



C-lever.org
Collaborative leverage towards inclusive development

FINAL EVALUATION BOS+ DGD Program 2017-2021

“Bos & Ontwikkeling”

GENERAL REPORT

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First draft

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1. Executive summary

The scope of this evaluation is the final evaluation of the DGD MYP 2017-2021 of BOS+. In total 13 outcomes have been evaluated in 7 countries: Belgium, Bolivia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Peru, Tanzania and Uganda.

In the framework of this final evaluation, a specific focus was on the efficiency and the impact of the intervention so that BOS+ can be held accountable for its achievement vis-à-vis the donor. This final evaluation is also a learning opportunity for BOS+ and its partners.

For all country Program evaluations of the Tropics Section, the evaluation team evaluated the country Programs through the lens of a common analytical framework. The evaluation team adapted the analytical framework of Romero et. Al.¹ on conservation and development to align it with BOS+'s intervention strategy and theory of change. All data collection tools were developed based on this analytical framework and were adapted by each country evaluator to the specific context of the country under evaluation.

The OECD-DAC criteria were assessed for each of the country programs using the following scoring system.

				
	Full grown	Continued growth	Initial stage	Seeds
Performancescores	A - very good	B - Good	C - Problems	D - shortcomings

For the purpose of this general report we provide an overview of the country performance for each of the OECD-DAC criteria. It is worth nothing that this overview is illustrative and not comparative. To interpret the scoring we refer to the country evaluation reports that provide context and argumentation that justify the attributed score.

	Africa			Latin-America		
Relevance	Ethiopia	Tanzania	Uganda	Bolivia	Ecuador	Peru
Coherence	Ethiopia	Tanzania	Uganda	Bolivia	Ecuador	Peru
Efficiency	Ethiopia	Tanzania	Uganda	Bolivia	Ecuador	Peru
Effectiveness	Ethiopia	Tanzania	Uganda	Bolivia	Ecuador	Peru
Impact	Ethiopia	Tanzania	Uganda	Bolivia	Ecuador	Peru
Sustainability	Ethiopia	Tanzania	Uganda	Bolivia	Ecuador	Peru

Next to overall conclusions for each of the OECD-DAC criteria that can be distilled from the country evaluations, this general evaluation report also contains a summary of the main overarching recommendations to BOS+ (§2), a SWOT analysis highlighting the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and risk associated with the BOS+ program and intervention strategy (§5) and specific recommendations for M&E (§ 6).

¹ Romero, C., S. Athayde, J. E. Collomb, M. DiGiano, M. Schmink, S. Schramski, and L. Seales. 2012. Conservation and development in Latin America and Southern Africa: setting the stage. Ecology and Society 17(2): 17.

2. Summary of the recommendations

1. A comprehensive **lobbying and advocacy strategy** is needed to rally together relevant agencies (both public and private) to collaborate and pool resources for conservation and agroforestry interventions in the target communities.

A distinction can be made between 3 levels

- The local/regional level
- The national level (legislation)
- The (inter)national level to rally (financial) support

These levels are all fundamental and complementary roles and require a targeted intervention and partnership strategy. While emphasis could be placed on different levels in the intervention countries of BOS+ depending on the context of the country, it is recommended to design an advocacy and lobbying strategy originating at the regional and local level.

Regional and local governments should be influenced so that the voice of rural and indigenous communities is heard and considered (more organically), that the participation of young people in organisations is promoted even more, and that the industries of various products that have a market, but which require greater capacity building throughout their value chain, are promoted. Monitor the advocacy and awareness raising activities of local partners and visualise it in the theory of change.

The evaluation team recognizes that integrating a lobbying and advocacy strategy into the program requires BOS+ to either increase funding or shift limited resources away from interventions in the field. To make this decision for each of the intervention countries, it is recommended to start with a country specific analysis of opportunities for advocacy (e.g. pooling resources with other actors in the country, capacity and ambitions of existing partners for lobbying,...).

2. Develop and strengthen **partnerships and synergies** that complement each other and ensure harmonised continuity. This is critical to scale up and to create impact on the environment and the community. However, it is essential that the contributions of different actors are delineated.
3. Provide greater support to research in areas linked to the value chains that the program works on. Stimulate **research and knowledge sharing** activities among university partners to generate more knowledge about the context. Develop research proposals and projects on cocoa, bamboo, and other relevant species, with the aim of attracting the attention of international technical cooperation agencies and private companies to complement the program's funding in other areas of the production chain. Associate academic research, ancestral knowledge for the protection and sustainable use of natural resources.
4. A sustainability strategy ought to be part of the design of the intervention and embedded in the **capacity development** activities. Structurally analyse and invest in the organisational development of the organisation itself and local partners. It is important that BOS+ facilitates mutual exchange and seeks complementarities for this capacity development. Building the capacity of local leaders to lobby and advocate for additional support for environment related interventions is critical for deepening and broadening the impact.
5. Importance of the integration of **livelihoods strategies** (poultry, honey, fodder, beekeeping ...) in a holistic approach to environmental conservation. Short term (economic benefits) can help to convince communities to participate in conservation activities from which the results will only be visible in the medium to long term.

6. It is essential to demonstrate the relevance and impact of activities by improving the **monitoring system** within the program, but also to encourage internal monitoring practices among local partners. This will help them in a corporatisation strategy and in accessing other resources. With BOS+, a learning trajectory on exchange between partners can be organised in this regard.

