



## Midterm Evaluation Trias

Meta-Analysis of the MTE-reports from Guinée,  
the Philippines, Tanzania, Andes (Ecuador),  
Central America (El Salvador) and Brazil  
MYP TRIAS 2017-2021

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## Abbreviations

AGM	Annual General Meeting
AGuidep	Association Guinée Développement et Prospérité
AHA	Andreas Hermes Akademie
ATC	Assistance Technique et Coopération
BDS	Business Development Services
CAM	Central America
CDA	Cooperative Development Authority
CEFE	Competency-Based Economies through Formation Entrepreneurs
CLM	Causal Link Monitoring
CSA	Collectif Stratégies Alimentaires
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CIP	Centro Internacional de la Papa
CNBB	Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil
CODE	Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO)
DGD	Directie-Generaal Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Humanitaire Hulp (Directorate-general Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid)
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
E&F	Entraide et Fraternité
ERI	Enabling Rural Innovation
ESPOCH	Escuela Politécnica del Chimborazo
FACT	Farmers Advocacy Consultation Tool
FBB	Fundación Banco do Brasil
FF	Family Farmer
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FNS	Fundo Nacional de Solidariedad
GAD	Gender and Development
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRM	Human Resources Management
HQ	Headquarters
IDP	Iles de Paix
INAP	Instituto nacional de investigaciones Agropecuarias
JSF	Joint Strategic Framework
KLJ	Katholieke Landelijke Jeugd
KM	Knowledge Management
KVLV	Katholiek Vormingswerk voor Landelijke Vrouwen (now named “Ferm”)
L&A	Lobby and Advocacy
LEATRA	Leadership Trajectory
LED	Local Economic Development
LEISA	Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture
LGA	Local Government Authorities

LPMPC	Labo Progressive Multi-Purpose Cooperative
MAG	Ministeria de Agricultura y Ganadería (Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MBO	Member based organization
MML	Matriz Marco Lógico (logical framework matrix)
MSS	Members Satisfaction Survey
MT	Management Team
MT(E)	Midterm Evaluation
N/A	Not Available
NGA	Non-Governmental Actor
N/S	North/South
OCA(T)	Organizational Capacity Assessment (Tool)
OD	Organizational Development
ODP	Organizational Development Plan
PME	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
RGTA	Réseau Guinéen sur la Traction Animale
SACCOS	Saving and Credit Cooperative Societies
S/S	South/South
SSE	Small-Scale Entrepreneur
SPIDER	Strengthening Partners in Development through Empowerment and Reflection
ToC	Theory/Theories of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
VICOBA	Village Community Bank
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
YEP	Youth entrepreneurship
YOUCA	Youth for Change and Action

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## Executive Summary

### Objectives and set up of the midterm evaluation and meta-analysis

The main purpose of this meta-analysis of six regional midterm evaluation reports was meant 1) to adjust and to enrich the strategic framework of Trias with reference to programming and the implementation of the Theory of Change and 2) to serve as an important input for the end evaluation of the program that will focus on impact and the new DGD program from 2022 onwards. The meta-analysis analyzed - within the context of the current 2017-2021 DGD program - 1) the extent to which the Trias intervention strategy is effective in strengthening the capacities of supported MBOs (using the SPIDER approach as a starting point), 2) the extent to which MBO capacity strengthening has positive effects at member level (= member of the supported MBOs) level, 3) how sustainable the changes – induced by Trias – at MBO and member level are (a first indication), and 4) the extent to which an answer on the questions above leads to the conclusion that the ToC of Trias is functional or not. In this sense, the meta-evaluation concentrates on effectiveness and sustainability at MBO and MBO member level as a precondition to perform an impact evaluation.

The midterm evaluation consisted of two phases and was organized in a participatory way, involving Trias staff from Belgium and the regional offices from six countries, and a selection of supported MBO partners (and members in some cases) in these countries. The first phase of the evaluation was at the regional level with national external consultants executing the MTE based on the regional terms of reference, agreed upon and harmonized with Trias at corporate level in advance. The countries included in this evaluation were the Philippines, Tanzania, Ecuador, El Salvador, Brazil and Guinée. The meta-analysis was carried out during the second phase of the evaluation by another external consultant than the national consultants being involved in the first phase.

### Conclusions

Taking the evaluation questions as a point of departure for the meta-analysis, the analysis concludes that the overall and regional country ToC are partial functional. Regarding this functionality, strong points could be found as well as weaker elements that need to be strengthened in the near future.

#### *Strong elements of SPIDER and the functionality of the Trias TOC*

The starting point for implementation of the ToC is well institutionalized and based on the SPIDER approach. The SPIDER approach is considered important and relevant by Trias at head office, by the regional Trias offices and by the MBOs involved in the evaluation. The greatest strength of the approach seems to be its participatory approach. The SPIDER approach needs some improvement (see recommendations) but the system itself is functional and in general seems to work well. Trias facilitates the SPIDER process (identification of priorities to strengthen at MBO level and the monitoring process of progress made) in a participatory way which is highly appreciated by the MBOs. Overall, Trias plays different roles: as facilitator, financier and giving technical support. This illustrates the flexibility of Trias as partner of the MBOs but at the same time, this also involves risks and certain challenges (see further).

Next to the SPIDER approach, an envisioned Theory of Change in the regions makes clear what changes need to be strengthened at MBO and member level. The existence of these country ToC is a good start for monitoring progress made of desired changes at MBO and member level. Other strong points of the country ToC are that they refer to the overall Trias strategy framework and six identified domains of change (although not all dimensions of change are included in the country ToC); they do not stand on themselves but refer to strategic priorities made earlier by Trias. In this sense they reflect the strategic priorities of Trias at overall level, translated to the regional context and regional priorities. The country ToC illustrate well the Trias strategy.

Another conclusion is that collaboration between MBOs, Trias and other stakeholders is emphasized in a complementary and/or synergetic way, to make sure that the priority needs of MBOs can be covered as much as possible. In some cases, this collaboration allows also the creation or the improvement of an enabling environment in which MBOs can function more effectively and efficiently. The regional MTE reports show progress in the capacities and performance areas of MBOs and in some cases of their members. Progress has been made on all core capacities and most of the performance areas, although some areas (e.g. natural resources management, environment, membership participation at performance level) are mentioned more prominently in the MTE reports than others. This does not mean that Trias does not work on these issues, but it was less present in the reports.

What supports the realization of the ToC is knowledge management. Compared to some years ago, knowledge management shows progress in institutionalizing several tools and instruments in the countries selected for this evaluation, like the gender tool, LEATRA and ERI in some countries. The gender tool can be used to work on youth inclusion, but this is still work in progress.

### *Weak elements of SPIDER and the Trias TOC functionality*

Besides the positive points, the ToC functionality shows also several weak aspects. Trias has a corporate strategy including domains of change but not a 'real' corporate Theory of Change. One overall ToC would make it easier to understand how Trias and the results achieved at regional level contribute to the desired changes at regional and corporate Trias level. But the contribution of Trias was unfortunately described in a broad and general way in the regional MTE reports and did not give much clarity on the extent to which and how the Trias interventions really contributed to the achieved results at MBO and member level. It was sometimes also difficult to understand from the regional MTE reports how strengthened capacities at MBO level led to improved performance at MBO level. Sometimes it was not clear if results at member level were due to MBO strengthening or to direct Trias support to the members.

In some regions, questions were raised whether Trias should play a more generalist or specialist role. Doubts or unclarity on what works best could undermine the functionality of the Trias strategy. It is important to add that this does not mean Trias does not play its roles well, on the contrary, the regional MTE reports revealed that in general, MBOs appreciated the Trias support quite well. But appreciation alone is not a sufficient measure to explain how the dynamics of change processes work from intervention to changes at MBO and member level, which is exactly what was meant to understand better through this evaluation. HRM could also do much more to strengthen and institutionalize



certain competencies at Trias level, which would benefit the professionalization of Trias staff and therefore the support to MBOs.

Another weak point is that in most of the regional MTE reports no real distinction was made between the capacity level and the performance level of the MBOs when discussing the results at MBO level, which limited a good analysis of how changes occur. The results measured through the indicators do not reveal anything about the underlying processes and how changes have taken place, which we want to know when checking the functionality of the ToC. There may be other processes or activities that lead to the results which may have nothing or little to do with the processes that we want to demonstrate through the theory of change.

A point of attention is that the country ToC are programmatic and do not envision (eventual) changes beyond MBO level that may be needed to achieve the desired impact at MBO and/or member level. Assumptions present in the country ToC focus mainly on external factors which cannot always be controlled or influenced if needed, and they were not or limited tested in this MTE. What didn't help either is that the country ToC do not include a narrative explaining how Trias expects the underlying processes from outcome to impact to work.

The country ToC show also some weaknesses in terminology and in constructing the pathways of change. Some change areas like environmental results or results regarding natural resources management are not or little included at the capacity level of the ToC. In most regional MTE reports the transversal topic inclusivity was not or in a limited way visible in the results of other capacities and performance strengthened. Regional offices question whether the SPIDER approach as a starting point covers sufficiently all actual MBO needs and if other topics don't deserve more attention as well like the increasing influence of climate change and environmental/ecological issues, increasing influence of digitalization, managing multi-stakeholder processes, strengthening inclusion in value chains.

Not all regional MTE reports zoomed in on sustainability or only in a limited way. There are indications that MBOs move into the direction of economic, social and/or environmental sustainability. This is a delicate process since quite some factors that can hardly be controlled influence this progress. Only two reports explained well the extent to which progress is made on sustainability.

Some evidence was missing in the midterm reports of the selected regions to illustrate to the fullest the functionality of the ToC: although all relevant evaluation questions in the regional TOR were included, most of the national consultants did not gather sufficient evidence in the regional reports so to give a well-informed answer on the functionality of the ToC. This has influenced the conclusions, because it is well possible that in practice the country ToC function better than illustrated in the regional midterm reports. Therefore, the conclusions above do not mean that results were not achieved or that Trias has not been working in an effective or efficient way so far, when implementing the DGD 2017-2021 program. It rather makes clear that, based on the regional MTE reports, some weaknesses in the theory of change were discovered.

## Recommendations

Recommendations can be grouped into three groups: recommendations meant for Trias at corporate level, recommendations for the Trias regions and recommendations meant for both groups. All recommendations should best be analyzed in close collaboration between the regions and Trias head office.

### *Recommendations for Trias at both the overall and regional level*

It is recommended to develop one clear Theory of Change at corporate level from which the regional Theories of Change can be derived, taking into account all relevant assumptions and a clear distinction between the level of control, the level of influence and the level of interest/impact when developing the corporate and regional Theories of Change, and adding a clear narrative to each ToC (corporate and country). This will be helpful in giving more insight in how the theory of change really works in practice. When deciding on a programmatic ToC, this choice should be deliberate and well-informed. It is also suggested to make sure that the overall and regional logical frameworks are well aligned with the overall and regional theories of change.

### *Recommendations for Trias at overall level*

At the corporate level, it is suggested to develop a short ToC manual and train relevant Trias staff at head office and in the regions in what a Theory of Change is and how to use it, in order to understand better how interventions contribute to changes at different levels with involved actors and beneficiaries. A recommendation is also to optimize the SPIDER process and tools particularly the scoring tools used during monitoring progress. Trias at corporate level should also evaluate whether the current OD approach as a starting point to strengthen MBOs is the most effective approach, or that it should be aligned or adjusted with current trends and evolutions demonstrating actual MBO needs and priorities.

The question whether Trias advisors are more effective as ‘specialists’ or as ‘generalists’ should be answered, taking into account the entire Trias theory of change (at corporate and country level), since different change areas influence each other and simultaneous support could be needed to achieve results e.g. increased financial autonomy could depend on improved production, better management of resources, improved governance next to marketing efforts. Trias at corporate level should invest stronger in competency management in order to strengthen specific competencies all advisors should have in order to fulfill the different identified Trias roles (facilitator, technical support and financier).

Investment in knowledge management to institutionalize effective tools like e.g. LEATRA, ERI, the gender tool etcetera gives positive results and need to continue. Knowledge management could even be more effective when approaching it in a more systemic way, by aligning it with competency management/human resource management at overall and regional level, in order to mainstream specific competencies more systematically at Trias advisor level. At the same time, flexibility in using similar tools from other partners which have proved their effectiveness should be maintained.

What will help in understanding better the Theory of Change and how different levels of change contribute to each other, is the development and implementation of instruments complementary to the tools Trias uses already like Causal Link Monitoring and Process Tracing.

### *Recommendations for Trias at regional level*

At the regional level, it is suggested 1/to be aware that the current country ToC are not necessarily the only and most effective way to achieve results like e.g. outreach, and 2/to dare to explore other ways of working which can give better results.

Based on the regional MTE reports, the regions should make more explicit how and to what extent changes occur with regarding to all supported capacities and performance areas, in order to understand better how the underlying change flows and dynamics work (since this did not come out well of the reports).

It is also important to make sure that the transversal themes are well integrated in the strengthening of core capacities, and not only treated in a separate way (or to make them more visible in the ToC and in practice since this wasn't clear from the MTE reports).

A particular point of attention for the future is to analyze well how to measure impact when working with 2nd and 3rd tier MBOs, and how MBO members who improve their situation because of the Trias program can continue to participate in activities and will not drop out due to lack of time.

Regarding sustainability, it is important to include in the next evaluation report how the Trias strategy contributes to achieving sustainability in different areas, since this was covered to a limited extent in most regional MT reports.

Last but not least, collaboration with other actors should be harmonized as much as possible before the start of a next (DGD) program. This allows other actors to be part of the SPIDER process and the development and implementation of the ODP plan with the MBOs in a more integrated way. It also avoids that ODP plans from different donors need to be adjusted in a later stage.

# 1 Background and objectives of this midterm evaluation

## 1.1. The organization

Trias is a movement NGO. In Flanders, it is backed by three rural and three entrepreneurial **Membership-Based Organizations (MBOs)**: KVLV<sup>1</sup>, Landelijke Gilde, KLJ, Markant, Unizo, and Neos. Trias is also supported by a larger network that identifies with its vision, encompassing organizations such as CD&V, KUL, ... The MBOs and the network are formally represented in the Board and General Assembly and help steer the organization. The MBOs' characteristics and beliefs are integrated in Trias's identity and form an important contribution to the definition of its strategic choices.

Trias's vision is based on the belief that individuals, groups, and MBOs like cooperatives, credit and saving groups, etcetera. possess the strength required for self-development and joint action towards social and economic empowerment, poverty alleviation, wealth creation, and well-being. Trias's mission is to improve livelihood security and wellbeing of family farmers (FFs) and small-scale entrepreneurs (SSEs) by supporting their respective MBOs.

Trias also wants to stimulate worldwide exchange and cooperation between farmers and entrepreneurs.

Trias envisions an ultimate goal with a timeframe of up to 20 years, that it wants to see achieved in the lives of family farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs and in their societies.

To assure effective progress towards these changes, six underlying domains of change must be addressed (see next figure). For Trias, **Membership-Based Organizations (MBOs)** are the best placed actors to assure the effective realization of these changes.

Four blocks of triggers need to be induced to effectively allow MBOs to play that role:

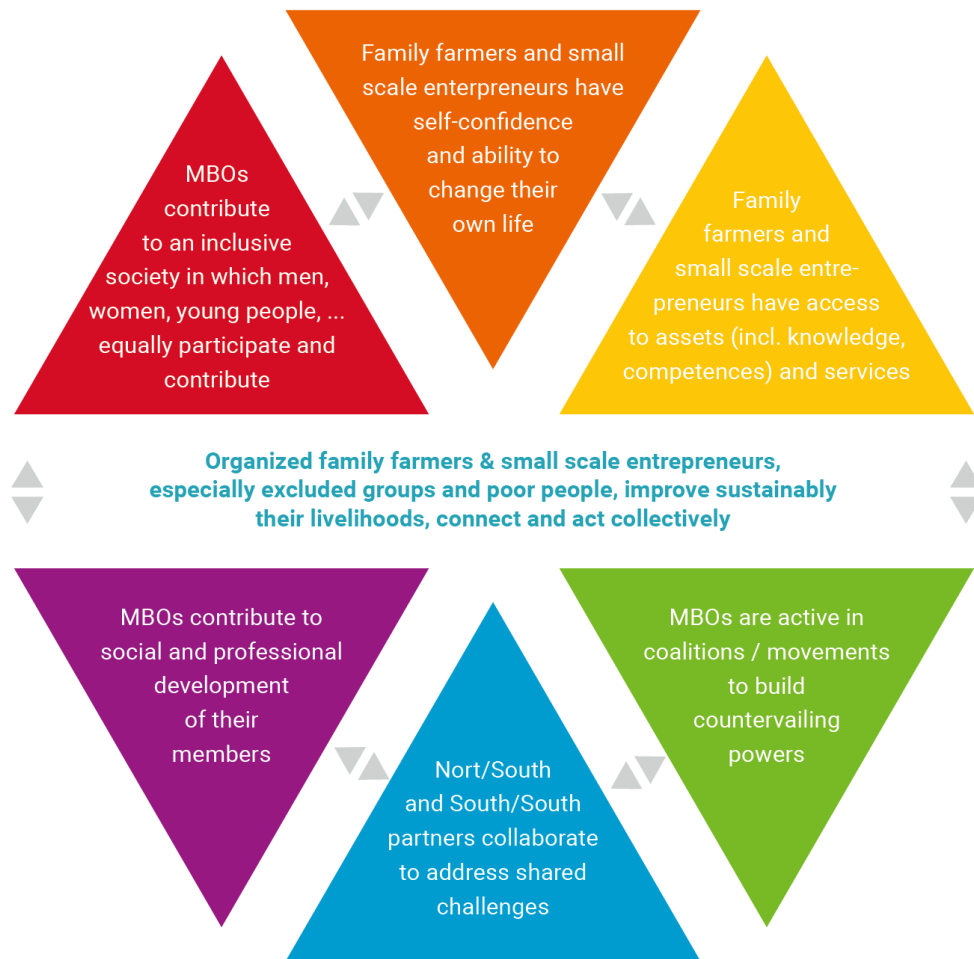
- Poor people, women, and young people empower themselves, which allows for their active participation in MBOs;
- Improved and sustainable organization of MBOs;
- MBOs and their strategic partners facilitate integrated quality services to ensure increased participation in markets, especially of poor people, women, and young people;
- MBOs coordinate, dialogue, and collaborate with other actors towards a more inclusive global society.

The ToC<sup>2</sup> of Trias says that Trias, by strengthening the capacities of an MBO, will contribute to an improvement of the well-being of the MBO members.

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<sup>1</sup> KVLV recently turned its name into "Ferm"

<sup>2</sup> See also the website <https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/how-to/how-to-build-a-theory-of-change#> and the introductory article about ToC 'Using a theory of change (ToC) to better understand your program': <https://learningforsustainability.net/post/theory-of-change/> For more in depth information on the ToC: [http://journals.sfu.ca/jmde/index.php/jmde\\_1/article/view/496/444](http://journals.sfu.ca/jmde/index.php/jmde_1/article/view/496/444)



## 1.2. Objective and purpose of the evaluation

This meta-analysis of six regional midterm evaluation reports neither the regional midterm evaluations were **not meant to measure impact yet**, to be achieved through the 2017-2021 program.

The meta-analysis was meant to analyze

- (i) the effectiveness and sustainability of the deployed trajectories with MBO partners at the regional level and
- (ii) the added value of the Trias involvement in the organizational and institutional development of MBO partners, based upon the Theory of Change of Trias
- (iii) if (i) and (ii) lead to the conclusion that the ToC of Trias is indeed functional

Based on this analysis, the main purpose of the meta-evaluation was

- to adjust and enrich the strategic framework of Trias with reference to programming and the implementation of the Theory of Change;
- to serve as an important source for the end evaluation of the program that will be focused on impact and the new DGD program from 2022 onwards. The meta-evaluation concentrates on effectiveness and sustainability as a precondition to perform an impact evaluation.

Therefore, the meta-analysis, based on six regional midterm reports and some additional interviews at Trias Bxl and with regional offices, seeks an answer on following questions:

- How effective is the Trias intervention strategy in strengthening the capacities of the supported MBOs (using the SPIDER approach as a starting point)?
- Does the strengthening of the capacities of the MBOs have positive effects at member level (= member of the supported MBOs) level? (without measuring the impact yet)?
- How sustainable are the changes – induced by Trias – at MBO and member level? (a first indication)
- To what extent can an answer on the questions above lead to the conclusion that the ToC of Trias is functional or not (sufficiently)?

The extent to which the Trias strategy turns out to be effective and sustainable, will support (or not) the ToC of Trias and eventually lead to the conclusion to change (or not) the TOC or/and the strategic framework or/and the intervention strategy of Trias.

If we want to know how effective the Trias strategy is in order to know how functional the Trias ToC is, then we need to understand also the underlying mechanism of how Trias support has strengthened the MBOs, asking ourselves these questions:

For the period 2017-end 2019

- How was the support, provided by Trias, identified and what was this support (based on the SPIDER approach)?
- How did the MBOs use this support in order to strengthen themselves?
- To what extent do MBOs consider themselves strengthened (based on the Trias support) and in what areas?
- Are there indications that MBOs are strengthened in a sustainable way?

The midterm evaluation was not only meant to look at the current status and results of the MBOs, but also to try to understand the underlying mechanism of how Trias has supported – so far- this process of capacity building and how MBOs have benefited from it and ‘used’ this support.

Secondly, if we want to know if the Trias strategy - through strengthening the capacities of the MBOs - have had positive effects at the member (= member of the supported MBOs) level so far (without measuring the impact yet), we want to understand better the underlying mechanism of how the strengthening of MBOs have turned out positively (in one way or another) for the members, asking ourselves the next questions:

During the period 2017- end 2019

- How did the MBO strengthening translate into benefits for the MBO members?
- How did MBO members ‘use’ these benefits (within the scope of the dimensions of change)?
- To what extent do MBO-members consider themselves strengthened (thanks to the strengthened MBOs) or with other words? What could eventually not be possible at MBO member level without the support of Trias at MBO level (counterfactual)?

## 2 Evaluation methodology

The midterm evaluation consisted of two phases. The **first phase** of the evaluation was at the regional level. For each country or regional program involved in the evaluation, a national consultant was hired, based on a TOR that had been agreed upon in advance by all the involved regional offices and Trias Belgium. The first target group of this evaluation were (a selection of) the MBO partners of Trias in the selected countries. The regional evaluators worked with staff and the boards of these MBOs, and with the regional Trias offices. Six countries were included in this evaluation: the Philippines, Tanzania, Ecuador, El Salvador, Brazil and Guinée. Methods used during the evaluation were mainly qualitative, through focus group discussions and interviews, preceded by a documentary study of progress reports, planning and other program documents.

The regional reports were meant to be shared with the involved MBO partners for feedback, but this could not be confirmed by the regions. In Brazil part of the main reflections of the MTE was used during MBO planning for 2020. Feedback on the draft versions of the regional reports was also given by the external consultant who was involved in the second phase of the evaluation.

The **second phase** of the evaluation was at metalevel. The six regional midterm reports were analyzed in this meta-evaluation report by an external consultant (of Humanya). Additional interviews were held with key persons at Trias HQ in Brussels, Belgium and with each one of the regional directors (with exception of Brazil). The meta-evaluation report was shared with relevant Trias staff in Belgium and from the regional offices for feedback.

The conclusions and recommendations of this report are meant to be shared with all involved regional Trias offices, MBO partners and DGD.

### 3 The relation between the overall Trias strategy framework, the Theory of Change of Trias and its capacity building intervention strategy

The SPIDER approach, the country theories of change (including logical frameworks), the overall Trias strategy framework and the six dimensions of change are the points of departure for the collaboration between Trias and the partner MBOs.

The DGD program document includes a Theory of Change and a logical framework for each country, supported by Trias. How do these concepts and instruments relate to each other and how are they brought into practice?

