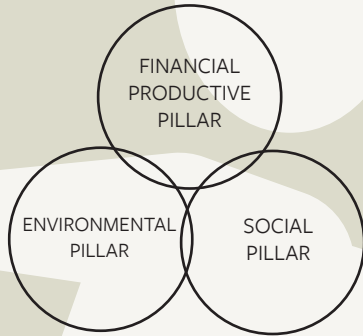
Trainings throughout the project

>> THIS BOOKLET PROVIDES SOME BACKGROUND ON SOY PRODUCTION IN PARAGUAY, ON THE ROLE OF SMALL PRODUCERS AND ON RESULTS OF THE PROJECTS AND HOW THIS PROGRESS WAS MADE.

# HOW PROGRESS WAS MADE

## 1. RURAL HORIZONS METHODOLOGY

RURAL HORIZONS IS AN EXPERT SYSTEM DEVELOPED BY SOLIDARIDAD TO SUPPORT CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION



### JOINT DESIGN

- use the law and RTRS standard as benchmark
- select progress indicators in accordance to context and organization's needs
- avoid jargon to be inclusive (many producers have little schooling)
- make sure questions don't overlap or contradict

BY MEANS OF A SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE THE PRODUCER MAKES A QUICK SCAN OF HIS PRODUCTION SYSTEM.

BUT ASSESSING PRACTICES IS FREQUENTLY PERCEIVED AS A CONTROL SITUATION AND PRODUCERS FEAR SHOWING THEIR LEGAL INCOMPLIANCES.

### VOLUNTARY SELF-ASSESSMENT

- ensure producers results are CONFIDENTIAL. Self-assessments create trust.
- create a relaxed environment
- offer support while answering

THE PRODUCER RECEIVES A TAILORED-MADE ROADMAP ALONG WITH A SET OF RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO IMPROVE PRACTICES.

GROUP BENCHMARKS ALLOW FARMER ASSOCIATIONS AND VALUE CHAIN PARTNERS TO IDENTIFY CHALLENGES PER GROUP OF PRODUCERS OR REGION.