7. Leave no one behind.

- a. More actively identify and remove barriers for both men and women to participate in activities for all outcomes, and specifically target young people.
- b. Greater impetus should be given to create basic capacities in young people between the ages of 12 and 18, in relation to the concrete needs of their families to produce goods and services that emerge from the protection of the forest. This implies building learning step by step from observation, experimentation, analysis, comparison, socialisation and practical use of knowledge in a learning-by-doing logic. Involve local structures, such as the "community gender leader" (gender chief), in creating a strategy for this.
- c. Adopt a gender and intercultural approach to capacity development
- d. The consolidation of appropriate spaces for the effective participation of women and young people
- e. Develop a strategy that targets local people who have less capacity to use electronic and social media to access development related information.

8. Recruiting locally

Continue to recruit local people and to engage with local institutions in the intervention zones.

- a. Working with and recruiting members from the communities itself contributes efficiently and effectively to the impact of the program. Having better knowledge of the context and customs, facilitates the transfer of knowledge. In addition, during crises such as Covid-19 and national strikes they remain present in the field and thus make it possible to avoid interruption in following up & monitoring the activities.

3. Introduction

3.1 Scope and objective of the evaluation

The objective of this final evaluation is to assess the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the BOS+ program 2017-2021.

The scope of this evaluation is the final evaluation of the DGD MYP 2017-2021 of BOS+. In total 13 outcomes have been evaluated in 7 countries: Belgium, Bolivia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Peru, Tanzania and Uganda.

In the framework of this final evaluation, a specific focus was on **the efficiency and the impact** of the intervention so that BOS+ can be held accountable for its achievement vis-à-vis the donor. This final evaluation is also a learning opportunity for BOS+ and its partners. The evaluation questions in the table below have been addressed during this evaluation.

DAC Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Relevance	Do the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries' needs, and did they continue to do so when circumstances changed?
Coherence	To what extent is the Belgian program coherent with the specific country programs?
Effectiveness	To what extent and how did Bos+ achieve its objectives and results?
Focus area: Efficiency	To what extent did the interventions deliver results in an economic (funds, expertise, resources, time) and timely (intended timeframe) way? How did our partners change their approach due to COVID-19? Which lessons can we learn from COVID-19 and the restrictions it resulted in, in function of the capacity building and efficiency of the program?
Focus area: Impact	How did/will the interventions generate change (positive or negative, direct or indirect) on communal, regional or national level? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Social impact</i>: focus on women and youngsters? • <i>Ecological impact</i>: focus on forest and tree ecosystems • <i>Economic impact</i>: focus on the economic development and well-being of the communities involved. Were there unintended or higher-level effects in our program that were not foreseen? Were there unintended or higher-level effects in our program that were not foreseen?
Sustainability	To what extent will the benefits of the intervention last? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Financial sustainability</i>: are the beneficiaries at the end of the program capable of continuing the program independently? • <i>Social sustainability</i>: in what way do the beneficiaries feel responsibility and ownership for the intervention and continuity and effects of the program? • <i>Technical sustainability</i>: do the beneficiaries, beneficiary organizations and partner organizations, at the end of the program have enough capacity and skills to guarantee continued results?

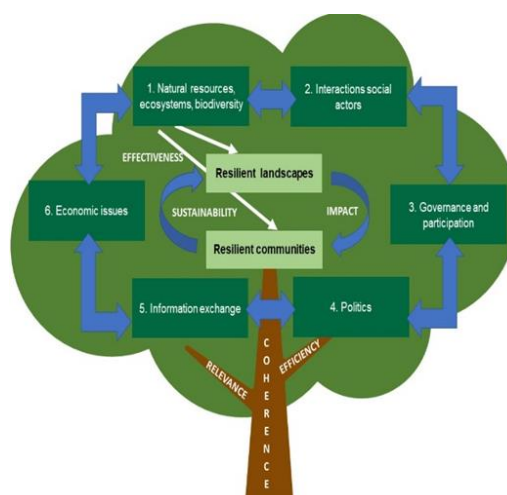
3.2 Analytical framework

For all country Program evaluations of the Tropics Section, the evaluation team evaluated the country Programs through the lens of a common analytical framework. The evaluation team adapted the analytical framework of Romero et. Al.² on conservation and development to align it with BOS+'s intervention strategy and theory of change.

The analytical framework analyses the balance between development and conservation through seven (7) clusters: a central cluster, and six (6) contributing clusters. The central cluster is an outcome of the interactions of the six other clusters. The central cluster converges with the envisioned impact of the BOS+ Programs, this means that it is harder to directly analyse in the field, but it can be assessed based on the emerging dynamics of the other six clusters.

Rather than referring to 'conservation' and 'development' as is the case in the Romero conceptual framework, C-lever.org applies a different terminology that more closely aligns with the terminology used by BOS+. For the central cluster this means specifically that C-lever.org refers to the concept of 'resilient landscapes' and 'resilient communities'.

Figure 1. Analytical framework used for BOS+ evaluation



While the analytical framework mainly aims to translate the balance between development and conservation, it provided valuable data to assess the performance of BOS+ country programs to the DAC criteria.