#### *The strategy framework*

The long-term goal of Trias and the critical blocks of triggers, described in the Trias strategy note, have been translated into a **strategic framework** allowing further definition of the expected impact, the outcome and results for Trias's work. This strategic framework also allows Trias to streamline its interventions in different regional contexts, to monitor and evaluate the success of the interventions, and to emphasize the coherence of the different components of its work. It also helps to provide an answer to the question "How do we know Trias is successful in 2022?" The Theory of Change that is applied in each country can be found in the DGD program document.

Trias emphasizes **six domains of change** that contribute to improved livelihoods of the MBO members and collective connection and interaction between the FFs and SSEs (see figure under 1.2.). Three domains of change relate to the level of MBOs; two domains are defined at individual (member) level: family farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs and one area of change is defined at broader partner level (N/S and S/S partners). The domains of change are inspired on the Theory of Change of AgriCord, a network of agri-agencies to which Trias also belongs. Although areas of change are defined in this figure, **the 'logic' of the changes** is not very clear (there are no 'pathways of change' defined), and assumptions are not made explicit. When looking at these six domains of change, it is not clear how Trias assumes that changes are taking place within the MBOs and at the level of their members when linking its overall strategy framework to the capacity building interventions of Trias, which is the core strategy with MBOs. Therefore, the six domains of change neither the strategic framework described in the strategy note of Trias represent a 'real' corporate Theory of Change.

#### *SPIDER*

**Capacity building** of MBOs takes place through the SPIDER approach. SPIDER means 'Strengthening Partners in Development through Empowerment and Reflection'. Starting from the notion that any group, how weak it may be, brings together a series of individual and organizational capacities, SPIDER seeks to identify the capabilities and opportunities as well as the challenges of each individual partner MBO, and assist them in their continuous process of organizational development. To be able to determine what activities have to be organized (trainings, exchanges etc.) and what investments have to be made, it is important to have a good overview of each partner MBOs' capacities and their evolution, as well as the effects on the actual work of the MBO with and for its members. This is why



SPIDER combines capacity development with methods and tools to monitor the progress and the results of the MBOs<sup>3</sup>.

SPIDER provides a guide for helping partner MBOs to strengthen their own organization and the quality of the services they provide to their members. SPIDER is an open framework, to which other tools and approaches can be included. Since every organization and every context is unique, flexibility is important. With SPIDER, the needs of every single MBO can be addressed, while managing country-wide, regional and worldwide programs. The SPIDER manual indicates that it provides a common language and a common reference framework, as to be able to exchange between each other – not only between Trias advisors but also between partners in the South and/or partners in the North. This does not mean that SPIDER should be used to compare results between MBOs within one or between several countries. This is not useful, as the scores do not reveal anything about their underlying argumentation and contexts differ from country to country.

There are six main steps in the SPIDER process<sup>4</sup>:

1. The process starts with the Organizational Capacity Assessment workshop. This is a participatory analysis with a representative group of members, staff and management people during which the whole organization is assessed. The goal of this exercise is to identify the priorities of the MBO in terms of capacity development and better performance of the MBO.
2. These priorities are then developed by the MBO staff and management into a well elaborated Organizational Development Plan. This ODP describes what the MBO wants to improve and how it will be done and by whom. The ODP also contains a timing. Indicators for follow-up (monitoring) are selected in collaboration with Trias.
3. Once the ODP is established and the indicators for success are selected, the baseline situation (or the situation before the start of the activities) can be established.
4. Then it is time to start the actual work of strengthening the MBO, which involves workshops, exchanges (including N/S exchanges), coaching by Trias advisors, etcetera. In other words, the Organizational Development Plan gets executed via a series of activities. The purpose of these activities is that the MBO will gradually introduce changes in its activities, its policies, its investments, its way of deciding, its involvement in networks, etcetera.
5. Every year, an Annual Review Workshop is organized. During this workshop, the progress of the MBO is established using the indicators selected in the ODP. Armed with this information, the MBO (staff plus management, members could also be involved) and the Trias advisor discuss the progress, the activities that have been organized, the planning for next year, etcetera. This information will serve to organize new activities. In some cases, the ODP will be modified or updated, since the idea is to allow for flexibility in the capacity development process.
6. At the end of the program, a participatory evaluation session is organized, which again involves a representative group of members, staff and management of the MBO, together with Trias. At this point, the MBO-scan that was made in the first phase is repeated and then compared to the original situation. Instead of focusing only on the topics and indicators identified in the ODP, Trias and the MBO will get an overview of the situation and evolution of the whole

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<sup>3</sup> Manual on monitoring and evaluation as part of the SPIDER approach (version April 2014)

<sup>4</sup> Id.

organization in all its aspects.

The effect of the capacity development on the performance of the organization and on the situation of the members can then be analyzed and discussed, to determine whether all the efforts done have led to the expected organizational changes, and to the desired effects at member level.

The process described allows for flexibility. For instance, it may be necessary to have more regular monitoring meetings (twice a year) or evaluation sessions (twice during the project). Or the order of the activities may vary. It is also possible that the MBO executes its own organizational audit and that information coming out of this assessment will be used for the ODP. It is possible that the MBO already has a strategy on organizational development; if this is the case, then this strategy will be aligned with the Trias support.

### *Identification and Implementation of the Trias capacity building strategy - Zone of control*

As mentioned above, the identification and implementation of the capacity building intervention strategy which is the core of the Trias strategy takes place, based on choices made and decisions taken by the MBO partners in close collaboration with Trias. According to the SPIDER manual, “Trias assists (facilitates) the partner MBO in its development process, but this doesn’t mean that Trias is the only party to offer assistance. It is therefore possible that there are other partners and parties listed in the ODP. The advantage of creating this overall plan is that the role of the various stakeholders is clear and that there is a clear division of tasks.”

The lowest level of the country ToC includes a short description of the main activities that are part of this capacity building strategy. These activities are sometimes executed by Trias, sometimes by another organization/strategic partner.

Capacity building and other intervention priorities are all selected by and agreed upon with the MBOs, and Trias plays an important supportive role towards the MBOs when executing the capacity building activities (see also further in this document). In terms of the Trias Theory of Change, this means that any decision Trias takes itself regarding its cooperation with the MBO partners and other organizations lies within its zone of control. It also means that every choice made, or decision taken by the MBO does not lie within the Trias zone of control, because Trias will neither steer nor manage or control the MBOs choices or decisions. Trias can only steer and adapt what they think and realize themselves within its cooperation framework with the MBOs.

For example if in cooperation with an MBO it is decided to work on gender, and the MBO decides to use the gender tool developed by Trias and to organize training sessions given by Trias for that purpose, then in this case the Trias zone of control are the training sessions given by Trias. Trias can control the quality of the trainings, the content, the set up etcetera (although this will usually also take place in collaboration with the MBOs thus the control will not be 100%). The whole process to come to the decision to use the gender tool does not lie within the zone of control of Trias, because Trias can only try to influence this process and the outcome of it (see next paragraph).

### *Changes at the level of the MBOs – Zone of influence*

Changes taking place at MBO-level (= **result level** in the strategy framework), as a result of the Trias support (and that of other organizations) are changes within the zone of influence. It means that Trias – based on its capacity building strategy– influences the MBOs to a certain extent in order to achieve the desired results and changes as described in the Trias Theory of Change, but cannot completely control what will come out of the capacity building. That’s what we call the ‘**zone of influence**’.

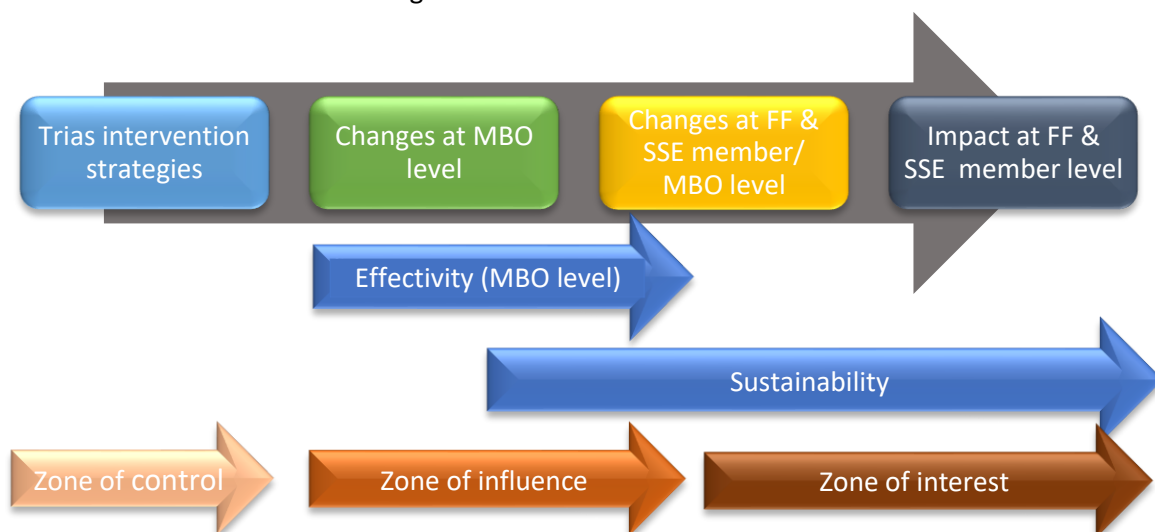
Looking back at the example above, it means that with Trias support, the MBO will hopefully acquire and apply knowledge and skills in how to improve gender related issues in the organization. Hopefully, because Trias can only influence the probability that gender inclusion will improve within the MBO, by working on the MBO’s understanding, awareness, willingness, knowledge and skills on gender inclusion.

### *Changes at the level of the MBO members and beyond – Zone of interest*

MBOs as active actors in society are organizations in which organized FFs and SSEs contribute to an inclusive society, are active in coalitions, have improved access to services responding to their needs, etcetera. These changes are to be found at FF and SSE level, as a result of the strengthened MBOs. Since Trias works mainly with the MBOs (board and staff) and less with individual FFs and SSE members<sup>5</sup>, members will only be influenced by Trias in an indirect way. This is called the **zone of interest**. We have interest in strengthening the individual MBO members, but we cannot influence that directly ourselves (except when Trias works directly with the individual MBO members).

Even more, what we want to achieve in the end, in the longer term, is that the individual MBO members increase their livelihood and connect and act collectively. This is an **impact level** that we hope for, but this is at such high level that it is quite difficult to measure the contribution or attribution of Trias. Many of the underlying assumptions have to be true in order to say something about the contribution or attribution of Trias regarding the achieved impact.

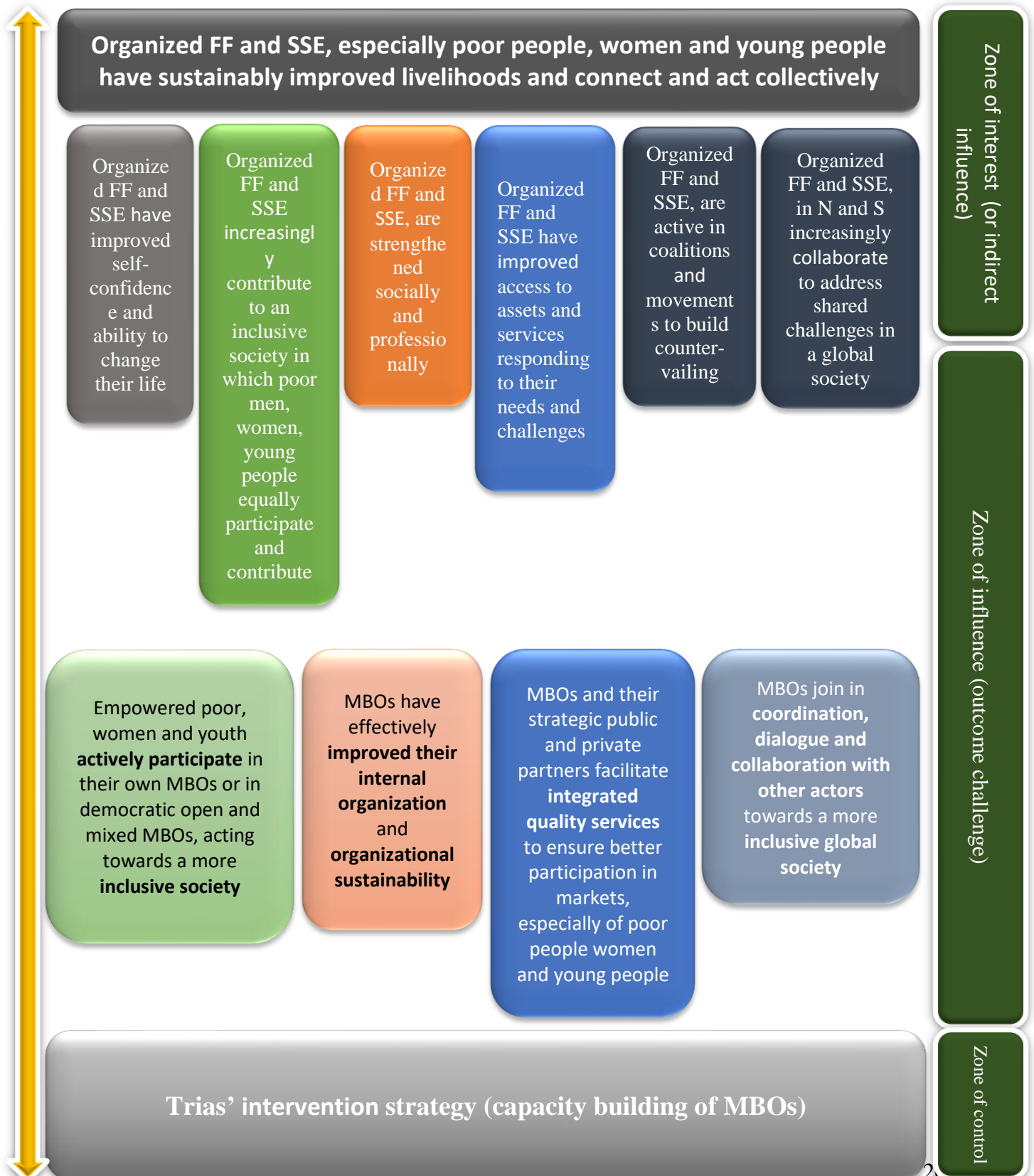
We can visualize the flow of changes of MBOs and their members as follows:



<sup>5</sup> Although there are examples mentioned in the midterm evaluation reports of Trias working directly with the individual FF/SSE MBO members.

*The overall strategy framework 2013-2022 of Trias and the Theory of Change*

Visualizing the overall strategy framework 2013-2022 (without changing the original wording) as a Theory of Change by including the zones of control, influence and interest, we get the following picture (see next figure). Areas of the same color seem more closely interconnected than the other areas (based on the formulation of the expected changes).



In every country where Trias works a Theory of Change has been developed based on the strategy framework above. These theories of change include a brief description of the Trias intervention strategy (= the topics that will be covered by Trias and its partners for the next 5 years), the expected results at MBO level based on the 7 core competencies of the SPIDER approach, the expected outcomes at MBO and MBO member level (performance areas), the expected long term changes at FF and SSE level (impact), and the underlying assumptions which need to be true for the Theory of Change to take place.

## 4 Main findings and conclusions

### 4.1. Analysis of the country Theories of Change

When analyzing the midterm reports and other documents like the 2017-2021 DGD program document, some first insights regarding the country theories of change of Trias could be observed. Apart from the progress results of the MBOs and their members in the countries, selected for this evaluation, a first analysis of the country Theories of change give already some insights on how functional these Theories of Change are:

- 1. The country theories of change are programmatic and do not envision (eventual) changes beyond MBO level that may be needed to achieve the desired impact at MBO and/or member level*

The MBO partners and their members form the scope of the country Theories of Change. The country logical frameworks of the DGD program have been derived from these Theories of Change; the results and outcome levels in the logical frameworks are pretty much the same as the changes described in the Theories of change. In this sense the country Theories of Change are rather **programmatic** than a visualization of all the changes needed in an environment in which the MBOs can operate effectively. An MBO is not an island though and the way how the environment interacts / influences / limits, creates opportunities which are not included now in the ToC or only to a limited extent.

Also, each MBO deals with internal and different power relations e.g. one year the MBO makes a lot of 'progress' and when new leaders come in, power relations change and suddenly the program does not move anymore and has to take into account certain developments. Trias can work at staff level, at board level, apply different roles, but this will not automatically generate results. It requires time and involvement of MBO key staff and leaders to enter into these reflections of power relations and organizational culture, which in a programmatic logic is a challenge because Trias needs to show progress each year.

The latter does not need to be a problem if this is a conscient and informed choice e.g. when Trias knows that other necessary changes – not tackled by Trias and not directly related to MBOs but needed for an effective functioning of the MBOs - are taken up by other actors (e.g. access to land, or the existence of a tax system that does not hamper MBO businesses to grow etc.) The question is: is this

the case? Since the country TOC are limited to MBOs and their members and do not include other (eventual) necessary changes beyond MBOs, we cannot give an answer to this question, although some interventions (by Trias) go beyond direct support to the MBOs.

In Tanzania for instance, advocacy and networking are done to connect to issues Trias and the MBOs don't work on directly but have an influence on the changes they are working towards. The question then would be how effective is the lobby, advocacy and networking, in favor of the MBOs? And in the Philippines, Trias looks at how they can bring in more stakeholders/service providers to support their partners in issues that they do not directly address. They also link them with national organizations e.g. which realize national lobby and advocacy on behalf and for the sector...

## *2. Assumptions present in the ToC focus mainly on external factors*

It's always a difficult exercise to identify those assumptions that are most crucial for the realization of the ToC. It is easy to come up with a long list of assumptions covering all possible internal and external factors that may influence the ToC resulting in an overview of assumptions no one will ever test because 1/there are too many and 2/the overview includes assumptions which lie outside the scope of influence. Assumptions are supposed to be true. If this is not the case, then they need to become part of the program or other solutions need to be sought to mitigate their risk. Therefore, no assumptions should be included that are not possible to influence if needed e.g. an assumption like "stable environmental conditions (no extreme risks because of earthquakes, hurricanes, or floods)" should not be included because nothing can be done to prevent or reduce it.

Secondly, assumptions are the backbone of the Theory of Change, and should therefore contain a combination of both internal (related to the MBO themselves) and external factors. Although not mentioned by the midterm reports, it was observed in the DGD program document that most of the country ToC do not include internal factors. For instance, in Brazil one internal assumption could be found: *"Members cooperatives are willing to follow rules & strategies and access services led by their local MBOs – UNICAFES."* It is nevertheless difficult to believe that the Trias intervention strategy in the regions lead to results without making important assumptions at the MBO level like e.g. "no turnover of staff". Therefore, based on the midterm reports it is not possible to conclude if the most crucial assumptions were included in the country ToC and if something needs to change here.

## *3. Little evidence could be found on how 'true' the TOC assumptions still are*

In order to check whether the ToC are functional or not, it is important to (re)affirm the assumptions. Based on this analysis it should be decided to change something in the ToC and/or the strategy or not. Assumptions were hardly analyzed and (re)affirmed during the regional midterm evaluations or little evidence could be found on this. Nevertheless, it is not that difficult to do. E.g. an example where assumptions were checked was in Brazil e.g.

*The political and economic situation is hampering dialogue with public authorities involved in policies related to family farming and cooperatives. On the other hand, lobby & advocacy expanded, mainly in the state and national legislatures, obtaining good results for Unicafes/MG and affiliates. With respect to environmental regulation, there is a trend towards*

*setbacks, such as the massive release of pesticides in 2019 and the dismantling of public services in this area, such as the scrapping of inspection agencies. The creation of Fecafes has challenged member cooperatives to follow common rules and strategies to access services and products that interest them. Despite difficulties and some resistance, they have made progress in this direction, especially in the commercial sector. The assessors, made possible by the project, have contributed to the qualification and improvement of the performance of Unicafes/MG and its affiliates, also contributing to the expansion of capacities and competencies in each region, constituting an important sustainability strategy.*

*Brazil is experiencing a critical juncture in several aspects, negatively affecting the assumptions defined above: i. economy in crisis, with growing unemployment and poverty; ii. unstable political environment with setbacks in the democratic rule of law, social division with greater intolerance and violence, loss of rights and unfavorable correlation of forces for the FF, the SSE and the supporting cooperativism; iii. expansion of the agribusiness offensive with greater deforestation and destruction of the Cerrado; iv. severe droughts in the state of Minas Gerais (2017, 2018 and 2019), due to the influence of El Niño, which led to the decree of a state of emergency in the regions of operation of Unicafes/MG; v. environment for local alliances influenced by the political and economic situation, increasing the need for articulation of popular democratic sectors and, on the other hand, restricting associations in the economic and productive sphere. At the international level, greater attention is being paid to Brazil, in the environmental sphere and in the defense of the rights of traditional peoples and communities.*

*(MT report, Brazil).*

#### **4. Identified assumptions at ‘outcome-impact’<sup>6</sup> level in the ToC do not sufficiently close the gap between outcome-impact level**

This would be acceptable if Trias would assume that the impact level is a zone of interest level and not a zone that can directly be influenced. In this case, we assume that in one way or another Trias will contribute to this level, even without measuring it.

There are countries however where Trias works directly with the members of MBOs. Also, in the countries where Trias supports MBOs and not the members, Trias wants to measure the impact and even the contribution of Trias to this impact.

However, even if Trias will be able to measure impact at the end of the program, it won’t be possible to measure the contribution of Trias without making explicit the underlying mechanisms that explain how outcome will eventually leads to impact. This means that assumptions at this level should not only include external elements, but also internal elements (MBO-related). Secondly, the country ToC don’t include a narrative that explains how Trias expects the underlying processes from outcome to impact to work. Main emphasis in the narrative lies on how Trias expects to implement its strategy with the MBOs.

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<sup>6</sup> Using the same terminology as Trias to explain the levels of change in the ToC

## *5. The terminology used in the ToC is not always clear, resulting in unclear descriptions of changes in the regional midterm evaluation reports*

This may seem a small remark, but it isn't. If the described changes in the midterm report do not make clear at what level they take place (result or outcome) or because of who (see last paragraph of the previous point) then this does not give insight in how functional the ToC is.

What is particularly confusing in the ToC is the following:

- Member participation is mentioned at results and outcome level in the country ToC: what is exactly the difference in terms of change?
- At outcome level two changes are described related to environment and natural resources, but there are no changes at a 'lower' level which are supposed to happen so that these 'outcome' changes can take place (or they might be 'hidden' under resources management). Because of this, it is not always clear in the regional midterm reports how these changes at outcome level could take place.

This point of attention returns further in the report.

## 4.2. SPIDER approach – Capacity building strategy of Trias

### 4.2.1. Main findings and analysis

If we want to analyze the results achieved so far at MBO level, with support provided by Trias in the regions, the starting question is:

***“How was the support provided by Trias identified (at/before the start of the program)?”***

#### *1. SPIDER approach*

Chapter 3 of this report describes briefly the SPIDER approach, which is meant to be a participatory process and executed in close collaboration between the Trias regional teams and the MBO partners. At the end of this process, participants should have a better view on the OD state of the MBO, on the organizational issues that need improvement and on the priorities to work on with support from Trias and other strategic partners and actors, taking into account the available time and resources.<sup>7</sup>

All midterm reports reveal that the SPIDER approach is used to establish the initial situation of the MBOs and to identify the MBO needs on organizational development. Based on these needs, a selection is made on which areas Trias will strengthen the MBOs during the implementation period of the DGD program. The underlying idea of this selection is that Trias cannot work (alone) on all areas, so that a prioritization of support is necessary. In all regions, Trias collaborates with other external stakeholders in a complementary and synergetic way to enable strengthening of areas that Trias does not or to a limited extent support.

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<sup>7</sup> SPIDER Manual of Trias (versión 2014)



Overall, the SPIDER approach is well appreciated by the MBOs, particularly the participatory approach for the identification of their organizational status and needs.