### PLANNING THE WAY TO SELF-IMPROVEMENT

**491**

INDIVIDUAL REPORTS

SHOWS CHALLENGES AND PROVIDES RECOMMENDATIONS

**11**

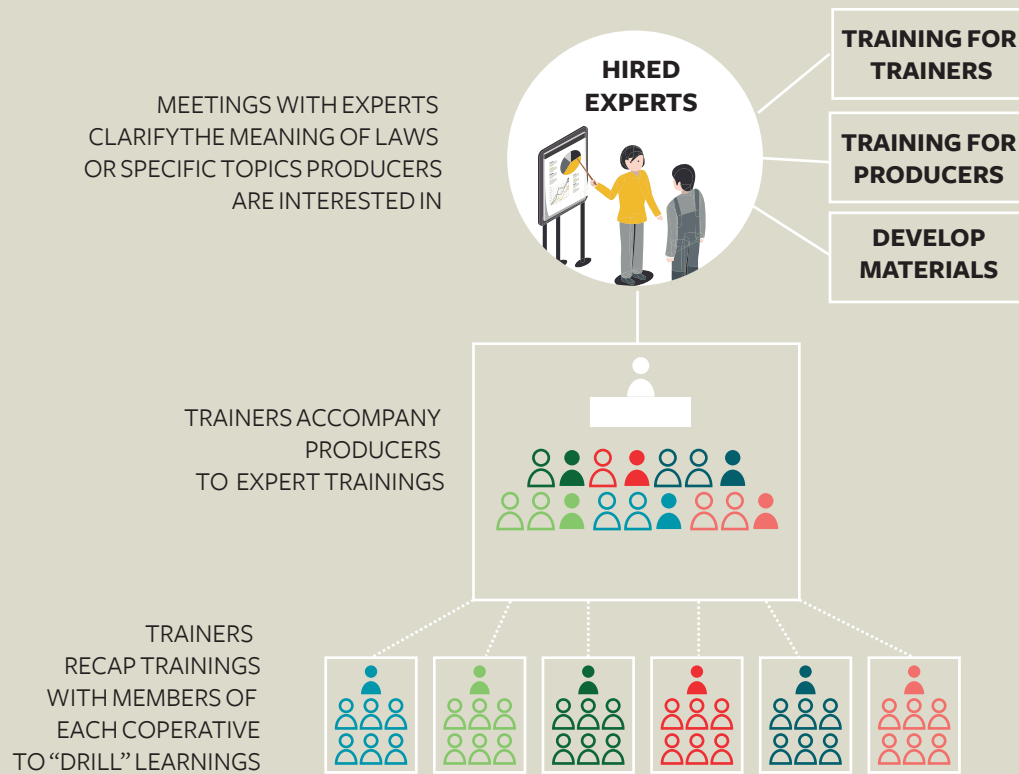
GROUP/ COOPERATIVE REPORTS

PROVIDE A BASELINE TO PLAN IMPROVEMENTS AND TRAININGS WITHIN COOPERATIVES

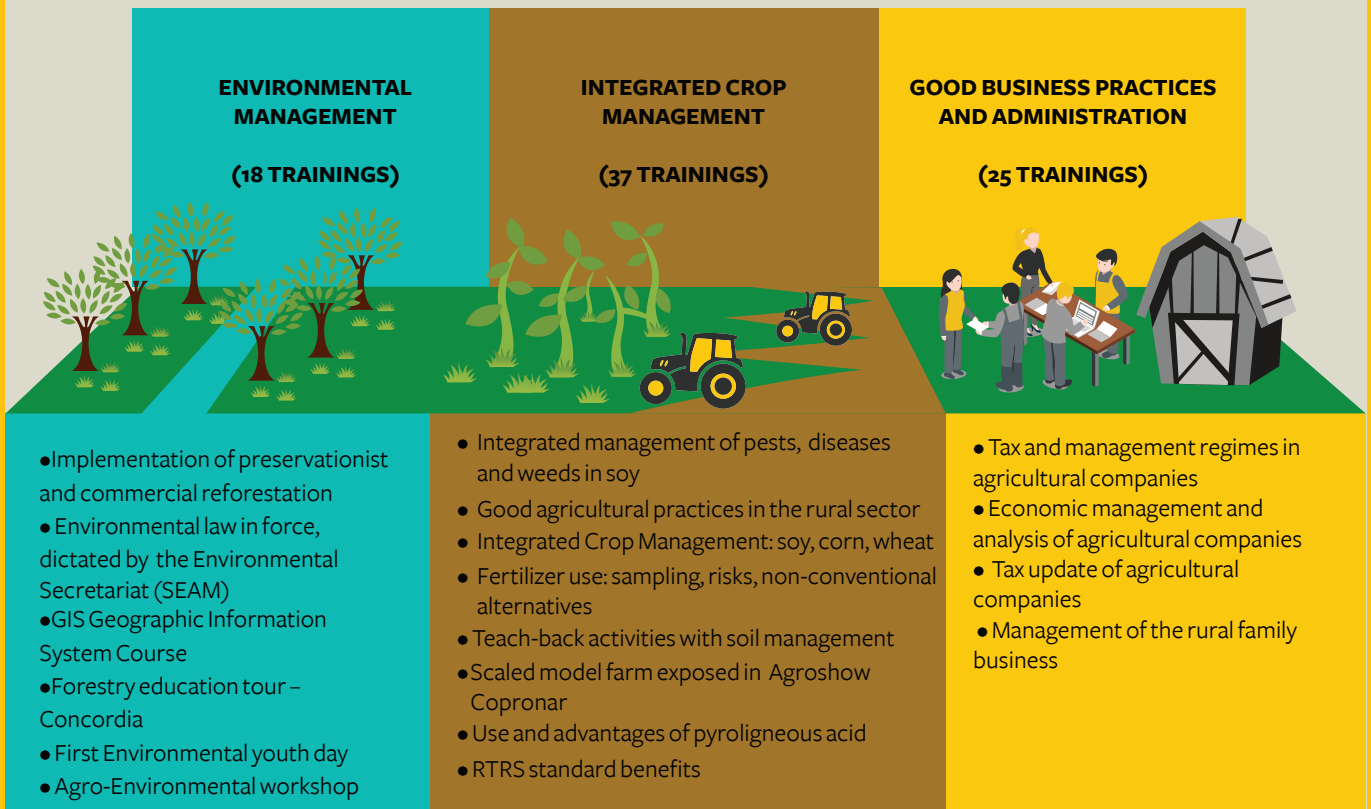
**WHERE WE STAND**



## 2. CASCADE MODEL:



### 2.1. OFFERED TRAININGS



# 3. ENVIRONMENTAL FORESTRY PLAN

## 3.1. CREATING A BASELINE



**FORESTRY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESMENT**  
Legal compliance status  
identification of environmental assets and liabilities.

**COOPERATIVES MAPPING**  
Area of influence with assets and liabilities.



## 3.2. CAPACITY BUILDING



Engaging leaders from each cooperative is key to accelerate decision making, articulate actions and ensure resources for implementation.