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 Principles of the evaluation

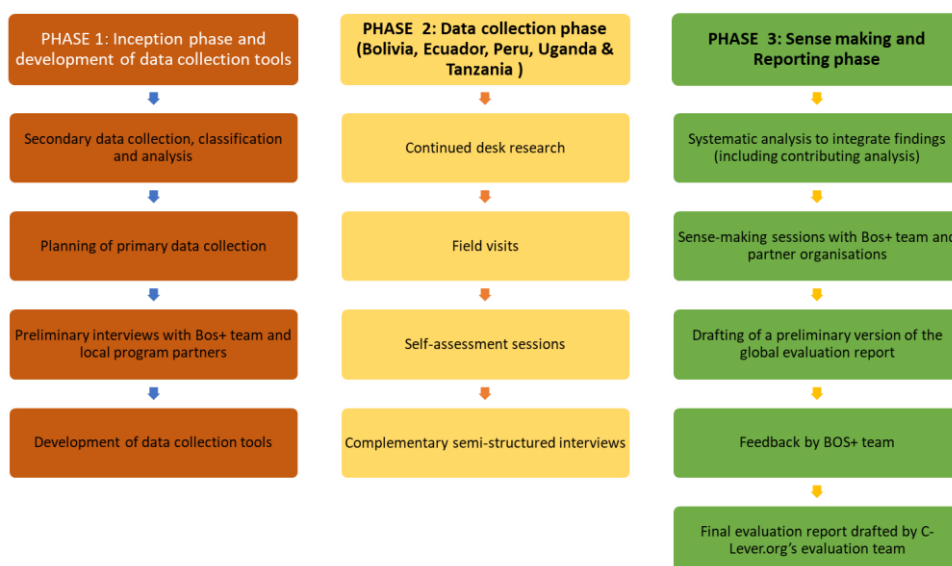
C-lever.org.org applied several guiding principles in its evaluation methods: Co-construction of the evaluation, the Do no Harm principle, quality assurance and application of a rights based and a gender mainstreaming approach.

² Romero, C., S. Athayde, J. E. Collomb, M. DiGiano, M. Schmink, S. Schramski, and L. Seales. 2012. Conservation and development in Latin America and Southern Africa: setting the stage. *Ecology and Society* 17(2): 17.

1. **Co-construction of the evaluation:** the evaluation was constructed as a participatory process involving the evaluation team, BOS+ and its partners from the inception phase to the reporting phase.
2. **Ethical considerations and “Do no Harm” approach:** Ethical research is underpinned by the principles of justice, beneficence, and non-maleficence, essentially seeking to ensure that the evaluation brings about benefit and does no harm to the participants. C-lever.org abided by these ethical principles in the evaluation process. Informed consent was sought, and care taken to ensure that none of the data collection techniques infringed on the psycho-social health of the participants. Confidentiality and anonymity of all respondents was ensured throughout the evaluation process.
3. **Quality assurance & peer-review:** Quality assurance was implemented for each step of the evaluation process. The team strategically guided and coached the work of each other and reviewed the results of their work; while also ensuring peer reviews of each other’s work.
4. **Rights based approach:** The evaluation team ensured a rights-based approach through every step of the evaluation.
 - Talk about the rights of the target populations rather than the needs, to address the sources of inequalities and not just provide immediate support services to these populations.
 - Emphasise the responsibility of public authorities and the government, who are ultimately responsible for the access to rights of the population, through legislation, public policies, and the support/regulation of other social bodies (family, civil society, etc.).
 - Insist on the fact that the members of the population are holders of rights, and that it is important to accompany them in claiming and realising their rights and in their emancipation from the state or from aid structures. In these regards, it will mean strengthening their role as agents of change.
5. **Gender mainstreaming approach:** the evaluation team adopted a gender mainstreaming approach to the evaluation, mainstreaming the gender perspective in all aspects of the program evaluations. To that extent, C-lever.org paid attention to gender perspectives, making them visible and showing the links between gender concerns and achievements of the program.

3.3.2 Approach

In this section we present the evaluation approach that was applied for each of the country program evaluations. The action plan below depicts the 3 phases of the evaluation process and the subsequent activities that have been conducted for each phase. Due to context-specific considerations, the evaluation process in Ethiopia and Peru deviated to some extent from the general evaluation process as presented below.



PHASE 1 - Inception phase and development of data collection tools

The inception phase took place in October 2021. Throughout this phase, the evaluation team together with the PME responsible of BOS+ and the project and country managers co-constructed the evaluation plan and methodology. **All data collection tools were developed based on this analytical framework (§3.2) and were adapted by each country evaluator to the specific context of the country under evaluation.** During the inception phase, the evaluation team explored available documents and data per country and organised preparatory interviews with key persons for each country in their respective region. At the end of the inception phase, the inception report and the required data collection tools were presented to the BOS+ team for feedback. The inception report was finalised after integration of the comments.

PHASE 2 - Data collection

Data collection has been carried out through:

- a) A self-evaluation session with BOS+ team members, partner organisations (eventually other stakeholders if relevant). The aim of this self-evaluation is to obtain a structured assessment based on the DAC criteria. This instrument proposes a progressive assessment scale (from "fruitful" to "planted seeds ") for each of the evaluation criteria. These values are based on factual and objective sub-criteria and examples to promote a common understanding of the criteria for all participants in the same session, and between countries.
- b) Semi-structured interviews with partners, beneficiaries, and stakeholders. The objective of the semi-structured interview (SSI) is to collect in-depth information about the program from the point of view of the interviewer. Conducted conversationally with one respondent at a time, the SSI employs a blend of closed- and open-ended questions, often accompanied by follow-up why or how questions.
- c) Specific field visits to observe BOS+ interventions. For the in-country evaluations (Ecuador, Bolivia, Uganda, Tanzania), the evaluators also observed relevant sites during the field missions.

For this purpose 3 data-collection tools were developed and tailored to the country specific context.

- TOOL 1: Self-evaluation instrument (See Annex 2)
- TOOL 2: Semi-directive interview grid (See annex 3)
- TOOL 3: Case study (See annex 4) to deepen the understanding of the change processes to which the BOS+ program has contributed.