Sur la base de leurs connaissances et de l'expérience qu'ils ont du contexte national, l'équipe de projet a pu sélectionner quatre OM de paysans agricoles et d'entrepreneurs au potentiel très important. Dans les quatre cas, les services que ces OM fournissent actuellement à leurs membres correspondent à leurs besoins et donc de nature à améliorer leur existence. En plus, en dépit des quelques écarts observés dans quelques localités (Cissela et Banko), le processus de choix s'est globalement conformé aux principes de l'approche d'intervention de TRIAS, centrée sur SPIDER qui requiert, entre autres, l'inclusion et la participation de l'ensemble des leaders et des membres des groupements de base concernée. Enfin la mise en œuvre du processus a permis de faire « l'état des lieux » dans chaque OM et d'avoir une connaissance approfondie des quatre structures, de leurs projets, des défis qui se posent à eux. Il a permis aussi de préparer la phase suivante qui devrait être celle de l'élaboration commune (TRIAS et OM) d'un plan de développement organisationnel (Guinée)

The SPIDER has been to a large extent the building block of the MBOs success and particularly in facilitating organizations development particularly in determining their members' needs and in delivering their services effectively. (Philippines)

El SPIDER es utilizado para todos los socios del programa Trias-Brasil. El enfoque y las herramientas de SPIDER son básicamente las que utiliza el programa Trias-Brasil para, junto y en diálogo con la MBO, en un proceso educativo y pedagógico, analizar la contraparte y sus necesidades y planificar, monitorear y evaluar el proceso de desarrollo organizacional. (Brazil)

Most of the regions apply the main SPIDER tools and instruments (see next table). In Brazil and Ecuador, the MSS tool is not used. This tool was used in the previous program in Brazil but not anymore in the current program. The reason for this is that the opinion of the members in Brazil is captured in a participatory and collective way or by using individual surveys while evaluating the capacity indicators or during planning workshops. A similar argument was used in Ecuador, where the opinion of members is sought during monitoring of the capacity indicators. These sources of information are considered as adequate and no need is felt to implement an additional survey.

<b>SPIDER tools/instruments:</b>	<b>BRA</b>	<b>GUI</b>	<b>TAN</b>	<b>ECU</b>	<b>SAL</b>	<b>PHIL</b>
Organizational Capacity Assessment workshop (OCA, start of the program)	X	X	X	X	X	X
MBO-scan	X	X	X	X	X	X
OD plan	X	X	X	X	X	X
Member satisfaction survey (MSS)	-	X	X	-	X	X
MBO Capacity monitoring	X	X	X	X	X	X
MBO performance monitoring	X	X	X	X	X	X
Program monitoring tool	X	X	X	X	X	X
Annual review workshop	X	X	X	X	X	X

Table: Extent to which the SPIDER approach is applied and instruments are used

## *2. Additional tools used next to SPIDER*

In Brazil an alternative tool was sought for the ODP, since the Trias template did not sufficiently allow for adding trimestral sub-objectives per sector. This alternative tool was found with Trias Ecuador where the MML tool was already used and now also by Trias Brazil.

Another tool used in Brazil next to the SPIDER tool is OKR (Objectives and Key Results) which is applied in strategic planning (developed by J.Doerr in 1970). This tool is used in a complementary way; it makes distinction between three levels: strategic, tactic and operational level. The tool helps in prioritizing and setting objectives. The idea is to combine different tools in the planning/assessment with MBOs to promote more and more realistic operational planning and action plans based on facts and not just on intentions (according to the Trias regional office).

The MTE report in Tanzania noted that two MBOs are using additional ODP formats namely OCTAGON and OCAT tools in order to meet requirements of other funders. For the same reason, one MBO in Ecuador uses also an additional tool (name of the tool not mentioned). In El Salvador a good ODP with one MBO partner took extra time and required negotiation at the methodological level between Trias and another donor (We Effect), since both organizations have their battery of supporting tools (WE Effect works with OCTAGON) and use a different program calendar. According to the regional office, it took time to come to one integrated support towards the partner, being flexible and giving up some of the internal tools. The regional office in CAM also mentioned that linking SPIDER tools with the ToC is a difficult exercise for MBOs.

The challenge to cope with different OD approaches was only reported in El Salvador. In Tanzania it was indicated that it was an advantage that most of the external actors, involved in the Trias program, were already integrated and involved in the DGD program from the start, which allowed coordination for cooperation to take place synchronously with the start of the program (which undoubtedly has increased the efficiency of the program from the start).

FGD data from the TRIAS Program team in the Philippines revealed that additional tools were used such as the Financial Health Check, tools on gender and development (GAD), the Balanced Scorecard and We Effect's OCTAGON for organizational assessment. These tools complement the SPIDER tools. In addition, during the Sense-Making Conference for the Metro Manila Partners, one MBO partner shared that aside from SPIDER, the MBO uses the CDA COOP PESO tool for performance monitoring, and CODE for social audit done by an internal committee. These are mandated tools of CDA for all savings and credit cooperatives.

In Ecuador several MBOs are supported by other actors both locally and internationally, which have different goals and propose their own ODP formats, as is the case with the CEJC<sup>8</sup>, which has more than one ODP format, used independently by the MBO.

The MTE report of Guinée does not mention the use of other than SPIDER tools to identify OD needs.

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<sup>8</sup> Coordinadora Ecuatoriana de Comercio Justo

### 3. Observations, challenges and suggestions for improvement of the SPIDER approach

(based on the MTE reports and additional interviews with regional directors)

The MTE report of Brazil (and confirmed by CAM regional office) indicates that the success of the SPIDER tools are due to following factors:

- Adaptations made to the tools e.g. reducing the number of questions accompanying the capacity indicators and the enrichment of the planning and evaluation workshops instead of using the MSS;
- The use of language, adapted to the FFs and a large group of participants in order to increase user friendliness and mutual understanding not just between staff but also between local – often rural - leaders);
- Number and diversity of participants like board, technical staff, members; 4/the dynamics of bringing all information together on the second day of the workshop into easy to understand spider diagrams.

In contradiction to the 3<sup>rd</sup> observation above, in the Philippines it was observed that the diversity of participants during these identification and planning workshops worked negatively on the dynamics of participation e.g. not all members wanting to express their opinion in presence of the board or technical staff. According to the regional office in the Philippines, a successful process is a process that creates a safe space for all 'types' of participants, and a mixed group prevents the exercise from generating full/unbiased information cf. how this is done in El Salvador.

In El Salvador, it was stated that working with homogenous groups during the progress monitoring e.g. with women and men separately, youth and elderly people separately revealed interesting differences in scoring of indicators, contributing significantly to the internal debate and reflection. Working this way avoids generalization and gives extra space during the moments that evidence is shared to analyze the underlying reasons for the scores.

Unfortunately, the Trias M&E digital system does not allow to capture the different points of view of the scored indicators, so overall this information goes lost and at corporate level no lessons can be drawn, taking into account these nuances. The latter has also been mentioned in other regions: when the regional Trias teams register and document the underlying argumentation for the indicators so to keep documented the why and how of a scoring, this information cannot be digitalized at the moment. In general, the opinion in the regions (at Trias level) is that the scores without the underlying explanation do not reveal the real progress made by MBOs.

An interesting observation was made in the MTE report of the Philippines, stating that the SPIDER system is mainly quantitative and builds on the assumption that *“we need to increase or improve scorings by definition. Sometimes though a decrease in the capacity or in the indicators of the performance just means that the question is better answered – as more info is available to answer, respondents understand better the issue behind the question and are now ready/equipped to answer the question more correctly”*. This observation was confirmed by the regional office in El Salvador i.e. that a lower scoring of capacity or performance indicators may simply mean that people better understand the meaning of the indicators, or that they are more honest and transparent in answering.

However, MBOs are sometimes reluctant in admitting that their capacities don't deserve more than a 1 or 2 scoring, especially with new partners where confidence and trust still needs to be built, and "politically correct behavior" is shown during the scoring of indicators which is completely normal, but it influences the program setup when a biased baseline is created.

When we look at the SPIDER manual, we see that the accompanying questions form the basis for the scoring of indicators. Observations raised by the regional offices about the scoring and accompanying questions were the following:

- The auxiliary questions do not always seem clear, or they are too vague, too general, or too numerous;
- A score for an indicator provides mainly an answer to the extent to which a certain indicator is present, and it does not necessarily provide an answer to the quality of the indicator brought into practice;
- Another challenge is that not all participants have the same understanding of what a topic really means and how to score it. What is "good financial management" for example, or what does "voice of women" really mean? Without a clear understanding of topics to be scored it is difficult to assess them objectively;
- Another challenge is the scale used to measure progress of capacities measured in the SPIDER approach (0-4). Although this scale is easy to use, it does not allow to see real progress made by the MBOs.

What further emerged from some interviews is that people sometimes find the SPIDER approach too much focused on organizational development, and that more attention should be paid to supporting the business wing of MBOs, including the related small scale businesses at the level of sub-chains with women and youth. MBOs often focus on production or marketing with the aim of raising the wellbeing of their members. Depending on the size and type of business, this can be quite complex and needs to be properly analyzed in order to provide targeted support (by Trias or via other partners).

Other challenges coming out of some of the reports were the following:

- Collection of monitoring information takes time and is sometimes delayed because of other priorities; (Brazil)
- Sometimes monitoring information is not complete or not of good quality because of time constraints or new staff is not used (yet) to collect this information (Brazil). A challenge that still needs to be overcome is the limited quantification of results in trimonthly and yearly reports, actualizing quantitative indicators every three months which makes it easier to aggregate this information only once a year;
- Turnover of staff and transition of board of directors' mandates cannot be underestimated (Brazil);
- In Guinée it was also observed, that there is still a need for the MBO staff to understand better the concept of performance monitoring. This was also confirmed by the regional office of CAM;
- Also in Guinée, although consulted members' groups consider that their needs were well identified during the first stage of the ODP process, they see it as a weakness that only their representatives and not the members themselves were consulted in this process (according to some of the consulted members);

- Partner MBOs do not use the trimestral monitoring reports produced by Trias (Brazil) because the MBO board and part of the staff are lacking sensitivity and comprehension about the importance of using trimestral information in reflections and decision taking processes. There seem to be deficiencies in quality and preparation of board meetings where no time and priority is given to this kind of reflections. Monitoring information is more used to justify or explain actions but without deepening reflections and debate aimed at improving collaboration;
- Also mentioned in Brazil: members with sometimes little knowledge participate to the yearly revision meetings. Not always the same members participate to the yearly revision meetings which influences negatively the continuity needed in planning and evaluation processes. Participants often express their personal opinion during revision meetings and not that of their union, cooperative, group... A reason for this could be because the annual revision meeting is not prepared in advance at the member cooperative, group, union...level.

In the other regions, no weaknesses or critical points have emerged regarding the use of the SPIDER approach.

Despite the challenges mentioned above, in general it is said that the SPIDER concept and approach is relevant and important. At the same time the regional Trias offices think that the process of identification and prioritization of OD needs is heavy and should be reduced in time and approach. Based on the midterm reports, following suggestions were given to improve the implementation of the SPIDER approach:

- Reduce the number of supportive questions without jeopardizing the quality of information collection;(Brazil)
- Some questions could be formulated better in order to capture the essence of what needs to be assessed; (Phil)
- Work with two different questionnaires or workshops: one meant for everybody (board, technical staff, members) and an additional one for only board and permanent technical staff complementing themes and information coming out of the first workshop or questionnaire. This because members do not always know sufficiently about all topics particularly on management issues. At the other hand, discussing these topics in a joint way increases transparency on these topics among board, technical staff and members, (Brazil), and it gives members a window to get informed on and even contribute to organizational themes (Tanzania regional office);  
However, in the Philippines it was mentioned that bringing different groups and power groups together does not provide the necessary space to critically discuss relevant issues in the organization especially those that relate to participation and democratic behavior of the organization. (ref. MTE report Phil).
- A better mastery of the concept and tools developed by the program and made available to Trias advisors is needed not only at the level of leaders but also at the level of the members and MBO staff who should be associated with all SPIDER activities (Guinée).

#### 4.2.2. Conclusions – SPIDER

In summary, the SPIDER approach of Trias is well integrated into the program cycle of Trias and its MBO partners, whether or not complemented by other tools, desired by the MBOs themselves or by other donors. The SPIDER approach is considered important and relevant. The greatest strength of the approach seems to be its participatory approach.

Nevertheless, there are a number of points that could be improved according to the regional MTE:

- 1/the processes to arrive at an OD plan should be less labor and time consuming;
- 2/the way of scoring (too quantitative) and the scale itself (too limited to monitor progress) is questioned;
- 3/the way in which participation takes place and diversity of participants (board, MBO staff, members, gender and intersectionality) is managed in a collective manner is also questioned in some regions (although splitting up groups can make the process more time consuming).

In addition, some regions feel that support for MBOs should also include more business-oriented aspects or include elements that cannot be derived from the SPIDER approach at this moment (because they are not included in the tools), without detracting from the importance of organizational development.

#### 4.3. Roles of Trias

Once the needs of the MBOs are identified, a selection is made on which areas Trias (and other stakeholders) will support the MBOs . The underlying idea of this selection is that Trias (and other partners) cannot work on all areas, so that a prioritization of support is necessary. In all regions, Trias cooperates with other external stakeholders in a complementary and synergetic way to enable strengthening of areas which Trias does not support or only to a limited extent.

Following question was used as point of departure for this chapter: during the period 2017-2019

***“ What was the support provided by Trias identified at/before the start of the program? What role did Trias play while collaborating with the MBOs?”***

### 4.3.1. Main findings and analysis

When analyzing the first question (what is the Trias support”), main findings are the following, based on the MTE reports and additional interviews:

1. *Although the MBOs involved in this evaluation intend to prioritize a number of OD themes in collaboration with Trias, in most of the regions Trias (together with other strategic partners) covers most of the capacities*

These core capacities are the following (see right column of next table)<sup>9</sup>:

Key result	Core capacity
Empowered poor, women and youth proactively participate in their own MBOs or in democratic, open and mixed MBOs, acting towards a more inclusive society	<b>Inclusivity:</b> the MBO ensures genuine participation of vulnerable groups in its structures and in its intervention area
	<b>Member participation:</b> the MBO is governed by its members and their chosen leaders
MBOs have effectively improved their internal organization and organizational sustainability	<b>Leadership:</b> the MBO has accountable and transparent leadership
	<b>Financial health:</b> the MBO is financially healthy
	<b>Resources management:</b> the MBO has the ability to motivate, train and support its human resources, and is capable to manage its equipment and other resources in a sustainable way
MBOs and their strategic public and private partners facilitate integrated quality services to ensure better participation in markets, especially of poor people, women and young people	<b>Delivery of integrated services:</b> the MBO delivers or facilitates the appropriate integrated services to its members
MBOs join in coordination, dialogue and collaboration with other actors towards a more inclusive global society	<b>Lobbying &amp; networking:</b> the MBO has the capacity to influence economic and social policies in favour of its members. The MBO also knows how to develop and maintain external relations, relevant to its purposes.

There are MBOs where all capacities are covered in one way or another. A reason given for this is that all core capacities are interlinked and influence each other and therefore should be covered (if needed).

Of course, not all MBOs have the same needs. In practice, it means that Trias works often on different core capacities with different partner MBOs, while in some cases other strategic partners cover some of the capacities not covered by Trias. Thus, even when Trias does not work on all and/or on the same core capacities with different MBOs in one region, overall it seems – based on the MTE reports - that all core capacities in one region are covered (see next table).

<sup>9</sup> Ref. SPIDER manual of Trias

Country	Trias support according to the midterm reports (often in collaboration with other partners, external consultants, external stakeholders)								Stakeholders collaborating with Trias (mentioned in the MT reports and program doc)
	Financial contribution	Member participation	PME/ program coordination	Financial mgmt.	Leadership/ board governance	Inclusion	Integrated service Delivery	Networking & Coordination	
Brazil	X	X	X	X	X	Youth (no gender, only indirectly)	X	X	Brookfield (technical support), FBB (equipment), Unicafe Nacional PECSOL (training on cooperativism), FNS/CNBB (support to women in agroecological alimentation), parliamentarians (financial support but not realized yet), national govt (financial support), membership fees
Guinée	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	(X)	Aguidep (business development);RGTA (technical services); ATC (technical/organizational)
Tanzania	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X (limited L&A, more in collab.with other partners)	IDP (technical, L&A), Rikolto (technical, market, BDS, OD), YEP, BOS+ (environmental), AHA (leadership, entrepreneurship), AVRDC <sup>10</sup> (BDS, technical), AgriCord partners
Ecuador	X	X	X	X	X	X	X BDS in collab.with university), markets, digitalization	X including L&A	ESPOCH; CIP; ETIQUABLE; GADP TUNGURAHUA; MAG TUNGURAHUA INIAP;; RIKOLTO RIMISP <sup>11</sup> ; MAG CHIMBORAZO
El Salvador	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	WE Effect and BRS/CERA (financial, governance skills) supporting one MBO partner, MARKANT, YOUCA, BE actors (JSF) among others
Philippines	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	We Effect, Agriterra, Central Bicol State Univ.of Agriculture, CUSO <sup>12</sup> , LGA, CSO's in rural & enterprise devt.; Belgian NGA's particularly E&F, CSA. Partners of the West Flanders synergy project

Table: Coverage of core competencies by Trias in collaboration with external stakeholders, per region (source: regional MTE reports)

<sup>10</sup> World Vegetable Center

<sup>11</sup> Centro Latinoamericano para el Desarrollo Rural.

<sup>12</sup> Canadian VSO



When analyzing the support and contribution made by Trias towards the MBO, we tried to make distinction between the support provided by Trias and the support provided by the other actors, in order to get a more precise idea of the Trias support, which should be helpful in determining the contribution of Trias towards the MBO results. But in many cases, this was not possible. In the regional MTE reports the Trias support was often mentioned together with support from other actors.

## *2. When supporting the MBOs, the regional Trias teams play different roles*

### **Description of the Trias roles**

In the SPIDER manual, the role of Trias is described as follows:

*“ The role of the Trias advisor is based on the principles of Action Research, which means that he or she will accompany the MBO in a supporting process as a change agent . The important word here is ‘accompany’. The advisor is a resource person who can give methodological support and who shares his or her knowledge and experiences. He or she helps to analyse, organize debates, reach conclusions and identify the way forward. But ultimately, it is still for the organization to decide on the changes it wants to introduce. What the advisor DOESN’T DO is to take over the development process from the organization. He or she doesn’t decide what should be done to make the organization the best possible organization it can be. The advisor can share his/her opinion, but he/she does not direct. **He/she shares information, but doesn’t force anyone to follow his/her ideas or opinion. The advisor is not a teacher, not a consultant, not a financial auditor. He or she facilitates.** As we’ve explained earlier, the actual process of organizational development belongs to the MBO itself.”*

In addition to this, the role of Trias with its partners is described as follows in the Trias strategy note:

*“Trias takes up different roles: **coach, facilitator of organizational development, financier, provider of network contacts, bridge builder, etcetera.** Trias also invests in renewed **partnerships between MBOs across borders, both North-South and South-South, aimed at mutually beneficial exchanges and increased solidarity.**”*

In 2017, during the Trias 2.0. transformation, all the above-mentioned roles were clustered into three main roles: **financier, facilitator and technical support**. These three roles are described as follows: as *process facilitator*, Trias takes up a coaching and supporting role towards the partner MBO. This support is two-fold: to implement the participative SPIDER approach and to facilitate support from service providers to the partner MBO. Once the MBO partners identified their change trajectories (as part of the planning phase of SPIDER), Trias investigates which local or other service organization could support the trajectory (see facilitating role above). Trias can, on request of the partner, also provide *technical support* itself related to the core themes of Trias (see above). The third role is related to the provision of *financial support* to partner MBOs.

There are several reasons why Trias takes up different roles (based on the MTE regional reports and additional interviews):

- Sometimes there are not sufficient other organizations on the spot that can take up a more technical support role, resulting in Trias taking up a more technical advisory or trainer role;
- To achieve results at MBO and member level, some of the regional offices believe that Trias staff needs to be able to do more than facilitating meetings, bringing people together etcetera. Next to facilitator skills, Trias staff needs to have at least some knowledge and expertise in the kind of businesses the MBOs are involved in e.g. strengthening BDS skills of MBOs may include being able to develop business plans, or strengthening governance may not only mean strengthening leadership skills but also strengthening skills regarding how to run a business, how to negotiate with commercial partners etcetera. OD skills may therefore not be that soft as it may seem. Supporting MBOs requires a certain technical level of expertise and knowledge regarding the topics the MBOs are involved in (not necessarily always in-depth knowledge).

*“We worked with a sociologist before. This profile is not sufficient anymore nowadays. MBOs expect us to have a certain level of knowledge on topics we work with them, in order to support them in helping to find a solution for their problems (always with MBOs in the driver’s seat of course)” (MTE Ecuador)*

- In the end, strengthening MBOs are not the final objective, but a means to increase the overall wellbeing of the MBO members. In El Salvador for instance, the regional CAM office applies the “good practice” (according to them) to build 40-60% budgets, assuring that a significant part of the budget is invested at member level, as a consequence and result of the strengthened process at the level of the MBO.

### Competency profiles in the Trias regional teams

To fulfill the different roles described above, most of the Trias regional teams have different **competency profiles in their team** e.g. profiles covering program management topics like program coordination, M&E, finances, next to more technical profiles working on topics like BDS, access to markets,... while other staff members have expertise in inclusion, membership participation, financial management, etcetera. In addition to this and already mentioned above, Trias often cooperates with other stakeholders, to guarantee 1/MBO support on topics not covered by Trias itself, and/or 2/strategies enabling MBOs to work effectively e.g. by building bridges towards other actors, by developing lobby and advocacy strategies etcetera.

The way how the regional Trias teams are composed is not the same in each region although some profiles always come back e.g. regional director, financial-administrative support. Overall, the MTE reports show that Trias plays all three roles in the regions (facilitator, financier and technical support). How these roles are concretely filled in and the importance given to each role differs between the regions and depends e.g. on what works best with the MBOs in a given context and based on their needs and priorities, the extent to which certain services can be covered by other stakeholders, contextual factors.

In summary, the regional team composition depends on the vision how to implement best the Trias capacity building strategy, the needs of the MBOs, the presence of other stakeholders in the region and contextual factors.

Trias usually works with board and MBO staff, and not with the individual members. However, there are examples that with smaller MBOs Trias collaborates also directly with the individual members like with local leaders at all levels of the MBO e.g. to train them in LEATRA, to sensitize on gender, to create new competencies on youth entrepreneurship etcetera.

Questions and challenges raised by regional directors during the interviews with regard to the roles Trias fulfills:

- When working on all the core capacities we need to be a generalist, but this has also limitations: we do a little bit of everything but nothing really in depth. What will be our impact then? **Isn't it better that we specialize in specific topics?** E.g. inclusion, or business development,...?
- Or **shouldn't we better be generalists and know a little bit of everything** to enable us to follow up the MBO strengthening in a more integrated way?
- Next to the core capacities, Trias works sometimes also on other topics e.g. climate change, environmental sustainability, multi-stakeholder management, following up trends in digitalization (e.g. use of drones in agriculture (Andes)), etcetera. Shouldn't this get more attention in the future?
- It is not always possible or recommendable to work with external consultants: they are expensive and/or they can't take the same ownership as Trias staff because they are not involved in/responsible for the long-term trajectory with MBOs.

### *3. Knowledge management supports the development and implementation of tools by the regional Trias teams*

The existence of tools developed by Trias or by other organizations which have proven their effectiveness yet and that can be replied in other regions (with some adjustments) adds value and can potentially save a lot of time and labor because Trias and their partners do not have to invent the wheel all over again. Most of the regions do not have a knowledge management officer (with exception of East Africa), but knowledge management is a task often taken up by the program coordinators.

An inventory of the application of these tools shows that this works i.e. that – compared to some years ago according to Trias HQ, increasingly more institutionalized tools on specific topics are being rolled out in the regions (see next table). The 'X' means that the tools are used in the field. If the topic is mentioned without an 'X' then it means that Trias works on the topic but with other tools or another approach.