Creation of Environmental Forestry departments in each cooperative with specific staff to tend to forestry plots.



Training of Trainers to disseminate good practices and avoid dependence from external consultants.



Link with government bodies (SEAM-INFONA).

## 3.3. COMMERCIAL REFORESTATION MODEL:

### LEGAL COMPLIANCE + INCOME DIVERSIFICATION



**ASSESS DEMAND**



**PEER 2 PEER ENGAGEMENT**



**ENSURE HIGH QUALITY INPUTS**



**LEARN BY DOING**

# MAIN AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT



SOIL CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT



INTEGRATED CROP MANAGEMENT



ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT



FARM MANAGEMENT AND GOOD BUSINESS PRACTICES

# LEARNING AND TESTING (OUTPUTS)

**80** TRAININGS  
(in all areas)

**5** MANUALS  
(for all areas)  
**7** PRINTED BROCHURES

**8** FIELD TESTS  
(on soil management)

# RESULTS

## INSTALLED CAPACITY

**2,658**  
FARMERS  
TRAINED



**100**  
TECHNICIANS  
AND ACCOUNTANTS  
TRAINED



## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

**397**  
REFORESTED  
HECTARES  
WITH



**29,345**  
NATIVE TREES

**16**

WATER QUALITY  
ANALYSIS  
(negative for  
glyphosat  
pollution)



## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

**200**  
YOUNG  
COOPERATIVE  
MEMBERS AT  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
DAY



**INTEGRATED  
MANAGEMENT  
OF SOLID WASTE  
PROGRAM WITH  
SCHOOLS**



# TESTIMONIALS



“We have been wanting to work in this area for a few years now, and we finally had the opportunity. The objective is that producers keep producing in better conditions. In order to achieve sustainable agriculture, it is necessary to plan strategically for the medium and long term”.

SIMONA CAVAZUTTI, UNICOOP PRESIDENT



“We’ve had an Environmental Committee experience at a national level before, but it did not work because there was no commitment from the cooperatives and its creation was forced. On the other hand, UNISOL’s Environmental Committee achieved what the national one did not in the past five years, thanks to smooth communication and active participation between its members”.

RAQUEL CÁCERES, UNI SOL ENVIRONMENTAL-FORESTRY COMPONENT LEADER



“We learned about the use of the nozzles. We received tips for a proper pesticides application, and how to maintain filters. We also learned about the importance of using adjuvants for better implementation of products in different crops”.

RAFAEL HOLZBACH, PINDO COOPERATIVE, PRODUCER



“I have adopted a technique taught in the Pest Management course to monitor caterpillars. By identifying caterpillars early, we can decrease the use of agrochemicals”.

JOSÉ ZUFF, COOPERATIVA RAUL PEÑA, PRODUCER



“Our objective as technicians was to orientate producers towards sustainability and encourage them to apply better management practices. The key was not to force them but to suggest them changes about Best Management Practices”.

CARLA KOLLING, COOPERATIVA RAUL PEÑA, TECHNICIAN



“Everything that comes regarding knowledge, be it technical or administrative, is welcome; any information that helps us as producers. I am doing soil management, something that was not part of our culture and it is a habit I incorporated. Two years ago, I started doing limestone management and had surprising results. One of my worst plots became one of the best. We are also working on environmental management, which helped us build awareness among our partners”.

ATILIO GÓMEZ, COOPERATIVA YGUAZÚ, PRODUCER



“We believe this project in Paraguay is a very good example of collaboration. We work with the same soy producers, and the cooperatives representing them are deeply involved in spreading the project. Solidaridad has provided counseling and technical assistance, and Marks & Spencer offers a message to the market and funds to help the project reach its objectives. We believe more of these types of projects and associations are needed so that global issues can be approached at a local level”.

FIONA WHEATLEY, PLAN A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, MARKS & SPENCER.



“During the course, I was able to identify shortcomings on my spraying equipment and the importance of observing how different nozzles behave with the adjuvants used, to ensure an efficient application”.

LEANDRO HOSS, PINDO COOPERATIVE, PRODUCER.



“Through the trainings, I could feel the engagement of UNISOL project with producers. I was very interested in learning, because we have little information available on how to regulate our sprayer and improve our applications. Through the workshop I was able to gain practical experience on these tasks”.