All country evaluations have been conducted based on these three (3) tools except for the countries where limitations apply, e.g. Peru (tool 1 only) and Ethiopia (tool 2 only).

PHASE 3 – Sense making and reporting phase

The final phase of the evaluation was the sense making and reporting phase. It ran from January until March 2022. During this phase the data collected in phase 2 has been analysed together with available secondary data. The evaluation team presented a preliminary version of the country reports and global report. BOS+ was invited to provide feedback to the draft reports:

- during a sense-making session with BOS+ team, providing an opportunity to discuss, integrate, disseminate and validate findings and enable joint learning.
- through written feedback on the draft reports.

C-lever.org then integrated all feedback in the final version of the report validated by BOS+.

3.4 Limitations of the evaluation

Sanitary limitations - Covid-19

Measures related to the management of the COVID-19 crisis marginally influenced the execution of the assignment. From the onset, the evaluation team adopted a hybrid approach in which face-to-face working sessions and field visits alternated with online sessions and data-collection.

Security limitations – Ethiopia

Considering the security situation in **Ethiopia** but also in light of the severe danger and risks people in general, and thus also the actors of the intervention (partners, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders) are undergoing, C-lever.org considered that it would not be appropriate to demand their active participation for this evaluation. Therefore, the country evaluation focused mainly on data-collection from the Belgian partners of the intervention in Ethiopia. In addition, C-lever.org believes that the limited budget of the Ethiopia intervention as well as the fact that Ethiopia isn't a Joint Strategic Framework (JSF)-country anymore for the new Multi Year Program of the DGD, are all sufficient arguments to underpin C-lever.org's approach for this evaluation.

Limited time and resources & coherence with the Mid-term review (MTR)

Considering that **Peru** has been thoroughly evaluated during the midterm evaluation and that the available time and resources are limited, the choice has been made to focus the evaluation mainly on Bolivia & Ecuador. The evaluation in Peru therefore consisted mainly of a desk review and a self-evaluation session.

Volatile context - Bolivia

the volatile context had a major impact on the planning and implementation of the evaluation and the field visits in **Bolivia**. Political tensions are causing a lot of unrest in society. In addition, planning was complicated by ever-changing corona measures.





The agenda of the evaluation was planned in cooperation with local organisations IBIF and PROBIOMA. After the activities were defined, the definitive agenda was adjusted 4 more times as alternatives had to be explored regularly due to changing corona restrictions. It was unclear whether foreign visitors had to be quarantined or not. After taking the 10-day quarantine measure into account in the operational and financial planning of the visit, and a few days before the consultant's arrival in Bolivia, this quarantine measure was formally abolished. An indefinite strike started in Bolivia on the day the consultant arrived in Bolivia. The region around Santa Cruz, where local organisations IBIF and PROBIOMA are active, and where the main intervention is located, was particularly badly affected.

Activities had therefor to be postponed. 10 days later the strike was called off, and the evaluation program could be executed.

The flexibility of the local partners, the indigenous community and the consultant have been essential for the successful implementation of the planned activities and visit to the indigenous community in Lomerio.

4. Global evaluation

The OECD-DAC criteria were assessed for each of the country programs using the following scoring system.

				
	Full grown	Continued growth	Initial stage	Seeds
Performancescores	A - very good	B - Good	C - Problems	D - shortcomings

For the purpose of this general report we provide an overview of the country performance for each of the OECD-DAC criteria. It is worth noting that this overview is illustrative and not comparative. To interpret the scoring we refer to the country evaluation reports that provide context and argumentation that justify the attributed score. For each of the OECD-DAC criteria we also provide a general answer to the evaluation questions presented in §3.1 based on elements from the specific country reports. The aim is to provide a general overview on the performance of the BOS+ program. This analysis, complemented with a SWOT analysis (§5) sheds a light on the main observations and findings on which the general conclusions and recommendations presented in this report are based.

4.1 Relevance

Relevance	Africa			Latin-America		
	Ethiopia	Tanzania	Uganda	Bolivia	Ecuador	Peru

Do the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries' needs, and did they continue to do so when circumstances changed?

The relevance of the outcome, the extent to which the objectives and design of the intervention correspond to the needs, policies and priorities of the beneficiaries and partners, of the country, and of the international community. The BOS+ Programs are in line with the priorities of the beneficiaries. This is ensured by the coordination with the local partners and the participation of women and youth in the protection and sustainable use of natural resources and in governance.

Key elements here are

- Strong focus on relevance for beneficiaries:
- Community based approach: Prior to the intervention local communities are informed about the work of BOS+ and its Program partners. The decision whether to participate in the Program is in the hands of the local communities. Subsequently once the decision to participate has been made, the Program activities are set out to respond to the challenges and priorities of beneficiaries' rights. Contribution to sustainable livelihoods (conservation of production resources, alternative livelihood options)
- Program goals directly contribute to achievement of aspirations, mandates, and goals of the partner organizations
- To a large extent the beneficiaries are motivated and willing to participate in the program activities
- Discussions on the community's priorities take place in the dedicated community governance structures.

- On the environmental level Programs on environmental conservation restoration and governance are highly relevant. By focussing on renewable resources of “income”, the natural capital of the communities increases.

