



SLOW FOOD-IFAD 2000001632

EMPOWERING INDIGENOUS YOUTH AND THEIR
COMMUNITIES TO DEFEND AND PROMOTE THEIR FOOD HERITAGE

Participatory Guarantee System Case Study Report



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development	PGS	Participatory Guarantee System
IFOAM	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements	SF	Slow Food
IP	Indigenous people	TM	Terra Madre
ITM	Indigenous Terra Madre	ToRs	Terms of Reference
MACODEV	Marioshoni Community Development Cooperative	TPC	Third Party Certification
MM	Mujeres Milenarias		

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Executive Summary

BACKGROUND

ES 1. In 2017, after several years of partnership between IFAD and Slow Food (SF) on themes related to food security, indigenous peoples and youth, IFAD approved a large grant project, with title “Empowering Indigenous Youth and their Communities to Defend and Promote their Food Heritage,” to be implemented by Slow Food over three years. Total project costs amounted to US\$1.16 million, through a co-financing scheme wherein IFAD provided US\$900,000 and Slow Food the balance.

ES 2. The overall goal of the project was to empower indigenous youth and their communities, improve the livelihoods of beneficiaries by protecting and promoting their food heritage and upholding the sustainability and resilience of their practice.

ES 3. Through Component 1, the project supported in total five existing and five new Presidia, eight in Latin America and the Caribbean and two in East Africa. Furthermore, one output provided for the implementation of two pilot cases to test participatory certification/labeling for indigenous products. The Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) was selected as the most appropriate approach to be tested and two Presidia, the Ogiek Honey Presidium in Kenya and the Oaxaca Mixteca Agave Presidium in Mexico, were selected as

pilot cases based on the interest demonstrated by members at Terra Madre 2018 and later considerations of the complexities linked to providing the necessary assistance. When the PGS was introduced in the first half of 2019, the Ogiek Honey Presidium had been operational for four years, whereas the Oaxaca Mixteca Agave Presidium had just been established.

ES 4. The case study included visits to both Presidia to carry out interviews, focus groups, meetings and direct observation of achievements and to canvass the views of direct and indirect stakeholders about strengths and weaknesses, areas for improvement and prospects for sustainability. At the Oaxaca Mixteca Agave Presidium in Mexico, separate meetings were held with women and men to enable a more in-depth understanding of gender-based differences in viewpoints. In total, interviews were held with 28 men, including four youth, and 20 women, including eight youth, as well as with 13 key partners in the PGS mechanism. The case study also drew on SF experience and lessons learned establishing a PGS for the Lucca Red Bean Presidium in Italy. The report was finalized in October 2020, and took into account work carried out for the establishment of the PGS up to March 2020, as well as the results of the data from the SF monitoring system, assessed for the two Presidia as of August 2020 (T1).



PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEMS AND SLOW FOOD

ES 5. The PGS model emerged out of a cross-cutting movement of practitioners and stakeholders who were exploring possible alternatives to the Third Party Certification (TPC) system. PGS are low-cost, local systems for product or value chain quality assurance, based on diffused technical knowledge, inclusion and collective accountability. A PGS certifies producers through the active participation of stakeholders and builds on foundations of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange. PGS also play an important role in community building and empowerment by demanding a high level of commitment and engagement from all actors involved.

ES 6. The PGS is a tool consistent with alternative modes of conceiving and organizing food systems. It is based on an innovative holistic approach, combines several dimensions of sustainability (economic, social and environmental) with technical and traditional knowledge and emphasizes other aspects such as equity, solidarity and justice. Furthermore, in the context of food-related value chains, a PGS represents the building block of the multi-stakeholder platform responsible for the governance of the value chain itself.

ES 7. Slow Food, following an internal debate aimed at identifying a credible control system that would also be respectful of the specific characteristics of its action model, identified the PGS as a possible instrument that could meet its complex organizational needs. The flexibility of the PGS model emerged as the critical aspect that would enable achieving an adequate balance among the different actors within the SF



system. In other words, the PGS model allows the development of a technically sound and credible system that can be adopted at the global level and is easily manageable at the local level by each Presidium.

ES 8. The combination of both global and local approach represents one of the main innovations—and challenges—of the SF approach to PGS and can only be achieved through the wide and proactive participation of all SF stakeholders. SF thus decided to develop a system based on a bottom-up approach, inclusive and respectful of the expertise of all stakeholders in the Presidium, while avoiding the imposition of a model dropped from the top (headquarters) that could be perceived as foreign to SF culture. Engagement and ownership by all stakeholders are pursued through a participatory approach that also gives specific attention to a communication strategy.

ES 9. During the preparation phase, prior to the field missions, the PGS concept was presented to the SF actors involved in the pilots through meetings in person and online, starting at TM 2018. During the field activity, specific attention was devoted to making available accurate translations in the local languages to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations. During the field missions ample time and opportunities were provided to enable discussions, open to all members, around the main concepts of PGS and the SF approach to PGS. After the field activities, follow up through emails and virtual meetings was also provided, to facilitate additional discussion on technical aspects, gather feedback and identify weaknesses or difficulties that might have emerged after the first field visits.

KEY FINDINGS

ES 11. The available evidence indicated that by August 2020, in both the Ogiek Honey and Oaxaca Mixteca Agave Presidia, the PGS had been solidly established and were operational through the following activities:

- Information, awareness-raising and capacity-development events had been carried out with high levels of member participation throughout the entire process.
- Governing bodies had been elected and were operating according to their respective mandates.
- The first round of verification of production practices of a small number of members had been carried out in each Presidium in the last quarter of 2019.
- Marketing labels had been developed

ES 10. The message conveyed to the stakeholders involved in the pilot project was centered on the following key points:

- The centrality of the Presidia in the design and implementation of the SF PGS.
- The establishment of dedicated structures at SF headquarters to ensure a transparent management process and a constantly open communication flow.
- The SF PGS does not aim at punishing but rather at adding value to the SF system, benefitting all SF stakeholders.
- The SF PGS is a living tool, an ongoing process that may require changes and adaptation to respond to the different needs that will emerge.

and were being used together with appropriate packaging to communicate the origin and quality assurance of the product through the PGS, although this step was only incipient in the Oaxaca Mixteca Agave Presidium.

ES 12. Overall, the stakeholders' opinion was that the SF approach to PGS was appropriate and contributed to pursue the goals of all analyzed Presidia. The process led to a good level of appropriation of the mechanism by Presidium members, including thanks to the flexibility of the proposed PGS model, which builds on few basic principles while allowing sufficient adaptation to facilitate adoption for the diverse products and cultural and social environments where it was piloted.



ES 13. The PGS has proved to be a valuable additional component of the Presidia, that contributed to strengthening a sense of belonging to the group and generating further empowerment of members, who have full control and ownership over the quality of the production process and its final output. The two pilots have shown a few necessary adjustments to the mechanism that can be easily integrated into future interventions; furthermore, the mechanism enables immediate lessons learning and feedback from the local practice and improved performance over time.

ES 14. The PGS also enhanced the contribution of the SF Presidia to the implicit broader goal of poverty alleviation among the participating Indigenous Peoples by raising their returns and incomes through better and guaranteed product quality and a consequent expansion of the marketing potential for their respective products. Presidia members recognized that the PGS met their need for an instrument that could provide practical benefits regarding marketing, by adding value to and ensuring the credibility of their products to consumers.

ES 15. Presidia members and the PGS governing bodies expressed a strong level of commitment to the PGS mechanism and to maintaining it in the future. The PGS in the two Presidia appeared to have a high degree of social and cultural acceptability, thanks to its intrinsic flexibility to adjust to the local context. In addition, the PGS also contributed to the sustainable management of the natural resources sustaining the production processes by verifying that environmentally sustainable practices were fully adopted throughout and by all members. Thus, prospects for the medium- to long-term sustainability of the PGS within the Presidium model were good at the time of carrying out the work at country level, although longer monitoring and support were desirable, given the innovative nature of the mechanism.

ES 16. Part of the commitment to the PGS also likely stemmed from the empowerment it triggered. Evidence from all the interviews indicated that the establishment of a Presidium was by itself a socially empowering process, in particular, but not only, for Indigenous Peoples (IPs). The simple fact that the traditional food or product of the IP gains national or even international

attention contributed to developing both pride and self-confidence within the groups and at the individual level, an initial step towards overcoming cultural, social and political segregation. The project experience also showed that a PGS is attractive and empowering for youth, who are likely to have technical and managerial skills and competences as well as an understanding of consumers' preferences, of great use to improving product quality and marketing efforts.

ES 17. Conversely, although women were a large minority among the Ogiek Honey Presidium members and represented the majority and the founders of the Oaxaca Mixteca Agave Presidium, women's inclusion in the governing bodies of both PGS was, respectively, very low and low. The main reason seemed to be the traditional pattern of gender-based discrimination, including by women, towards women in public decision-making roles. This likely inhibited women who were more than capable of taking on the roles, with a few exceptions. A recommendation was formulated on this issue.

ES 18. Overall, the analysis shows that the SF PGS model is highly appropriate to strengthen the SF Presidium model in terms of enhanced knowledge among members, stronger cohesion and empowerment of groups and individual participants, increased transparency and technical quality of the production and marketing process, higher returns from market sales and expansion of the marketing potential thanks to enhanced consumer trust and increased dialog across stakeholders, with the PGS as a building block for multi-stakeholder platforms as the governance mechanism of the pro-poor value chain.

ES 19. The only specific challenge related to the PGS itself still pending was the cost of the field verification visits, i.e. for transport, food and lodgings as required, in the short term. This should be resolved through the higher incomes generated by the increased sales of the certified products. In this respect, at the time of finalizing the report (October 2020) the world is still grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, estimating the economic sustainability of the PGS model is particularly complex considering that the impacts of the pandemic on the survival and performance of Presidia, triggered by the disease itself, mobility restrictions and reduced economic activity at local, regional and national levels, are still unclear. The marketing potential for both products is likely to be seriously affected in the short term, also due to the isolation of the production areas from urban markets. In the medium term, however, the global disruption of long value chains for bulk products and beverages might mean that consumers and restaurants will, by preference or necessity, include more local products in their purchasing strategies. If this scenario does play out, there are good prospects for an expanded market for both Ogiek honey and the various Oaxaca maguey products and the inclusion of the PGS in the Presidia will prove to be an additional tool of resilience for the Ogiek and the Oaxaca Mixteca people.

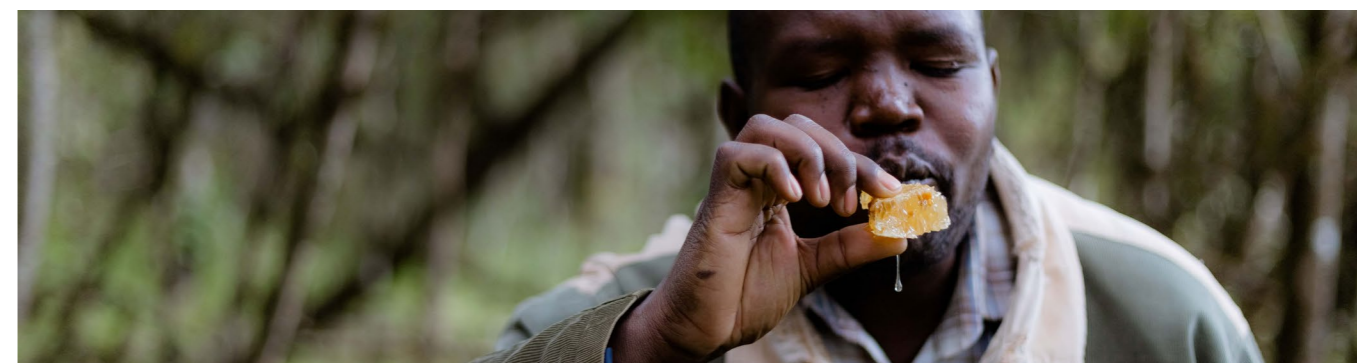
ES 20. The adoption of a PGS with more stringent health and food safety requirements could also respond to the new market needs and consumer demand while also increasing food security at the local level. During the COVID-19 pandemic several PGS networks have reportedly been able to react to the limitations in accessing physical markets by developing innovative models to supply their customers and distribute their products fully respecting quality and health standards.

LESSONS LEARNED

ES 21. The case study identified the following key lessons learned, which should be taken into account in the future whenever integrating PGS into existing or new Presidia.