ALVARO CARLESCO, UNIÓN CURUPAYTY COOPERATIVE PRODUCER



“I think the project was a model for the whole community. Once they see their neighbor is applying Best Management Practices and obtaining benefits, they will join the project. It is a dynamic constructive process. Friends and colleagues constantly ask me about the project and I try to explain it helps the producers to increase sustainable production and manage natural resources”.

NILMAR JOSE SCHORR, COOPERATIVA NARANJITO PRODUCER





“The project length was quite short, so it was very challenging to impact at a field level. Nevertheless, we took advantage of the opportunity and resources available to train technicians so they can then transmit their knowledge to producers at a field level through workshops and personal interviews and visits”.

MICHAEL CRISTAM, COOPERATIVA NARANJITO, TECHNICIAN



“The associated producers have the intention of complying with the law. They only need support and someone who shows them the way. When the producer adopts good agricultural practices, there is improvement in productivity, savings in pesticide use and fertilizer application, and improvement on land use. When adopting the practices promoted by UniSol, an almost immediate increase in productivity is generated”.

GUSTAVO RUÍZ DÍAZ, SOLIDARIDAD COUNTRY MANAGER



“I’m very impressed, everything that was learnt in here was new. The awareness that the project has created here was a very important work. The parents started with deforestation and their children are reforestation. I think the Paraguayans have a lot to be proud about”.

NIENKE SLEURINK, IDH PROGRAMME OFFICER



“The Agroshow model farm was a useful tool to raise awareness amongst producers, general public and local authorities that visited the Agroshow. It was a demonstration of our efforts as producers to protect the environment. The subjects highlighted were waterways protection, crop rotation, reforestation of riparian areas and legal environmental compliance in order to achieve a sustainable production”.

DARCI BARTOLOSO, COOPERATIVA COPRONAR PRESIDENT

## CONCLUDING REMARKS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The UNISOL Sustainable Agriculture project was a pioneer in promoting sustainability in the Paraguayan soy sector at a larger scale, certainly among soy family farmers. As UNICOOP president Simona Cavazutti said: “finally we had the opportunity”.

The result of entering this new area was overcoming mistrust. Working on real commitment from soy producers turned out to be a challenging task. In the first sessions, only around 15% of invited members participated in meetings. But farmers’ interest and level of participation increased over time.

Working with the “seeing is believing” approach, like through visits to other farmers that effectively apply Good Agricultural Practices or visiting reforestation parcels, turned out to have good results. After seeing the first positive results, more farmers joined the project. Visualization of benefits has been important in many project activities.

At the start of the project quantitative targets were set. As technician Michael Cristam of cooperative Naranjito indicates in his testimonial: “it is challenging to really measure concrete impacts in terms of less pesticide use or improved soil quality in such a short period”. One concrete target was to train a total of 2,400 farmers. At the end of the project as much 2,658 farmers at around 150,000 ha, had been trained on improved sustainability practices. This target was clearly met. And around 100 technicians that reach out to these farmers. In terms of environmental conservation, 397 ha of land have been reforested with native and exotic species.

Perhaps the most influential impact of the project will have been on changing mindsets of farmers’ families and their surroundings.

Promoting legal compliance has been a challenge since the beginning of the programme. As indicated, Paraguay does not really have a culture of legal compliance. One reason is that laws are complicated and constantly change. The programme resulted in better communication between farmers and farmers organizations on one side and government departments, such as the Environment Secretariat (SEAM) and the National Forestry Institute (INFONA) on the other side. This improved communication and facilitated better understanding among farmers of legal requirements.

Some of the critical success factors were:

*A. Commitment of the leadership of UNICOOP and the member cooperatives.*

The leadership of UNICOOP really saw promoting sustainability as an imperative for the long-term future of soy farming in Paraguay. The creation of the UNICOOP Environmental Committee was also an important step as this formed a team of sustainability ambassadors within the organization.

*B. Assignment of staff with exclusive dedication to environmental topics of the cooperatives.*





Through the project the cooperatives managed to hire specialized technicians with knowledge about maintenance and control of reforestation parcels or pesticide use. Several producers mentioned this as an important factor, improving the way the cooperatives work.

*C. The voluntary character working through persuasion or showing advantages.*

The basic premise of the project was to create a peer group of farmers and farmers' cooperatives that could act as "sustainability ambassadors" or in other words: to create a culture of accountability. In the project, a tool developed by Solidaridad in Brazil, Rural Horizons, was introduced to support continuous improvement. With the use of Rural Horizons producers evaluate themselves and discover what actions they can undertake to improve productivity and sustainability.