Additionally, the BOS+ **Program in Ethiopia remained relevant even in times of conflict**. One source cited that the Program increased the resilience of the communities they worked with during the conflict. After the escalation of the conflict in 2020 the Program partners and BOS+ decided to adapt the intervention strategy to accommodate changing priorities of the communities. More resources have been dedicated towards improving food security of the communities while this was an urgent need during the crisis. The flexibility to adapt the intervention approach of the Program in face of the conflict underlines the relevance of the outcome. However, this does not mean that there was not a significant impact of the conflict from November 2020 onwards on the effectiveness cannot be denied. On an operational level transport, communication and both Program and monitoring activities were hindered, partners offices were looted, and Program collaborators had to flee.

The BOS+ program in Bolivia showed that the local governance structures of local communities play a crucial role in monitoring the relevance of activities in their zones. The intervention in Bolivia also actively strengthened these local structures to further take on this role, with good results. . Crucial community organisations that have been strengthened during the implementation of the program are the **Central Indigena de Comunidades Originarias de Lomerio (CICOL)**, the local government and political organisation of the communities of Lomerio whose objective is to improve the quality of life of men and women and the self-management of the territory in the sustainable use of its natural resources. itself, it's **Unidad Técnica Territorial de Recurso Naturales (UTT)** and the **Organizaciones Forestales Comunitarias (OFCs)**.

Partners and communities in Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia also testified that covid crisis had a positive impact on the relevance of the program. When the flow of food shipments to local communities was interrupted at some critical moments, it made clear the benefits of local and sustainable food production, something that is central to the program. The COVID-19 crisis also saw the return of many young people to the communities, which reinforced the participation of youth in the program activities and increased the relevance of creating income through sustainable management of the local community's environment.

4.2 Coherence

Coherence	Africa			Latin-America		
	Ethiopia	Tanzania	Uganda	Bolivia	Ecuador	Peru

To what extent is the Belgian program coherent with the specific country programs?

The coherence of the outcome is the extent to which the intervention is compatible with other interventions underway within a country, a sector or an organisation. This DAC criterium has not been part of the performance monitoring system developed at the start of the Program. For the purpose of this evaluation and in addition to the country reports we focus on *the extent of coherence between the Belgian program and the specific country programs*.

We suggest addressing this specific evaluation question in the evaluation report of the Belgian outcome. Instead we suggest to develop a paragraph on the ToC, action research and systemic approach.

4.3 Efficiency

Efficiency	Africa			Latin-America		
	Ethiopia	Tanzania	Uganda	Bolivia	Ecuador	Peru

To what extent did the interventions deliver results in an economic (funds, expertise, resources, time) and timely (intended timeframe) way?

For the purpose of this evaluation the scope of the efficiency criterium as defined by OECD-DAC is the extent to which the intervention produces, or is likely to produce, economic results over time has been broadened to also include the extent to which the intervention produces social results over time in the communities. Overall, there was high level of achievement in terms of outcomes albeit some challenges. Most results within the country programs were achieved efficiently in an economic way. A key element in general, was the good partnership relations between BOS+ and its partners involved in the implementation of the program. Program results are high compared to the investment due to partnerships that leverage resources, commitment, and creativity. BOS+ often acts as a liaison between implementing partners, facilitating information exchange between partners. The efficiency of the program could be even more increased through the development of a structural capacity building approach.

How did our partners change their approach due to COVID-19? Which lessons can we learn from COVID-19 and the restrictions it resulted in, in function of the capacity building and efficiency of the program?

The implications of the COVID-19 pandemic were different for each of the specific country programs.

Bolivia: In 2019, Bolivia in general and Chiquitania were affected by severe forest fires. 2019 also saw a change of government where the socialist government was replaced by a conservative government that saw the rights of local communities and preserving their living environment as less of a priority. From April 2020, the community was equally hit by the covid-19 pandemic. Although several activities had delays due to a slow start-up and the previously mentioned crises in 2019/2020, most results were achieved efficiently in an economic way. The following key elements have contributed to the efficiency: recruitment local people (recruit local staff for UTT, local volunteers as socio-environmental monitors), less intensive support for agro ecology to reach more beneficiaries, compensated by the great enthusiasm of participants, the good relationship between BOS+ and the local partner organizations.

Ecuador: The effects of Covid influenced efficiency in two ways; first by delaying the implementation of face-to-face training and other activities linked to face-to-face events, and second by enabling greater interaction of stakeholders through virtual platforms without the need for travel expenses. It was noted that not all associates have access to quality internet.

Ethiopia: The conflict that erupted in November 2020 was not the only contextual factor that hindered the effectiveness of the Program. In the same period the Tigray Region was confronted with the Covid-19 pandemic, a dry spell, and a plague of locusts. According to one consulted stakeholder this created a perfect storm, not only impacting the environmental objectives of the Program but also the social objectives.

Peru: Unfortunately, due to the situation generated by the Covid 19 pandemic, adjustments had to be made to the schedule of on-site activities, but the partners also took advantage of the communication opportunities offered by technology, thus ensuring that the program would not be interrupted.

Tanzania: Not all activities were implemented in time as planned due to delays in disbursement of funds and interruptions by the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted movement to the field and number of people that could be allowed to gather. Meetings and mobilization campaigns were rescheduled.

Uganda: COVID-19 pandemic which constrained activities involving meetings such as training, sensitization campaigns, farmer exchange visits, and environmental education. Movement to communities to conduct sensitization meetings and trainings were restricted. The environmental education program in schools completely ceased as schools were closed.

