

Sustainable Farm Plans as a contribution to regional development.

The project AmPaz – *Ambiente y Paz* (as in Environment and Peace in Spanish) was implemented from February 2018 to April 2021 in Colombia’s post-conflict regions. The aim of the project was to ensure that territorial planning and development measures consider the protection and sustainable use of natural resources as well as the needs of the population most affected by the conflict.

AmPaz worked with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development -MinAmbiente- and the Territorial Renewal Agency -ART- in the municipalities of Albania, Curillo and Valparaíso in the department Caquetá and in Puerto Lleras, Puerto Rico and Puerto Concordia in the department Meta.

The project was implemented in 4 strategic components: 1) Territorial Planning, 2) Green Business Models, 3) Green Financing and 4) Capacity Building.

Component 2 – Green Business Models, ensured that the productive activity led by associations was well articulated with guidelines set forth in the Land Use Planning Schemes (EOT – *Esquemas de Ordenamiento Territorial*¹). The approach considered market dynamics and the sustainable use of biodiversity and forest resources, laid the foundations of trade relations and expanded business opportunities with customers. Therefore, the project strengthened actors along the value chains of cacao, rubber, and livestock products, which are characteristic for the region.

AmPaz worked at three levels: 1. the family agricultural unit, 2. producer associations and 3. territorial management (Figure 1).

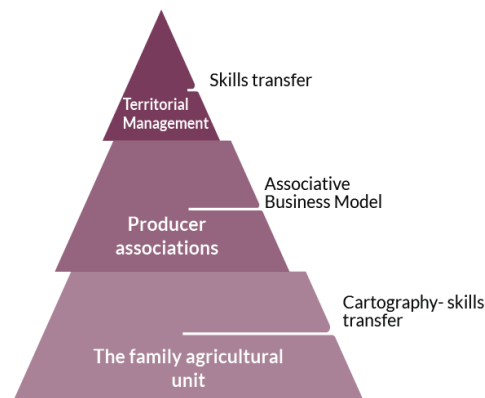


Figure 1. Chain approach

¹ A spatial planning tool to ensure a comprehensive development of the municipality under the principles of equity, sustainability, and competitiveness, whose elaboration was supported by the project’s component 1

Implementing green businesses

The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development has been promoting the creation of so-called Green Businesses, that is, companies that offer goods and services that generate positive environmental and social impacts. Against this background the possibility arose to involve the associations supported by AmPaz in the Ministry's `trust assessment` process. To achieve the label of a Green Business, products and services must comply with at least 50% of the Ministry's sustainability criteria. Thus, seven producer associations structured their business models using the CANVAS methodology with a focus on sustainability. Associated producers worked on strategic planning for organizational development and joined a land planning process with actions that promote the protection of natural resources.

Sustainable Farm Plan

Within the land planning activities, the so-called Sustainable Farm Plan (*Plan Finca Sostenible*- PFS) was implemented (Figure 2). The tool is used at farm level by producer families for economic, social, and environmental planning of their productive units or farms. It enabled the identification of the current state of the farm and to project, in an orderly and coherent manner, a set of improvement activities that would have an impact on increasing or stabilizing family income, on the social protection of the family and on the conservation of natural resources on the farmland, thus enhancing opportunities for well-being.