	TAN	PHIL	ECU	SAL	GUI	BRA
<b>LEATRA</b>	Leadership (AHA tools)	X	LEATRA + other tools (Mgmt 3.0)	X	X	Liderazgo/ LEATRA
<b>Gender tool (ruta de género)</b>	Inclusion of women	X	X + other tools	X	(Inclusion of women)	-
<b>ERI</b>	-	X	-	-	X	-
<b>Youth inclusion</b>	X	(X)(under construction) <sup>13</sup>	X	(X) (under construction)	X (Jeunes solidaires)	(X) (under construction)
<b>FACT<sup>14</sup></b>	X	X	L&A	X	X	(X)

Table: Institutionalized instruments/practices used by the Trias regional teams

This is sometimes the case in regions where Trias partners were already applying tools with good results before Trias started to institutionalize knowledge on the same topic. In Tanzania for instance, Trias collaborates with AHA on leadership and other soft skills. Before LEATRA was rolled out within Trias, Trias Tanzania was already using tools from AHA.

The midterm reports from Tanzania, the Philippines and Ecuador also mention other tools or instruments than the tools developed by Trias e.g. in Ecuador, in addition to LEATRA, management 3.0 (of Jurgen Appelo) is applied. Also in Ecuador, additional activities next to the ERI tool (a kind of ERI 3.0) are being executed, and lobby and advocacy is done but based on other tools than FACT. In El Salvador, Trias, with the financial support of the YOUCA program and together with the local partners, is currently developing a method for involving young people more strongly in cooperatives and productive activities.

In the Philippines, other concepts and instruments than the ones mentioned above are used in training and technical support to MBO partners e.g. through the application of GAP, LEISA, DRR to mention some, contributing to increased production and income. CEFE is an important other toolbox of enterprise development modules which can be used to train MBOs.

In Brazil, an introductory workshop has been organized on LEATRA and there is quite some enthusiasm to use this tool in leadership trajectories. At this moment Trias is planning to adjust the tool for using it with CRESOL in the Parana. Trias staff and a permanent staff member of the MBO UNICAFES have followed training on FACT in El Salvador. According to the midterm report, part of this tool is being used but no information was revealed on the benefits neither on the results. Regarding inclusion (of women), no capacity building is taking place in Brazil neither is this a priority for the MBO partner. Even more, working on gender is being ignored by the MBO partner with a predominantly masculine governance structure, without considering this is as a problem and while

<sup>13</sup> The gender tool will be used to improve youth inclusion; this is currently work in progress

<sup>14</sup> Developed and rolled out with support of Agriterria in the area of L&A in previous DGD programs

women are fulfilling a considerable part of the agricultural activities of the member cooperatives. More efforts are being done to include and strengthen young MBO members.

Questions and challenges raised by regional directors during interviews with regard to this approach were the following:

- Knowledge management is important, but it often seems to receive the last priority. KM is an inspiring process according to the CAM regional office, which pays off, but it is an additional one, next to the Trias advisor role. The advisors' first role is to support processes and experiences, and only in a later phase to systematize and capitalize acquired experiences and expertise into knowledge and to enable this knowledge to be managed;
- There are limits on feasibility (in terms of time and resources) to keep up with new trends and needs. Also, translation of manuals and tools (the SPIDER manual, the LEATRA modules etc.) e.g. from English into Spanish requires time, labor and extra costs;
- KM within Trias is challenging but according to the regions is functioning quite well thanks to an integrated approach i.e. starting from what exists in the field, building upon local experiences and expertise, adjusting tools according to contextual needs, good cooperation between Trias staff from different regions;
- The approach for rolling out institutional tools like LEATRA could be improved with the roles and tasks of all Trias staff more efficiently deployed;
- More attention could be given to the detection and development of opportunities for institutionalization of tools with potential.

*4. Human Resources Management at corporate level does not support sufficiently competency management of Trias staff at institutional level, with exception of the competencies that are strengthened through knowledge management. Trias staff acquire most of the competencies in a hands-on manner*

This means that based on the regional competency needs and priorities, every regional director looks for ways to fill in each staff position. Local staff professionalizes mainly in an auto-didactical and hands-on way or staff is allowed to follow a short course to actualize their knowledge in function of the needs. This regional approach works well to some extent. Knowledge management supports and complements the regional competency building of staff, but this competency building does not arise from the local competency needs of the Trias staff members, but rather from the organizational and institutional needs within Trias to strengthen some specific competencies.

Some regional directors prefer to see some competencies more integrated in a more structural and institutional way, in order to professionalize Trias staff in a more effectively and efficiently. Examples are e.g. competencies of an advisor (“what is an advisor?”), and competencies of a “facilitator” (what does “facilitating groups” mean?). This would help new staff to professionalize more quickly some of the key competencies needed at the level of Trias staff. About eight years ago Trias already organized a training on ‘what is an advisor’ what was considered as very useful, but this training was a one-time event and did not become institutionalized so far, because of other priorities and not considering this important (according to some regional offices). However, during

the Trias 2.0 transformation process in 2017 a range of skills and knowledge were identified for Trias advisors needed to acquire. Trias management took the decision to support every Trias advisor to ensure thorough acquisition of this knowledge, to a much greater extent than in the past, through institutional training courses. So far this does not seem to have taken place yet (at least no evidence was found during this evaluation).

#### 4.3.2. Conclusions on the role of Trias

Regarding the role Trias plays in strengthening the MBOs, we conclude that Trias plays different roles, depending on the needs of the MBOs, and taking into account the available competencies, other partnerships with stakeholders who collaborate in supporting MBOs, the environment in which Trias operates and the regional Trias teams' own vision on how capacity building with MBO partners should take place. In summary these roles are facilitator, financier and technical support. Depending on the support provided Trias plays a more expert role or a more facilitator role, but always with the MBOs in the driver's seat. In general, this seems to function well.

The question can be asked whether the SPIDER approach with OD as a starting point covers sufficiently all actual and most important MBO needs, and if also other topics shouldn't deserve to be given more attention, although they may not be part or still very limited of the current SPIDER approach e.g. the increasing influence of climate change and environmental/ecological issues, increasing influence of digitalization, managing multi-stakeholder processes, strengthening inclusion in value chains etcetera.

A question raised by some regional Trias offices is what works best: being an expert on some topics and prioritize more than now and work more in depth with some MBOs, or being a generalist and trying to know a little bit of everything while offering support in an integrated but more superficial way? Answering these questions within a broader strategic debate of supporting OD of MBOs could be part of the upcoming strategic reflection process within Trias.

Knowledge management is supportive to the roles Trias plays when strengthening the MBO partners. In general, progress has been made in institutionalizing several tools (LEATRA, the gender tool, ERI) and by rolling them out in several regions. These are no easy processes and they can be further improved, but progress made is promising.

It is challenging for Trias to keep all balls in the air while fulfilling the different roles. Knowledge management supports the institutional strengthening of some competencies within Trias, but human resource management is still under-utilized when professionalizing the Trias advisors in strengthening the MBOs. Opportunities remain unexploited such as competency management that was once started and picked up again during the Trias 2.0 transformation process, but currently no evidence could be found that it is put into practice. HRM could do much more to support competency building of its staff, which would benefit the professionalization of Trias and therefore the support to MBOs.

## 4.4. Changes at MBO and member level – effectiveness and sustainability

The previous chapter describes the role Trias plays towards the MBOs, based on the support provided by Trias between 2017-2019.

In this chapter we seek an answer to the questions below, in order to determine how functional the country ToC really are:

- ***How did the MBOs use the Trias support in order to strengthen themselves?***
- ***To what extent do MBOs consider themselves strengthened (based on the Trias support) and in what areas?***
- ***Are there indications that MBOs are strengthened in a sustainable way?***
- ***Does the Trias strategy through strengthening the capacities of the MBOs have positive effects at the member (= member of the supported MBOs) level? (without measuring the impact yet)?***

In summary, we want to know to what extent Trias support leads to MBO changes and how do these changes in turn have a positive effect on the level of MBO members?

### 4.4.1. Main findings and analysis - Progress made at the level of the MBOs and their members

#### ***1. Progress has been made on all core capacities***

Based on the MTE reports a lot of results at MBO level can be situated in following areas:

- Inclusion
- Leadership and/or governance
- Improved service delivery towards members e.g. in the field of BDS, access to market information, market development
- Improved financial and resources management
- Increased networking and coordination

Progress detected in the MTE reports but less prominent could be observed in next areas:

- Lobby and advocacy
- Environmental issues
- Increased membership (which comes back at two levels in the country ToC with no clear distinction between both levels)

This does not mean there was no progress made in these areas, but it was to some extent less visible in the regional reports.

At the capacity level, it is not clear where the strengthening of capacities regarding DRR, environment, natural resources management, climate change should fall under. In the list of capacity indicators these areas of change aren't touched much yet (only under 6.8.0.). Resources

management includes only financial and human resources but no natural resources management. This is not a weakness of the MTE reports, but rather a weakness in the theory of change: at the higher performance change level these changes are mentioned thus they should also be included more prominently at the change level of results (capacities).

## *2. Progress has been made in most of the performance change areas*

Based on the results mentioned in the regional MTE reports, most changes appear to have occurred in following areas of change:

- **Increased organizational performance of MBOs:** financial performance, leadership performance, member participation linked to inclusion, qualitative trainings and empowerment, and linking MBOs/members to relevant professional networks and markets
- **Increased professional and social strengthening of members:** application of knowledge, skills and improved techniques, increased production, sales and profit, and working in an improved (regulatory and physical) business environment.

What came out less of the MTE reports were changes regarding:

- Members are respected and feel secure
- Members jointly maintain their local and global natural environment
- Member satisfaction

This does not mean that Trias does not work on these issues (indirectly through the MBOs) but it was less present in the reports. In fact, during the interviews at Brussels HQ and with the regional directors it came out clear that Trias is increasingly working on environmental topics. Most probably progress made on this will become more visible in the end evaluation and in later progress reports.

## *3. It is quite difficult to understand from the regional MTE reports what support of Trias led to what strengthened capacities at MBO level and from there to what improved performance at MBO level*

This was found in all reports to a greater or lesser extent, because of following reasons:

- In some reports, Trias support was only briefly described and summarized in the beginning of the MTE report or at the beginning of the chapter with results, with no clear linkage to the results at MBO level.
- In all reports (in some more than in others) there was a lack of focus on how exactly the Trias support provided a strengthening of which capacities of the MBOs. The idea of the MTE was less on focusing on the results at MBO and member level *as such*, but also to understand how the support of Trias led to changes at MBO level (capacities), how these changes transformed into changes in performance of the MBO and how these changes were beneficial at the member level (see next figure which we showed already in the beginning of the report):





In order to conclude if the TOC is functional, we have to understand the mechanism of the change flow, from the support given by Trias to changes at MBO level to changes at member level. This was extremely difficult to detect in the regional MTE reports since the results described as such did often not reveal the underlying processes.

A side observation that could have influenced the fact that changes at capacity and performance level were not always clearly distinguished in the regional MTE reports: the Trias logframe indicators used at capacity level sometimes tend more towards indicators that we expect to see at outcome level e.g. the indicator “leaders are able to effectively lead people in their organization as well as their members” is clearly a capacity indicator while the indicator “leaders lead in an effective and efficient way” is more a performance indicator. Both indicators can be found though at capacity level in the Trias logical framework.

Therefore, it is necessary to make more explicit the flow of changes from Trias support to changes at MBO level and from there to changes at member level, and to check whether this flow has really taken place or not, while also (re)affirming the assumptions (the latter was only mentioned in the MTE report from Brazil) (see also the recommendations)

#### *4. Changes in results at MBO level – capacities and performance – were sometimes measured against progress made in the indicators of the logframe*

Most of the regional MTE reports showed or referred to the capacity and performance indicators from the logical framework in order to check progress made in MBO results (besides the qualitative methods). Although this is interesting information and useful for the regions, this information alone is not enough to tell us whether the country ToC is functional or not because of following reasons:

- The indicators refer to the logical framework and not to indicators of the theory of change ,which do not exist for the Trias country ToC). Moreover, the fact that changes in the country ToC are +/- the same as the levels of result and outcome in the country logical frameworks, can be confusing.
- **The results measured through the indicators do not reveal anything about the underlying processes and how changes have taken place, which we want to know when checking the functionality of the ToC or monitoring progress on the realization of the ToC;**
- Thus, it is not because there is progress made in the indicators that we can conclude that the theory of change is functional. **There may be other processes or activities that lead to the results which may have nothing or little to do with the processes that we want to demonstrate through the theory of change.**

To give an example: imagine we work with an MBO with 100.000 members and membership increased last year with 10.000 members. If we measure only the indicator 'membership', we can say that we as Trias did very well in our collaboration with the MBO, membership increased. In the logical framework this is shown as good progress. But if we take a look at the processes we supported and the changes that came out of that, it is very well possible that our support influenced quite other things than the membership, and that the increased membership had nothing to do with our capacity building strategy.

*5. The table below illustrates the flow of changes from Trias to the supported MBOs and to the MBO members - this flow of changes is often not complete*

The table below is illustrative for the progress on results, and it helps to understand better how the flow of changes has taken place from Trias support to changes in capacities/performance of MBO level to changes at member level between 2017 and 2019. The table shows examples described in the regional MTE reports. As can be observed, parts of this change flow are often missing and marked as N/A (= information not available), since it was not explicitly mentioned in the regional MTE reports or in a too general or vague way. It does not mean that Trias support was not provided or that there was no progress made, but this was not described in the regional MTE reports.

Since in most of the regional MTE reports no real distinction was made between the capacity level and the performance level of the MBOs when discussing the results at MBO level, these two levels were taken together in the second column.

**This is an important point of attention for the end evaluation.** In order to measure impact and to trace it back in one way or another to the capacity building strategy of Trias, more insight is needed in how the theory of change really works in practice at all levels (see further the recommendations).

Some notes regarding the table below:

- As can be noticed, the names of the partners were not included in the table, in order to not to overload the table with unnecessary information for the purpose of the table. In the regional midterm reports, all information can be found with names of the partners included;
- The regional midterm reports did not always mention clearly to which capacity or outcome the progress made belongs to. For this reason, it is possible that the examples were not always placed correctly under the correct outcome or result area in the table below. This is not so important. What matters more is to show how the flow change has taken place;
- Important to mention is that the table below is illustrative. This means that more results than shown here can be found in the regional MTE reports. In any case, N/A means that the information required was not explicitly described in the regional MTE reports.
- The first column of the table and the text marked in yellow were added by Trias HQ or based on feedback by the Trias regional offices on the draft of this report.

Key Result Areas	Country	Summary of Trias support, leading to...	Progress made at MBO level (capacities-performance) , thanks to Trias support <sup>[1], [2]</sup> leading to.....	Progress made at member level, thanks to progress made at MBO level[3]
<b>1. Member Participation</b>				
	Brazil	Advice provided by the Trias Brazil Programme Youth: inclusion in production; governance; succession of leaders**	Some affiliated co-operatives have made efforts to involve young people in the perspective of solidarity-based co-operativism, seeking to identify generative issues that will sensitise and attract young people close to Unicafes/MG and its co-operatives.	N/A
		N/A	Unicafes/MG has been promoting the role of family farming in the political arena at the local, state and national levels, resulting in benefits for cooperatives and farming families.	N/A
		Gender: no progress made*	N/A	N/A
AND Inclusivity / Diversity	Ecuador	Development and application of the ruta de género. Gender training	Women lost fear to express themselves and to participate in governance structures.	N/A
AND Inclusivity / Diversity	El Salvador	Development and application of the ruta de género; Exchanges in Belgium on gender and inclusion	Increased participation of women and youth in decision taking processes and governance structures; Increased governance of MBOs; Strategic plans adjusted in order to include inclusion of youth and gender; Creation of institutional spaces to strengthen participation of youth and institutionalize inclusion	N/A

AND Inclusivity / Diversity	Philippines	Also help from others: support from UP Engineering Department, CSWCD, DOLE, Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), UP Center for Women and Gender Studies. Trainings of Trias.	More youth members in the national council and board; At least 2 youth members became town and barangay officials.	Increased membership youth at high level the rate is increasing for the youth sector, the absolute numbers are still very low due to various contexts of the youth, improved leadership performance. Young people gained self-confidence and the ability to speak and defend their needs, to make proposals and engage in dialogue with the older leaders on an equal footing. This space has also been created by their organizations.
AND Inclusivity / Diversity	Tanzania	N/A	More diversity women and youth in board composition → In terms of composition, all MBOs are now including youth and women in Boards/Steering committees in strategic positions such as Directorships and Coordination.	hence give them a voice on key decisions making processes.
	Tanzania	Mixture of support given: 1/Tailor made training, coaching and mentoring (soft skills); 2/Financial support helping MBOs to execute their mandates; 3/linking with organizations with technical expertise in MBOs focus areas; 4/Trias helping 3 MBOs in getting access to funds from other donors.	Enhancing members to participate in lower level networks meetings and in AGMs (in person or through representation).	Re-energized inactive members and attracted non-MBO members to acquire membership. The outreach services have imparted a sense of ownership and belonging to MBO members. They (member) also appreciate that MBOs are providing them with nonpartisan platforms to discuss issues affecting their development;  Enhanced participation of members in AGMs: AGMs are increasingly becoming more powerful and member driven platforms opposed to old days where AGMs were almost a rubber stamp of the management/secretariats. Active and functioning AGMs have led to magnification of

				members voices and inclusion in MBO decision making processes.
<b>2. Inclusivity / Diversity</b>				
	Brazil	Gender: no progress made* Youth: inclusion in production; governance; succession of leaders**	N/A	N/A
	Brazil	Youth training initiative supported by the project	The Cooperative Youth Program which involved 269 young people, in 3 cooperatives and 3 EFAs (Family Agricultural Schools), in 22 municipalities, in 4 different regions, from 2018 to 2019, counting on important associations such as unions, churches, but especially EFAs, that have actively contributed to the results achieved. There is a favourable evaluation of this Programme, with the validation of the training strategy adopted that has had a positive impact on its quality, generating results that are still pilot but important for the young people:	Young people i. strengthened in specific competencies, skills and attitudes; ii. increased participation in cooperatives; iii. participation in cooperative focus activities; iv. interest in staying in the field.
	Guinée	N/A	Efforts in inclusion (involving everyone).	Young people are integrated at all levels. To be consolidated.***
<b>3. Leadership</b>				
	Brazil	N/A	Better definition of roles and responsibilities.	N/A

	Ecuador	Training of skills in different areas	Increased performance in leadership, internal control, governance.	N/A
	El Salvador	Support from CERA/BRS	Improved governance;	N/A
	El Salvador	Training/ rolling out LEATRA	Transformative leadership; Empowered leaders, more professional leadership.	N/A
AND Inclusivity / Diversity	Guinée	N/A	The process of strengthening the board members (leaders) has been inclusive and transparent; Women's participation is progressing but insufficient (observation of the group discussions) + problem of illiteracy. Strengthened capacity at the level of the technical coordination unit.****	Strengthened governance at the level of the member groups.****
	Guinée	Thanks to the support of TRIAS (not specified);	Groups that were non-functional are now active;	Strengthened governance at the level of the member groups.****
	Philippines	Rolling out LEATRA	N/A	LEATRA training taught members to better understand each other, facilitate participatory and consensus decision making, and to value transparency. Leadership and business management skills among members improved. Apart from the technical knowledge and skills, there was improvement in the attitudes and increased self-confidence among the members of the MBOs as well. This was made possible through the opportunity to become a member of an MBO which increases the members sense of belongingness and identity.
	Tanzania	leadership training to Boards and Management/Secretariats	Improved good governance practices: Board/Steering Committee members of 5 MBOs consulted attributed their understanding of their roles and responsibilities to leadership training facilitated by Trias;	Incidences of clashes between managements and boards which were common prior to training due lack of clarity on the roles and responsibilities between different governance

				structures within MBOs have been reduced significantly.
	Tanzania	Thanks to Trias support in strengthening MBOs organizational capacity	<p>Statutory MBO meetings are held now (board and AGMs)</p> <p>MBOs have been able to hire qualified staff who have been instrumental in helping MBOs to adequately push their agendas and provide service to their members accordingly.</p> <p>They have been able to timely meet staffing needs (salaries, benefits and working gears). This in turn has contributed to keeping MBO staff motivated and committed to their work.</p> <p>BoardDP plans and Org.mgmt manuals, guidelines etc. leading to strengthened financial and internal control systems;</p> <p>Leadership succession plans for Board and Management in place. This is done through nurturing leadership capacities at lower levels of the MBOs (members and middle level managers) to ensure continuity of quality leadership and avoid shocks in the event of departure of MBO current key performers.</p>	N/A
<b>4. Financial health / Management</b>				
	Ecuador	Support in financial planning	Better cost control and financial planning	
	Ecuador	Technical skills training	Improved internal control system	N/A
	Ecuador	N/A	Improved bookkeeping and financial reporting Improved financial performance	N/A
	El Salvador	Support from CERA/BRS	Development of a sustainability strategy;	N/A

	Guinée	Based on Trias trainings	Significant achievements in management record keeping, accountability;	N/A
	Guinée	N/A	Substantial improvement in management: increase in capital (4x higher); Mobilisation of funds from MFIs and private partners; Implementation of a money transfer application and a new product called "Tontine Savings"; Real strengthening of financial autonomy with the introduction of other financial products and better overall management of ASF.	Improvement in the income of the members (dividends at the end of the fiscal year).
<b>5. Resources management</b>				
	Brazil	Trias gives support with two advisers for mobilization of resources	Financial resource mobilization from different sources (Brookfield, Fundación Banco do Brasil, Enmiendas parlamentarias, poder legislativo etc.)	Construction of 60 septic tanks, planting of 4,000 seedlings of native species and protection of 15 springs, adquisition of office equipment, etc
	Brazil	N/A	Investments to improve the internal functioning of Unicafes/MG have had a positive impact on the services provided to its members, with emphasis on political representation, resource mobilization and marketing. There are weaknesses in education and inclusion, especially in the gender approach.	N/A
	Philippines	Strengthening capacities of management – Trias support started already in 2014 (!)	Membership increased, assets, share capital and deposits (savings and time) increased, one branch more; Training of farmers and women led to the establishment of the satellite office in Sta. Elena municipality	<b>Increased the trust and confidence</b> of the people in Camarines Norte in the cooperative system attracted more members province-wide Better use of loans by members, savings habit developed (as a result of Financial Literacy Orientation), better payment of loans, and continuous growth in shares and savings



				deposit. There was also increased attendance among the coop members in trainings offered by LPMPC
<b>6. Integrated Services Delivery</b>				
	Brazil	N/A	Increased and diversified market channels expand income generation possibilities;	N/A
	Brazil		The collective commercialization made possible by the cooperatives and Unicafe/MG.	This provides greater stability to the flow of production and greater capacity to negotiate fair prices and supportive commercial relations, giving more favorable results, positively impacting the cooperatives and their members.
AND Inclusivity / Diversity	Ecuador	Training for young/female entrepreneurs in spe	Increased access to credits for young entrepreneurs, more training for young people;	Increased youth entrepreneurship and representation of organizations by young members.
AND Inclusivity / Diversity	Ecuador	N/A	Young and female members have brought into practice their acquired skills in developing businesses;	Increased youth entrepreneurship and representation of organizations by young members.
	Ecuador	N/A	Improved access for members to 1/technical training meant to manage plagues and diseases 2/financial services like credit and 3/ mechanization services;	the MBO partners improve their yields with notable improvements in the quality of the potato (free of white worm attack (Premnotrypex borax), seed potatoes of registered quality are produced and the members have access to anagricultural insurance provided by the state to overcome the presence of a new disease called Punta Morada, which currently affects all potato producing areas in Ecuador;
	Ecuador	Support received from Trias (not specified) in collaboration with other actors and the	Acquisition of equipment, installment of a system controlling the quality of quinoa.	Increased production of quality quinoa Increased sales, better prices by renegotiation of prices.

		Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock.		
	Ecuador	Exchange of experiences and technical skills training	<p>Quality inspectors of organic quinoa trained</p> <p>Application of technical skills in agroecological production, production of guinea pigs and chicken, potato and vegetables</p> <p>Application of administrative procedures</p> <p>Elaboration of business plans</p> <p>Improved entrepreneurship regarding production of guinea pigs, vegetables and embroidery products</p> <p>Improved way of thinking in which the associative business is managed.</p>	<p>Increased productivity and production</p> <p>Improved management of businesses</p> <p>Increased income, increased quality nutrition</p>
	Ecuador	N/A	Improved access for members to financial services like credit	N/A
	Ecuador	<p>Several strategies are used to reach its equilibrium point, being the</p> <p>Elaboration of chips with native potato;</p> <p>Support in the acquisition of machinery needed to develop the production of potato chips;</p> <p>Provision of working capital for the purchase of commercial and seed potatoes, covering the basic services of the potato processing plant and training of the staff working in the collection centre</p>	Result: The production of this new product has started with a volume of 4 quintals per week and commercialization has already started in the nearby communities.	N/A

	Ecuador	Financial support	Improved promotion of products through acquisition of equipment	N/A
AND Inclusivity / Diversity	El Salvador	Exchanges in Belgium on gender and inclusion	Development of a credit line oriented towards women.	N/A
AND Inclusivity / Diversity	El Salvador	N/A	Working on inclusion has a positive impact on the creation of productive opportunities for young entrepreneurs and female MBO members who lived in a subsistence economy (e.g. through production of small livestock, vegetables etc).	Increased economic opportunities through MBOs does not allow yet to move beyond the min.salary but at least it helps in reducing vulnerability of involved members and in increasing more stability: members do not have to leave the community anymore in search for other, usually informal, jobs (youth, women).
	El Salvador	Support from CERA/BRS	Strengthened services to members in the field of entrepreneurial skills and financial sustainability.	N/A
	El Salvador	OD support	OD services to members have been strengthened	N/A
	El Salvador	Support in collaboration with other actors (not specified well in the report)	MBOs offer training and technical assistance in a broad range of areas to their members and member MBOs e.g. quality, diversification of products, business plans, sales, negotiation, promotion of female entrepreneurship,... (not clear to what extent these services are a result of Trias support)	N/A
	El Salvador	N/A	Increased access to new markets with help of financial loans (of AMC)	Providing school meals to public schools; exporting coffee
	Guinée	Thanks to ERI training	Remarkable progress with a doubling of rice yields and a 30% reduction in the quantity of seeds used; Improved quality of products;	N/A
	Guinée	A new method introduced by TRIAS = improvement of the commercial offer (rice)	Improvement of rice quality;	N/A

	Guinée	Different trainings	Increase in turnover with increasing international sales; Increased access to qualitative services in a sustainable way e.g. by introducing methods of composting.	leading to higher income at member level; leading to the development of sustainable micro-enterprises respecting environment (to be consolidated).
	Guinée	N/A	Real reinforcement of the management capacities of the structures composing the platform, better animation and support of the members in the development of the entrepreneurial spirit. Increase the members' ability to develop their business plans based on TRIAS trainings	Beginning of networking of its members
AND Inclusivity / Diversity	Philippines	Also help from others: support from UP Engineering Department, CSWCD, DOLE, Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), UP Center for Women and Gender Studies. Trainings of Trias.	Youth members became inhouse facilitators of LEATRA and CEFE and VSLA orientation and formation; they orient on advocacy and gender awareness, SOGIE, reproductive health using infographics on digital platform/social media. They run computer literacy and infographics training	
	Philippines	ERI-CEFE, DRR	GAP, LEISA, and Sustainable Agriculture trainings provided to the farmer members; (and many other examples given in the MTE report resulting in increased production and income).	resulted to increased yield in production particularly for pineapple. The coop-led pineapple juice processing project has become ready market for the members' produce at a higher price compared to dealers and with incentives like free pick up, low rental of equipment, low interest on working capital loan, and free coaching and mentoring. Further, the coop serves also as market for the butterball size pineapple produced by members that are no longer marketable. Aside from juice production, the members supply pineapple leaves and fiber which in the past

				were considered waste in the farm. With the coop's venture into the pineapple fiber processing, the farmers have continually earned additional 25,000 to 30,000 per hectare from fiber in one cycle of 14 months.
	Philippines	N/A	Strengthened capacities of MBO staff e.g. the Marketing Officer who used to be a vendor, is now able to record transactions, do product development, source raw materials, and use social media for marketing. She also provides advise and coaching to VSLA organizers.	Improved performance of agri-and non-agri enterprise in terms of generating income, diversification and expansion;
	Philippines	Some of the training mentioned is given by Trias.	Trainings to members on leadership, entrepreneurship, business mgmt., recording, savings VSLA and formation, technical skills; DRR, linkage to markets	Members who attended Business Management trainings learned and religiously do recording of business transactions; Trained trainers are now able to act as resource persons, guides/mentors affiliate member organizations and its members in areas of expertise such as recording, IT/infographics, among others.
	Philippines	N/A	Productive loan provided by the coop	Diversification of sources of income and purchase of assets
	Philippines	Training of officers and staff and use of monitoring tools introduced by TRIAS	From negative to positive operations Upgrading products and services	<b>increased the trust and confidence</b> of the people in Camarines Norte in the cooperative system which attracted more members province-wide.
	Tanzania	Mixture of support: soft skills training and coaching, financial support, linking to other organisations, increasing access to funds from other organisations;	MBOs increased ability to organize members in groups It is much easier now for MBOs to facilitate FFs/SSEs trainings as well as encouraging farmer – to – farmer learning through formed groups	This has eased the processes of imparting members with knowledge and skills necessary for improving their interventions.

	Tanzania	N/A	N/A	<p>Improved yields and quality of products (onions, garlic, honey and fresh vegetables) as a result of learning good farming practices and access of improved seeds varieties;</p> <p>Number of members using their new acquired knowledge and skills increased from the 2017 baseline. The increment was most notable in environmental conservation + the outreach in form of training of members in natural resource management also significantly exceeded the target;</p> <p>FFs know prices offered by different markets hence decide when and where to sale their produce based on the projected profit and ability to access the markets</p>
	Tanzania	N/A	Increased ability of TOT (Training of Trainers)	This made it possible for FFs/SSEs and lower level network leaders to access knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship (BUS) and leadership through trained community own resource persons.
	Tanzania	N/A	<p>Enhancing members access to market information [e.g. through bulk messages, through mobile phone, Mkulima portal and participation in lower level networks meetings</p> <p>MBOs contribute in the monitoring: At MBO level, Management teams have developed monitoring tool for tracking the performance of program indicators at MBO and members levels. Monitoring visits are conducted monthly for the purpose of gathering information regarding performance of the indicators</p>	FFs are linked with mobile services that helps them to obtain prices of their products in different markets on real time basis.

	Tanzania	N/A	Increased members access to financial facilities [through VICOBA and SACCOS]	N/A
	Tanzania	N/A	Successful advocacy for reduction of 40 so-called “nuisance taxes”, the reduction of unrealistic levies on fire department services as well as disproportionate license costs of signboards. Collaboration between MBOs and LGA’s	FFs have been able to access services of agriculture extension workers (for onion, garlic and fresh vegetable producers), vaccination and treatment services (for poultry keepers) and market information. SSEs on the other hand have been able to access tax related information from Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) representatives and business formalization information from Business Registration and Licensing Authority (BRELA).
<b>7. Networking &amp; Cooperation</b>				
	Brazil	N/A	Unicafes/MG has developed an efficient work of institutional representation, articulation and political impact that provides direct and indirect benefits to its members. It has expanded its alliances by providing resources for its work (financial, technical, human and material).	N/A
	Ecuador	Support in advocacy skills	Increased encounters between MBOs and local governments; Increased access to new clients; Increased access to credits	
	Ecuador	Participation of members in exchanging experiences and business trips to Peru and Colombia	Improved capacities to produce potato chips Participant members are part now of a network of potato breeders	
	Ecuador	N/A	Increased access to business fairs	N/A
	El Salvador	N/A	Increased networking with public and private actors to promote LED through participation to specific fairs (Foro de Desarrollo Economico Productivo) and	N/A

			subsectoral tables on coffee, honey, vegetables, handicrafts and tourism	
AND Inclusivity / Diversity	Philippines	N/A	The partner MBO has enhanced its capacity in the development of participatory video/IEC materials to raise awareness on and gain support for the situation of women in the informal economy especially the subcontracted home-based women. The video was one of the presentations made during the HomeNet Asia and trade expo in Nagoya, Japan.	N/A
AND Inclusivity / Diversity	Philippines	N/A	The MBO partner has established links with KVLV for women and KLJ for the youth which already conducted 2 exploratory visits. The KLJ did 2 visits and they organized a youth camp in Bicol in 2018 and in 2019 and there is a planned April 2020 youth exchange in Belgium.	N/A
	Brazil	N/A	Unicafes/MG has been promoting the role of family farming in the political arena at the local, state and national levels, resulting in benefits for cooperatives and farming families. There is the challenge of capillatalisation of social and political empowerment down to the grassroots, strengthening the social fabric in the territories. In view of the political setbacks in the country, the need for continuous training processes is increasing, strengthening the identity and understanding of cooperative solidarity, consolidating the legitimacy and representativeness of cooperatives and Unicafes/MG.	N/A



[1] When cells are left in blank this does not necessarily mean that Trias does not work on these capacities It means that for the indicated MBO change it was not explicitly indicated in the report what capacities have been strengthened.

[2] Not all results mentioned in the MT reports have been included in this illustrative table; in any case, N/A means that the information was not explicitly mentioned in the reports. Yellow parts have been added later, based on feedback.

[3] Id.

**Brazil:**

regarding inclusion:\*The MTE report of Brazil mentions that no or very little progress has been made in bringing inclusion (gender) on the agenda of the MBO partner:as mentioned earlier this is not a political priority, not included in the planning neither in operations: the midterm report mentions a huge incompatibility between the principles of solidary cooperativism while ignoring the gender differences in the MBO governance structures seen the important role women play in family farming and in society in general).

\*\*Still a gap between initiatives undertaken and the organizational reality within the MBO partner

**Guinée:**

\*\*\*regarding inclusion, the same problem occurs as in Brazil: the midterm report mentions that better attention should be paid to women, who are responsible for the bulk of production but not for the bulk of decision-making (illiteracy).

\*\*\*\*strengthening governance gives mixed results; with one partner the results are better at MBO level, but less progress can be seen at member group level. With another partner this is the opposite where groups seem to progress more quickly in their governance than the coordinating unit of the MBO.

Other findings that came out of the analysis of the MTE reports:

*6. Inclusion of youth and women is a core capacity that has not been taken up yet to its fullest by all supported MBOs*

Having an open mind towards inclusion is a basic condition to work with the MBOs. At this moment this condition seems to be fulfilled except for inclusion of women by UNICAFES in Brazil. It is strange that Trias does not make an issue of this. This goes against her own choices made.

Another point of attention is that inclusion starts from the basis and should therefore be linked to all aspects of working with MBOs. Currently, inclusion is still mainly linked to participation and governance, which is only one aspect of the capacities to be strengthened. With the exception of some countries (see table above under point 5. for examples), working on inclusion is less visible (with some exceptions) in the other capacities and performance e.g. at the member level.

*7. While attempting to understand the changes mentioned in the regional MTE reports, we have to be careful not to oversimplify the logic of change*

The Theory of Change does not only work according to a vertical logic but works also horizontally and even in an iterative way. Under section 4.3. we explained how difficult it was to detect the mechanism or flow of change, starting from the Trias support towards the MBO results and from there to changes at the member level. The reasons for that were explained in that chapter.

In addition to this, it must be said that many times not only one type of support leads to one type of change. Sometimes it is, but more often a combination of support (financial, training, coaching in different areas) is needed in order to achieve results at MBO level. These results can be situated in one or more result areas. They can also influence each other and even can influence the future Trias support. This makes the ToC so complex to understand.

*8. Sometimes it is not clear in the midterm reports if results at member level are due to MBO strengthening or to direct Trias support to the members*

In order to know if the ToC is functional or not, it is important to understand how the underlying mechanisms already mentioned above work:

- How does Trias identify its strategy?
- How does Trias implements its strategy?
- As a result of this, how do MBOs 'use' the support of Trias?
- As a result of this, what changes at the level of the MBOs (result level)?
- As a result of this, how do MBO members 'use' the support of MBOs
- As a result of this, what changes at the level of the MBO members?

As mentioned already earlier, we speak of 'pathways of change' which are not necessarily linear, they can be iterative and also horizontal (parallel processes can influence each other also the results). The processes can be complex sometimes, therefore, in order to know if the ToC works well, it is important

to know how these processes work and how they lead to the desired changes. It is not enough to describe the achieved results, since this will not explain how these results were realized. In the reports it was not always clear if the results achieved at member level were due to changes at MBO level or because of interventions of Trias directly at member level (which happens from time to time in several countries).

This is a weak point in several MTE reports and has already been touched earlier in this meta-analysis. These reports reveal the progress made at the level of MBOs, and at the level of the members, but without describing how the underlying mechanism has worked or with other words how the pathways of change were developed. These reports follow more the logical framework approach (a brief overview of activities followed by the main results at each level), but this was not the objective of the midterm evaluation. An explanation for this could be because the evaluators had still too little knowledge about the application of the ToC. And in some countries, other priorities at the moment of the evaluation caused little follow-up of the local evaluator at the moment it was carried out, with few modifications to the draft version of these MTE reports.

What also confuses is the fact that the dimensions of change in the overall Trias strategic framework speak of 'organized FF and SSE' while in the country ToC a distinction is made between MBOs (changed performance) and the members of the MBOs.

*9. Choices made by Trias (type of MBO, selected capacity building areas) influence the extent to which changes, particularly at the highest level (impact) can be contributed or attributed to Trias*

The fact that all regions use the same TOC design and 'logic' of changes makes it easy to understand how Trias works, with whom and what changes are expected. Not all result and outcome changes mentioned in the ToC need to be strengthened. This depends on choices and priorities made while running the SPIDER approach together with the MBO partners.

There are also challenges to this approach. Based on choices made e.g. with what kind of MBOs will we work, or what areas are selected to be strengthened through capacity building, it seems challenging to use the same methods in all regions for measuring the achieved changes and particularly the impact (which was not part of this evaluation yet).

For example: based on the interviews with regional directors, outreach seems to be an important outcome to achieve. This is understandable from the point of view of the MBO: a higher outreach means more potential members and more income through membership fees, and potentially more credibility as an organization and more weight in negotiations with others. From the point of view of Trias, this is more complex when working with 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> tier MBOs: this automatically means a higher outreach but without Trias having to do much to achieve that outreach. Secondly, impact and Trias's contribution to this is difficult to measure with this kind of MBOs.

Two challenges here: how to measure increased income of members (which is one way Trias measures impact, next to the Most Significant Change method) when the MBO counts 30.000, 50.000, 100.000

or even more members? Working with smaller MBOs has the disadvantage that high numbers of outreach will probably not be achieved but measuring impact in terms of higher income will be easier to realize with fewer members and will also be less complex to trace back to the interventions of Trias. Secondly: since the contribution of Trias to this kind of MBOs will usually be part of a range of interventions of different actors and donors, how could an eventual increase in income be contributed to Trias; this is hardly not possible. In Tanzania for instance, distinction is made between direct beneficiaries (of the Trias program) and indirect beneficiaries and changes in income are only measured with the direct beneficiaries.

In addition, other elements influence the extent to which it will be possible to measure impact and (partially) attribute it to Trias:

- The extent to which other donors or organizations in the region collaborate with the same MBO. Even when other capacity areas than the ones selected by Trias are strengthened, results can and will influence the changes with MBOs that were obtained by the Trias support;
- The extent to which Trias and the MBOs monitor how changes occur. This is a weak point in the midterm reports. Sometimes it is explained how changes took place and what the role of Trias was, more often this was not the case.

In summary, the type of MBO and secondly the choices made – in collaboration with the MBOs – to strengthen certain areas within an MBO, influence the extent to which it will be easier or not to measure the changes, particularly the impact. Also, the extent to which Trias and the MBOs themselves invest time in documenting, making explicit and monitoring how changes occur (i.e. the underlying mechanism of change) will influence the extent to which changes could be more easily or not measured and contributed/attributed to Trias.

#### 4.4.2. Factors influencing the results at MBO and member level

We mention here the factors coming out of the regional MTE reports that are said to have a (negative) influence on the progress made so far. Sometimes the reports explain how the MBOs and Trias tackle these factors, sometimes they are just mentioned. Although not all the factors below are mentioned in all reports, some come back in several reports and most of them could certainly have an effect on results in most of the regions where Trias works (this could not be confirmed through this meta-evaluation).

- Deep rooted gender and social inequalities are the basis for social exclusion and injustice, particularly in rural areas with a system of patriarchal heritage, resulting in little willingness to change the current situation (male overrepresentation and masculine style of governance in MBO partner without considering this as a problem) (Brazil).
- No favorable political environment for MBOs and /or NGO's result in less political support, less governmental funds available etcetera.
- In Guinée, the illiteracy of the majority of members and the relatively low participation of women (despite a marked improvement) are constraints for improving governance and member participation in governance structures.
- Despite management capacity building and improved governance, financial autonomy is sometimes jeopardized by difficulties in identifying revenue niches.

- It is important for MBOs to realize that different result/performance areas influence each other and therefore need to be strengthened simultaneously (if necessary) to achieve results e.g. increased financial autonomy could depend on improved production, better management of resources, improved governance next to marketing efforts.
- Lack of financial resources affect further grow of MBOs (particularly when governmental support was promised but later withdrawn).
- Increased access to market information does not automatically mean that FF/SSE increase their sales. The challenge often remains to overcome the inability of FFs to reach the profitable markets hence they are forced to trade with middlemen and local brokers to sell their produces.
- Limited access to land does not allow to increase membership in some cooperatives in El Salvador (only a maximum number of people can work in the cooperative in a profitable way). Solutions have been sought for this situation but in practice, membership can only expand when there is sufficient land.
- Rotation of staff at MBO level influences results, as well as rotation of MBO board members (although it is a good practice of not having a 100% rotation of all board members at the same time).
- Increased income through diversification of production as a result of MBO strengthening is a positive result at member level, at the same time it has shown that some members cannot attend anymore the meetings and trainings offered by the MBO because of increased lack of time (unexpected negative result).
- Members sometimes face difficulties in the application of the trainings especially in recording business transactions due to limited time. This is important though in order to be able to track their business performance.
- As much as members appreciate the value of the training and the investments that TRIAS and MBOs put into these activities, a few hours or days in the training takes them away from their business which means no income for that period which is a constraint for participation.
- Turnover of MBO staff e.g. in charge of training of farmers, women and youth

#### 4.4.3. Factors influencing the sustainability of results achieved

The TOR for the regional MTE included a question on progress made on sustainability (or indications of sustainability).

Not all reports zoomed in on sustainability or only in a limited way. The reports of Guinée and Brazil dedicated a separate chapter to this subject.

Some examples coming out of the reports that illustrate progress made on sustainability (and challenges to achieve sustainability at economic, social, environmental and /or other levels):

*Sustainability of the MBO enterprise has not yet been established – this pertains to those newly established enterprises whose markets have not been proven to be sustained like the basket making of TKFPI. Even the pineapple processing of LPMPC is relatively new and working further on developing the market to operate at full capacity. It is still being subsidized through some support in human resources by the project and by other businesses of the MBO. Further, the markets of enterprises of weaker*

organizations are not yet fully established, they have weak capacity to manage, thus are still dependent on TRIAS support. The TRIAS team asserted that the progress achieved in various areas can be sustained with the increased capacity of the MBO staff and improved methodologies which could lead to improved service offerings that are relevant to the needs of the members. Institutionalization of the changes can also be assured through the pool of trainers' improved methodologies and through the changes in the policies and in the constitution and by-laws of the MBOs. Sustainability should be achieved at the economic and organizational aspects through a conscious implementation and monitoring of the performance of the business plans. At the end of the program, sustainability of the impact (as relevant since there are impacts which could be achieved beyond the 5-year duration) shall be measured through the PPI, and other tools. (MTE report, Philippines)

Improving sustainability becomes a priority element in a context of reduced international cooperation <financial>flows and the reduction of the 2020 budget allocated to the Ministries of Economy and of Agriculture and LivesToCk, particularly the agricultural packages.

According to the MBOs, improving sustainability is an element that was already on their agendas, but they had not managed to develop a precise method for doing so. In the ODPs, sustainability is addressed through organizational development, an element to which few cooperating partners dedicate resources and which the MBOs consider essential, since it is not possible to only demand the fulfillment of goals (trained people or increased income from economic initiatives, among others) without the guarantee that the organization has improved its capacities. Among the actions undertaken to improve sustainability are: strengthening the participation of the membership in the decision-making process of the MBOs, especially women and youth, including generational change (in a context of aging memberships); elaboration of sustainability plans, which integrate the creation of new products, services or the development of productive projects. (MTE report, El Salvador).

Main changes expected at the level of each MBO is that they achieve economic and social sustainability. It is considered that the items supported (quinoa, potatoes, agro-ecological vegetables, organic bananas and cocoa, handicrafts), become an alternative and offer an opportunity for young people and women to effectively insert themselves in the value chain.

But the commitment to strengthening social, productive and technical capacities is not always in line with the degree of economic development of the MBOs; this not only affects their development, but also the sustainability of the organization. This situation is due to the fact that potato, quinoa, banana, cocoa and agro-ecological vegetable production depends on external factors, mainly climate, which influence production and determine its quality and quantity.

In terms of climate, Ecuador's rainy seasons from October to December and from March to May have historically marked the planting seasons. However, there is no longer any certainty about this, which means that access to irrigation is required to ensure that planting plans are met. At the same time, less than 10% of agricultural land in the country has access to irrigation.

Commercially, the MBOs that have reached levels of export or direct sale to the consumer are the ones with the best levels of economic sustainability, which has legitimized them in the eyes of their partners, guaranteeing social sustainability. This is the case of Tejemujeres, Coprobich, the member organizations of the CEJC and the partners that participate in the PACAT fair. While the situation is different for AGROPAPA, since the item currently presents technical threats, which cause economic and social weaknesses within the MBO. (MTE report, Ecuador)

*Pace and scope of undertaking the interventions will not be the same once the program ends due lack of adequate resources to cover their whole project area. The foreseen sustainability challenge is on the MBOs capacity to raise adequate financial resources to sustain coordination activities and ensure that members continue to access technical support from the experts. This is due to the fact that some of the MBOs are overly dependent on Trias funding for their day to day operations. MBOs supported by Trias depend heavily on grant resources; grant resources are tricky in terms of supporting sustainability of MBOs. In that manner, limited financial capacity might impede the maintenance of STRONG program achievements as some MBOs beyond the program period.*

*Despite the improvement noted in the business environment, SSEs are still faced with some challenges threatening sustainability and growth of their businesses. There is seemingly a high drive for tax collection and high fines are imposed in case of non-compliance hence need enhanced advocacy to appeal to tax authorities to come up with a more friendly tax regime especially for starters. (MTE report, Tanzania)*

*MBOs know the precise activities to be carried out in the life of an organization to ensure its functionality and in accordance with what they have learned with the SPIDER approach are able to carry out themselves an organizational diagnosis, a development plan, an internal self-evaluation, a member satisfaction survey, a capacity and performance development follow-up, etcetera. All this knowledge are assets that OM leaders are able to reproduce today without assistance. The applied management manual of the MBO partner JS has inspired management methods and procedures that the platform can pursue without support. The management software acquired by FASEF no longer requires the presence of TRIAS to be used. These are examples of achievements of a certain sustainability at the level of the MBOs.*

*On the other hand, other achievements need to be consolidated to ensure their sustainability. E.g. It is not certain yet if the MBO partner COPRAKAM is capable, on its own, of reproducing all the work that has been done to obtain a credit of several hundred millions or to make available large amounts of money to facilitate the marketing of its members' products. Likewise, the mobilization of its investment plan financing remains subject, for sure, to external support as well as the innovation envisaged in many other fields.*

*The leadership of the cooperative, despite the training it has received and the experience it has gained from working with TRIAS and other partners, offers no assurance that it will be able to achieve these results on its own. It is tempting to ask what would happen today if the prices of raw materials (peanuts, shea butter, even honey) were to drop significantly, now that the opening of export markets is beginning to increase members' incomes. Does the leadership of the cooperative have sufficient resources (technical and communicational) to make producer members understand that such situations are within the realm of possibility? The answers to this question leave one in doubt.*

*In the end, just as there are already achievements of unquestionable sustainability at the level of the MBOs, there are also other that should certainly be consolidated in order to be able to bet on their sustainability. (MTE report, Guinée)*

The MTE report explains to what extent the MBO partner of Trias in Brazil works towards economic, political, social and environmental sustainability.