- A. The introduction of a PGS into an already existing Presidium does not differ significantly—in terms of resources and time required—from the inclusion of a PGS in a Presidium that is just starting its activity. In both cases, external support and monitoring appear necessary for a period that is long enough to ensure full ownership of the process and the capacity to independently manage it; this will be highly contextual, although a new Presidium will likely need support for longer given that the group still has to consolidate its internal dynamics, independently from the PGS.
- B. The structure of any Slow Food Presidium automatically builds on an existing spirit of collaboration and mutual learning among members. The PGS clarifies and makes more visible and tangible how the contribution of each and every member is a necessary condition for the success of the group as a whole. Thus the PGS helps groups to reflect on the technical processes for the Presidium protocol, the formation of the group and its cohesion, and contributes to strengthening the sense of belonging to the group as well as the sense of ownership over the process and the final product.

- C. The presence and support of external organizations that are technically familiar with the concepts of control, certification, and PGS and who understand the producers' cultural context and can speak their language, facilitate knowledge sharing, the dissemination of best practices and the identification of technical solutions to overcome specific critical aspects.
- D. The systematic interaction with external partners, through meetings and discussions where respect for group and individual views underpins all exchanges, helps to strengthen the sense of pride and purpose of a group, in addition to increasing attention and commitment towards improved overall performance and quality.
- E. The first round of verification field visits is highly useful for improving the format of the Guarantee Sheet and the efficiency and effectiveness of the approach. Interesting specific lessons emerged and are likely to emerge at each round; the PGS mechanism should thus include formal feedback sessions as part of the verification process, to enable the integration of lessons learned and subsequent adaptations in the following cycle.
- F. For ease of testing, the percentage of producers assessed by the Control Groups during the project was set at 10%. However, this proved to be too low to ensure adequate coverage. Slow Food PGS protocols should thus aim at an annual coverage rate of 35% of members, which makes it possible to assess all members every three years.



RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR SLOW FOOD:

- The PGS should become a systematic component of SF Presidia and a fundamental element of each protocol.
- Slow Food should consider harmonizing the broader monitoring system for the Presidia, namely the data collected at T0 and T1, with the monitoring data for the PGS, to avoid duplication and waste time and efforts.
- The criteria for Presidium and PGS membership should be made more visible and explicit; inclusion of marginalized groups and individuals who are interested but face challenges in participation should be among the basic principles, in addition to youth involvement.
- Slow Food should be more proactive in supporting the equal participation of women in PGS governing bodies, if necessary, by supporting the targeted training or capacity development of those women within the groups who have potential and interest for assuming leadership roles.
- Slow Food should consider partnering with like-minded organizations at the national level to raise awareness among consumers and to

lobby at the political level for the recognition of PGS as a fully reliable and convenient-for-all approach to quality control for a wide range of products from family farming and indigenous peoples.

- Slow Food should consider developing partnerships and alliances with ethical banking and microfinance institutions that provide financial support to micro-projects that have sustainable economic, social and environmental development goals.

FOR IFAD:

- The Slow Food PGS model could be used as a reference model in IFAD projects that aim at developing pro-poor value chains for products originating from family farming and Indigenous Peoples, to enhance their integration into local and national markets.
- IFAD might consider a closer integration of participants benefitting from its grants and loans in the same country, when it aims at facilitating the access of small-scale producer organizations and Indigenous Peoples' organizations to microfinance services.



1. Introduction and background



In 2017, after several years of partnership between IFAD and Slow Food (SF) in support of innovative grassroots projects and the development of a strong indigenous peoples' network with specific attention to the inclusion of youth, IFAD approved a large grant project, with title "Empowering Indigenous Youth and their Communities to Defend and Promote their Food Heritage," to be implemented by Slow Food over three years.¹ Total project costs amount to US\$1.16 million, through a co-financing scheme wherein IFAD provides US\$900,000 and Slow Food the balance.

2. The overall goal of the project was to empower indigenous youth and their communities and improve the livelihoods of beneficiaries by protecting and promoting their food heritage and upholding the sustainability and resilience of their practice. The project was fully anchored into IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025, and contributed to Strategic Objectives 1 and 2. It also met the four objectives established by the 2015 IFAD Policy for Grant Financing².

3. The project was structured in three components, each with its respective outcome and outputs:

1. Valorisation of food heritage products through the Presidia model.
2. Institutional support and capacity building for the Indigenous Terra Madre network (ITM).
3. Knowledge Management, including the "Participatory identification, development and dissemination of 4 case studies on project experiences and best practices actively involving project beneficiaries and stakeholders, based on the Presidia as "Living Labs."

4. The project supported two Presidia—one existing and one new—in Argentina, Brazil, Kenya and Mexico. In Colombia and Ecuador, only one Presidium was supported, an existing one and a new one respectively. In addition, within Component 1, one of the two outputs foresaw the implementation of two pilot cases to test participatory certification/labeling for indigenous products. The Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) was selected as the most appropriate approach. Box 1 below provides basic information on each of the IFAD-supported SF Presidia, including those where the PGS was planned and/or established.

1. The case study adopted the definition of indigenous youth provided in the project document, i.e. individuals aged between 15 and 34, who live in indigenous communities. IFAD defines youth as any person in the age range of 18 to 24 years old (<https://www.ifad.org/en/youth>, visited on May 4, 2020) while the Slow Food Youth Network uses the age range 18 to 32 years.

2. See <https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/39428948>.

Box 1. Slow Food Presidia supported through the IFAD grant

Country, indigenous group or area of origin	Presidium products	Year Presidium established
Argentina, Wichi people	Honey	2018
Argentina, women of the Wichi, Qom, Qomléec y Pilagá people in the Formosa, Salta and Chaco Provinces	Wild fruits, carob	2008
Brazil, Kiriri people	Cassava	2018
Brazil, Sateré Mawé people	Waráná (initially selected for the PGS)	2007
Colombia, Providence Island Community	Black crab	2014
Ecuador, Esmeralda Province women's groups	Blue crab	2018
Kenya, Maasai people	Red Maasai sheep	2018
Kenya, Ogiek people	Honey (PGS established)	2014
Mexico, Mixteca people, Oaxaca	Maguey/agave (PGS established)	2018
Mexico, Nahuatl people, Puebla	Honey	2012

5. This is the final report of the case study that analyzes the process and initial results of the establishment of the PGS. This report was finalized in October 2020, and took into account work carried out for the establishment of the PGS up to March 2020, as well as the results of the data from the SF monitoring system measured for the two Presidia as of August 2020 (T1)⁴.



3. The initial deadline for this component was December 2019. In early 2020, it was decided to extend it to June to allow further progress in implementing the system at Presidia level. Due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the project closing date was postponed to December 2020.

4. Slow Food established a monitoring system comprising more than 50 indicators, depending on the product, that pertain to the three pillars of sustainability—socio-cultural, environmental and economic—to assess, together with Presidium members, the status of the Presidium at its establishment (T0) and every two or more years (T1 T2, etc.).

2. Conceptual Framework for all Case Studies



6. IFAD and Slow Food agreed that all case studies would refer to the same conceptual framework and criteria. The IFAD Policy for Grant Financing was selected for this purpose, based on the close match of the project objectives and approach to the Policy's principles, as shown in Box 2.

Box 2. Principles of the IFAD Policy for Grant Financing and the case studies

Principle	Grant Project Component	Case study
i) Promote innovative, pro-poor approaches and technologies with the potential to be scaled up for greater impact	Component 1, through the establishment of five new Presidia, the strengthening of five existing Presidia and the launching and testing of the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) for two Presidia.	Two Presidia case studies and PGS case study
ii) Strengthen partners' institutional and policy capacities	Component 2 of the project, through the institutional strengthening of the ITM network that also includes Presidia youth members, as a means for social empowerment, exchanges and South-South triangular cooperation.	Capacity development case study
iii) Enhance advocacy and policy engagement	Component 2, which foresees the participation of the ITM network in international events and platforms, and pursues communication, advocacy and policy engagement.	Capacity development case study
iv) Generate and share knowledge for development impact	Component 3, through provisions for knowledge exchanges through local, regional and international events and workshops.	All case studies

Source: IFAD Policy for Grant Financing

5. See footnote 2.



7. Using the same conceptual framework also meant that all case studies would contribute to the same goals, respond to the same over-arching questions and adopt the same criteria and cross-cutting issues as analytical domains, as shown in Boxes 3 and 4 below.

Box 3. Overarching goals and questions

Goals

To learn lessons on the enabling factors, and on the challenges that affected the implementation process and the achievement of results and impacts.

To assess how the engagement of participants with the project (process) has led to results (outcomes) and to significant changes (impacts), positive or negative, in their lives and in their communities, as well as what the perspective are for these changes to be sustained over time.

Questions

What have been the main enabling factors in the achievement of positive changes, can they be replicated elsewhere and under which conditions?

What were the challenges and related lessons generated that need to be learned for future similar interventions?

What have been the changes in the lives of participants through the project and what are the perspectives for the positive changes to be sustained over time?

Source: Case Studies Terms of Reference, August 2019

Box 4. Core criteria and cross-cutting issues

Core criteria

Effectiveness: through this criterion, the case studies analysed the enabling and challenging factors in the process for the establishment and strengthening of the Presidia, as well as the degree of achievement of project results.

Impacts: the case studies analysed what have been, and will likely be, the long-term changes in the livelihoods of participants, positive and negative.

Sustainability: this included environmental, economic and social sustainability, and provided insights into the perspectives of long-term functioning of the Presidia.

Relevance: differently from the traditional evaluation practice, the criterion of relevance will represent here a synthesis of the overall performance of the selected Presidia.

Cross-cutting issues

Gender equality: this is a key principle for both IFAD and SF, which should be mainstreamed in all activities; the case studies therefore analysed to what extent the project took gender equality into consideration during implementation, as appropriate, and the specific results in this respect.

Empowerment: the project aimed at both economic and socio-cultural-political empowerment; in its 2012 Gender equality and women's empowerment policy, IFAD defines empowerment as "...the process of increasing the opportunity of people to take control of their own lives. It is about people living according to their own values and being able to express preferences, make choices and influence – both individually and collectively – the decisions that affect their lives..." The case studies analysed any available objective evidence about the empowering process, along with the changes in the self-perception of participants in this regard through the project.

Participation: the "who, how, when and for what" of participation was assessed in all case studies, as appropriate, with regards to the project implementation process and to its results.

Source: Case Studies Terms of Reference, August 2019, slightly adapted.

8. In all case studies, the approach was highly participatory, inclusive and transparent; project participants' views and opinions were thoroughly explored throughout the process and reflected in the report, insofar as possible. Triangulation of the collected information and evidence strengthened the robustness of the findings. Insofar as possible, the case study process also contributed to some degree of empowerment of Presidia members.

6. In international evaluation practice (see OECD/DAC Evaluation Glossary at www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/glossaryofkeytermsinevaluationandresultsbasedmanagement.htm) the criterion of Relevance assesses the "extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies."

7. See <https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/39135645/IFAD+Policy+on+Gender+Equality+and+Women%E2%80%99s+Empowerment/fa1e3ab4-dfb0-4d3b-a6e4-5a4d17c02e29>, Annex I, Glossary of gender terms.

8. Triangulation means gathering data from at least two different sources, possibly through different methods, and comparing and cross-validating the findings.

3. Participatory Guarantee Systems: An Overview



9. Sustainability standards and related certification schemes have become the leading governance mechanism for determining what sustainability entails, how to measure it and how to assess it. Typically, this requirement has been met for many years through the third-party certification (TPC) model that ensures compliance with standards established for the entire production process. Over the last 15 years, a growing cross-cutting movement comprising practitioners and stakeholders has explored possible alternatives to the TPC system. Its main goal is to address some of the limitations inherent to the TPC system (e.g. costs, paperwork) and develop alternative methods.

10. The PGS model emerged out of this process as a viable certification system, alternative or complementary to the TPC. PGS are low-cost, local systems for product or value chain quality assurance that strongly emphasize social control and knowledge building. The PGS approach is based on diffused rather than specialist technical knowledge, inclusion rather than marginalization of some actors, and collective instead of individual accountability.

Typically, PGS are networks, created within local communities, that include producers, experts, public sector officials and consumers. A PGS certifies producers through the active participation of stakeholders and builds on foundations of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange.