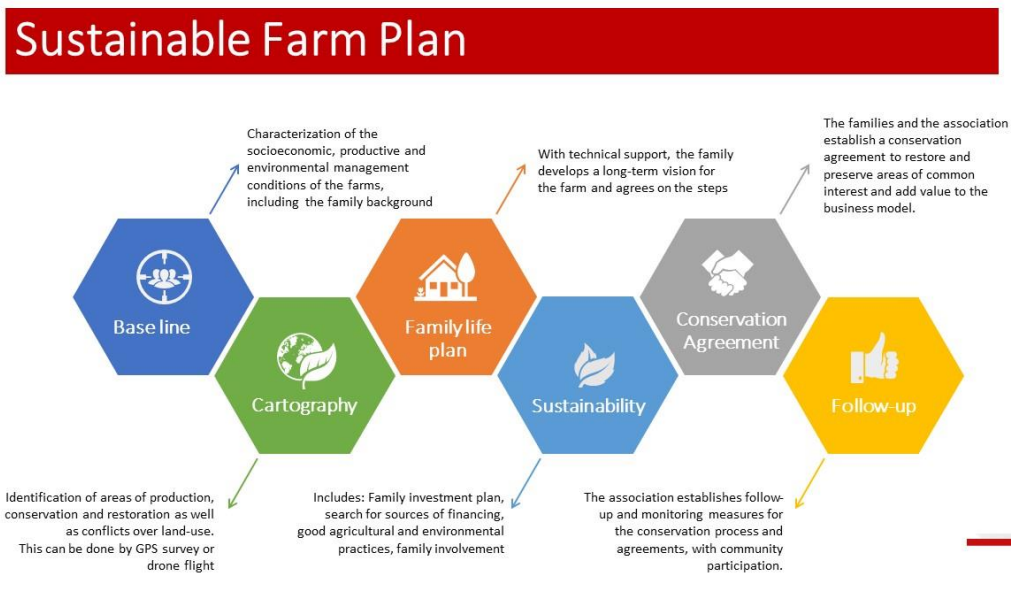


Figure 2. Steps for the Sustainable Farm Plan

The PFS also helped the associations to strengthen their activities and commercial operations by orienting their commercial strategy towards businesses that integrate elements of environmental sustainability, based on the conservation and/or restoration decisions and the application of good sustainable practices of the associated families.

Benefits for families with a Sustainable Farm Plan

- Integration of the family to envision a better future.
- Appreciation of the farm as the basis of the family life project.
- Strengthen rurality as a way of life for children and young people.
- Greater knowledge of the costs of their economic activity.
- Recognition of the advantages of applying Good Agricultural Practices and Good Livestock Practices.
- Identification of natural resources on the farmland and their vulnerability.
- Establishment of environmental care areas within the farm.
- Identification of opportunities to improve production. An action plan to develop the farm as an environmental and productive unit.
- Knowledge regarding the resources required to implement the action plan.
- A management tool before public or private entities.
- Establishment of family savings plans to support the integral development of the farm.

Innovation in the PFS

For the first phase of the PFS, drone flights were used for the cartographic survey, obtaining information on land cover in real time and with a high level of detail (Figure 3). This information was cross-checked with the environmental determinants defined by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the Regional Autonomous Corporation -CAR- (Figure 4), as well as with information on potential land use defined by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Rural Agricultural Planning Unit -UPRA- (Figure 5).



Figure 3. Coverage with drone photography



Figure 4. Environmental determinants



Figure 5. Environmental determinants

In this exercise, each family defined necessities for conservation and restoration and after awareness-raising activities were carried out between families and the associations, the conservation and/or restoration agreements were established.

Conservation and/or restoration agreements

As a result of 122 land planning processes, applying the Sustainable Farm Plan methodology and establishing conservation and restoration agreements, 3.096 hectares of farmland are managed sustainably, and 870 hectares of forest are under conservation. The elaboration of these agreements not only resulted in higher awareness towards the importance of nature and ecosystem services amongst the farmers and their families. Also, the prospect of being able to offer products with a positive environmental impact, leads to commercial advantages since it attracts the attention of buyers interested in products that protect natural resources and contribute to the conservation and/or sustainable management of forests.

Support measures

AmPaz supported the implementation of the association's action plans within their business models. An example would be the association of female milk producers in the municipality of Albania - Asmujima, which managed to improve their production processes, establish business strategies, strengthen leadership and female empowerment, and comply with health regulations.

At the level of family agricultural units, the development of a 'life plan', built based on the PFS, was supported. The focus lay on improving productive infrastructure to increase the quality of products, for example the producers obtained material and the capacities for the construction of dryers and fermenters to improve the quality of the cocoa bean (Image 1).



Image 1. Cocoa dryer built by the producer family

Contributions to the sustainability of the process.

Through the implementation of their business models, the associations were able to increase their sales by 50% - 150%, with incentives for the quality of their products; 6 associations passed the trust assessment for Green Business Models, impacting 278 families linked to the productive and commercial process. This process allowed for coordination with other GIZ projects such as INCAS

Global+ and ProBosques, as well as with other cooperation entities such as Socodevi and Swisscontact.

The National Chocolate Company is currently purchasing cocoa beans with economic recognition for the quality of the beans in accordance with the Colombian Technical Standard for the purchase of cocoa beans, under quality parameters - NTC1252. The quality of the cocoa bean continues to be promoted through regional contests such as 'Cacao de Oro', which are including sustainability standards and green business in the award process.

Finally, MinAmbiente, in its processes of implementing associative Green Businesses, is promoting the Sustainable Farm Plan as a pillar for the creation of value and the conservation and/or restoration of forests.