**Economic sustainability:** Unicafes/MG has been seeking its economic sustainability by developing institutional capacity to support the costs of its structure and actions in the medium and long term, through validated and secure resource mobilization strategies. In this sense, currently, its most important front is marketing, through commercial representation on behalf of the affiliated cooperatives, seeking to satisfy their demands and needs. In this sense, it has been trying to act in the social construction of markets that are more in tune with the objectives of Unicafes/MG, such as short circuits and initiatives that bring together producers and consumers, such as the Market of Origin, in Belo Horizonte, the state capital. On the other hand, the supply of products on a large scale requires the diversification and expansion of market channels, in order to allow the flow of production and the generation of income desired by the associated cooperatives. The challenge is not to lose the essence of solidarity-based cooperativism, reproducing the *modus operandi* of traditional cooperatives, which no longer act as organizations representing the rights and interests of their members to function in the business logic, exploiting the peasants, seeking only economic results, with profitability at the top. The MTE report showed good progress on the economic sustainability of Unicafes/MG.

**Political sustainability:** Unicafes/MG, by adopting solidarity-based corporativism, is closely related to the process of building citizenship and fully incorporating people into the process of sustainable development. Unicafes/MG has successfully occupied several political spaces, as a result of the recognition of its contribution to family agriculture and solidarity economy in the state of Minas Gerais. However, there are indications that it is necessary to broaden the spectrum of its tactical alliances, recognizing the different political forces and possible institutional arrangements, partnerships and networking actions as new dynamics among social subjects, political parties and state organizations. On the other hand, in its internal environment, it needs to advance in the political formation and qualification of its membership, strengthening the identity with cooperative solidarity and its principles and values. At the same time, it needs to connect the agendas and territorial struggles with the objectives and strategies of Unicafes/MG, from the perspective of a more organic and articulated action with the associated cooperatives.

**Environmental sustainability:** The environmental dimension of the sustainability of Unicafes/MG was evaluated more critically: only 15% of the members interviewed considered it to be good, while 30% rated it as regular and 35% as bad. These data reflect the fact that there is no political and programmatic definition that prioritizes this approach, although it is positive that 40% of the affiliated cooperatives adopt agroecology. The DGD program has the perspective that Unicafes/MG stimulates sustainable production arrangements that contribute to the mitigation of climate challenges.

**Social sustainability:** The social component is one of the pillars of solidarity-based cooperativism, which aims at equity in social opportunities and relations (race, gender, generation, etc.), together with equal access to resources and services. Unicafes/MG's evaluation in this area pointed out that there are weaknesses, since 15% of the universe surveyed rated social sustainability as poor, 30% as fair, 10% as good, 10% as very good and 20% did not position themselves. This scoring points to a critical view of the way in which the social dimension is not addressed, without emphasis on inclusion strategies, as in the case of women and youth. There are gaps arising from the lack of prioritization of inclusion within the institutional and planning framework, highlighting the importance of a process of



self-criticism and repositioning on this important dimension of organizational sustainability, which is an intrinsic condition for the achievement of objectives. solidarity cooperativism and family farming.

Factors that came out of the MT reports that influence economic, social and /or ecological sustainability (positively and negatively) are:

### Economic factors

- Businesses that are not yet consolidated. New businesses need time to grow thus scale is still low;
- Unstable markets and prices;
- Quality of products;
- Declining donor funds, termination of contracts with partners without having achieved a certain level of performance with the MBO partner;
- Too heavy dependence on Trias;
- In terms of resources, some partners have their own funds to give continuity to the processes, while other partners are building a strategy of financial sustainability;
- The extent to which inclusion is part of all economic activities (not mentioned that explicitly as a condition for sustainability but included by the meta-consultant).

### Social factors (human resources)

- Turnover of MBO staff that leave for a job in the private sector or with the government;
- Change of leadership sometimes leads to disruption of plans;
- 100% renewal of the board at the same time (mentioned in one case);
- Rotation of staff/leaders trainers at the MBO level and partner groups;
- The support provided by Trias: although Trias is doing its best, doing a lot of things but in a fragmented way with the MBOs could hamper results and to some extent also sustainability of results;
- The way how Trias support is realized: in one region the question was asked if the team is using the right proportion between training and mentoring/coaching to reach optimal impact;
- Slow change of mindset toward entrepreneurship at the level of the MBO and partner groups;
- In El Salvador, there is political will and conviction in a "critical mass" of actors to promote inclusion and entrepreneurship at different levels: board members, management, technical and administrative staff and members of the membership, and capacities have been built in these actors;
- In addition to the previous point, the extent to which the MBOs show openness towards full participation of women and youth in all governance structures of the MBOs.

### External contextual factors

- Laws, policies, financial measures like high taxes and levies influencing negatively the sustainability of results at MBO and member level;
- Governments evolving towards a discourse that makes the work of NGOs, MBOs and partners more difficult
- Change resulting in longer dry periods or short periods with too much rain at once;
- Political unrest;

- Natural disasters.

#### 4.4.4. Conclusions on the results at MBO and member level

In this DGD program 2017-2021, progress has been made on all core capacities, although some areas are more prominently strengthened within the MBOs than others. The country theories of change have a certain weakness in the sense that some change areas at higher level like environmental results or results regarding natural resources management are not or little included at the capacity level.

Progress with MBOs has also been made in most of the performance change areas, and also here, more prominently in some areas than other. This does not mean that Trias does not work on these issues (indirectly through the MBOs) but it was less present in the reports.

It is quite difficult to understand from the regional MTE reports what support of Trias led to what strengthened capacities at MBO level and from there to what improved performance at MBO level. In the regional MTE reports, there was a lack of focus on how exactly the Trias support provided a strengthening of which capacities of the MBOs. However, in order to know if the TOC is functional, we need to understand the mechanism of the flow, the process, from the support from Trias turning into changes at MBO level turning into changes at member level. This was extremely difficult to detect in the regional MTE reports since the results as such with the MBOs and their members did often not reveal the underlying processes.

Changes in results at MBO level – capacities and performance – were sometimes measured against progress made in the indicators of the logframe. However, the results measured through the indicators do not reveal anything about the underlying processes and how changes have taken place, which we want to know when checking the functionality of the ToC. It is not because there is progress made in the indicators that we can conclude that the theory of change is functional. There may be other processes or activities that lead to the results which may have nothing or little to do with the processes that we want to demonstrate through the theory of change.

The current Trias TOC is not necessarily the only and most effective pathway to achieve results at MBO level. The construction of the TOC is built on the assumption that – when supporting MBOs in certain areas through a capacity building strategy – this will lead to results and effects at the level of MBOs and their members. In a certain context though with only small and weak MBOs, this approach could result in limited outreach and impact.

Sometimes it is not clear in the midterm reports if results at member level are due to MBO strengthening or to direct Trias support to the members. This is a weak point in several reports and has already been touched earlier in this meta-analysis.

Choices made by Trias (type of MBO, selected capacity building areas, way of working) influence the extent to which changes, particularly at the highest level (impact) can be measured and attributed to Trias. The type of MBO and secondly the choices made – in collaboration with the MBOs – to strengthen certain areas within an MBO, influence the extent to which it will be easier or not to

measure the changes, particularly the impact. The methods chosen should depend on this. Also, the extent to which Trias and the MBOs themselves invest time in documenting, making explicit and monitoring how changes occur (i.e. the underlying mechanism of change) will influence the extent to which changes could be more easily or not measured and contributed/attributed to Trias.

Not all reports zoomed in on sustainability or only in a limited way. Examples included in the report show progress made on sustainability. There are indications that MBOs move into the direction of economic, social and/or environmental sustainability. This is a delicate process since quite some factors that can hardly be controlled influence this progress.

## 5 Final conclusions

Previous chapters include already conclusions per chapter, these are not all repeated here. Recalling the purpose of the midterm evaluation, this evaluation had a specific focus, and was meant to analyze (i) the effectiveness and sustainability of the deployed trajectories with MBO partners at the regional level and (ii) the added value of the Trias involvement in the organizational and institutional development of MBO partners, based upon the Theory of Change of Trias and (iii) if (i) and (ii) lead to the conclusion that the TOC of Trias is indeed functional. Based on this analysis, the main purpose of the meta-evaluation is to adjust and enrich the strategic framework of Trias with reference to programming and the implementation of the Theory of Change.

Based on the results coming out of the regional MTE reports, can we conclude that the TOC of Trias is indeed functional? Taking the evaluation questions as a point of departure for the meta-analysis, the analysis concludes that the (overall and regional) country ToC are partial functional. Strong points regarding the functionality could be found but also some weaknesses and points of attention that needs improvement for the future.

### 5.1. Strong points regarding the ToC functionality

What functions well and can be related to the ToC or can be referred to the ToC is the following:

*1 The starting point for implementation of the ToC is well institutionalized and based on the SPIDER approach.*

Once identified the needs of the MBOs, priorities are defined and the capacity building interventions are agreed upon between Trias and the MBOs. A selection is made on which areas Trias will strengthen the MBOs during the implementation period of the DGD program. The underlying idea of this selection is that Trias cannot work on all areas, so that a prioritization of support is necessary.

*2 The SPIDER approach is considered important and relevant by the Trias staff at HO and in the regions and the MBOs*

The greatest strength of the approach seems to be its participatory approach. The SPIDER approach could improve at some points (see recommendations) but the system in itself is functional and in general seems to work well.

*3 Trias facilitates the SPIDER process (identification of priorities and monitoring process) in a participatory way which is highly appreciated by MBOs. Additionally, Trias plays other roles as financier and giving technical support*

The role of Trias regarding the SPIDER process is mainly facilitating and highly participatory and well appreciated by the MBOs.

*4 An envisioned Theory of Change in the regions which makes clear what changes need to be strengthened at MBO and member level*

The existence of these ToC is a good starting point for monitoring progress of desired changes at MBO and member level.

*5 The regional ToC refer to the overall strategy framework and six identified domains of change*

The regional ToC do not stand on itself but refer to strategic priorities made earlier by Trias. In this sense they reflect the strategic priorities of Trias at overall level, translated to the regional context and regional priorities. The regional ToC illustrate well the Trias strategy.

*6 Collaboration between MBOs, Trias and other stakeholders is emphasized in a complementary and/or synergetic way*

A strong point of the ToC is that collaboration with other stakeholders take place in a complementary and/or synergetic way, to make sure that the priority needs of MBOs can be covered as much as possible. In some cases, this collaboration allows also the creation or the improvement of an enabling environment in which MBOs can function more effectively and efficiently.

*7 The regional MTE reports show progress in the capacities and performance areas of MBOs and in some cases its members, prioritized and included in the ToC*

This progress is well described in most of the MTE reports and illustrate that most of the interventions of Trias, in collaboration with other partners and MBOs, result in improved capacities at MBO level. **Progress has been made on all core capacities and most of the performance areas**, although some areas come back more prominently in the MTE reports than others. This does not mean that Trias does not work on these issues (indirectly through the MBOs) but it was less present in the reports.

## *8 Knowledge management shows progress in institutionalizing several tools and instruments in the countries selected for this evaluation*

Most important tools are the gender tool, LEATRA, ERI in some countries, FACT (but becoming less important due to external reasons). The gender tool can be used to work on youth inclusion, but this is still work in progress.

### 5.2. Weak points regarding the ToC functionality

What works less well regarding the functionality of the ToC is the following:

#### *1 Trias has a corporate strategy including domains of change but not a 'real' corporate Theory of Change*

Real means a ToC with envisioned pathways of change illustrating the logics of the change flows and a clear linkage to the Trias strategy. One overall ToC would make it easier to understand how Trias and the results achieved at regional level contribute to the desired changes at regional and corporate Trias level.

*2 The contribution of Trias was unfortunately described in a very broad and general way in the regional MTE reports and did not give much clarity on the extent to which and how the Trias interventions really contributed to the achieved results at MBO and member level.*

This does not mean Trias does not play its roles well, on the contrary we would say because in general MBOs appreciated the Trias support. But appreciation alone is not a measure to explain how the dynamics of change processes work from intervention to changes at MBO and member level, which is exactly what we wanted to understand better through this evaluation.

*3 The country ToC are programmatic and do not envision (eventual) changes beyond MBO level that may be needed to achieve the desired impact at MBO and/or member level.*

This does not need to be a problem if this is a conscient and informed choice e.g. when Trias knows that other necessary changes – not tackled by Trias and not directly related to MBOs but needed for an effective functioning of the MBOs - are taken up by other actors (e.g. access to land, or the existence of a tax system that does not hamper MBO businesses to grow etc.) The question is: is this the case? Since the country TOC are strictly limited to MBOs and their members and do not include other (eventual) necessary changes beyond MBOs, we cannot give an answer to this question.

#### *4 Assumptions present in the country ToC focus mainly on external factors which cannot always be controlled or influenced if needed + they were not or limited tested in this MTE*

Assumptions are the backbone of the Theory of Change and should therefore contain a combination of both internal (related to the MBO themselves) and external factors. Although not mentioned by the midterm reports, it was observed in the DGD program document that most of the country ToC do not include internal factors.

Moreover, little evidence could be found in the regional MTE reports on how 'true' the assumptions still are; most of the assumptions were not tested which is necessary in order to conclude if the ToC is functional or not. **Assumptions were hardly analyzed and (re)affirmed in the midterm evaluations or little evidence could be found on this.**

#### *5 Identified assumptions at 'outcome-impact' level in the country ToC do not sufficiently close the gap between outcome-impact level*

At this stage, even if Trias will be able to measure impact, it will not be possible to measure the contribution of Trias without making explicit the underlying mechanisms that explain how outcome will eventually lead to impact. **Secondly, the country ToC do not include a narrative that explains sufficiently how Trias expects the underlying processes from outcome to impact to work. Main emphasis in the narrative lies on how Trias expects to implement its strategy with the MBOs.**

#### *6 The country ToC show some weaknesses in terminology and in constructing the pathways of change*

**The terminology used in the country ToC is sometimes confusing resulting in unclear descriptions of changes in the regional midterm reports.** This may seem a small remark, but it isn't. If the described changes in the midterm report do not make clear at what level they take place (result- outcome) or because of who (see last paragraph of the previous point) then this does not give sufficient insight in how functional the ToC is.

In addition to this, some change areas like **environmental results or results regarding natural resources management are not or little included at the capacity level.**

Based on the regional MTE reports, in most reports the transversal topic **inclusivity** is not or in a limited way visible in the results of other capacities and performance strengthened.

#### *7 In some regions, questions are raised whether Trias should play a more generalist or specialist role. Doubts or unclarity on what works best can undermine the functionality of the Trias strategy if not analyzed well*

**Trias plays different roles to strengthen MBOs which can differ from region to region,** depending on the needs of the MBOs, and taking into account the available competencies, other partnerships with stakeholders who collaborate in supporting MBOs, the environment in which Trias operates and the

regional Trias team's own vision on how capacity building with MBO partners takes best place. Depending on the support provided Trias plays more an expert role or a more facilitator role, with the MBOs in the driver's seat. Although this seems to function well, it seems sometimes challenging for Trias to keep all balls in the air. Resources are mentioned to be limited (in terms of human resources) and also other factors like the presence of other actors, staff turnover, a disabling environment inhibiting good MBO functioning etcetera limit a sometimes effective implementation of the Trias strategy and Trias roles in order to cover the prioritized capacity areas. These limitations could jeopardize the functionality of the Trias strategy and therefore also the ToC. Uncertainty or doubts on what works best (work as a generalist or specialist) can undermine further this functionality and should be clarified at regional and corporate Trias level (see recommendations).

*8 It is quite difficult to understand from the regional MTE reports how Trias support led to what strengthened capacities at MBO level and from there to what improved performance at MBO level.*

In order to know if the TOC is functional, we have to understand the mechanism of the change flows, the change processes, starting from the OD identification process to the support by Trias towards changes at MBO level and further towards changes at member level. This was extremely difficult to detect in the regional MTE reports since the results as such did often not reveal the underlying dynamics and mechanism on how the change processes function.

**In most of the regional MTE reports no real distinction was made between the capacity level and the performance level of the MBOs when discussing the results at MBO level, which limited a good analysis of how changes occur.**

Changes in results at MBO level – capacities and performance – were sometimes measured against progress made in the indicators of the logframe. However, **the results measured through the indicators do not reveal anything about the underlying processes and how changes have taken place, which we want to know when checking the functionality of the ToC.** It is not because there is progress made in the indicators that we can conclude that the theory of change is functional. **There may be other processes or activities that lead to the results which may have nothing or little to do with the processes that we want to demonstrate through the theory of change.**

*9 It is not always clear from the midterm reports if results at member level are due to MBO strengthening or to direct Trias support to the members.*

This is a weak point in several reports. It is important though, to understand the functionality of the ToC, to what extent and how different partners contribute to what changes. This could function well in practice, but evidence should be gathered to illustrate the contributions of the different partners. If this is not done, we cannot conclude if the ToC is functional in this matter.



*10 The question can be asked whether the SPIDER approach as a starting point covers sufficiently all actual MBO needs,*

taking into account all relevant topics playing a role in the effective functioning of MBOs e.g. the increasing influence of climate change and environmental/ecological issues, increasing influence of digitalization, managing multistakeholder processes, strengthening inclusion in value chains etcetera.

*11 In an indirect way, human resources management influences the functionality of the ToC*

**Knowledge management is supportive** to the roles Trias plays towards the MBOs. In general, progress has been made in institutionalizing several tools (LEATRA, the gender tool, ERI) and by rolling them out in several regions. **These are no easy processes, but progress made is promising. Knowledge management contributes in strengthening specific competencies of Trias staff, but human resource management is still too much under-utilised when professionalizing the Trias roles in strengthening MBOs.** Opportunities remain unexploited such as competency management that was once started, but is currently not brought sufficiently into practice. **HRM could do much more to strengthen and institutionalize certain competencies at Trias level, which would benefit the professionalization of Trias staff and therefore the support to MBOs.**

*12 Not all reports zoomed in on sustainability or only in a limited way*

There are indications that MBOs move into the direction of economic, social and/or environmental sustainability. This is a delicate process since quite some factors that can hardly be controlled influence this progress. A functional ToC should contribute to sustainable processes. Only two reports explained well the extent to which progress is made on sustainability. But since this was topic was only explained to a limited extent in the other MTE reports, we cannot conclude that the ToC is functional regarding this matter.

Based on the conclusions above, we conclude that the country ToC have some strong points, but also some weaknesses. Evidence was missing in the midterm reports of the selected regions in order to illustrate to the fullest the functionality of the ToC. Although all relevant evaluation questions in the regional TOR were included, most of the national consultants did not gather sufficient evidence in the regional reports so to give a well-informed answer on the functionality of the ToC. This has influenced the conclusions, because it is well possible that in practice the country ToC function better than it was illustrated in the regional reports. **Therefore, the conclusions above do not mean that results are not achieved or that Trias is not working in an effective or efficient way.** But it means that based on the regional midterm evaluations, some weaknesses in the theory of change were discovered. It was also not helpful that some of the regional MTE reports showed weaknesses in answering the evaluation questions, which did not sufficiently allow to give evidence on the dynamics of the change processes taking place in the field.

Monitoring of progress of results at MBO and member level in function of the realization of the Theory of Change needs to improve considerably in order to be able to show and measure the flow of the change processes starting from the provision of Trias support (in collaboration with others) to the desired changes in capacities of the MBOs to changes in performance of the MBOS to changes in performance at MBO

member level. This is an important point of attention for the end evaluation. In order to measure impact and to trace it back in one way or another to the capacity building strategy of Trias, more insight is needed in how the theory of change really works in practice (see also chapter 6 Recommendations)

## 6 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, following recommendations were formulated. Distinction has been made between recommendations at corporate level and at regional level, and recommendations meant for both the corporate (overall) and regional Trias level. All recommendations should best be analyzed in close collaboration between the regions and Trias head office.

### 6.1 Recommendations meant for both Trias corporate and regional level

#### *1 Develop one clear Theory of Change at corporate level from which the regional Theories of Change are derived*

This will make it easier to understand how Trias and the results achieved at regional level contributed to the desired changes at regional and corporate Trias level. As mentioned in this report the contribution of Trias was unfortunately described in a very broad and general way in the regional MTE reports and did not give much clarity on the extent to which and how the Trias interventions really contributed to the achieved results at MBO and member level. It does not mean Trias does not play its role well, in general MBOs expressed their appreciation for the Trias support in the regional MTE reports. But appreciation alone is not a measure to explain how the dynamics of change processes work from intervention to changes at MBO and member level, which is exactly what we wanted to understand better through this evaluation.

What is also not very helpful is that the overall six domains of change and the Trias strategy framework are designed and formulated in a different way compared to the country ToC.

Make a clear distinction between **the level of control, the level of influence and the level of interest/impact** when developing the corporate and regional Theories of Change. The *level of control* is the level where Trias develops and implements its strategy in collaboration with the MBOs. It includes the immediate results of actions undertaken by Trias. This level is not visible now in the ToC of the regions. The *level of influence* contains changes at MBO level which Trias wants to achieve at short term, and which can be influenced by the Trias strategy. This level of change coincides with the changes in capacities at MBO level, described as results in the regional ToC and sometimes also- to some extent- with the changes at performance level, described as outcomes in the regional ToC.

Different levels of outcomes can be described in a Theory of Change: outcomes to be achieved at shorter term (which can more easily be influenced) and outcomes to be achieved in the longer term (more difficult to influence by Trias). Outcomes in the longer term at MBO level coincides with the impact level of the regional ToC.

The third and highest level of interest are the changes to which Trias wants to contribute in the very long term. This level coincides often with the impact level but at long term for instance within 10 or 20 years. It is the final 'dream' to which Trias would like to contribute. It is in the interest of Trias to contribute to these changes (therefore *level of interest*) but a lot of other actors and factors will also influence changes at this

level. This level is currently not included in the regional ToC but could e.g. be aligned with the Theory of Change of AgriCord, the network of AgriAgencies to which Trias also belongs.

Make sure that the narrative of the corporate and regional ToC explain **the logic of changes**. ‘Logic’ does not mean that changes should be linear, on the contrary, interventions in the ToC can contribute to more than one change and changes can also influence each other up- and downwards, horizontally and vertically. What is meant here is that it must be clear how the process of changes takes place from one to another level of change. This is not clear now in the current ToC; and it will help in closing the gap between the levels of change e.g. environmental changes/changes in natural resource management need to appear at both capacity and performance level (and not only at performance level).

Be careful not to oversimplify the logic of changes in the ToC. Often a combination of support (financial, training, coaching in different areas) is needed in a simultaneous way in order to achieve results at MBO level. Results will also influence each other. This makes the ToC – as concept – so complex to understand well.

This is also an important point of attention for the end evaluation. In most of the regional MTE reports no real distinction was made between the capacity level and the performance level of the MBOs when discussing the results at MBO level. In order to measure impact and to trace it back in one way or another to the capacity building strategy of Trias, **more insight is needed in how the theory of change really works in practice**.

Develop a **good narrative** to explain the ToC. This is missing now at both corporate and regional level. The narrative explains how the ToC needs to be read: how does Trias expect to implement its strategy with the MBOs and how is expected that this strategy contributes to changes at capacity, performance and impact level. The basis for this narrative is already present in the Trias strategy note and in the DGD program. The narrative should also explain the wording used in the visualized Theory of Change, so that single words can be better understood e.g. the difference between “member participation” at capacity level and “member participation” at performance level.