Lessons learned

- Covid-19 led to the realization of adjustments preventing some activities, such as trainings and other face-to-face activities, from taking place; however, it favored the use of opportunities such as the greater presence of young people in their territories of origin and therefore the increase of their participation in the activities of their program
- Working with local institutions and providers and recruiting members from the communities itself contributes efficiently to the impact of the program. Having better knowledge of the context and customs, it is easier for them to transfer knowledge. In addition, during crises such as Covid-19 and national strikes they remain present in the field and thus make it possible to avoid interruption in following up & monitoring the activities.

4.4 Effectiveness

Effectiveness	Africa			Latin-America		
	Ethiopia	Tanzania	Uganda	Bolivia	Ecuador	Peru

To what extent and how did BOS+ achieve its objectives and results?

The effectiveness of specific outcomes is described in detail in the country evaluation reports. In this section we will discuss the validity of the theory of change 2017-2021 based on findings from the specific country evaluations.

In the **Sphere of control**, BOS+ works parallel on knowledge building, capacity building and awareness raising. These three aspects must lead to action.

The outcomes BOS+ wants to realize in the **sphere of influence** are categorized into management, conservation and restoration of forests and overall forest governance. Depending on the condition of the natural environment, BOS+ has two specific domains that have a joint target of creating an eco-livelihood-system: (1) value chain management of forest products and services and (2) restoration of degraded land.

In the sphere of influence BOS+ also aims to lift their outreach up to a higher level through the multiplication and the institutionalisation of best practices.

Within the sphere of interest, the multiplication and institutionalization of the interventions both by stakeholders and beneficiaries (direct and indirect) lead to an enabling context that encourages community forestry by people and organizations and to the mainstreaming of sustainable ecosystem valorization in development practices.

The flexibility, creativity, and adaptability of the program, together with the trust of the partners and other BOS+ allies, allowed the results to be achieved.

It was noted that the activities of knowledge exchange and research with research institutes as mentioned in the program document were only carried out to a limited extent

The activities carried out within the program also enables local partners and communities to do sensitization and lobbying work, which is not (yet) visualized in the theory of change. There is an increased legitimacy for the partners to take up their role in policy advocacy processes. The intervention financed by BOS+, among other things, allows them to gain experience, to build a network and gives them the legitimacy to influence policy.

Income generation is a central element of forest conservation for local communities. There is enormous potential and interest from the communities to develop economic activities; in South America honey is produced, the Melipona bee was recently introduced, artisanal products such as shampoo, traditional medicines, etc. are made by the communities and products like cacao and vanilla are being produced. These income generating activities stimulate the interest and importance of forest regeneration and sustainable management of the forest. After all, the forest must yield; if the forest does not yield it will give way to other profitable activities such as cattle ranching or mining.

Multiplication effect: For outcome 2 in Bolivia, in contrary with outcome 1, limited results can be attributed to a multiplication effect within the community because the community does not have the capacities nor resources at the end of the intervention to extend the intervention to other families and communities or villages who were not involved from the beginning.

4.5 Impact

Impact	Africa			Latin-America		
	Ethiopia	Tanzania	Uganda	Bolivia	Ecuador	Peru

How did/will the interventions generate change (positive or negative, direct or indirect) on communal, regional or national level?

- **Social impact: focus on women and youngsters?**
- **Ecological impact: focus on forest and tree ecosystems**
- **Economic impact: focus on the economic development and well-being of the communities involved.**

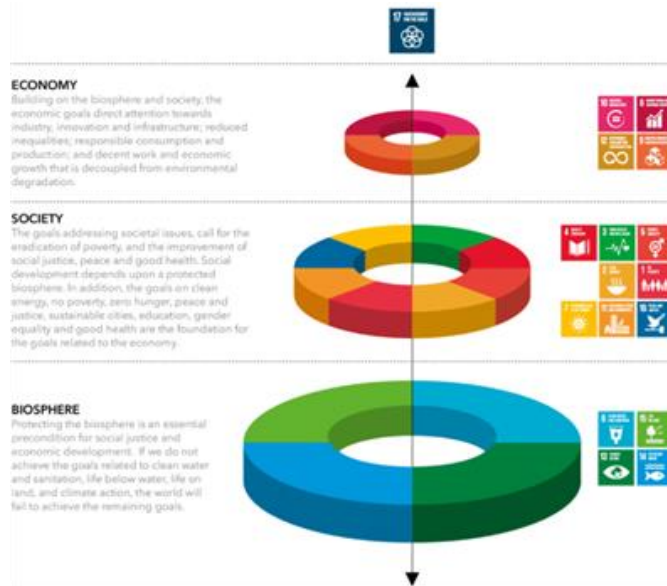
Were there unintended or higher-level effects in our program that were not foreseen?

It is too early to establish impact of the program given the long maturity period of the interventions to give full benefits but there are signs of high impact basing on the scope of uptake of the interventions. Impacts of the programs can be expected at different levels: social impact, economic impact and ecological impact.

- Social impact: in the capacities of the organizations to do the surveillance of the forest, organize spaces of dialogue in the community and in the social skills of women and young people for governance. In the changing awareness and practices in the communities.
- Economic impact: in the generation of alternative income
- Ecological impact: increasing the monitoring of the territory, the reforestation of degraded ecosystems and the use of ancestral techniques and others adapted to their context.

A few general indications for the potential for impact of environmental conservation programs can be identified

- The importance of a long-term horizon both for program implementation and monitoring. In the program under review collaborations with communities often exceed program duration and the long-term effects of the program activities on both the environment and the community are often only visible after the program already ended.
- The importance of a participatory approach to ensure ownership and sustainability of the program.
- The scale of the intervention. With a smaller scale intervention facilitating a less? important impact on communities and a larger scale intervention facilitating a more important impact on the environment. The scale of the intervention is an important consideration at the start of the intervention to determine the eventual impact of the program.
- The scope of the evaluation did not allow to assess interlinkages between effects of the program and their relation to the SDG's. However, the model BOS+ adopts illustrates the potential for SDG interlinkages in the program and the interconnectedness of the economic impact, the impact on society and the impact on biosphere.