11. A PGS improves the capacity of small-scale producers to access more remunerative markets by properly managing and certifying the quality of their products, or value chains, thus overcoming the major challenge represented by food certification and traceability, which entail costs and specialized technical knowledge. A PGS contributes to improve the sustainability of the certification process along the entire value chain through enhanced quality management of all process steps from input supply, through production, transport and processing to packaging and labeling. The quality of each step in the value chain is ensured through the full commitment and responsibility of all the actors involved, which raises consumers' confidence in the safety and quality of the product.

3.1 PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEMS AND ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

12. Most research and investigation initiatives on PGS have been conducted and developed within the framework of organic agriculture practices. The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), which unites and represents different organic agriculture movements worldwide, has worked since early 2000s to coordinate and formalize the PGS methods and initiatives. Starting from the first studies on PGS in Brazil (2004), and based on a number of case studies, IFOAM has reached an official definition of PGS which is generally adopted nowadays: "Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) are locally focused quality assurance systems. They certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange." (IFOAM, 2008)

13. In 2019, there were almost 200 PGS initiatives in more than 70 countries, involving almost 500,000 farmers (IFOAM, 2019), with a significant presence in Asia and Latin America. In this respect, a discussion is currently ongoing at the global level on whether the PGS is particularly suitable for organic agriculture movements in low- and middle-income countries.

14. The key elements and features of PGS can be summarized as follows (adapted from IFOAM, 2007, see Annex 4):

- **Principles and values that enhance livelihoods:** The PGS builds on clearly defined principles and values with the aim, among others, of improving the well-being of small-scale producers, ensuring fair relationships with consumers.
- **Suitable for small-scale agriculture:** The participatory nature and horizontal structure of

the PGS allow for more appropriate and less costly mechanisms of certification for small-scale producers, in addition to highlighting, celebrating and encouraging consumers' engagement with producers.

- **Norms developed by stakeholders:** PGS norms are identified and developed through a participatory process.
- **Grassroots organization:** Participatory certification is the result of a social dynamic, based on the active participation of all stakeholders.
- **Producer's pledge:** Through a documented process, each PGS member commits to adopt and comply with the agreed standards and to abide by the PGS process.
- **Clear and previously defined consequences:** From the outset, producers are aware of and agree on the consequences of not complying with the established standards and procedures. Actions to be taken in such cases must be transparent and consistent.
- **Documented management systems and procedures:** The PGS aims at reducing paperwork and the administrative burden, fostering full transparency and accessibility of documents for all stakeholders.
- **Mechanisms to verify producers' compliance with the established norms:** The PGS mechanism must enable and stimulate participation and allow a learning process for all stakeholders.
- **Mechanisms for supporting producers:** These include learning opportunities, facilitation of market access and parallel social processes.
- **Seals or labels:** Seals or logos on a product label enable consumers to quickly recognize which products have been guaranteed through the PGS.

3.2 PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEMS AND THIRD-PARTY CERTIFICATION

15. The discussion above shows that the underlying principles of PGS differ greatly from the TPC systems established by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). In a PGS, the stakeholders (producers and consumers) are directly involved in the establishment of the norms tailored to local conditions and sociocultural context and are responsible for the control procedures. In a TPC system there are international norms to be applied and external technical actors (e.g. inspectors) performing the control using generic guarantee forms to be applied globally.

16. In a PGS, the active participation of the stakeholders enhances transparency, as all actors could be engaged in control activities and all documentation generated by the guarantee procedure must be publicly accessible. Participation and horizontality are key aspects of PGS membership that promote producer

self-awareness and self-confidence, while simultaneously benefiting consumers in terms of access to information and end-user guarantee.

17. In a TPC system, conversely, confidentiality is protected by law and no information regarding the reasons underlying non-compliance is made public. Also, non-compliance means the loss of certification and the inability to sell products with the (organic) label. In a PGS, all the information related to the control process is public and strictly connected to a form of social control. Non-compliance in a PGS does not automatically result in the loss of certification, though it can lead to the exclusion of the non-complier from the PGS membership.

18. Box 5 below summarizes a few of the main differences between PGS and TPC, with reference to the laws and procedures relevant to the framework of regulated organic agriculture.

Box 4. Basic features of TPC and PGS

Basic elements	TPC	PGS
Governance	The guarantee procedures are regulated at the institutional level and by the certification body. Producers and consumers are not active actors.	Decisions on guarantee procedures (what, how and when to control) are discussed and agreed within the social network. Producers and consumers play an active role.
Responsibility	Certification bodies are technically responsible for the process.	Responsibility is jointly shared within the community by producers and other stakeholders.
Administration	Technical documents (i.e. checklists) are globally adopted.	Documents are tailored to the context of the producers that will be controlled.
Costs	The certification process entails costs (e.g. audits by international experts, travel, administration) that are often too expensive for small-scale producers.	The process is cheaper, thanks in part to volunteering by some stakeholders.
Transparency	Confidentiality of the data of the controlled operator is guaranteed by law.	All stakeholders in the network are fully informed about the outcomes of the control process.
Non-conformity	The certification could be suspended or cancelled (commercial exclusion).	There are different levels of non-conformity that must be agreed among stakeholders and that can lead to commercial exclusion and social exclusion.

Source: Slow Food

3.3 INNOVATION AND CHALLENGES IN PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEMS

19. The PGS has by now expanded its boundaries and is perceived and adopted as a reliable and promising instrument to assess sustainability in agriculture across a wider spectrum of practices, beyond organic agriculture. For example, some currently operational PGS adopt and verify broader concepts of sustainable agriculture. Therefore, each PGS is different by design and is supposed to self-govern the activities of its members and compliance with the agreed reference standard, through a relationship of mutual recognition among stakeholders.

20. The PGS is a tool consistent with alternative modes of conceiving and organizing food systems, is based on an innovative holistic approach, combines several dimensions of sustainability (economic, social and environmental) with technical and traditional knowledge and

emphasizes other aspects such as equity, solidarity and justice. Furthermore, in the context of food-related value chains, a PGS represents the building block of the multi-stakeholder platform responsible for the governance of the value chain itself.

21. The PGS proposes a different vision of relationships among food systems stakeholders, in which trust should emerge from social dialog and horizontal processes. Therefore, in addition to the technical compliance with standards and related learning process, PGS play an important role in community building and empowerment by demanding a high level of commitment and engagement from all actors involved. Time, mutual effort, participation, conflict resolution, building of confidence and management of collective responsibility are some of the critical elements that contribute to the success of the PGS.

4. Methodology for the PGS Case Study

22. The establishment, results and impacts of a PGS were selected as a topic for one of the case studies due to the strong potential for replicability and scaling up of this highly innovative tool.

23. The primary criteria for the selection of the two Presidia where the PGS would be tested included the size of the Presidium group and the interest its representatives showed in the PGS during Terra Madre 2018. This led to the choice of the Ogiek Honey Presidium in Kenya and the Sateré-Mawé Native Waraná Presidium in Brazil, which also enabled a balanced regional representation. The Waraná Presidium, however, presented important

logistical challenges for the establishment of the PGS, due to the remoteness of the community. Furthermore, internal governance issues prevented the work on PGS to progress. In mid-2019 IFAD and Slow Food agreed to substitute the Waraná Presidium with the Oaxaca Mixteca Agave Presidium in Mexico (hereinafter, the latter will be referred to as the Agave Presidium).

24. When the PGS was proposed, the Ogiek Honey Presidium had been operational for almost five years, whereas the Agave Presidium had been established less than a year before. This offered the opportunity to compare the progress and

9. The 2018 survey launched by SF to identify Presidia, ongoing and new, to be supported through the IFAD project also included a question on interest in engaging in a PGS; as most Presidia responses were positive, the more in-depth discussion at TM 2018 helped to fine-tune the selection process and firmly engage with the most suitable Presidia.

results from setting up the PGS at different levels of information and experience in the management of a SF Presidium. As it emerged through the case study, the early introduction of the PGS to the Agave Presidium meant that from the perspective of the Presidium members, the PGS was fully embedded in the Presidium and “PGS-specific” effects could not be distinguished.

25. Data from the SF monitoring system measured for each Presidium at the beginning of the project activities (T0) were used as baseline; the T2 data for the Ogiek Honey Presidium and the T1 data for the Agave Presidium were collected in July 2020.

26. The criteria and cross-cutting issues listed above were applied during the analysis as follows:

- Effectiveness, with regards to the achievement of the stated objective of establishing a functioning PGS, including with regards to prices and production volume.
- Sustainability, with regards to the perspectives for the sustained management of the PGS, in terms of economic capacity and social acceptability.
- Empowerment, with regards to the self-perceived empowerment of PGS members.
- Gender equality, with regards to the gender balance of participants and the effects of the PGS on gender roles and equity.
- Participation, with regards to the type of participation and engagement of members in the PGS process.
- Overall relevance of the introduction of PGS as a component of the two Presidia.

27. With regard to impact, the case study was carried out too early to make a credible analysis of the long-term changes of the PGS on the lives of participants.

28. The case study included the following steps and tools:

- Consultation with the leaders and members of the two Presidia, to ensure they were interested and willing to be part of the process.
- Desk review of all available information about each Presidium and PGS process.
- Mapping of direct and indirect stakeholders for each Presidium, locally and nationally.
- Preparation of the interview protocols and checklists.
- Visits to the two selected Presidia, to carry out interviews/focus groups/meetings and direct observation of achievements and to canvass the views of direct and indirect stakeholders about strengths and weaknesses, areas for improvement and prospects for sustainability. At the Agave Presidium in Mexico, separate meetings were held with women and men to enable a more in-depth understanding of gender-based differences in viewpoints.
- On completion of the visit in Kenya, the key findings of the data-gathering process were shared with the Presidium leadership, together with a few suggestions for the way forward; in Mexico, this was only possible with the SF Mexico coordinator, due to time constraints and travel arrangements.

29. In addition, the case study also took into consideration the experience generated by the introduction of a PGS in the Italian Lucca Red Bean Presidium, which was conducted in parallel by Slow Food, independently from the IFAD grant.

30. The case study work was carried out between October 2019 and June 2020 and included field visits and meetings: in Kenya, with the Ogiek people who manage the Ogiek Honey Presidium in December 2019; and in Mexico, with the Mixteca people who manage the Agave Presidium in Oaxaca, in February 2020. In total, 28 men, including four young men, and 20 women, including eight young women, were interviewed in the two Presidia. In addition, 13 stakeholders (key partners in the PGS mechanism) were also interviewed.¹⁰

10. See Annex 2 for the list of people met.

5. Participatory Guarantee Systems Within Slow Food

5.1 SLOW FOOD'S APPROACH TO PGS

31. A few years ago, SF decided to launch a stimulating internal debate on the subject of control and certification, with the main objective of identifying a credible control system, respectful of the specific characteristics and complexity of SF, that could be adopted to upscale its first-party control system.

32. Slow Food aimed at developing a system that, as a main feature, would not be based on

sanctions in case of lack of compliance. Rather, the vision informing the discussion was the achievement of quality control by supporting all stakeholders through a growth process that would result, ultimately, in increased reliability vis-à-vis external actors that Presidia products meet all SF principles for a good, clean and fair food. Through this debate and research, SF identified the PGS as a possible instrument worth exploring and testing through pilot experiences.



33. The key characteristics of the PGS model most appealing to SF and most consistent with its vision are the following:

- **Flexibility:** The system should be reliable and flexible, able to interact with the multifaceted and changing realities of the SF Presidia worldwide.
- **Adaptability:** The system should be able to deal with the rich “biodiversity” of SF products, locations and conditions; it should be a living process, which can evolve over time and in reaction to further testing.
- **Locally centered:** The Presidia and

Communities should be at the core of the system, holding a primary role based on recognized levels of autonomy, ownership and trustworthiness.

- **Accessibility:** The technical complexity of the PGS should be easily accessible and manageable by all SF stakeholders, particularly small-scale producers who have different sets of skills.
- **Sustainability:** The system should be technically and economically sustainable, with a minimal additional administrative and economic burden on SF at all its organizational levels and the relevant Presidia producers.

11. First-Party Audits/certification: these are better known as internal audits. They entail someone from the organization itself auditing a process or set of processes in the quality management system to ensure it meets the procedure that the company has specified. Second-Party Audits/certification: This entails a company performing the audit of a supplier to ensure that they are meeting the requirements specified in the contract. Third-Party Audits/certification: This occurs when a company has created a quality management system that conforms to a standard set of requirements and hires an independent auditing company to perform an audit to verify that the company has succeeded in meeting these standards.