Convincing farmers to reforest was really a challenge, where a number of obstacles had to be addressed, such as lack of financial incentives, availability of inputs including quality seedlings. To tackle these obstacles, the project strengthened the work of the most experienced cooperative in this field.

One additional highlight was the participation and involvement of future generations, as key players, in the process. For instance, on World Youth Day in September 2015, cooperative Naranjal organized a youth day with 200

participants to raise awareness of environmental issues. Additionally, young cooperative member organized an Integrated Management of Solid Waste programme with schools.

Overall, the project participants did not aim to certify under the standard of the Round Table on Responsible Soy (RTRS). Some of the more advanced farmers or farmers' cooperative would no doubt be able to certify, but the RTRS standard was primarily used as a reference for improvement. The RTRS standard was used as reference for improvement. Promoting certification was not an aim as such, but UniSol is hopeful that the more advanced cooperatives and farmers would be able to certify in the future. As such the project would contribute towards smallholder inclusion in RTRS.

Does this mean that the work within or for UNICOOP is done? Not really. There's more work to do with the participating farmers. For instance to work on ecosystem preservation through farm diversification, on better water protection or erosion prevention or more training on Occupational Health and Safety for workers.

What the experience in Paraguay shows is that with appropriate support, important steps can be made in promoting sustainability of soy production, also on smaller family farms. Solidaridad hopes that this leaflet inspires others inside or outside Paraguay to replicate this approach or at least learn from it for their own work.



## EPILOGUE: A WORD FROM MARKS & SPENCER



**LOUISE NICHOLLS**

CORPORATE HEAD OF HUMAN RIGHTS,  
FOOD SUSTAINABILITY (PLAN A) AND  
FOOD PACKAGING, MARKS & SPENCER

In 2007 M&S launched Plan A with the ultimate goal of becoming the world's most sustainable major retailer. By sourcing responsibly, reducing waste and helping communities, Marks & Spencer believes it is possible to help protect the planet. However we recognise we can't achieve success alone and strong partnerships are at the heart of M&S approach. We have a long heritage of linking with partners to share knowledge, develop solutions and support causes that our customers and employees care about, and to ensure a sustainable supply of the raw materials we need to run our business and make our products.

Soy is one of the more challenging commodities for Marks & Spencer and our suppliers. It is a key source of protein for animal feed, and despite over a decade of industry efforts and some notable success stories, soy continues to contribute to deforestation in South America, albeit at a dramatically lower rate than before. Our goal is to ensure zero deforestation from the use of soy in the production of M&S products by 2020.

M&S soy supply chain is complex. We don't own farms or factories. Most of the soy used by M&S suppliers is used for animal feed and is sourced by large traders on a global market. And in comparison to many others in our industry we are also a relatively low user of globally traded soy.

To achieve the change that is needed M&S works in collaboration with industry, civil society and producers. We provide a mix of market insights, technical expertise and funding to catalyse the widespread transformation that needs to happen to help us achieve our goal. We are working with initiatives like the Round Table on Responsible Soy (RTRS) and the Amazon Soy Moratorium to tackle the causes of deforestation and promote the benefits of more sustainable soy. We have made major investments in a broad range of

programmes to address the multiple causes of deforestation and support the development of sustainable, deforestation-free soy

<https://corporate.marksandspencer.com/plan-a/our-approach/food-and-household/product-standards/raw-materials-commodities-and-ingredients/soy>

We believe that small producers should be supported to make their production practices more sustainable, which is why in 2013 we decided to participate in this smallholder soy program in Paraguay. The project aimed to work with a major farmers cooperative, UNICOOP, to help them address obstacles to sustainable production and to showcase the benefits of these changes.

We are proud to have partnered with Solidaridad, IDH & Unicoop on this project reaching over 2600 farmers in Paraguay. It's been an excellent example of the sort of partnerships needed in the future to face our global challenges.

Every member of the partnership has played their part – we at M&S would like to thank Solidaridad for their role in professionally project managing the programme, IDH the Sustainable Trade Initiative for their contribution in initiating and supporting the project. Most importantly thanks go to UNICOOP for their leadership and for bringing to life these inspiring steps towards more sustainable soy production. We believe that these farmers in East Paraguay are role models with the potential to inspire farmers in other countries to appreciate the economic, social and environmental benefits of achieving an optimum balance between productive agriculture and a healthy landscape.

## **Solidaridad**

't Goylaan 15  
3525 AA Utrecht  
The Netherlands  
+31 (0) 30 272 0313

## **Solidaridad Paraguay**

Guido Spano 2676 , Asunción  
+595 21 664 498  
infoparaguay@solidaridadnetwork.org

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