4.6 Sustainability

Sustainability	Africa			Latin-America		
	Ethiopia	Tanzania	Uganda	Bolivia	Ecuador	Peru

To what extent will the benefits of the intervention last?

- **Financial sustainability:** are the beneficiaries at the end of the program capable of continuing the program independently?
- **Social sustainability:** in what way do the beneficiaries feel responsibility and ownership for the intervention and continuity and effects of the program?
- **Technical sustainability:** do the beneficiaries, beneficiary organizations and partner organizations, at the end of the program have enough capacity and skills to guarantee continued results?

The evaluation team noticed diverging performance of the outcomes regarding sustainability in Africa and Latin America. Two main explanatory factors of this divergence could be cited: the difference in

scope and budget of the Latin American outcomes compared to the African outcomes, and the presence of local BOS+ staff and representation in the Latin American outcomes allowing for a more responsive follow-up and anchoring of the program.

Sustainability of tree planting activities and conservation of community forests depend on building trust between the citizens and the government to guarantee long-term ownership of the forests by the community. Enhancing benefits to the community from the forest products is a motivator for the local leaders to enforce bylaws related to conservation of community forests. The social acceptance of the interventions that are made in a territory is an essential requirement for the **social sustainability** of the program outcomes. This is directly linked to the fulfilment of the rights of its inhabitants. We see positive results in all areas for the Latin American outcomes, there is still room for improvement for the African outcomes. In Tanzania unanticipated community dynamics at some of the sites limited outcomes that can be sustained.

In any development cooperation program **financial sustainability** is a major concern. Regarding financial sustainability, it is important to mention that all intervention strategies of the key implementing partners have an economic component. This is also an important element in the analytical framework that has been used for the purpose of this evaluation. As mentioned under Program effectiveness, the integration of livelihoods strategies (poultry, honey, fodder, incense, ...) in a holistic approach to environmental conservation is crucial for the effectiveness of the Program. Short term (economic benefits) can help to convince communities to participate in conservation activities from which the results will only be visible in the medium to long term.

Alongside the economic component of the intervention strategies, implementing partners also invest in the **technical sustainability** of the intervention through capacity development. Sustaining the capacity of the partners to continue is to a great extent dependent on availability of resources, otherwise the experienced staff may be taken by more resource endowed organizations. For the African outcomes, there was no elaborate lobbying and advocacy and sustainability strategies to ensure continuity of activities after the program ends.

5. SWOT -analysis

The following overview combines the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that surfaced in the course of the evaluation. The list is not an exhaustive list but will help BOS+ to continuously improve its performance.

Strengths

- Community based participative approach: Participative approaches in the entire Program management cycle. For example, participatory mapping, participatory monitoring, feedback and information loops and bottom-up approach through existing decision-making institutions of the communities.
- Action-research: innovative and experimental approach. Capitalisation of previous (academic and developmental) experience in the Tigray region for the Ethiopia outcome and precious sustainable forest management programs in Bolivia (BOLFOR).
- Systemic approach combining environmental conservation interventions with livelihood activities and capacity building.
- A consortium of partners with complementary capacities and experiences like in Tanzania can be qualitatively more effective.
- Importance of the integration of livelihoods strategies (poultry, honey, fodder, ...) in a holistic approach to environmental conservation. Short term (economic benefits) can help to convince communities to participate in conservation activities from which the results will only be visible in the medium to long term.
- The role of BOS+ as the liaison between Program partners. Exposure visits and sharing lessons learned between partners.
- **Recruitment of local people** and involvement of local authorities from the intervention zone to facilitate ownership and sustainability

Weaknesses

- Limited results were achieved in the field of **capacity building of local partners**. Most results achieved by the local partner organisations in the field of organisational development occurred in the context of other funding.
- Limited collaboration and interest of academic partners – inadequate mechanisms and resources to facilitate collaborations with research/academic institutions
- Short intervention period and inadequate funding to allow engagement with multiple actors to enable tangible outcomes in a complex and sometimes highly politicized environment. Some of the benefits of conservation are long-term and behavioral change processes are usually slow.

Opportunities

- There is an increased legitimacy for the partners to take up their role in **policy advocacy processes**. The intervention financed by BOS+, among other things, allows them to gain experience, to build a network and gives them the legitimacy to influence policy. Also strengthen the capacity of local leadership to advocate and lobby for support from governments and other development agencies towards conservation as springboard for livelihood improvement.

- Promote the renewal of alliances with civil society organizations, local and regional governments and their respective institutions, and academic institutions to consolidate the change processes and the views of resilient landscapes and resilient communities
- Increase the exchange of experiences between local partners and local communities to optimize processes that in some places are already more advanced than in others and perhaps find new partners who can contribute with their knowledge, innovative aspects to face similar problems.
- Develop a comprehensive sustainability strategy that progressively increases the participation and ownership of the intervention by the local authorities. Such strategy should be part of the program design and implemented right from the start of the intervention.