34. Flexibility is the critical factor for reaching an adequate balance among the different stakeholders within the SF system. SF decided to put the Presidia at the core of its PGS model, which must abide by and adapt to a Presidium's specific and unique characteristics. In other words, the SF global guarantee and certification system must respect and adjust to the extreme heterogeneity of the Presidia, for the PGS to be accepted and managed by SF at all levels.

35. The centrality of the Presidium is key along the entire PGS process and is particularly evident in its initial phase, when Presidium members must define what should be controlled and how, for example by formulating the questions in the checklist. It is important to stress that the range and diversity of the elements to be controlled in each Presidium do not diminish the technical credibility of the system, rather they testify to the robustness of a system that can encompass a huge diversity of products and respect the extremely rich "biodiversity" of SF Presidia.

36. SF has identified a core structure of essential elements that must be embedded and controlled in all Presidia, while allowing flexibility and autonomy to each Presidium to identify other specific key

issues, which represent approximately one third of the elements to be checked. This approach is respectful of the local context, the production techniques and local traditions, and aims at ensuring a correct balance between the founding criteria of SF and the local technical requirements.

37. In Slow Food's view, the PGS model allows the development of a technically sound and credible system that can be adopted at the global level and be easily manageable at the local level by each Presidium. The combination of this global and local approach represents one of the main innovations— and challenges— of the SF approach to PGS.

38. In order to comply with this ambitious combination of global and local levels of control, SF has identified as a fundamental prerequisite the wide and proactive participation of all SF stakeholders. SF has decided to develop a system based on a bottom-up approach, inclusive and respectful of the expertise of all stakeholders in the Presidium, while avoiding the risk of imposing a model from the top (headquarters) that could be perceived as foreign to SF culture. The methodology adopted by SF to ensure engagement and ownership by all stakeholders is based on a participatory approach that also pays specific attention to the communication strategy.



5.2 THE PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEM WITHIN THE IFAD-FUNDED GRANT

39. As mentioned in the Introduction, the IFAD grant included the implementation of two pilots to test the Slow Food approach to PGS, with the aim of contributing to increasing the economic value of food heritage products. Two Presidia were selected, in Kenya and Mexico, based on the interest expressed by members at TM 2018 and on later considerations about the complexities linked to providing the necessary assistance to the pilots. Given the project thrust, the selected Presidia were managed by indigenous peoples including many youth.

40. During the preparation phase, prior to the field missions, the PGS concept was presented to the SF actors involved in the pilots through meetings in person and online, starting at TM 2018. During the field activities, specific attention was paid to making available accurate translations in the local languages to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations. During the field missions ample time and opportunities were provided to enable discussions, open to all members, around the main concepts of PGS and on the SF approach to PGS. After the field activities, follow up through emails and virtual meetings was also provided, to facilitate additional discussion on technical aspects, to gather feedback and identify weaknesses or difficulties that might have emerged after the first field visits.

41. The message conveyed to the stakeholders

involved in the pilot project was centered on the following key messages:

The centrality of the Presidia in the design and implementation of the SF PGS.

- The centrality of the Presidia in the design and implementation of the SF PGS.
- The establishment of dedicated structures at SF headquarters to ensure a transparent management process and a constantly open communication flow.
- The SF PGS is not aimed at "punishing" but rather at adding value to the SF system, benefitting all the SF stakeholders.
- The SF PGS is a living tool, an ongoing process that may require changes and adaptation to respond to the different needs that will emerge.

42. As mentioned earlier in the report, SF had also decided to implement an additional testing of the PGS in one Italian Presidium, the Lucca Red Bean Presidium. The same methodology and approach used in Kenya and Mexico was followed in Lucca, with several meetings held with stakeholders, which were particularly useful to collect technical feedback and make comparisons with the tests implemented in Kenya and Mexico. Interestingly, many similarities emerged from the feedback provided by stakeholders in the three countries. This aspect provides additional strength to the PGS model designed by SF, as it is recognized as a very flexible instrument that can be adopted in very diverse environments, while still fully respecting the overarching SF principles.

6. Brief Description of the Two Communities and Presidia

6.1 THE OGIEK PEOPLE AND THE HONEY PRESIDIUM

43. The Ogiek are an indigenous people who live in and around the Mau Forest on the southwestern side of the Kenyan Rift Valley, an area of 273,300 hectares¹², and in the forests around Mt. Elgon along Kenya's northwestern border with Uganda. In 2000, the ethnic Ogiek population was estimated to number 36,869.¹³

The work assessed in this case study was carried out with the Ogiek community who settled around the Mau Forest.

44. Traditionally, the Ogiek people are hunters and gatherers. According to information canvassed from different informants, the entire belief and livelihood system of the Ogiek people revolves around the forest and its resources, with honey being the most important product that represented the main food for all Ogiek families. Honey production is couched in the local indigenous knowledge that has been passed on from one generation to the next for a long time. Traditional practices range from hoisting the hives high up in the forest trees, to harvesting and brewing as well as using honey as a culturally significant food, including for blessing boys during male adulthood initiation practices. Abundant honey production depends on a healthy forest and the Ogiek people perceive and protect the

forest as their own home and source of their livelihood. Estimates suggest that 90% of Ogiek households engage in beekeeping and honey production.

45. Ogiek men control all the knowledge about bees and beekeeping, as well as the income generated by the sale of the honey from their log hives. Surplus honey production is stored in the forest itself and bartered by men for other food, e.g. meat from the Maasai. In more recent times, selling honey on the local markets has progressively become more common and many if not most households do now engage in small-scale agriculture and livestock keeping.

46. Ogiek women traditionally contribute to honey production by carrying the log hives into the forest, making the antelope-skin bags for honey collection, participating in some steps of the construction of the traditional beehives and occasionally carrying the honey back home. Honey and log hives are also key elements of the dowry system and traditional ceremonies. However, Ogiek people hold strong taboos against women harvesting honey and placing log hives in the trees. Married women can "own" log hives by asking a male relative to place the hives in the trees and harvest honey on their behalf. In these cases, the woman's

12. SF questionnaire at T0 in the Ogiek Honey Presidium.

13. Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ogiek_people, accessed on 9 February 2020.

honey is typically used mostly for family consumption, although women can control selling some of it. Women have easier access to modern beehives, which are placed in the farms, where control and management are easier. Taboos about women harvesting from modern hives seem to be less strict, but farm-located hives have not performed satisfactorily yet. Reasons seem to include the quality of the plywood used for construction and design issues, as well as the potential exposure of bees to pesticide spraying in the cultivated fields.

47. Ogiek youth actively participate in making hives, transporting hives to the forest and hoisting them into the trees, harvesting and transporting honey to the refinery, as well as processing, packaging, labeling, marketing and selling. Young women are mostly involved in honey processing, packaging, labeling and marketing; they also process the wax and ensure the refinery is clean. Youth occupy leadership roles in the local organization; many are secretaries of the groups due to their ability to read and write as well acting quickly, some are leaders of various groups, some of which only comprise youth members. They are also involved in the decision-making processes.

48. Traditional knowledge is typically transmitted through storytelling about Ogiek food traditions and identity, and through apprenticeships during which youth are taught by watching their fathers and older relatives, as well as by actively contributing to the entire bee management and honey production process. They are also involved in traditional ceremonies where honey is a key product.

49. The Ogiek also have knowledge of the nutritional and medicinal properties of honey and its by-products. They understand that the product has a rich medicinal value and can be used to treat coughs and stomach problems, as an antidote for poisons, to heal burns and fractures and as a food for sick people due to its energy-giving properties. Honey is also valued as a food for pregnant women and for several ailments.

50. In 2017, after a long legal struggle between the Ogiek people and the Kenyan government over the right to inhabit the forests, the Arusha-based African Court on Human and People's Rights ruled in favor of the Ogiek by recognizing their right to Kenya's Mau Forest as their ancestral home and their role in protecting it. The Ogiek people face various challenges as they seek to secure their livelihoods from their ancestral forests: For example, logging followed by reforestation with exotic non-flowering species (mostly *Pinus* spp.) is a direct threat to the foraging activity of bees and therefore to honey production. The Ogiek people established a Community Forestry Association for the Mau Forest which collaborates with the Kenya Forestry Service on the joint management of the forest.¹⁴ Other partners in this effort include Egerton University and ICRAF, a member of CGIAR.¹⁵

51. In 2012, a group of Ogiek honey producers living in and around the Mau Forest decided to join forces and set up beekeeper groups to increase their production and income. This led to the decision to establish MACODEV, a community-based organization responsible

14. In July 2020, the government of Kenya unexpectedly gave orders to evict and destroy the houses of several Ogiek honey producers; SF, with many partners, launched an appeal in response to protest and protect the rights of the Ogiek people to their land.

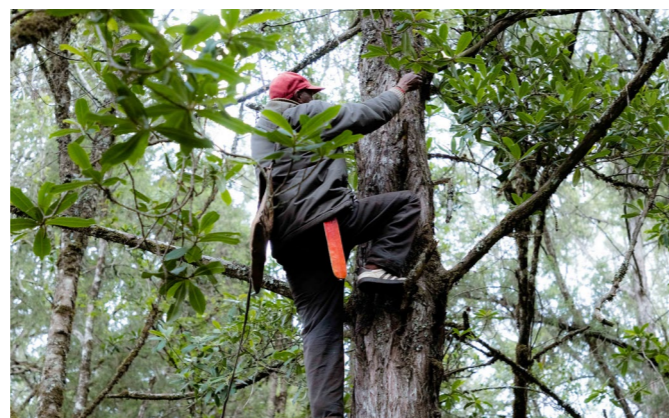
15. World Agroforestry Centre of the CGIAR System Organization.

for marketing honey on the producers' behalf. Its leaders were elected from within the community. Among MACODEV's early partners were the Italian NGO Mani Tese and the Italian Province of Bozen, which initially provided MACODEV with traditional and modern beehives and equipment for the refinery through the Network for Eco-Farming in Africa (NECOFA). Currently active partners are, among others, NECOFA and the Baraka Agricultural Technical College, which provided know-how and capacity development for young Ogiek carpenters on modern beehive construction.

52. In 2015, Slow Food started engaging with MACODEV to improve honey marketing, by introducing refinement, branding, packaging and market analysis. This led to the development of the Ogiek Honey Protocol and the establishment of the Ogiek Honey Presidium. In 2018, the Presidium was selected from among others in Kenya as the most appropriate to benefit from the support provided through the IFAD-funded project, thanks to the solid relationship and trust that already existed between MACODEV and Slow Food, the market potential for the organic forest honey and the proximity of the SF Kenya office to the Mau Forest, facilitating frequent contacts and communication. The logical framework for the initiative identified the following as specific objectives, or outcomes:

1. Increase in the economic value/income of Ogiek honey and by-products.
2. The Indigenous Terra Madre network is strengthened, and the Presidium community is integrated into and actively participate in network activities locally and internationally.
3. Sharing of good practices and success stories within ITM network on giving value to traditional indigenous peoples' products.

53. This case study focused on the work related to the establishment of the PGS within specific objective i. IFAD financial resources were used to carry out capacity development activities, directly by Slow Food beekeeping experts and through Baraka Agricultural College. Topics addressed included various aspects of beehive management, such as bee health, harvest and post-harvest handling and modern beehive construction, for eight young Ogiek beekeepers. Other project-funded activities included a study on the productivity of traditional versus modern beehives, providing beehives for youth groups and 500 native species seedlings for afforestation, production of communication material, attendance at various national and international events including Terra Madre 2018 and organization of a local Terra Madre Day.



54. Box 6 below shows the membership at the time of the establishment of the Presidium and in August 2020. Total membership increased by 79% from the establishment of the Presidium, with members forming 23 groups. Of these, four were women's groups, four were youth groups and two were disabled groups. Despite the strong gender-based division of labor in Ogiek beekeeping and honey production, the number of adult women increased by 83%, although their share in the total membership hardly changed. The number of youth increased even more significantly, by 192%, and their share in the total membership went from 19% to 31%, whereas the number of men increased only by 32% and their share in

total membership decreased from 47.5% to 35%. Youth members also included those who attended the capacity development process for modern beehive construction, as they all are beekeepers. Gender-disaggregated data of youth members was available for 2015, at the establishment of the Presidium, and December 2019. In this period, the number of young women more than doubled, going from 17 to 34, as did their share in total membership, from 6.7% to 12.5%. The first young female member of MACODEV, and who seems to have set the example for others, joined because of her interest in beekeeping and is currently the cooperative's treasurer.

