

Integrating the Theory of Change (TOC) and Jurisdictional Approach (JA) in preparing a sustainable palm oil action plan in Indonesia

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Abstract

The Jurisdictional Approach (JA) is an integrated landscape approach that is used within the administrative boundaries of the government. This approach can be used to encourage sustainable palm oil while promoting regional success in reducing deforestation. The project of scaling jurisdictional approaches in the Indonesian palm oil sector involves a multi-stakeholder, participatory, and gender-inclusive approach. JA can be integrated with Theory of Change (TOC) through workshops and focus group discussions to identify key issues at the regency level related to sustainable palm oil practices, especially regarding the implementation of Presidential Instruction Number 6 of 2019 concerning the National Action Plan for Sustainable Palm Oil Plantations.

The objective of this paper is to examine the integration of TOC and JA in the preparation of a regional action plan for sustainable palm oil in Indonesia and to highlight the practical instances of how the integrated approaches enable significant promotion and generate meaningful collaboration between key players involved in advancing the preparation of a regional action plan for sustainable palm oil in Indonesia.

The integrated TOC and JA effectively heard the voices and interests of stakeholders in a participatory manner, understood the local context and issues, defined the problems to be addressed, formulated objectives, articulated the changes expected to be achieved, and established collaboration among different sectors to achieve sustainable palm oil practices at the jurisdictional level. TOC supports JA by articulating causal linkages between interventions and their desired effects and identifying three common types of theories of change: causal chain, dimensions of influence, and actor-centered theories.

Keywords: *Theory of Change, Jurisdictional Approach, Sustainable Palm Oil, Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration*

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I. Introduction

Indonesia has made significant progress in reducing deforestation and moving the agricultural commodity sector toward sustainability, particularly regarding palm oil plantations. Communicating this progress to the global market is imperative to enable regions to receive recognition and rewards for their efforts in meeting relevant requirements. Additionally, maintaining, and intensifying efforts to achieve sustainable palm oil production is crucial. The Jurisdictional Approach (JA) is one such approach. JA is an integrated landscape approach that aims to reconcile competing social, economic, and environmental objectives through participation by a full range of stakeholders across sectors, implemented within government administrative boundaries, and with a form of government involvement, (Buchanan et. al., 2019). This approach uses a series of ‘Sustainable Jurisdictional Indicators’ that enable regencies and cities to demonstrate that agricultural commodities such as palm oil are produced sustainably by complying with the law and without causing deforestation.

The jurisdictional approach initiative is realized by translating the national sustainable palm oil action plan (*Rencana Aksi Nasional-Kelapa Sawit Berkelanjutan/ RAN-KSB*) into regional action plans (*Rencana Aksi Daerah-Kelapa Sawit Berkelanjutan/ RAD-KSB*). The regional action plan is prepared by a secretariat team at the regency level consisting of various stakeholders. However, the secretariat team has not yet

been able to implement this regional action plan optimally because it does not have a systematic framework. Moreover, it is challenging to coordinate these diverse groups involved in the palm oil industry, such as governments, NGOs, small and major companies, and communities at large. Therefore, integrating JA and TOC can emphasize multi-stakeholder participation, ensuring that every interest and need is heard and considered in the planning and implementation processes. This can lead to more equitable and sustainable outcomes.

Comprehensive frameworks for monitoring and evaluation of palm oil sustainability initiatives are also required for tracking their progress and effectiveness. TOC offers a concise structure for determining required actions, intended results, and the causal links connecting them while ensuring the Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks are in line with the intended results. JA complements this by providing a structured, landscape-level approach that ensures these actions are implemented in a coordinated and inclusive manner by the *RAD-KSB* task force at the jurisdictional level.