Threats

- Working in fragile contexts. Both in terms of climate change and political context, the Bolivian context is very fragile. During the implementation of the program there were also **successive crises** (political crisis, forest fire, as mentioned under relevance). Political disorientation also derailed the intervention at one of the sites in Tanzania. However, these successive crises illustrate the relevance of the program and nevertheless, the (adjusted) objectives and results were achieved.
- Inconsistence in policies and or weak enforcement of conservation related policies and regulations; and building trust between authorities in charge of conservation and the communities. This affects the commitment and participation of the citizens in conservation activities.

6. Documenting change – specific recommendations for M&E

This section provides some leads to further improve the monitoring system of BOS+ in response to the specific recommendations from the evaluation of the tropics program.

3 areas of monitoring can be distinguished for the interventions of BOS+: resilient landscapes, resilient communities and resilient organisations. These areas are situated in the sphere of influence and the sphere of interest of the theory of change as developed by BOS+.

For the monitoring of the program 2017-2021 indicators were a mix of output indicators directly linked to program implementation, environmental indicators and to a lesser extent 'community' indicators.

2 of the main recommendations of this evaluation pertain directly to the improvement of the monitoring system.

1. It is essential to demonstrate the relevance and impact of activities by improving the **monitoring system** within the program, but also to encourage internal monitoring practices among local partners. This will help them in a corporatisation strategy and in accessing other resources. With BOS+, a learning trajectory on exchange between partners can be organised in this regard.
2. A sustainability strategy ought to be part of the design of the intervention and embedded in the **capacity development** activities. Structurally analyse and invest in the organisational development of the organisation itself and local partners. It is important that BOS+ facilitates mutual exchange and seeks complementarities for this capacity development. Building the capacity of local leaders to lobby and advocate for additional support for environment related interventions is critical for deepening and broadening the impact.

In this section we will provide some more insights into how BOS+ can address these recommendations in the current multiannual DGD programs for each of the identified areas. However, it is important to stress that the monitoring system should integrate all 3 monitoring areas in a coherent way. Since monitoring of resilient landscapes and resilient communities are already part of the BOS+ monitoring system, focus will be on recommendations for monitoring of capacity development of partner organisations.

Resilient landscapes

Scope of the monitoring; Forest conservation, forest restoration and of restored and enrichment on degraded lands, sustainable use and management of forests, climate change, biodiversity...

- Increase and or optimise collaboration with (local)research institutions were possible to monitor indicators related to resilient landscapes
- Pool resources for monitoring with other actors working in the same area

Resilient communities:

Scope of the monitoring; Community based forest management, livelihood strategies, governance, legislation, advocacy and rights-based approach, wellbeing of communities, ...

- Design maturity level indicators together with partner organisations to increase ownership of the data, allow for tailor made monitoring and monitoring of qualitative information on outcome level for instance for advocacy activities

Resilient organisations - Designing capacity development trajectories with partner organisations

The 5C model for capacity development³ developed by ECDPM is a practical model to develop and monitor organisation capacity development trajectories and that could potentially also be useful for BOS+ and its partner organisations. The 5Cs framework distinguishes capacity defined as a ‘producing social value’ and five core capabilities which, by themselves, do not necessarily contribute to social change. To the degree that they are developed and successfully integrated, capabilities contribute to the overall capacity or ability of an organisation or system to create value for others. A single capability is not sufficient to create capacity. All are needed and are strongly interrelated. Thus, to achieve its development goals, the 5Cs model states that every organisation/system must have five basic capabilities. These are: the capability to act and commit, the capability to deliver on development objectives, the capability to adapt and self-renew, the capability to relate to external stakeholders and the capability to achieve coherence

The model can be used as a underlying structure to develop capacity development trajectories with partners applying the following steps.

Step 1: Diagnostic

Evaluation of the current capacity of the organisations based on the 5C model. Identification of strengths and capacity gaps. This can be done by a guided self-evaluation by the partner organisation. BOS+ can use the information as a baseline for this area of the monitoring.

Step 2: Setting priorities

Based on the diagnostics, the partner organisation can choose priorities for capacity development. It is important that the partner organisation chooses the priorities through their internal governance mechanisms. The ownership of the capacity development trajectory will be in the hands of the partners.

Step 3: Defining the role of BOS + and implicating other actors

Once the priorities have been chosen by the partner organisation, BOS+ and the partner can decide how and for which priorities BOS+ can support. For the remaining priorities that lay outside the scope of BOS+ as for instance marketing and economic aspects of forest products, BOS + and the partners can look for other actors (local, national and international) that can support. In this instance BOS+ can also act as a liaison between partners to facilitate learning and capacity development between partner organisations.

Step 4: implementation and continuous monitoring

Once priorities have been decided and the contribution of each actor has been specified it is time to think about implementation and monitoring. The partner organisation in concertation with BOS+ can set out progress markers for the capacity development trajectory. These progress markers will allow to monitor changes in a systematic way during the implementation phase. Each partner organisations can develop its own set of progress markers based on its individual capacity development trajectory.

Step 5: evaluation

The last step is the evaluation of the capacity development trajectory. In this step the data collected through the implementation phase based on progress marker monitoring will be consolidated and evaluated with all the actors involved. This will allow BOS+ and its partners to learn about the capacity development trajectory, the intended and unintended, positive and negative outcomes and the relative contribution of BOS+ and other actors involved.

While the 5 C model is mostly used for organisation capacity development. BOS+ could also investigate its merits for community-based monitoring.

³ ECDPM, Bringing the invisible into perspective Reference document for using the 5Cs framework to plan, monitor and evaluate capacity and results of capacity development processes, <https://ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/2011-5Cs-Framework-Plan-Evaluate-Monitor-Capacity-Development-Processes.pdf>