Box 6. Ogiek Honey Presidium membership

Social group	Number of members in 2015, at the establishment of Presidium	%	Number of members in August 2020	%
Adult men	121	47.5%	160	35.0%
Adult women	86	33.7%	157	34.4%
Youth	48	18.8%	140	30.6%
Total	255	100%	457	100%

Source: MACODEV

55. The largest increase in membership occurred in 2020, when the number of members went from 288 in December 2019 (13% increase over 2015) to 457 (79% increase over 2015). The case study formulates two hypothesis to explain the significant growth of youth members. First, membership in MACODEV typically reflects the traditional household-based honey production

model, whereby one adult member represents all other household members who are also beekeepers and honey producers. Over time, youth who had been contributing to their parents' production of honey start to establish their own households and become fully fledged members of MACODEV in their own right. Second, the establishment of the PGS strengthened the

credibility of MACODEV and raised its profile, making it a more attractive driver of income generation within the community. It will be up to Slow Food Kenya to validate or challenge these hypothesis with more in-depth analysis.

56. Since MACODEV was established, there has also been a steady increase in the quantity of honey produced, the number of hives and the unit price on the market. Box 7 below shows the values of a few key parameters at the time of the Presidium's establishment in 2015, at

the beginning of the IFAD-funded grant, in December 2019 and in June 2020. The evolution in the quantity of crude honey purchased by MACODEV per number of members, as well as the changes in unit price, show that the per-household income from honey production increased from KSh282/member in 2015 to KSh1,750/member in 2020, i.e. a six-fold increase. The increase in the number of MACODEV members also indicates that the economic benefits of the Presidium spread across the Ogiek Community during the project.

Box 7. MACODEV honey production and honey purchase price over time

Milestone	Total MACODEV honey production, in tonnes	Total number of MACODEV members' beehives	MACODEV processed and packaged honey wholesale and retail sale price/kg in Kenyan shillings	MACODEV crude honey purchase price/kg in Kenyan shillings
2015, establishment of the Presidium	0.4	200	600	180
End of 2018, IFAD-funded grant activities	2.0	650	700	180
December 2019	3.0	750	750/800	200
June 2020	4.0	850	750/800	200

Source: MACODEV

57. Until December 2019, MACODEV used to sell honey directly at its premises in Marioshoni, at the foot of the Mau Forest. The cooperative also used to attend markets in nearby towns, as well as various events where they could set up a sales stand. The SF Kenya network also facilitated reaching out to Nairobi and other locations. Other

buyers included local chefs, the Italian NGO Trame Africane, which started buying MACODEV honey to sell abroad, and the herbal clinic Wamiti in Nairobi, which used the honey to prepare herbal medicines. The COVID-19 lockdown disrupted the marketing patterns and at the time of writing this report, a new "normal" had not been attained yet.

16. The analysis used prices at nominal value, without taking into account inflation. The USD/KSH exchange rate in October 2015 and September 2020 showed minimal variation.

58. As of December 2019, the cooperative faced several challenges, largely related to its need for a larger working capital to expand its production and marketing network. Identified requirements include tools for those youth who had been trained in building modern beehives so they can start their construction business, honey

harvesting equipment and means of transport to facilitate transferring the honey from the forest to processing locations and markets. The modern beehives also required some more testing with different materials and possibly design variations, to address the frequently recorded problems of low bee colonization and low productivity.

6.2 THE OAXACA MIXTECA PEOPLE AND THE AGAVE PRESIDIUM

59. The Mixteca people represent the fourth largest indigenous group in Mexico. They have lived since time immemorial in the Mixteca region, in the Southwestern part of the country, which straddles the states of Guerrero, Oaxaca and Puebla. Since the 1970s, however, internal migration movements have led to Mixteca communities being established in several other Mexican states. The identity of the Mixteca people is typically defined by the community, and the language presents many local variations.¹⁷

60. The Oaxaca Mixteca region, the area across the states of Puebla and Oaxaca and which includes the Nochixtlán district, is characterized by highland valleys and semi-arid mountain ranges, with altitudes ranging from 1,500 to 2,900 meters (4,920 to 9,515 feet) above sea level. Towns tend to be located in the valleys, while most rural communities are found on higher-altitude, terraced slopes, where they practice subsistence agriculture. Youth migration to urban areas for employment opportunities is very common. Average rainfall is below 700 mm (27.5 inches) a year¹⁸ and varies depending

on the altitude, with local farmers reporting a decrease in rains in recent years.

61. The agave, maguey in Spanish and yaavi in Mixteco, is an endemic species and a typical feature of the Mexican landscape. In the Nochixtlán district, twelve varieties of pulque-producing magueys (*Agave salmiana* and *Agave atrovirens*) are endemic; it is estimated that 40% of these are at risk of extinction. According to the book *Santo Mezcal libranos de todo mal*,¹⁹ the moon goddess Yade'e Yavi²⁰, a symbol of fertility, was transformed into a maguey plant to provide all sorts of products to the Mexican people. For some Mexican indigenous people, the plant still represents fertility, water, rain, vegetation and nature cycles. One of Mexico's patron saints, the Virgin of Los Remedios, is often represented sitting on a maguey plant, which gives a sacred value to the plant. For the Oaxaca Mixteca people, the maguey has been part of their traditional cropping system for millennia, and both maguey and pulque are fundamental pillars of their traditional livelihoods and belief systems. Special ceremonies are regularly practiced for

17. Source: Wikipedia at https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pueblo_mixteco, on March 11, 2020.

18. Source: Aprovechamiento sustentable del maguey pulquero, Mujeres Milenarias, 2018.

19. Edited by WowBooks and MedioImpresos with the Los Danzantes Restaurant.

20. This is the name of the goddess for Mixteca people; for Nahuas, the goddess name is Mayahuel.

the various steps in maguey cultivation and use, and different maguey products are used both in everyday life and on special occasions.

62. Magueys are resistant to drought and help retain water and soils on slopes. It typically takes 8 to 15 years for newly planted magueys to achieve maturity and be ready for cutting, which marks the end of the plant's life, and extraction of a sap called aguamiel ("honey water") from the central part of the plant. Aguamiel can be consumed fresh, but its most frequent use is through processing. Fermentation produces 'pulque', only mildly alcoholic; distillation produces mezcal, a spirit; and fermentation and distillation, produces tequila, also a spirit. Different agave species and varieties are suitable for the production of the three different drinks. Pulque can substitute leaven to make bread and has other culinary uses.

63. Aguamiel is rich in fructose, inulin which is an important prebiotic, and fiber. It also has good levels of potassium, magnesium, calcium and Vitamin C.²¹ Traditionally, both aguamiel and pulque are used as remedies for a wide range of ailments, particularly those caused by imbalances of the intestinal flora. In recent years the nutritional properties of both aguamiel and pulque have started to be recognized again and appreciated more widely.

64. Additional maguey products include the leaves (pencas), used for special dishes like barbacoa; leaf fibers (ixtle), which are made into ropes; flowers, which are edible; the flower stem and the plant, which after extraction and flowering are used as firewood; and edible caterpillars that live on the plant. According to

maguey experts, starting from the third year after planting, maguey leaves and caterpillars can be sustainably harvested and sold, which means that some income can be generated well before the plant is cut for aguamiel.

65. With regard to the gender-based division of labor, in the Presidium area only the cutting of the mature maguey for aguamiel extraction is traditionally a male activity. Women explained that this was the case because of the strength required for the operation, although some women are known to perform it. However, there is also a local belief that women would be punished if they carried out the task themselves. All other activities, from the planting of the seedlings to plant care, aguamiel extraction and pulque processing, were reported to be gender-neutral tasks, often carried out by men and women together. Women, conversely, are responsible for selling aguamiel and pulque at the Nochixtlán market. All those interviewed, both men and women, uniformly said that women control the generated income. It is not clear, however, whether the same applies in the case of regular sales of pulque in Oaxaca, which seems to be a male prerogative for the time being.

66. In the Nochixtlán area, pulque has typically been produced and consumed in most households, as well as at traditional events, for many centuries. The families of a few current Presidium members had been fully dedicated to pulque production and marketing as their main source of income. However, in Mexico between the 1920s and 1940s other drinks like beer and imported spirits became the new favorites among the urban population. Pulque came to be

21. Information drawn from the following websites, accessed on March 13, 2020: <https://www.organicfacts.net/agave.html>, <https://www.botanical-online.com/plantas-medicinales/aguamiel-propiedades>.

perceived as a low-quality, unsafe drink, thanks in part to intentionally disparaging campaigns, and survived only as a local drink in rural communities.

67. The drop in pulque consumption led to a drop in attention among farmers towards the pulque-producing varieties of maguey and to the risk of loss of a range of local varieties. Magueys reproduce through seeds from the flower, or through shoots that develop from the base of the plant. Shoot reproduction has reportedly been the most common practice, also because it requires less labor. Recently, however, reproduction through seeds from the flower has emerged as an interesting practice that improves the rooting rate of the seedlings compared to that already relatively high of shoots which is estimated to be around 70%. It can also represent an economic activity because the seed-produced seedlings can be sold to small- and large-scale plantations, for example those run by the national forestry service.

68. Due to a broad trend of renewed interest in local and traditional products, possibly complemented by greater trust in the health benefits of pulque, the market potential for the drink has been increasing in recent years among urban consumers in Oaxaca and Mexico in general. In early 2020, the well-known Selva cocktail bar in Oaxaca city introduced a pulque cocktail to its list of drinks and its associated restaurant, Los Danzantes, is exploring traditional and new dishes with pulque as an ingredient. Similarly, other restaurants in Oaxaca city advertise pulque on their menus. The use of both aguamiel and pulque outside the production

area is strongly limited by their shelf lives, in the order of a few days depending on the storage temperature. Pasteurized and canned pulque is also produced in Mexico, including through a SF Presidium²² and has a market. Although the process strongly affects the flavor, it still represents a potential market outlet in case of over-production or to ensure the availability of pulque during the rainy season, when the quality of the fresh pulque is lower. Flavor and quality, however, vary significantly across producers, as each family has its own recipe for pulque.

69. In 2012/13, a young Mixteca forester who had returned to her community in the Santa Maria Apazco Municipality after completing her academic studies and who was working for a civil society organization²³ based in the district capital Nochixtlán, started dedicating her energy to reviving the cultivation of endemic pulque-producing maguey varieties. Her initiative had multiple objectives, including the protection and recovery of local biodiversity, enhanced soil and water retention on cultivated slopes and the development of income-generating opportunities for communities in the area. She engaged with local women and managed to raise enthusiasm and commitments for her proposal.

70. An early result of her efforts was the celebration of the first Feria del Pulque (Pulque Festival) in May 2013, in the El Almacén locality in Santa Maria Apazco.²⁴ The Feria has been celebrated every year since, with attendance growing over time, extending first to nearby communities and then further beyond. In 2019, in addition to a large public and members of the

22. Baluarte Maguey del altiplano mexicano (Mexican Plateau Agave Presidium).

23. Organizacion juvenil Yuku kuixi, which reportedly is no longer active.

24. In 2015, the Santa Maria Apazco municipality had the following socio-economic indicators: 86.9% of the population was assessed as poor, 41.22% as extremely poor and 32.2% of people as extremely poor and without access to sufficient food.

media, participants included representatives from the Tlaxiaco government's Rural Development Department (Secretaría de Desarrollo Rural, SADER), the Mixteca government's Department for Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (Secretaría de Desarrollo Agropecuario, Pesca y Acuicultura, SEDAPA), the Teposcolula Institute of Technology, the Purépecha Institute of Technology of Michoacan State, the Oaxaca Network of Autonomous Extension Workers (Red de Extensionistas Autónomos, REAO), the forestry engineering department of the Oaxaca Valleys Technological Institute and the Oaxaca unit of the Interdisciplinary Research Centre for Integral Regional Development, (Centro Interdisciplinario de Investigación para el Desarrollo Integral Regional-Unidad Oaxaca, CIIDIR). This suggests that the Feria has become a visible and well-known event in Oaxaca state and beyond.



25. See <https://semillas.org.mx/en/>. At the time of writing, MM had not yet completed the registration process.

71. After the first Feria, the group of women who initially gathered around the promoter continued working to revamp the cultivation of the pulque-producing magueys and in 2016, 35 women established a working group called Mujeres Milenarias (Ancient Women, MM). The group defined its goal as "Recover and protect the environment through equal opportunities for indigenous men and women, by preserving the pulque-producing maguey." The mission statement of MM was: 'We are the guardians of the pulque-producing maguey, taking care of it from planting to using and selling its products.'