## *2 Develop realistic and relevant assumptions at all levels of the Theory of Change, and test them regularly*

When developing a Theory of Change, make sure that the **most relevant assumptions** are included and made explicit, so that they sufficiently explain the ‘gap’ between the different change levels of the Theory of Change. Assumptions can be contextual (based on external factors) and internal (based on internal organizational factors). Assumptions describe what you assume is true and present and necessary for the success of the Trias program. Unlike a precondition, assumptions are already in place and do not need to be brought about. To avoid a long list of assumptions, only these assumptions that are mostly relevant and possible to influence if needed should be included.

As mentioned before, the assumptions of the ToC are the backbone of the theory of change. If these are not true, then this will affect the desired changes and thus results achieved. Therefore, assumptions should be tested and (re)affirmed at least once a year.

### *3 Make sure that the choice of a programmatic ToC is a deliberate and informed one*

A Theory of Change visualizes desired changes of involved actors at different levels. Also changes needed at the level of actors who Trias itself does not work with directly but who are necessary for an effective functioning of the MBOs or for an effective implementation of the Trias strategy could be included in the corporate and country ToC. This would make the Theory of Change more realistic than it is now, although it is not an error to develop a programmatic Theory of Change as Trias has done now at regional level. A programmatic ToC means that the Trias program is visualized in a ToC. Whether Trias wants to opt for a programmatic or a broader ToC, make sure in any case that decisions in this matter are well founded and informed.

### *4 Make sure that the overall and regional logical frameworks are well aligned with the overall and regional theories of change.*

**A Theory of Change is not another way to present the logical framework**, neither is a ToC the same as the logical framework, but both complement each other. The logical framework of Trias visualizes the result chain of those interventions that should lead to the desired changes to which Trias wants to contribute in the ToC. Therefore, make sure that the overall DGD and regional DGD logical frameworks are well aligned with the overall and regional theories of change.

## 6.2. Recommendations meant for Trias at corporate level (in collaboration with the regions)

### *1 Train relevant Trias staff at head office and in the regions in what a Theory of Change is and how to use it*

Develop a short **Trias manual** on how to develop a good Theory of Change, including how to select assumptions, how to check evaluability of the Theory of Change, how to make distinction between the levels (of control, influence and interest), how to write a good narrative, how to align the ToC with the logical framework and how to monitor the realization of the Theory of Change. This manual should be known and understood by at least all Trias staff members which function is related to (program) management, monitoring and evaluation, and preferably by all Trias staff being involved in the development and implementation of the Trias strategy in order to understand better how interventions contribute to changes at different levels with involved actors and beneficiaries.

## *2 Optimize the SPIDER process and tools*

When using the SPIDER manual for this meta-analysis, some information was not valid anymore e.g. the second part of the manual regarding how to use the SPIDER in project management. Therefore, the SPIDER manual should be optimized and actualized.

Also, based on the MTE reports, some suggestions have been given to improve and optimize the SPIDER process which we can subscribe : make the process less onerous, but at the same time optimize participation so to allow real reflection and in depth discussions. Other improvements relate to the way of scoring (consider a broader scale), a better description of indicators and accompanying questions and a critical assessment of indicators at result and outcome level, and the analysis of how qualitative information coming out of the monitoring does not go lost in the digital M&E database.

## *3 Assess whether the current OD approach as a starting point to strengthen MBOs is still up to date and relevant*

This recommendation is in line with the observation made in some regions that some specific topics should be emphasized more in the Trias strategy, including attention for current trends and evolutions in the support to MBOs like e.g. climate change, environment/natural resources, development of business wings, management of multi-stakeholder processes, digitalization, inclusivity in value chains. This means that strengthening the core capacities with MBOs should be checked whether they still cover sufficiently these trends and evolutions, with regard to the support given and the way progress is monitored (indicators and accompanying questions).

Also, inclusion/diversity is a specific capacity but it should be reflected better in all capacities, similar for environment.

## *4 Optimize the role of Trias in the context of effective Human Resource Management so that Trias advisors can be deployed more effectively and efficiently*

It is recommended to reflect upon the question whether Trias advisors are more effective as 'experts' or as 'generalists', since this question was raised by several regions during the evaluation; it does not always seem clear which approach works best. Each approach has advantages and disadvantages. Choices made in this respect influence the way in which the Trias strategy is deployed and each choice has its consequences. In reality, the choice for one or another way of working differ from region to region depending e.g. on the available resources and the context in which Trias implements its strategy. Some regions choose to specialize in supporting specific capacities and look for other actors to support other capacities (if present), or Trias advisors work as general facilitators with no specialism at all. A mixed way of working is also applied. Currently, each region decides its own way of working (as a generalist, or rather as a specialist in certain areas) and the way how each regional workforce is built. In any way, **choices in this respect cannot be made without looking at the entire theory of change**, since different change areas influence each other and simultaneous support could be needed to achieve results e.g. increased financial autonomy could depend on improved production, better management of resources, improved governance next to marketing efforts.

In addition to this, **Trias at corporate level should invest stronger in competency management in order to strengthen specific competencies all advisors should have** in order to fulfill the different identified Trias roles (facilitator, technical support and financier). This decision was already taken at the moment Trias 2.0. kicked off, but more initiatives are needed to bring this competency building into practice.

Investment in knowledge management to institutionalize effective tools like e.g. LEATRA, ERI, the gender tool etcetera creates positive results and need to continue. **Knowledge management could even be more effective when approaching it in a more systemic way** by bringing it more in line with competency management/human resource management at overall and regional level, in order to mainstream specific competencies more systematically at Trias advisor level. At the same time, flexibility in using similar tools from other partners which have proved their effectiveness and efficiency should be maintained.

### *5 Develop tools which can measure progress of the realization of the Theory of Change*

In order to increase the extent to which Trias can follow up the progress made regarding the realization of the Theory of Change, several tools can be used. One is **Causal Link Monitoring**, which could be used to monitor the most complex change processes or a selection of change processes (to keep it manageable) between the different levels of the Theory of Change e.g. between the capacity and performance level and between performance and impact level. The advantage of this method is that it explains and makes visible the underlying process and dynamics of how Trias interventions lead to changes at capacity level and how changes at capacity level lead to changes a higher level. Making this visible **helps to adjust processes where possible, and also helps in understanding better the Theory of Change and how different levels of change contribute to each other.**

Another instrument is **Process Tracing**, which can be used in a complementary way together with CLM. The main purpose of process tracing is to establish whether, and how, a potential cause or causes influenced a specified change or set of changes. Process Tracing can thus be used to test contribution to development outcomes. This is done by applying tests to examine the strength of evidence linking potential causes to the changes. Process tracing also involves testing alternative ideas about how change might have come about.

Both instruments can be helpful to measure the contribution of Trias to each change level by making explicit and finding evidence for the underlying mechanisms that explain how interventions lead to strengthened capacities, how these capacities lead to improved performance and how this leads to impact.

These instruments are quite complementary to other tools Trias is starting to work with namely the GDP+<sup>15</sup> tool and the MsC instrument which are a mixed combination of a quantitative and qualitative method meant to measure impact at the end of the program. Process tracing and Causal Link Monitoring are complementary to the GDP+ and MsC tool because they emphasize the underlying processes and causal links between the levels of change.

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<sup>15</sup> The GDP+ tool has recently been changed into another name: the Income+ tool

In any way, additional instruments like process tracing or CLM are needed if Trias wants to know if the desired changes at outcome and impact level are achieved with help of Trias, and particularly if Trias wants to know more about the underlying processes how changes have taken place in order to learn from them and improve practices. It is important to realize that results of the Trias strategy, measured through indicators, do not reveal anything about these dynamics of change and moreover, as mentioned before, there may be other processes or activities that lead to these results which may have nothing or little to do with the processes that we want to demonstrate through the Theory of Change.

### 6.3. Recommendations meant for the Trias regions (in collaboration with Trias corporate level)

#### *1 Be aware that the current Trias ToC is not necessarily the only and most effective way to achieve results like e.g. outreach, and dare to explore other ways of working*

The construction of the TOC is built on the assumption that – when supporting MBOs in certain areas through a capacity building strategy – this will lead to results and effects at the level of MBOs and their members. In a certain context though with only small and weak MBOs, this approach will remain limited in terms of outreach results. In these cases, and with the intention of achieving more MBOs (if these exist), other strategies could be more effective than working with MBOs alone e.g. by collaborating with local governmental institutes through the TOT approach, which is already applied within MBOs, with the idea to reach out to more MBOs through governmental extension workers.

When developing the ToC at regional level, MBOs could then still be the preferred partners of Trias, or even be the end beneficiaries of Trias (and not their individual members), with the option to expand capacity building strategies to other organizations if this would lead to a wider outreach of MBOs.

This goes one step further than working together with external stakeholders towards MBO strengthening (without strengthening these external stakeholders) and is something to consider in case this would lead to more effective results, without having to become common practice (since every situation and context is different).

#### *2 Make more explicit how and to what extent changes occur with regarding to all supported capacities and performance areas*

This recommendation refers to these areas that were less visible in the midterm reports like increased membership (both at capacity and performance level), natural resource management and environment, and lobby and advocacy efforts, so it was not possible to see whether Trias has worked less on these areas but the topics were tackled by others OR these topics were given less attention for one or another reason (less needed to support, less a priority, or another reason).



### *3 It is recommended to analyze well how to measure impact when working with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tier<sup>16</sup> MBOs*

This because of two reasons: first because it is not always obvious to make distinction between direct and indirect beneficiaries of the Trias program within an MBO, secondly because impact through increased income measurement does not necessarily relate to the interventions of Trias or it is not certain to which extent Trias has contributed to the impact. Trias uses also the Most Significant Change method which could be more appropriate in this case. In any case, when measuring the impact, tools should be used which enable to trace back to the Trias intervention with the MBO.

### *4 Analyze how MBO members who improve their situation because of the Trias program can continue to participate in activities and will not drop out due to lack of time*

This because, as mentioned in the report, increased income through diversification of production as a result of MBO strengthening is a positive result at member level, at the same time it has shown that some members cannot attend anymore the meetings and trainings offered by the MBO because of increased lack of time (unexpected negative result).

### *5 Make sure that the transversal themes are better integrated in the supported capacities, and not only treated in a separate way*

In addition, it is recommended to strengthen or to adjust interventions on including inclusivity of youth and/or gender with some of the MBO partners who show poor progress and results on integrating youth and/or gender.

### *6 Make more explicit how the Trias strategy contributes to achieving sustainability in different areas*

Not all reports zoomed in on sustainability or only in a limited way which made it difficult to analyze the extent to which the regional approaches contribute to sustainability in different areas: socially, politically, economically, environmentally. Some of the factors mentioned in the regional MTE reports that influence sustainability can be managed, others not. Although sustainability was less a point of attention in the regional reports, it does not mean Trias does not give attention to this topic in its strategy. This could be made more explicit in some of the regional reports, and in any case, it is an important issue to include in the next evaluation.

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<sup>16</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> tier MBOs are usually MBOs whose members are 1<sup>st</sup> level MBOs (= organized groups of individual members). 3<sup>rd</sup> tier MBOs are MBOs usually counting 2<sup>nd</sup> and eventually 1<sup>st</sup> level MBOs to their members. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> level MBOs can be federations, confederations or larger networks of MBOs.

## *7 Harmonize collaboration with other actors as much as possible before the start of a next (DGD) program*

To avoid problems with aligning ODP plans, it is recommended to include and involve external, strategic partners as much as possible in the SPIDER process with MBOs. This allows them to be part of the SPIDER process and the development and implementation of the ODP plan with the MBOs in a more integrated way and it avoids that ODP plans of different donors need to be adjusted in a later stage (ref. good practice of Tanzania).

# Annexes

## Annex 1: TOR regional midterm evaluation

### TERMS OF REFERENCE - MID TERM EVALUATION TRIAS SOUTH PROGRAMME 2017 - 2021



#### 1. Background information and subject of evaluation

##### 1.1. The organization

Trias is a movement NGO. In Flanders, it is backed by three rural and three entrepreneurial **Membership-Based Organizations (MBOs)**: KVLV, Landelijke Gilden, KLJ, Markant, Unizo, and Neos. Trias is also supported by a larger network that identifies with its vision, encompassing organizations such as CD&V, KUL, ... The MBOs and the network are formally represented in the Board and General Assembly and help steer the organization. The MBOs' characteristics and beliefs are integrated in Trias's identity and form an important contribution to the definition of its strategic choices.

Trias's vision is based on the belief that individuals, groups, and MBOs like cooperatives, credit and saving groups, etc. possess the strength required for self-development and joint action towards social and economic empowerment, poverty alleviation, wealth creation, and well-being. Trias's mission is to improve livelihood security and wellbeing of family farmers (FF) and small-scale entrepreneurs (SSE) by supporting their respective MBOs.

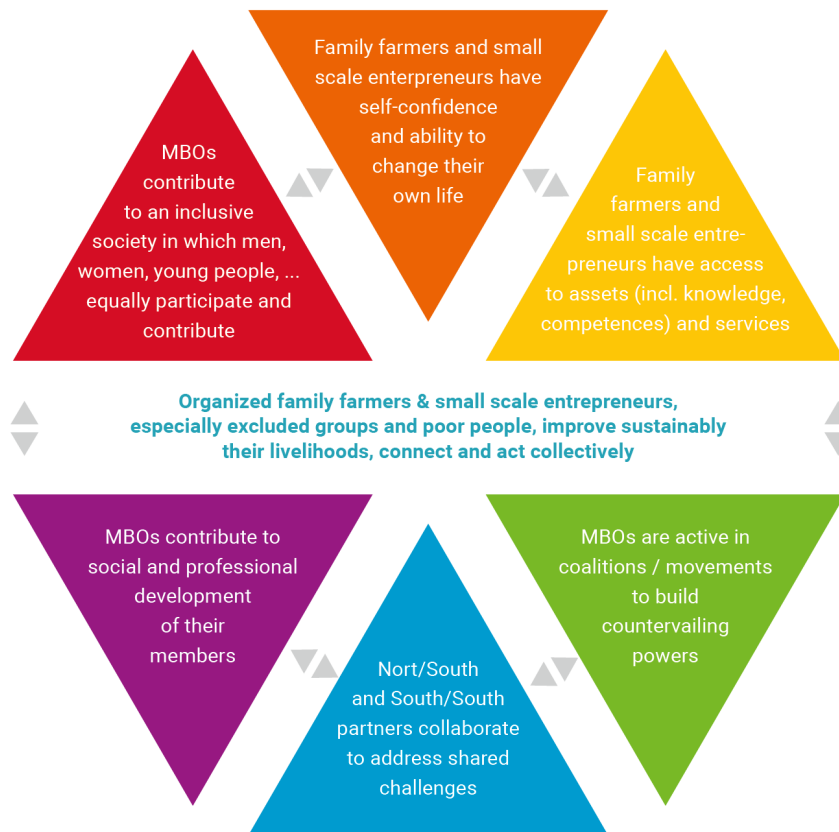
Trias also wants to stimulate worldwide exchange and cooperation between farmers and entrepreneurs.

##### 1.2. The Theory of Change and Strategic Framework of Trias

Trias envisions a final goal with a timeframe of up to 20 years, that it would like to see in the lives of family farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs and in their societies.

To assure effective progress towards this change, six underlying domains of change must be addressed (see next figure). For Trias, **Membership-Based Organizations (MBOs)** are the best placed actors to assure the effective realization of these changes. Four blocks of triggers need to be induced to effectively allow MBOs to play that role:

- Poor people, women, and young people empower themselves, which allows for their active participation in MBOs.
- Improved and sustainable organization of MBOs.
- MBOs and their strategic partners facilitate integrated quality services to ensure increased participation in markets, especially of poor people, women, and young people.
- MBOs coordinate, dialogue, and collaborate with other actors towards a more inclusive global society.



The long-term goal and its critical blocks of triggers have been translated into a **strategic framework** allowing further definition of measurable expected impact, particularly the outcome and results for Trias’s work. This strategic framework also allows Trias to streamline its interventions in different regional contexts, monitor and evaluate the success of the interventions, and emphasize the coherence of the different components of its work. It also helps to provide an answer to the question “How do we know Trias is successful in 2022?” (see Strategy Note of Trias in annex).

The Theory of Change that is applied in each country is written out in the DGD programme document.

### 1.3. SPIDER

To bring its strategic view into practice, Trias developed an approach called SPIDER: Strengthening Partners in Development through Empowerment and Reflexion<sup>17</sup>. SPIDER refers to the approach of participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation as part of the organisational development process. Starting from the notion that any group, how weak it may be, brings together a series of individual and organisational capacities, SPIDER seeks to identify the capabilities and opportunities as well as the challenges of each individual partner MBO, and assist them in their continuous process of organisational development. To be able to determine what activities have to be organised (trainings, exchanges etc.) and what investments have to be made, it is important to have good overview of each partner MBO’s capacities and their

<sup>17</sup> Manual on monitoring and evaluation as part of the SPIDER approach

evolution, as well as the effects on the actual work of the MBO with and for its members. This is why SPIDER combines capacity development with methods and tools to monitor the progress and the results of the MBOs.

SPIDER provides a guide for helping partner MBOs to develop their own organisation and the quality of the services they provide to their members. SPIDER is an open framework, to which other tools and approaches can be included. Since every organisation and every context is unique, flexibility is important. With SPIDER, the needs of every single MBO can be addressed, while managing country-wide, regional and worldwide programs. SPIDER also provides a common language and a common reference framework, as to be able to exchange between each other – not only between Trias advisors but also between partners in the South and/or partners in the North.

## **2. Evaluation objectives, questions, scope and stakeholders**

### **2.1. Objective and scope of the evaluation**

This midterm evaluation is not meant to measure impact yet, to be achieved through the 2017-2021 programme. Instead, this evaluation has a specific focus, and is meant to analyze (i) the effectiveness and sustainability of the deployed trajectories with MBO partners and (ii) the added value of TRIAS involvement in the organizational and institutional development of MBO partners, based upon the Theory of Change of Trias.

**The ToC of Trias says that strengthening the capacities of an MBO will lead to an improvement of the well-being of its members. In principle, Trias limits itself to the capacity building of the MBOs. Whether both the capacity development of the MBO and the increased well-being have been achieved, can be evaluated based on the answers to questions 3 and 4. Does this lead to the conclusion that the ToC of Trias is indeed functional?**

Target group of this evaluation are the MBOs involved. The evaluators will work with the staff and boards of the MBOs (& staff of Trias teams).

For each country or regional programme involved in the evaluation, a local consultant will be hired, based on this TOR. Depending on the interest of the region, the local consultant might be supported by a peer-to-peer review (with support from an advisor of another country office of the region). Deployment of the peer to peer advisor need to be consulted with HO before any commitment can be taken up, this to make sure the added value in the global proces and the management of the budget

The output of the regional evaluations will be assessed by a consultant assigned through Head office with the objective to produce a meta-evaluation. This meta-evaluation will serve to adjust and enrich the strategic framework of Trias with reference to programming and the implementation of the theory of change. Additionally, the meta-evaluation will serve as an important input for the end evaluation of the programme and the new DGD programme from 2022 onwards.

The regional reports will be shared with the MBO partners for feedback. The meta-evaluation will be shared with the involved Trias regional offices for feedback. Relevant conclusions and recommendations will be shared with all involved regional Trias offices, MBO partners and DGD.

## 2.2. Evaluation questions

The evaluation seeks an answer to the following main evaluation questions (5). Each evaluation question includes several sub-questions.

Evaluators should design an appropriate methodology to find an answer to the main evaluation questions below. Both the Trias regional office and the selected MBOs (board and/or operational level) need to be questioned, to cross-check and triangulate collected information.

E.g. the MBO should not be questioned directly about the SPIDER-tool as such (evaluation question 1) but they should be asked if there was a partner assessment done before or at inception of the 2017-2021 programme resulting in a plan to strengthen the organization. Depending on who will be questioned, the evaluation questions need to be slightly adapted. (see also below methodology)

### 1. Functionality of SPIDER

To what extent is SPIDER used by the Trias regional office as the basic system (i) to analyze the MBO and its needs, and (ii) to establish an ODP together with the MBO?

Supportive Q:

- Is SPIDER used for all MBOs supported by Trias in the region? If not, why not?
- Which parts of SPIDER are used (and indicate your appreciation) and which parts not (explain why).
  - o Spider tools and key activities:
    - Organizational Capacity Assessment workshop (OCA, start of the programme)
    - MBO-scan
    - OD plan
    - Member satisfaction survey (MSS)
    - MBO Capacity monitoring
    - MBO performance monitoring
    - Programme monitoring tool
    - Annual review workshop
- When is SPIDER used? Before establishing the MBO- partnership, once established the MBO- partnership, during preparation of the programme 2017-2021, at the beginning of the 2017-2021 programme, otherwise. Explain.
- Do all MBOs supported by the Trias region have an ODP<sup>18</sup>, based on the format available in SPIDER?
- Are there MBOs with an ODP based on other tools than the SPIDER-tool?

Which tools are these?

Why does the Trias region prefer these other ODP formats rather than the one from SPIDER?

### 2. Relevance of Spider - addressing the MBOs' needs

To what extent does the support agreed upon in the ODP, respond to the needs of the MBO and how is this realized?

Supportive Q:

- Was the support as indicated in the ODP agreed upon jointly by the MBO and Trias? And does it really reflect the needs of the MBO according to the MBO?
- Within the ODP:

What kind of support does Trias deliver itself to the MBO?

What kind of support is delivered by other organisations to the MBO (possibly facilitated by Trias)

E.g. direct financial support, technical support (to services delivered by the MBO), organizational support (to strengthen the MBO in their management/governance capacities), institutional support

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<sup>18</sup> Organisational Development Plan

(to strengthen the MBO in their representation towards others), other kind of support (specify)?

- Does the Trias regional office use good practices/methods, developed within Trias, to support the MBO? Which ones? If not, why not?
  - o Either (almost) 'institutionalised' methods (ERI<sup>19</sup>, LEATRA<sup>20</sup>, Gender roadmap, ...)
  - o Methods developed and used only in the Region.

### 3. Results at MBO level

To what extent does the support, provided by the Trias region, lead to (sustainable) service delivery by MBOs to its members?

Supportive Q:

- What are the expected changes at MBO level as a direct result of the Trias regional support?
- How do MBOs 'use' the Trias support?
- What are, the effective results/changes at MBO level, in terms of
  - o Service delivery to the members
  - o staff / governance structure
  - o other
- How does Trias monitor progress in terms of these results?
- Are results / changes sustainable? What criteria do Trias/MBO partners use to measure this?
- Are the targets set for the performance indicators at MBO level on track?

### 4. Results at Member level

To what extent and how does the MBO strengthening, as a result from the Trias regional support, have a positive and sustainable effect on the members of the MBO?

(where possible, the results of the MSS, GDP+/Income+<sup>21</sup> and/or MSC<sup>22</sup> can be used to get input on these questions).

Supportive Q:

- What are the expected changes at individual member level, as a result of the Trias regional support (via the changes at MBO level)?
- What are, in reality, the effects on the individual members of the MBO?
- Are MBO members satisfied with the service delivery by their MBO? (indirect information, results member survey))
- Are the targets set for the performance indicators at member level on track?

### 5. What lessons can be drawn and recommendations given to the Trias regional office and its MBO partners, based on the previous evaluation questions?

- What should we do more, what should we do less?
- If we continue implementation with the current strategy and pace, will we achieve our goals at the end of the programme? If not what drastic changes should Trias implement?
- Are we focusing on the right people? Are youth and women sufficiently involved? Are we respecting a good mix between farmers and entrepreneurs?
- Is the collaboration with other actors adding value to the programme? How can this cooperation still be improved?

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<sup>19</sup> Enabling Rural Innovation

<sup>20</sup> Leadership Trajectory

<sup>21</sup> See factsheet in Annex of this TOR

<sup>22</sup> Most Significant Change stories



### **3. Methodology**

The exercise will entail a combination of comprehensive document analysis, and consultation with the Trias regional office (relevant staff) and involved MBO partners (board and staff members). The evaluation will be participatory in nature and should make use of a mix of data sources, collected through multiple methods. The data collection methods should include collection of primary and secondary data through use of interviews, questionnaires, eventually group interviews.