72. MM was financially supported by the Mexican Fundación Semillas to achieve the legal status of "social association" and to plant new magueys to enhance production and soil and water conservation.²⁵ It also received financial support from the National Institute for Indigenous People (INPI), to purchase traditional tools for proper maguey management and pulque production. The national ministry of agriculture, SAGARPA, provided technical assistance for the proper management of the maguey plants; and a partnership was developed with RUTOPIA, a travel agency based in Mexico City, which established a beneficial partnership with MM members by investing in building simple accommodation infrastructure in El Almacén for tourists.

73. In 2018, Slow Food Mexico and SF proposed the selection of the Oaxaca Mixteca maguey as a new Presidium to be established through the IFAD-funded grant, in partnership with MM, thanks to the group's commitment towards protecting and fostering the cultivation of local varieties of magueys at risk of disappearance, as well as the group's membership, that mostly comprised indigenous women, including several youth.

74. The specific objectives or outcomes expected for the IFAD-supported work were defined in the logical framework as follows:

1. Household incomes increased through a sustainable use of maguey.
2. Best practices for maguey cultivation and products processing adopted.
3. Presidium maguey plantations and soil and water conservation works adequately supported and monitored.
4. Indigenous identity and traditional production practices recognized and appreciated, in particular through the Slow Food ITM network or wider forums at the local, national and international level.

75. This case study focused on the work related to the establishment of the PGS within all components. By the end of August 2020, IFAD financial resources had been used for the following main activities²⁶:

- Mechanized works for planting 20,000 maguey plants in an area of 12.5 hectares, which represented 100% of the project target and the project's largest item of expenditure.
- establishment of the Oaxaca Mixteca Maguey Presidium, which comprised: the development of the protocol, called Regulation, for the cultivation of the maguey; improved hygiene practices for aguamiel and pulque production among the members; printing of Presidium labels; purchase, distribution and use of labelled containers for aguamiel and pulque marketing; diversification of maguey products for the market, e.g. maguey seedlings from seed, and pulque for culinary uses, e.g. bread baking and sauces;

- Participation in marketing and traditional events in Oaxaca state to achieve greater visibility and broaden the market range for the products of the Oaxaca Mixteca Agave Presidium.

76. The decision to use the project's funds for the mechanized works had been made by the Presidium members through a participatory process that included a problem and need identification phase, followed by an in-depth analysis and discussion among group members of the available options in terms of funding priorities in order to achieve the established objectives. Presidium members had contributed to the project by planting new maguey shoots in the newly dug trenches; members from localities where virtually no magueys were left also had to "buy" maguey shoots, for cash or in exchange for labor, from those who still had maguey plants on their land. The negotiations were carried out internally within the group, reportedly in a satisfactory manner for all.

77. During the meetings held in February 2020 with Presidium members, all stated that the financial support made available to dig trenches for planting the magueys had been a key factor in the establishment of the Presidium and in motivating them to join forces as a group in the subsequent activities. It was also reported that when other community members saw the mechanized works being carried out, a few had expressed their regret at not having joined the Presidium themselves or having left it.²⁷

26. Source: IFAD Grant Number: 2000001632, Narrative report for the period 1 January 2019 - 31 December 2019, Slow Food International, March 2020.

27. Nine out of the 58 initial members of the Presidium left the group before activities actually started, and one passed away.

78. According to members, an additional element of empowerment and motivation to engage in the Presidium was the recognition—by organizations such as SF and IFAD—of the value and importance of both maguey and pulque as key symbols of Mixteca cultural identity. By joining in the Presidium, they perceived themselves as being part of something global and important. A strong element of pride also emerged when Presidium members reported that media from other Mexican states and other countries had taken an interest in their work and produced articles and videos on MM and the Presidium.

79. During the first year of life of the Presidium, total pulque production from 45 Presidium members increased by 12%, reaching a total of 6,452 liters/week during the extraction season, which lasts three to six months depending on the maguey variety.²⁸ It is estimated that each plant will produce on average 1,500 liters. The productivity increase was mainly due to improved management of the existing mature magueys on the land of group members. Information provided through the T1 questionnaire indicated that pulque shelf life had increased to one week thanks to improved hygiene practices during handling of the product and the better quality of the containers procured through the project.

80. In February 2020, Presidium members stated that selling the pulque and aguamiel had never been an issue and no foreseeable risk existed of a production glut when the newly planted magueys reach maturity and are ready for aguamiel extraction. This is due to the fact that each plant is said to grow differently, depending on a range of factors including variety, soil quality, water

availability and altitude. Some diversification in access to markets had also occurred over time, with 5% of the output sold in Oaxaca city, with a corresponding decrease in local sales; the main outlet still remained the regional markets, where 80% of the output was sold.²⁹

81. At the end of February 2020, Presidium members received Presidium narrative labels and specific containers for marketing the pulque and aguamiel, which appeared to be an additional important factor of cohesion and empowerment for the group. Two weeks later, however, COVID-19 mobility restrictions were imposed in Mexico, which significantly limited access even to the Nochixtlán market and led to an 80% decrease in the quantities of pulque and aguamiel sold. This meant that in August 2020, when the collection of monitoring data for the T1 assessment was conducted, the available data did not make it possible to assess the specific effects of these marketing improvements on sales.

82. The combination of increased production and price (see later in the report) for pulque meant that gross returns for every Presidium member household increased by 49%. All interviewed members acknowledged that they had to dedicate more time to the magueys, but this was manageable and well-compensated by the increased income, which emerged as a key factor for joining the Presidium.

83. The Presidium was founded with 58 members, located in six different communities in the Nochixtlán district, which contributed to a certain degree of socio-economic and cultural heterogeneity among them³⁰.

28. During the rainy season, the extracted aguamiel has a lower quality due to its higher water content.

29. The local market includes the producers' municipalities and Nochixtlán; regional markets include neighboring municipalities and towns; the Oaxaca city market is also defined as "state-level."

30. For example, Mixteco is only the lingua franca in some communities.

A management group of five young indigenous women, including the president, all with university degrees and from the Presidium localities, coordinated the activities at the district and local level.

84. Box 8 below shows the membership at the time of the establishment of the Presidium and

in August 2020. The share of youth members increased over time, from 34% to 39%, because a quarter of adults left the group. The recorded variations in membership can be ascribed to normal group dynamics, in particular when benefits from membership are not immediately visible. Women, overall, have maintained over time their share at 52-53% of the membership.

Box. 8 Oaxaca Mixteca Agave Presidium membership

Social group	Number of members in August 2018, at the establishment of the Presidium	Number of members in August 2020
Adult men	19	16
Adult women	19	13
Young men	8	7
Young women	12	12
Total	58	48

Source: Oaxaca Mixteca Agave Presidium

85. Women's attendance in the meetings for the establishment of the Presidium was systematically higher than men's, at 56.3% of all participants, with one occasion only when both men and women were present in equal numbers. In terms of age cohorts, most women attending were in the 18 to 25 age range, representing 40% of women participants, followed by those above 35 years old, representing 36% of participants. Conversely, adult men, above 35 years old, represented 51% of participating men, followed by men in the 18 to 25 age range, at 35% of

participants. For both men and women, the 25-35 age cohort had the lowest participation; this is likely due to family duties for women, who tend to have young children in that period of life. In the case of male youth, migration to urban areas for employment is high and only very few stay on or have come back.

86. Presidium members showed a good level of commitment and engagement to the initiative and the prospects for Presidium development and sustainability look reasonable. Most

interviewed members stated their appreciation for the opportunity to meet people from other communities through the Presidium, suggesting that this was an element of social empowerment. Apparently, the collaboration between Mixteca-speaking and non-Mixteca-speaking communities was also a trigger for a revived interest in the wider use of the Mixteca language, including with children.

87. The challenges identified by Presidium members in late February 2020 included:

- The absence of a proper shop or stall in Nochixtlán market, where all Presidium products could be sold.
- Lack of means of transport to carry the pulque from their localities to the Nochixtlán market or beyond.
- Need for technical knowledge to control the maguey pests.
- Water scarcity and drought risk due to climate change, which could affect the proper growth of the maguey plants.

88. In addition, the author of the case study considered that two features of the Presidium's internal organization required careful following up:

- First, as of late February 2020, solid mechanisms for delegating responsibilities and tasks among the Presidium members had not been developed yet, apparently due to a certain degree of dependence on the president of MM for decision-making and taking the initiative; this may represent a risk for the continuity of activity when the incumbent cannot be present due to various reasons, also taking into account the relative dispersion of members over several communities, and their socio-economic heterogeneity.
- Second, a few Presidium members who live outside the core location of El Almacén said they had been “invited” to join the group. This suggests that there could be other community members interested in joining the group who had not been invited: For example, mention was made of single mothers who engage in pulque production who were not members because they had no time to attend the workshops and meetings. Participation by “invitation” could also lead to including members who are not fully committed to the Presidium's objectives, who join for reasons of status or rent-seeking.



7. Achievements of the Pilot PGS

7.1 THE PGS FOR THE OGIEK HONEY PRESIDIUM

89. Information in this section was gathered from interviews conducted with MACODEV members and stakeholders between late November and early December 2019 by the SF team and updated with information provided in the T1 data collected in August 2020. It is important to note that since March 2020, Presidium activities have been seriously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting mobility restrictions. In addition, as mentioned in footnote 14 above, in July 2020 the Ogiek community was seriously affected by the Kenyan Government's unexpected order to evict several Ogiek honey producers and destroy their houses.

90. MACODEV's decision to set up a PGS was based on the cooperative's goal of producing and marketing pure organic honey of high quality, harvested from both traditional and modern beehives located in the forest and certified through the internal peer-control mechanism. The cooperative had already obtained the mark of the Kenya Board of Standards and was fully aware that traditional organic certification would be difficult to achieve, due to costs and the related bureaucracy and paperwork. Initially, the Cooperative had engaged with NECOFA and the Kenya Organic Agriculture Network about establishing a PGS, but the process had stalled. The collaboration with SF offered the opportunity to relaunch the initiative and the IFAD grant enabled its implementation.

91. As of December 2019, the IFAD-funded activities in support of the establishment of the PGS had been the following: a study to assess the viability of PGS in Kenya versus a standard third-party certification mechanism; a capacity development workshop on the PGS in May 2019 in Nakuru, attended by 31 MACODEV members and other stakeholders, including four women and eleven youth; and a close follow up from SF Kenya and SF, supporting MACODEV members with the various steps. These included the election of the two PGS governing bodies, namely the Ethical Committee and the Guarantee Group;³¹ the preparation of the checklist for the verification process, its testing and translation into Kiswahili; the organization in November 2019 of the Guarantee Group's verification field visits to check the beekeeping, honey harvesting and conservation at the producers' level; and the subsequent discussion of findings and challenges.

92. In total nine meetings were held between June and December 2019, partly because attendance varied and partly to ensure that the concept and procedures were properly and widely understood. Reportedly, attendance varied significantly depending on the topic, but no precise data were available. Across all meetings, youth always represented at least 50% of participants, whereas women's participation was always significantly below 50%. All MACODEV governing bodies include youth and adult women among their members.

31. See Annex 3 for the structure of the Ogiek Honey PGS governance.

However, although women are a large minority of the Presidia members (44%), due to the fact that forest beekeeping is a typically male activity, they are only a very small minority in the PGS governing bodies, at 12.5% (4 out of 32) with two women members out of 21 in the Ethical Committee and two among the 11 members of the Guarantee Group. Women members who were interviewed commented that they feel empowered, as individuals, by being part of these bodies. Attending the initial workshop and follow-up events gave them the opportunity to learn and gain confidence and visibility in the community.

93. All the MACODEV members interviewed considered that the SF-organized workshop on PGS had been instrumental in triggering a shift in their attention towards the importance of both honey quality and its clean handling for securing market outlets, and the need to increase the number of hives to boost production. The first round of peer review by the Guarantee Group had faced several challenges linked to less-than-perfect organization and transport difficulties due to weather conditions. Nevertheless, in the view of participants, each visit had been a good opportunity for all those present, who often included the selected individual producer and several neighboring producers, to learn through knowledge and experience sharing, including about very practical aspects of the process.³² The peer reviewers' attitude had been constructive and members found that responding to the questionnaire had been both encouraging and instructive. Also, the MACODEV structure in groups of contiguous producers facilitated the sharing of knowledge and information after any event with those who had been unable to attend.

94. MACODEV members were eager to enter the market with their own branded product and become one of the leading honey producers in the country, by improving both the quantity and quality of their honey. In their view, the PGS represented a key step in this direction by empowering the cooperative and equipping it to address the market challenges. Members were aware that there is an important market for organic honey and that the "PGS ensures that standards are followed and complied with, that all production steps are carried out in clean conditions and that the right containers are used." The PGS, in their view, would make the honey "safe" and recognized by consumers.

95. Members also noted that so far MACODEV had only produced multi-floral honey. During the PGS training they had learned that honey can be classified depending on the altitude of the beehive and the flowering species the bees have foraged on, and marketed accordingly. Specific training on this subject was requested, which suggested interest and awareness among producers for innovating their traditional practice.

96. Furthermore, members considered that the participatory approach of the PGS raised awareness among all the members about the contribution of each of them to the common goal of increasing both the quantity and quality of honey through the daily active control and improvement of their work as beekeepers and honey producers. This enhanced the sense of commitment to the cooperative and its work and a feeling of ownership and strengthened bonds among members. In more than one meeting, participants mentioned that keeping youth motivated and engaged in beekeeping was a key issue, and the PGS might contribute to this as well.

³² The example was made of one verification field visit during which participants learned how to repair a queen extruder.

97. Indirect stakeholders and partners of MACODEV, namely the Kenya Forest Service, technical departments in the Nakuru County government, NECOFA and Baraka Agricultural College, were also interested in and positive about the establishment of the PGS. The Government representatives found that the mechanism was fully aligned with national and local policies regarding the continued sound management of the Mau Forest, which is a fundamental pillar for the production of organic forest honey. Another positive consequence was the public health and nutrition aspects, by making a high-quality organic honey available on the local market. Other stakeholders considered that the PGS is a key factor in securing solid access to markets for the Ogiek honey, which in turn can directly contribute to poverty alleviation and local development for the community.

98. At the same time, MACODEV members identified several challenges that need to be addressed to sustain the PGS mechanism. These included:

- The costs of the peer review phase, mostly relating to transport and food for the Guarantee Group members; MACODEV was aware of the need to keep accurate records of all expenses related to the entire mechanism for future planning.
- Continuous capacity building of MACODEV members, at all levels.
- Sustained and continuous monitoring of the entire production process at all levels.

99. Data from the T1 monitoring of Presidium progress in August 2020 show that major positive shifts from the 2015 T0 data occurred in regards to product differentiation, certification, market diversification and economic growth of the initiative. All of these parameters are related, in one way or another, to the establishment of the PGS. This suggests that despite the Ogiek Honey Presidium PGS was only set up in late 2019 and that it faced many challenges in 2020, the system has already triggered positive dynamics by diversifying markets and products and by making the Presidium a more attractive enterprise for the Ogiek community.



7.2 THE PGS FOR THE OAXACA MIXTECA AGAVE PRESIDIUUM

100. Information in this section was gathered from interviews conducted with Presidium members and stakeholders in late February 2020 by the SF team and updated with information provided in the T1 data collected in August 2020. It is important to note that since March 2020, Presidium activities have been seriously affected by the COVID-19 mobility restrictions.

101. As mentioned above (see Section 4), in mid-2019 SF and IFAD agreed to “transfer” the pilot PGS from the Sateré-Mawé Native Waraná Presidium in Brazil to Mexico’s Oaxaca Mixteca Agave Presidium, due to internal problems in the initially selected Presidium. The members of the Mexican Presidium had no or very limited previous knowledge about PGS, partly due to the fact that such systems are not widely used in Mexico, and the newly developed Oaxaca Mixteca Agave Presidium protocol did not envisage the creation of such a mechanism. At the same time, the establishment of the PGS largely overlapped with other Presidium activities and was not perceived as a separate, additional innovation with respect to the Presidium. In other words, and differently from the Ogiek honey PGS, the PGS for the Oaxaca maguey was not the result of a specific request from the members and was taken as an additional element of the Presidium.

102. In order to address the limited knowledge about PGS among Presidium members, SF made the appropriate decision to include in the process the expertise of another Mexican participatory guarantee system. The chosen entity was the Tijtoca A.C., a farmers’ union based in Tlaxcala state. Tijtoca focuses on the implementation of agroecology principles through farmer-to-farmer exchange and learning and a participatory guarantee system

that certifies the entire farming household over the whole production cycle, from field to fork. Two of the union’s PGS experts participated in the entire PGS establishment process and provided advice to the Agave Presidium members, and two members of the MM management group took part in a residential capacity-development program run by Tijtoca that also addressed PGS and related issues.

103. The activities that SF carried out to create the PGS started in September 2019 and closely followed the established standard procedure. This included meetings with all Presidium members to introduce the concept, the election of the Ethical Committee and Guarantee Group members, the development of the Guarantee Sheet, the first round of verification field visits to five Presidium members’ plantation practices and the restitution to the entire Assembly of the relevant results.

104. A list of key issues to be looked at during the verification process was also drafted, together with a list of both “serious” and “light” gaps in compliance. The first round of visits made it possible to identify members who did not fully respect the rules and regulations of the Presidium, although all interviewed members were clear about the need for full compliance to ensure that the pulque being produced meets the established standards. The most frequent issue across the five visits was the limited weeding and clearing around the maguey plants and pest control. The Assembly planned for April 2020 was going to be the first opportunity for an official discussion among all Presidium members about how to apply and enforce compliance measures, but the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown measures forced the event to be postponed to a date still unknown at the time of finalizing this report.

105. A key issue discussed by the Ethical Committee was the increase of the minimum price of the two main Presidium products at the Nochixtlán market; the pulque price was raised by 33%, from Mex\$15/liter to Mex\$20/liter, and aguamiel price was raised by 166%, from Mex\$15/liter to Mex\$40/liter. Presidium members were obliged not to sell below these values, though they could sell at a higher price if the market allowed, as was the case in Oaxaca city, where the pulque price increased to Mex\$40/liter and the aguamiel price grew to Mex\$60-80/liter. Specific sanctions and control measures were put in place in this regard and group members discussed the possibility of asking the local government to introduce a fine system to sanction infractions (theft and damages to plants) committed by external actors. As of March 2020, the group had not yet discussed how to finance the costs of the PGS.

106. The first round of verification field visits also enabled further discussions on the appropriateness of the Guarantee Sheet. A widely shared conclusion was that the list of questions had to be revised to enable a more objective analysis, less open to personal interpretation, and to focus on fewer issues. It was also agreed that 10% of members would be assessed every year.

107. Presidium members who had taken direct part in the verification process, either as members of the Guarantee Group or as visited members, stated that the exchanges had been useful and interesting, also because the Guarantee Group included maguey cultivation experts who were able to speak in simple language about the required improvements and adjustments to cultural practices. Repeatedly, Presidium members stated that the PGS mechanism had triggered additional motivation for them and that they wanted to ensure that their pulque is 100% natural and that all meet the established quality standards.

108. Attendance of meetings for the PGS represented 65.6% of attendance of Presidium meetings. Only young men aged 25 to 34 showed a higher attendance in PGS meetings compared to Presidium meetings, whereas young women aged 18 to 25 were the group with the lowest attendance. The highest levels of attendance were registered during the first and last meetings held.

109. With regard to gender and age balance, only four women—two from MM and two external stakeholders—were among the 11 members of the PGS Ethical Committee, and six women—three adults and three external stakeholders—were among the 16 members of the Guarantee Groups, thus representing 37% (10 out of 27) of the members. This despite the fact that women’s membership of the Presidium was 50% and the Presidium was launched by a women’s association, MM. In addition, in contrast with the attendance of meetings for the establishment of the Presidium where women accounted for 56.3% of participants, women’s attendance in meetings for the establishment of the PGS was at 44.4% of all participants. Across the three age cohorts, attendance grew with age, including for male participants, again differing from the pattern in Presidium meetings. This suggests that the PGS was perceived as a topic for the more experienced and mature members of the Presidium, with a preference for men in the role.

110. Indirect stakeholders and partners of the Presidium, including Tijtoca leaders, MM partners and pulque buyers in Oaxaca city, expressed their appreciation for the Presidium and the PGS, with limited or no distinction between the Presidium and the PGS, which was perceived as an inherent element of the entire Presidium enterprise.

8. Analysis by Criteria and Cross-Cutting Issues

8.1 EFFECTIVENESS

111. By August 2020 the project had achieved the objective of establishing a functioning PGS for the Ogiek Honey Presidium in Kenya and the Oaxaca Mixteca Agave Presidium in Mexico. In both Presidia:

- Information, awareness-raising and capacity-development events were conducted with high levels of member participation along the entire process.
- The governing bodies were elected and operated according to their respective mandates.
- The first round of verification of production practices of a small number of members had been carried out in each Presidium in the last quarter of 2019.
- Marketing labels had been developed and used, together with appropriate packaging, to testify to the origin and quality assurance of the product through the PGS, although this step was only in the early stages in the Oaxaca Mixteca Agave Presidium.³³

112. All interviewed members in both Presidia stated that the mechanism helped to strengthen a sense of ownership of the production process and a sense of belonging to the association, as well as contributing to the sharing of experience and knowledge for improving the final quality of the product.

113. The available information shows an increase in both quantities sold and prices for both Ogiek honey and Oaxaca maguey that were clearly triggered by the establishment of the Presidia. At the time of writing this report, however, it was not possible to confirm a direct link

between the establishment of the PGS and these improvements. An indicator would have been the increase in both quantities sold and price once both Presidia started using the narrative labels mentioning the PGS itself. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting mobility restriction measures taken by governments in Kenya and Mexico, as in most other countries in the world, have significantly affected all marketing activities in both Presidia and have limited the potential for improvements in this regard.



33. See above regarding the impacts of mobility restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic on the access to markets with labeled containers in the case of the Oaxaca maguey products.

8.2 SUSTAINABILITY

114. The available evidence from the interviews and interactions with the Presidia members and the PGS governing bodies indicate a strong level of commitment to the PGS mechanism and to maintaining it in future. The PGS in the two Presidia have a high degree of social and cultural acceptability, also because they retain sufficient flexibility to adjust to the local social and cultural context. In addition, the PGS also contributes to the sustainable management of the natural resources sustaining the production processes by verifying that environmentally sustainable practices are fully adopted throughout and by all members.

115. In addition, the SF PGS model seems to be particularly suited to enhance the sustainability of the entire value chain through its capacity to stimulate the creation of innovative local systems of production and consumption. The PGS model shifts roles along the value chain and leads to the sharing of responsibilities among producers, consumers and other actors, and this favors the emergence of reciprocal relationships based on solidarity. The concept of solidarity implicit in the PGS strengthens the resilience of local food networks in situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic, because members have to develop the habit of trust and collaboration for the PGS to function. PGS stakeholders who are used to collaboration to comply with PGS standards have shown greater capacities to develop sustainable and innovative ways to stimulate local markets as a result of the interactions inspired by the participatory certification process.

116. At the same time, as mentioned by some interviews, the long-term sustainability

of the PGS will also depend on the effects of the system on sale volumes and/or unit sale price. At the time of writing, too many variables are at play to make any informed guess in this respect. The difficult market outlook ahead should not lead PGS governing bodies to postpone addressing the need to achieve internal economic sustainability for the system. The possibility of applying to funds and project calls (local and national) had been identified as a possible solution to ensure short-term viability. In the long term, however, the costs of running the PGS must be covered by the revenues from the product itself, or by an annual contribution from the Presidia members as part of a membership fee. Thus, the costs of implementing the PGS, from the meetings of its governing bodies to the verification process, should be accurately recorded and analyzed to identify areas for efficiency savings.

117. In parallel, information and awareness-raising campaigns at the national level with like-minded associations and groups to promote PGS as a consumer-friendly approach would represent an additional element of sustainability. The basic observation that the PGS guarantees quality for consumers while keeping costs—and therefore market price increases—at a very reasonable level could be the core content of such campaigns. The same focused partnerships, possibly supported by SF, could also conduct advocacy actions directly with governments to include PGS in national legislation on food safety and quality.