The evaluator is expected to develop an evaluation methodology including:

- A methodological approach explaining what approach, methods and tools will be used to answer the evaluation questions (justification, limits)
- An evaluation framework to guide data collection to answer the evaluation questions An explanation on who will be interviewed/questioned to answer what evaluation question (for example by using a matrix)
- How the collected evidence will be cross-checked /triangulated
- A detailed timeline and work plan
- A list of persons/stakeholders to be consulted

Documents and data that will be made available for desk study:

- DGD Country program 2017-2021
- Country logical frameworks
- The Trias strategy note (in English, French, Spanish)(also in annex of this TOR)
- Factsheets / infosheets
  - o GDP +
  - o Member Satisfaction Survey
  - o Leadership trajectory (LEATRA)
  - o Enabling Rural Innovation (ERI)
  - o Gender Roadmap
  - o Spider (also in annex of this ToR)

MBO selection: xxx

### **4. Main steps and expected deliverables**

Steps and Deliverables should include the following:

- A kick-off meeting between the regional consultant, the Trias regional office and meta-consultant/Trias head office to agree on the final work plan and methodology
- A presentation of preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations, through a sense making workshop, with the Trias regional office
- Draft evaluation report written in English, French or Spanish

- Final evaluation report (adjusted based on feedback given by the MBO partners, the Trias regional office and the evaluation committee of Trias HQ)
- A restitution meeting with the Trias regional office

The structure of the report, containing region specific sections, should cover at least the following:

- Executive summary with main conclusions and recommendations
- Table of contents (Well structured, sufficient detail)
- Analysis of the context(s)
- Description of the Methodology used
- Main findings and conclusions relating to the evaluation questions
- Lessons learnt related to the evaluation questions
- How the Theory of change is being applied in the region (critical review) and is it functional (see also ‘objective and scope of the evaluation’)
- Recommendations
- In annex: ToR, ToC, the evaluation framework, list of interviewees, documents consulted, every other info used as basis for the analysis

- The report (and the annexes to it) should give information on the evidence collected, and the weight of the evidence, supporting the conclusions.

- Conclusions and recommendations should be prioritized.

- Use of tables to synthesize findings (should this be a plus for the readability of the report).

Max. length of the report (excluding annexes): 25 pages

## 5. Indicative Timeline and budget

Activity	September 2019	October 2019	November 2019	December 2019
Contracting the local consultant				
Kick-off meeting and document study				
Data collection with main actors involved				
Sense-making workshop				
Writing of the draft report				
Delivery draft report			Due 20 november	
Feedback on the draft report				Due 1 <sup>st</sup> of December

Delivery of final report and restitution				Due 15 December
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**Indicative overall budget for the evaluation: xxx €, all costs and taxes included.**

## **6. Profile of the evaluator(s)**

The evaluation will be carried out by a local evaluator.

Preference will be given to applicants with the following qualifications, experience and skills:

- Proven experience in evaluations, including at least five years of working experience in carrying out evaluations of development projects/programmes
- Experience in working with MBO (through previous evaluations or other kind of work)
- Knowledge of evaluation of capacity building activities and familiarity with the theory of change concept
- Knowledge of the political, socio-economic and socio-cultural context of the region/country
- Knowledge of the international development cooperation sector
- Ability to produce well written, analytical reports in English, French, or Spanish is essential.

## **7. Requirements for proposals**

Proposals should include:

- A description of the proposed (methodological) approach
- Indicative timeline for the different phases of the evaluation, with a list of activities and corresponding estimate of number of days per phase.
- Short overview of how the candidate(s) meet(s) the qualifications, experience and skills, including – in annex - an up-to-date CV and track record of most relevant evaluation assignments
- Detailed budget – including projected travel and in-country accommodation and subsistence costs
- Indicative length: 5 pages without CV

## **8. Management of the evaluation**

The evaluation will be closely followed up by the Trias regional office, with support from the evaluation committee at Trias headoffice in Brussels.

The Trias regional office will be responsible for hiring the local consultant, for coordinating the evaluation process, the feedback on the deliverables, and the approval of the report after receipt of feedback from the evaluation committee at Brussels HQ.

Proposals are expected not later than 31 August and should be sent to xxx

The contract will be awarded Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> at the latest.

For more information about this evaluation, contact xxx

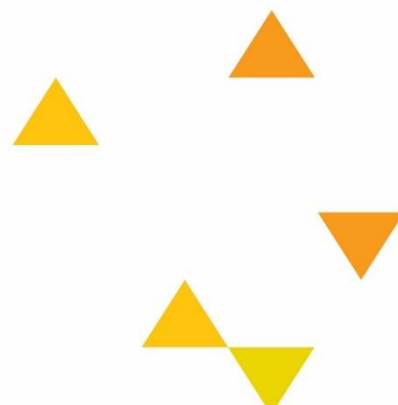
All proposals will receive a reply.

**Annexes:**

1 – Trias strategy note (English, French, Spanish)

2 – Factsheet SPIDER (Cycle of opportunities)

# TRIAS



## SPECIAL SPECIFICATIONS

*TRIAS vzw – May 2019  
Call nr 1 TRIAS-BXL-2019*

*Negotiating procedure without publication*



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# TECHNICAL PROVISIONS

## 1. Background information

The timing foreseen is as follows:

	meta consultant								
		june	july	August	September	October	November	December	January
<i>Defining global approach</i>	x	x							
<i>Developing ToR standard format for the 6 regions</i>	x	x							
<i>Developing ToR for evaluation North programme &amp; hiring evaluator</i>	x	x							
<i>Evaluation North programme</i>				x	x	x			
<i>Publication Tor at regional level &amp; hiring consultant</i>			x						
<i>Preparing evaluation at regional level</i>			x	x	x				
<i>Support and mainstreaming consultants regional level &amp; deployment approach local evaluations</i>				x	x				
<i>Process of evaluations at regional level</i>					x	x	x		
<i>Finalizing evaluation report – sharing with HO – mainstreaming of output</i>	x						x	x	
<i>Development of strategic meta report based upon the regional reports</i>	x								
<i>Presentation meta report to TRIAS</i>	x							x	x
<i>Implement strategic learning &amp; steering</i>									x

Timing can be adapted due to circumstances and in common agreement

## **2. Objectives of the assignment**

The **objective** of this assignment is: *To ensure the quality and comparability of all evaluations done in the regions, in order to be able to make overall conclusions and draw common lessons at a meta level:*

- *Coherence on content & focus*
- *Coherence on methodology*
- *Coherence on formats for temporary and end products*
- *Coherence on communication (internal)*
- *Coherence on drawing overall observations of trends, conclusions, recommendations, lessons learned*

*The assignment is in line with the overall concept of the evaluation approach as outlined in attached document nr 1 and the concept of midterm evaluation in attached doc nr 2*

*To be able to achieve the above we suggest -among others- following **tasks**:*

- *Structure and focus the amount of questions to what really matters for TRIAS, in line with the given evaluation focus on effectiveness and sustainability on the one hand as a precondition to perform an impact evaluation, and TRIAS being a learning organisation, on the other hand.*
- *Attend the evaluation committee meetings (internal and external) at TRIAS HQ to keep overview on the process and steer where needed, in collaboration with the supervising officer.*
- *Revise guidelines for regional evaluations and contribute to the development of a standard format for regional ToR*
- *Observe TRIAS actions, communication with regional evaluators, approach, coordination, etc. during the evaluation process, and give constructive feedback with an aim of increasing TRIAS's internal capacity and competencies.*

**Additional objective** *is to advise and support on the development of a midterm evaluation for the North programme*

## **3. Expected outcomes**

- *Fine-tuned methodological approach based upon the existing concepts*
- *Format standardized for a regional ToR*
- *ToR & support evaluation North programme*
- *Support, supervision and steering of regional evaluators*
- ***Development of a meta evaluation***
- *Facilitation of a learning day*
- *Presentation of strategic recommendations*

## **4. Length and period of assignment**

*Based on the time frame presented under point 1 above, we plan a need to foresee*

*discussions on methodology*

*support in developing regional ToR & ToR north programme*

*Supervising & steering regional evaluators*

*Mainstreaming the approach & outcome of regional evaluations*

*Developing a strategic meta evaluation based upon regional evaluations & evaluation north programme*

*facilitate an internal reflection or think day in Brussels & feedback to management team*



## 5. Language

The consultant will be fluent in Dutch, English and French. Spanish is an asset

- Internal reports & Guidelines will be in English

## 6. Procedure

- Write a short proposal (max 2 pages), with:
  - o Methodology / number of days / availability
  - o The price offer (total price in euro exclusive VAT and inclusive VAT should be indicated).
- Send your interest for this job + your short proposal as well as a short CV (max 2 pages – focus on experience with similar assignments) per email to:
- Latest Date of submission of proposal: 24/06/2019
- As this is a specific procedure, other candidates will be informed that they are not selected.

In case you would like further explanation with regard to this assignment, please contact :

[Eric.Vanderwegen@trias.ngo](mailto:Eric.Vanderwegen@trias.ngo) or [patrick.eeckloo@trias.ngo](mailto:patrick.eeckloo@trias.ngo)

1000 Brussels  
Belgium

## Annex 3: List of persons interviewed for the meta-analysis

Name	Function within Trias
Lode Debare	General director
Patrick Eeckloo	Programmes and Strategic Partnerships Manager
Eric Vanderwegen	Head of Department Quality and Resources
Natalie Vandeneuynde	Programme Information Management
Ellen Van Himbergen	Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor
Astrid Vreys	Regional director Central America
Gudrun Cartuyvels	Regional director SE Asia
Lieve Van Elsen	Regional director Sudamerica
Bart Casier	Country director Tanzania
René Fara Millimouno	Regional director West Africa
Delmas Kinda	Regional program coordinator West Africa
Gisele Obara	Country coordinator Brazil (not interviewed, feedback given on the draft report)
Daniela Medeiros Nascimento	Organisational Development Advisor Brazil – Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (only feedback given on the draft report)

## Annex 4: Overview of MBO partners involved in the regional midterm evaluation

Name MBO	Coverage/ubicated	Country
PATAMABA Pambansang Kalipunan ng Manggagawang Impormal sa Pilipinas	Metro Manila	Philippines
LPMPC Labo Progressive Multi-Purpose Cooperative	Bicol Region	Philippines
TKFPI Tao-Kalikasan Foundation of the Philippines, Inc.	Bicol Region	Philippines
UNICAFES/MG (board and +/- 15% of the 32 member cooperatives) União Nacional das Cooperativas da Agricultura Familiar e Economia Solidária no Estado de Minas Gerais	3 regions: Zona da Mata, Norte y Noroeste del estado de Minas Gerais	Brazil
ADEL Morazán Asociación Agencia de Desarrollo Económico Local de Morazán	Department of Morazán	El Salvador
CLAC Coordinadora Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Pequeños Productores y Trabajadores de Comercio Justo	International network of small FFs and SSEs (scope of the MT evaluation was in El Salvador)	El Salvador
CONFRAS de R.L. Confederación de Federaciones de la Reforma Agraria Salvadoreña de Responsabilidad Limitada	National level	El Salvador
PACAT Unión de Organizaciones Productoras Agroecológicas y de Comercialización Asociativa	Provincia de Tungurahua (Ambato)	Ecuador
COPROBICH Corporación de Productores y Comercializadores Orgánicos Bio Taita Chimborazo	Provincia de Chimborazo, (Cajabamba)	Ecuador
AGROPAPA Asociación de Productores Agrícolas del Rubro Papa	Provincia de Tungurahua (Ambato)	Ecuador
Tejemujeres Cooperativa Artesanal Teje Mujeres	Provincia de Azuay Cantón Gualaceo	Ecuador
CECJ Coordinadora Ecuatoriana de Comercio Justo	Provincia de Chimborazo, Cantón Riobamba	Ecuador

FUPRORIZ La Fédération des Unions de Producteurs de Riz de la Haute Guinée	Banko, Cissela, Dinguiraye commune urbaine	Guinée
COPRAKAM La Coopérative des Producteurs d'Arachide, de Karité et de Miel	Dabola centre, Dogomet	Guinée
JS La plateforme de jeunes entrepreneurs Jeunes Solidaires	Kindia centre, Dabola centre	Guinée
FASEF La Fédération des Associations des Services Financiers	Friguiagbé, Dogomet	Guinée
Fédération des Producteurs de Vivriers et Saliculteurs de Basse Guinée (FOPVS-BG) (2 unions)	Préfecture Kindia (Samaya, Madina Oula)	Guinée
TAHA Tanzania horticultural Association	Arumeru and Zanzibar	Tanzania
MVIWATA Manyara Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima Tanzania	Mbulu and Hanang districts	Tanzania
MVIWATA Arusha Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima Tanzania	Arusha DC, Monduli and Karatu districts	Tanzania
TCCIA Manyara Tanzania Chamber of Commerce Industry and Agriculture	Mbulu and Hanang districts	Tanzania
TCCIA Arusha Tanzania Chamber of Commerce Industry and Agriculture	Arusha city and Karatu districts	Tanzania

## Annex 5: Some stories of change

### Story of Change – Guinée

*Le FIDA, par l'intermédiaire de son Programme National d'Appui aux Acteurs des Filières Agricoles (PNAFA), a appuyé les communautés à élaborer leurs Plans de Développement Locaux (PDL) et à identifier les ressources endogènes mobilisables pour le financement. Les magasins de stockage, les aires de séchage, les pistes de production au niveau rural, les écoles et postes de santé, etcetera. réalisés dans un certain nombre de communautés sont issues de ce programme (identifiés par les communautés qui apportent entre 20 et 30% du financement ; le reste assuré par le PNAFA). Le Program CAT est venu donc se superposer dans ces communautés au PNAFA (qui prend fin en Décembre 2020). Toutefois, selon les membres des groupements et leurs dirigeants, le Program CAT travaillant essentiellement dans le renforcement des capacités, a permis de rendre opérationnelle l'approche AMED développée depuis une dizaine d'année par le FIDA chez eux. En effet, les membres des groupements ont exprimé leur enthousiasme par rapport au Program CAT, en soutenant qu'il « leur donne la possibilité d'exploiter réellement tout ce que le PNAFA a réalisé en leur faveur ». Par exemple le PNAFA a incité depuis plusieurs années les paysans à se regrouper en créant des groupements par filières. Ce qui fut fait et la quasi-totalité des groupements aujourd'hui dans le Program CAT son issus de cette dynamique. Seulement, les structures mises en place n'étaient pas fonctionnelles, le plus souvent parce que les membres, y compris les leaders ne savaient pas comment gérer un groupement agricole.*

*En outre, le PNAFA a construit dans certaines localités des magasins de stockage, des aires de séchage du riz et équiper certaines localités de machines décortiqueuses (Sous-préfecture de Banko). Mais les magasins étaient restés fermés, les aires de séchages non ou peu utilisées. Aucune structuration des bénéficiaires ni formation pour l'exploitation de ces infrastructures n'avait été réalisée. Le renforcement des capacités des groupements par TRIAS leur permis d'avoir aujourd'hui les capacités d'exploiter toutes ces infrastructures. Les infrastructures ont donc acquis une immense importance nouvelle dans la perspective d'orienter la production vers la commercialisation (stockage, étuvage, transformation). De même, l'exploitation des rizeries étaient arrêtée à maints endroits pour des questions liées à leur gestion ou pour des pannes, les exploitantes n'ayant pas les moyens financiers pour y faire face. L'habilitation des groupements dans le domaine de l'organisation et de la gestion leur permet aujourd'hui de dépasser toutes ces contraintes. Et, selon les membres des groupements, tous ces acquis peuvent maintenant être intégrés dans la mise en œuvre des Plans stratégiques de développement conçus avec TRIAS. Un responsable de groupement impliqué dans la mise en œuvre du PNAFA a indiqué « qu'en 20 ans de présence chez eux, le FIDA n'a jamais organisé à leur intention une formation du genre que dispense TRIAS, et c'est précisément ce qui manquait » (MTE report Guinée)*



## Success story

# MAKE SELELA GREEN

2019

= *MVIWATA-ARUSHA* =

Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima wa Mkoa wa Arusha



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima Mkoa - Arusha, abbreviated as MVIWATA-Arusha, is a regional farmers' network organization in Arusha region, catering for five districts of Arusha DC, Meru, Karatu, Longido and Monduli. The main purpose of the network is to improve communication amongst farmers' groups in order to enhance the participation of small-scale farmers in planning, implementation/supervision of social, economic and understanding of political processes.

One of the objective of MVIWATA-ARUSHA is meeting the challenges emanating from climate change, by developing and implementing viable interventions. And specifically MVIWATA-ARUSHA have specific objective on environment and climate change i.e. *Small-scale farmers' knowledge and skills on dealing with climate change and environmental degradation improved.* List of activities that are undertaken to contribute reducing impact of climate change are; To organize and conduct awareness raising on environmental conservation to members of MVIWATA-Arusha and to community at large. Capacity building to peer educators to conduct trainings and awareness rising to MVIWATA-ARUSHA members' on environmental conservation and dealing with impact of climate change, training on agroforestry to members and community. Organizing tree planting campaigns in farms, in range land and at households.

The objective of this activity was to carry out tree planting campaign in Selela village. MVIWATA-ARUSHA expected Selela villages to plant over 50,000 trees in farms, institutions, in the forest and at farmers' homestead in two year. Tree planting mission/campaigns comprised mobilization of villages to plant trees, training members on important planting trees and on agroforestry. With support from partners, villagers and district government we managed to plant 86661 trees in 2017, 2018 and 2019. There many other trees are planted in areas that are not monitored and counted this means there many trees that will contribute in making Selela green.



There is a political will for ecological protection, and climate change impact mitigation and hence central and local government, international organizations were willing to participate in interventions that are protection and mitigating impact of climate change. MVIWATA-ARUSHA collaborate with TRIAS and other partners to facilitate environmental and climate change impact mitigation in Monduli and mainly in Selela village. The slogan for this intervention is to make **SELELA GREEN**.

In Tanzania we have national tree planting day and in that day we organised tree planting campaigns at region, district and villages level. In 2018 MVIWATA-ARUSHA manage to plan over 45928 trees and 2019 MVIWATA-ARUSHA managed to plant 25079 trees



in Selela village, there other many trees planted by individual farmers who were sensitized during training and mobilization of tree planting.

The government environmental protection policy is also applied to the regional level. There are campaigns organized at regional level on planting trees to mitigate impact of climate change. Every villages and districts are also given target to plant tree for the ecological protection and mitigating impacts climate change. Farmers are doing agroforestry farming compared to 2017, due to sensitization and mobilization campaign.

MVIWATA-ARUSHA is collaborating with different partners in implementing this campaign, they are at different level i.e. National level, International level and at local level, this is to make sure all partners, villagers are fully involved in change Selela green. At national level, MVIWATA-ARUSHA collaborated with partners in different areas like on Land Use Plans, lobby and advocacy and in socio-economic development, and environmental interventions including tree planting and nurseries preparation and management. MVIWATA-ARUSHA collaborate with Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA) to facilitate environmental and climate change impact mitigation by planting trees and by organizing tree nurseries.



At international level, MVIWATA-ARUSHA also collaborated with international partners to organize and implementing programme at regional level. Synergy interventions amplified results of the programme implemented by collaborating partners. MVIWATA-ARUSHA collaborate with BOS+, We Effect and TRIAS to facilitate environmental and climate change impact mitigation in Selela village, i.e Make Selela Green again.

There are initiatives that were done locally with villagers and village government, hence contributed to the achieved results. Willingness of the villagers and Selela village government was a key contributing factor in making Selela green. Village Natural Resource Committee (VNRC) organized during programmes in village contributed a lot in sensitization of planting trees and managing natural resource and planted trees by using by-laws that were formulated and trained by the programme. VNRC also were responsible to make sure all planted tree are surviving in all planted areas i.e. in forest, farms and at public areas

A common goal and impact of climate change influenced partners to collaborate in related interventions. For example MVIWATA-ARUSHA and Ngorongoro Conservation Area worked together to plant tree and develop tree nurseries just because the factors

pushing partners to come together to intervene on particular challenge and i.e. impact of climate change.

## 2. Tree planting trends from 2017 to 2019

The objective of tree planting campaign in Selela village, aimed to plant 50,000 trees in two years. In 2017 at Selela villages 15654 tree were planted, in 2018 at tree planting campaign week 45928 trees palned and 2019 trees planting campaigns w e planted 25079 trees. Tree planting mission comprised mobilization of villages to plant trees, training members on important planting trees and on agroforestry. More than 5454 members and villagers were participating in planting



The following activities contributed to the successfulness of the trees planting campaign in Selela village.

- a. Training farmers on climate change and its impacts.
- b. Awareness creation and by doing tree planting campaigns
- c. Facilitate availability of tree by collaborating with other partners
- d. Demonstration of organizing nurseries and tree planting in Selela village.
- e. Meeting with Villagers at their general Assembly, meeting Village governing committee and discussing on planting campaign, whereby planting tree was sensitized with all leaders of sub-villages in Selela village.
- f. Tree planting campaign was sensitized and mobilized in all sub-villages and institutions like schools (*Primary School Ndinika, Primary School Mbaashi, Secondary school Ortinga, Selela village farms and Selela Primary.*) and churches. In farms plating was demonstrated during planting campaigns.
- g. Construction of water infrastructures to facilitated irrigating nurseries and planted trees in Selela primary school.

With mentioned activities and involvement of District Natural resource and land plan officers in Monduli District and with willingness of the Monduli District Executive Director as well as Selela ward councillor Mr Meena was a great contribution to Make Selela green as it is now. Involvement of Regional commissioner, district commissioner, ward councillors and other leaders also contributed to increase seriousness in planting trees at community level.

### 3. Pictures report on different interventions facilitated during tree planting campaigns to Make Selela Green

	
<p>Meeting and discussion with ward councillor partners and regional and districts officers on March 2018</p>	<p>Selela Villagers, guest and leaders participating in tree planting campaign on April 2018</p>
	
<p>Inaguration board for tree planting campaign on April 2018 at Selela Village</p>	<p>Trees planted on April 2018, at second planting campaign on May 2019.</p>
	
<p>One of the planted tree in bare area in Selela primary school on April 2018</p>	<p>Appreciate certificate from Arusha regional commissioner on April 2018</p>



MVIWATA-ARUSHA Coordinator explaining planting interventions to guest of honour (Arusha RC) and other districts commissioners in tree planting campaign day



Villagers, guest, partners and local leaders at tree planting campaign in Selela.



In 2019 tree another campaign done District Commissioner Iddy Kimanta planted trees at Selela Village on May 2019



TRIAS staff Mr Julius Mlambo planted trees and spokes to media on tree planting campaign on May 2019



The area before planting trees and during planting trees at Selela primary school on April 2018



The area after planting trees and during planting trees on May 2019 at Selela primary school.

#### 4. CONCLUSSIONS

The objective of tree planting campaign in Selela village, aimed to plant 50,000 trees in three years, but we managed to plant 86661 trees and over 95% of the planted tree survived. In 2017 at Selela villages 15654 tree were planted, on April 2018 at tree planting campaign week 45928 trees planted and on May 2019 trees planting campaigns we planted 25079 trees.

Tree planting mission comprised mobilization of villages to plant trees, training members on important planting trees and on agroforestry. More than 5454 villagers were participating after understanding importance of tree planting for their future and mitigating impact of climate change. Leader at different areas were also participating in sensitization of tree planting and its importance. *“Although the people had participated in planting campaigns, some sub-villages were behind target”* the Selela councillor said (Mr Cathbert Meena). *“Selela village is now with no dust and greener”* said Selela village chairman Mr. Julius Loibosoik

MVIWATA-ARUSHA appreciate contributions of our partners (TRIAS, We Effect, BOS+) and other stakeholders in making Selela green and contributing to mitigate impact of climate change. MVIWATA-ARUSHA appreciated MVIWATA-ARUSHA staff, Villagers and Selela village leaders for accepting and contributing in making Selela green.