118. From a broader perspective of Presidium sustainability, moreover, there seems to be room for two parallel streams of action to facilitate the Presidia's access to national

microfinance institutions to develop business plans and borrow funds for running capital and expanding and/or diversifying production and market outlets. First, SF and IFAD could collaborate more closely in those countries where IFAD is supporting Presidia development, to develop links between Presidia and those microfinance

institutions that IFAD may be supporting through its other initiatives. Second, SF could engage and develop alliances and partnerships with ethical banking and microfinance institutions, in Italy and elsewhere, that provide financial support to micro-projects that have sustainable economic, social and environmental development goals.

8.3 EMPOWERMENT

119. Evidence from all interviews indicate that the establishment of a Presidium is by itself a socially empowering process, in particular but not only for Indigenous Peoples. The simple fact that the traditional food or product of the IP involved gains national or even international attention contributes to developing both pride and self-confidence within the groups and at the individual level, the initial steps towards overcoming cultural, social and political segregation. The project experience also shows that a PGS is attractive and empowering for youth, who are likely to have technical and managerial skills and competences, as well as an understanding of consumer preferences, that are highly useful for improving product quality and marketing efforts.

120. The PGS builds on these initial seeds of self-confidence and further strengthens members'

empowerment by giving producers full control, responsibility and recognition for the quality of the production process and the final product. Appreciation by external people of the high quality of the product automatically becomes an appreciation and recognition of the worth of the producers who are responsible for it.

121. Furthermore, the PGS contributes to triggering and developing additional empowering elements:

- Stronger ties among Presidia members and a sense of belonging to the group.
- Stronger sense of ownership over the process and product.
- Capacity development and enhanced knowledge about the process and product.
- Economic empowerment, by enabling higher revenue from the product and higher incomes.



8.4 GENDER EQUALITY

122. Mainstreaming of gender equality is a constant feature of Slow Food's work and approach to the establishment of Presidia. In addition, many Presidia aim at preserving and giving visibility to processes and products that are traditionally managed by women. In this context, the establishment of a PGS should in theory further contribute to gender equality by strengthening empowerment of Presidium groups and members. For this to happen, the balanced participation of men and women in the PGS governing bodies should be systematically ensured.

123. However, this had not happened yet in the two PGS analyzed by the case study. Members of PGS governing bodies are elected by the Assembly of the Presidium members. Despite women being a large minority among Ogiek Honey Presidium members and the majority of Oaxaca Mixteca Agave Presidium members and its founders, women's inclusion

in the governing bodies of both PGS was, respectively, very low and low.³⁴ The main reason seemed to be the traditional pattern of gender-based discrimination, including by women, towards women in public decision-making roles. This likely inhibited women who were more than capable of taking on the roles, with few exceptions.

124. The way forward seemed to be a more proactive intervention by IFAD and Slow Food, with specifically targeted actions aimed at identifying and developing the capacity of adult and young women in each Presidium who show leadership potential and are interested in taking on a more visible and public role in the PGS and Presidium governance. Furthermore, Slow Food may consider introducing and enforcing gender-based quotas in the membership of each PGS governing body as part of the Presidium and PGS protocol.

8.5 PARTICIPATION

125. Participation is a broad concept, which comprises a wide range of behaviors from simple attendance at an event to effective involvement in decision-making. In this case study, the criterion of participation analyzes who took part in the establishment of the PGS, when and how this happened and the purpose of the participation.

126. The available evidence showed that participation in meetings had been uneven for the establishment of both PGS, which

meant that information had to be repeated on several occasions. This could be due to the obvious complexity of scheduling meetings at a suitable time for large numbers of members, as well as to a varying degree of interest and understanding among members for the specific PGS initiative. In addition, the available data for the Oaxaca maguey PGS suggest that gender and age play a role in the interest and/or commitment to the PGS, with adult men leading the way.

34. The PGS protocol for the Ogiek Honey Presidium states that: "The presence of youth and women members is strongly recommended"; however, it does not specifically mention women in the leadership groups and they are underrepresented.

127. Nevertheless, all interviewees in both Presidia stated their strong and serious commitment to the concept of the PGS, perceived by all as an important element of the Presidium, and to running the process in the future to ensure and possibly enhance the quality of the final product. The verification process, which is the more time-consuming and demanding step, was duly carried out in both PGS with a good level of attendance and participation. In some Ogiek groups, those who could not attend the field visits in person were subsequently informed of the results by the group chairs and this was proposed as standard practice. In this

respect, the first round was uniformly perceived as a great opportunity for testing and adjusting the procedure and sharing knowledge among participants. It also enhanced the sense of ownership for the entire process, which should contribute to ensuring participation in the future.

128. As discussed under sustainability, sustained participation in the PGS in the future will also depend on the added value that the PGS will bring in terms of revenue. This will likely be a key factor in ensuring the interest and willingness of both groups to follow up and invest their own time and resources in running the mechanism.

8.6 OVERALL RELEVANCE

129. The overall relevance of the PGS mechanism is based on the performance of the intervention and the extent to which the establishment of the PGS contributes to the related specific objectives.

130. The evidence available indicated that in both the Ogiek Honey and Oaxaca Mixteca Agave Presidia, the establishment of the PGS was adequately carried out through awareness-raising and capacity-development events, elections of the governing bodies and testing of the verification process. Similar evidence also emerged for the Lucca Red Bean Presidium. Overall, the stakeholders' opinion was that the SF approach to PGS was appropriate and contributed to pursuing the goals of all the analyzed Presidia. The process led to a good level of appropriation of the mechanism by Presidia members, thanks in part to the flexibility of the proposed PGS model that

builds on few basic principles while allowing sufficient adaptation to facilitate adoption for the diverse products and cultural and social environments where it was piloted.

131. The PGS has proved to be a valuable additional component of the Presidia, which contributed to strengthening the sense of belonging to the group and to generate further empowerment of members who have full control and ownership over the quality of the production process and its final output. The two pilots have indicated a few necessary adjustments to the mechanism that can easily be integrated into future interventions; furthermore, the mechanism enables immediate lesson learning and feedback from the local practice and improved performance over time.

132. The PGS also enhanced the contribution of the SF Presidia to the broader underlying goal

of poverty alleviation among the participating Indigenous Peoples; this by raising their returns and incomes through better and guaranteed product quality and consequent expansion of the marketing potential for their respective products. Presidia members recognized that the PGS met their need for an instrument that could provide practical marketing benefits by adding value and ensuring the credibility of their products to consumers.

133. Prospects for the medium- to long term sustainability of the PGS within the Presidium model were good at the time of carrying out the work at country level, under the social and economic circumstances prevailing in late 2019 and very early 2020. This despite the fact that the analysis was carried out less than a year after the establishment of the two PGS and that longer monitoring and support appeared desirable, given the innovative nature of the mechanism.

9. Conclusions and Lessons Learned

134. The analysis above shows that the SF model of PGS, based on the two pilot experiences supported through the IFAD grant and further validated through the SF-funded PGS in the Lucca Red Bean Presidium, is highly appropriate for strengthening the SF Presidium model. Several benefits emerged, including:

- A. Enhanced knowledge among members about the PGS itself as well as about technical and marketing aspects of the production process, for example on issues such as minimum price, differentiated prices for different markets and products and internal mechanisms to control commercial transactions, compounded by a willingness to share this with colleagues who were former competitors, and to further develop innovative techniques and approaches.
- B. Strengthening the cohesion and empowerment of the groups and all individual participants, who gain full control over the quality of each step along the value chain in regards to consumers and external actors.
- C. Increased transparency and technical quality of the production and marketing process.

- D. Higher returns from market sales and expansion of the marketing potential thanks to enhanced consumer trust.
- E. Increased dialog across stakeholders, with the PGS as a building block for multi-stakeholder platforms as the governance mechanism of the pro-poor value chain.

135. The only specific challenge related to the PGS itself still pending was the cost in the short term of the verification field visits, e.g. for transport, food and lodgings as required. This should be resolved through the higher incomes generated by the increased sales of the certified products, which should also generate the required extra revenue.

136. In this respect, at the time of finalizing the report, October 2020, the world is still grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, estimating the economic sustainability of the PGS model is particularly complex considering that the impacts of the pandemic on the survival and performance of Presidia, triggered by the disease itself, mobility restrictions and reduced economic activity at local, regional and national levels are

still unclear. The marketing potential for both products is likely to be seriously affected in the short term, also considering the isolation of the production areas from urban markets. In the medium term, however, the global disruption of long value chains for bulk products and beverages might mean that consumers and restaurants will, by preference or necessity, include more local products in their purchasing strategies. If this scenario does play out, there are good prospects for an expanded market for both Ogiek honey and the various Oaxaca maguey products and the inclusion of the PGS in the Presidia will prove to be an additional tool of resilience for the Ogiek and the Oaxaca Mixteca people.

137. The adoption of a PGS with more stringent requirements on health and food safety could also respond to new market needs and consumer demands and simultaneously increase food security at the local level. Reportedly, several PGS networks during the COVID-19 pandemic have been able to react to the limitations in accessing physical markets by developing innovative models to supply their customers and distribute their products fully respecting appropriate quality and health standards.

138. The case study identified the following key lessons learned, which should be taken into account in the future whenever integrating PGS into existing or new Presidia:

A. The introduction of a PGS into an already existing Presidium does not differ significantly—in terms of resources and time required—from the inclusion of a PGS in a Presidium that is just starting its activity. In both cases, external support and monitoring appear necessary for a period that is long enough to ensure full

ownership of the process and the capacity to independently manage it; this will be highly contextual, although a new Presidium will likely need support for longer given that the group still has to consolidate its internal dynamics, independently from the PGS.

- B. The structure of any Slow Food Presidium automatically builds on an existing spirit of collaboration and mutual learning among members. The PGS clarifies and makes more visible and tangible how the contribution of each and every member is a necessary condition for the success of the group as a whole. Thus the PGS helps groups to reflect on the technical processes for the Presidium protocol, the formation of the group and its cohesion, and contributes to strengthening the sense of belonging to the group as well as the sense of ownership over the process and the final product.
- C. The presence and support of external organizations that are technically familiar with the concepts of control, certification, and PGS and who understand the producers' cultural context and can speak their language, facilitate knowledge sharing, the dissemination of best practices and the identification of technical solutions to overcome specific critical aspects.
- D. The systematic interaction with external partners, through meetings and discussions where respect for group and individual views underpins all exchanges, helps to strengthen the sense of pride and purpose of a group, in addition to increasing attention and commitment towards improved overall performance and quality.
- E. The first round of verification field visits is highly useful for improving the format of the Guarantee Sheet and the efficiency and effectiveness of the approach. Interesting

specific lessons emerged and are likely to emerge at each round; the PGS mechanism should thus include formal feedback sessions as part of the verification process, to enable the integration of lessons learned and subsequent adaptations in the following cycle.

- F. For ease of testing, the percentage of producers assessed by the Control Groups during the project was set at 10%. However, this proved to be too low to ensure adequate coverage. Slow Food PGS protocols should thus aim at an annual coverage rate of 35% of members, which makes it possible to assess all members every three years.

Recommendations

FOR SLOW FOOD:

- The PGS should become a systematic component of SF Presidia and a fundamental element of each protocol.
- Slow Food should consider harmonizing the broader monitoring system for the Presidia, namely the data collected at T0 and T1, with the monitoring data for the PGS, to avoid duplication and waste time and efforts.
- The criteria for Presidium and PGS membership should be made more visible and explicit; inclusion of marginalized groups and individuals who are interested but face challenges in participation should be among the basic principles, in addition to youth involvement.
- Slow Food should be more proactive in supporting the equal participation of women in PGS governing bodies, if necessary, by supporting the targeted training or capacity development of those women within the groups who have potential and interest for assuming leadership roles.
- Slow Food should consider partnering with like-minded organizations at the national level to raise awareness among consumers

- and to lobby at the political level for the recognition of PGS as a fully reliable and convenient-for-all approach to quality control for a wide range of products from family farming and indigenous peoples.
- Slow Food should consider developing partnerships and alliances with ethical banking and microfinance institutions that provide financial support to micro-projects that have sustainable economic, social and environmental development goals.

FOR IFAD:

- The Slow Food PGS model could be used as a reference model in IFAD projects that aim at developing pro-poor value chains for products originating from family farming and Indigenous Peoples, to enhance their integration into local and national markets.
- IFAD might consider a closer integration of participants benefitting from its grants and loans in the same country, when it aims at facilitating the access of small-scale producer organizations and Indigenous Peoples' organizations to microfinance services.