CIFOR (Center for International Forestry Research) and partners have been conducting activities that are supported by the Walmart Foundation with the topic “Improving Jurisdictional Approaches for Sustainable Palm Oil in Indonesia” in 2019-2023 in cooperation with universities, environmental NGOs (non-

governmental organizations), and civil society forums as local partners in four regencies (Sintang, Pelalawan, Kutai Kartanegara, and Pulang Pisau). This project aims to enhance the readiness of palm oil-producing regencies for the implementation of durable jurisdictional programs (JPs) through the adoption of a participatory, multi-stakeholder, and gender-inclusive approach, drawing on lessons learned from both CIFOR and non-CIFOR JPs. One of the work packages of this project is to co-design nested Theories of Change (TOCs), Theories of Actions (TOAs), and Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks (MEFs) that catalyze finance, collaboration, collective leadership, and planning to support the implementation of locally responsive JPs. CIFOR and local partners facilitated and worked closely with key stakeholders to implement a specific set of activities.

Risk to oil palm practices can be reduced by co-designing a strategy of action plan and building capacity for stakeholders to implement effective jurisdictional programs to enhance the inclusiveness and sustainability of palm oil practices. The issues and problems identified during the discussion aligned with the five components that are mentioned in the Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Palm Oil (RAD-KSB): (a) data, coordination, and infrastructure; (b) enhancing growers' capacity and capabilities; (c) environmental management and monitoring; (d) governance and disputes; and (e) supporting acceleration of ISPO

(Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil) certification and enhancing market access for palm oil products.

II. Objectives

The objectives of this paper are to:

- a) Examine the advantages and challenges of integrating the TOC and the JA in the preparation of a regional action plan for sustainable palm oil in Indonesia.
- b) Highlight the practical aspects of how the integrated approaches enable meaningful collaboration between all the key players or stakeholders involved in advancing the preparation of a regional action plan for sustainable palm oil in Indonesia.

III. Theory of Change (TOC) to support Jurisdictional Approach (JA)

A TOC in evaluation articulates causal linkages between interventions and their desired effects. It also shows “how and why programs work (or fail to work) in different contexts and for different program stakeholders” (Astbury and Leeuw, 2010). The use of TOCs in impact evaluation would improve the definition of the counterfactual and would help generalize the results, found in the reviewed literature, Jones (2011) and Chervier et al. (2020) identify three common types of theories of change:

- Causal chain: A succession of elements and the logical connections between a set of inputs, activities,

outputs, outcomes, and impacts, with each element causing or leading to the next one, depending on certain assumptions.

- Dimensions of influence: Sets of areas of outcomes presumed to be important contributing factors towards policy influence.
- Actor-centered theories: These focus on the behavior changes of actors. Actors are seen as the key driving force for change, with policymaking dependent on policy actors and networks, their behaviors, relationships, perspectives, and political interests. (Jones, 2011). Moreover, Chervier et al. (2020) offer an illustration of the TOC's implementation for JA (*Please refer to Figure 1 on page 5*).

TOC is a method that uses a causal analysis based on the available evidence to explain how a certain intervention, or series of interventions, is expected to result in a specific development change (UNDG, 2015). A TOC is an explicit, testable model of how and why change is expected to happen along an impact pathway in a particular context. The process of developing a TOC is intended to support and document an initiative's change strategy. It encourages research design teams, research managers, and researchers to support system-level

strategic planning; encourages critical thinking, integration, and collective visioning among team members and partners; facilitates co-ownership of the research process; supports transparency and accountability to results; helps identify and engage key actors at program boundaries; and builds appreciation and understanding of the diverse roles required in change processes (*Why Develop and Use a TOC*, 2023). According to Brown (2023), There are six stages to the TOC development process:

- a) Determining long-term objectives and assumptions.
- b) Identifying the preconditions to accomplish the long-term objective and providing an explanation; backward mapping starts with the ultimate objective.
- c) Articulating assumptions and explaining the rationales for why the particular outcome is a necessity for other outcomes.
- d) Set up indicators to measure the initiative's performance and track your progress toward those objectives.
- e) Determining and selecting the most appropriate interventions to achieve the desired change.
- f) Crafting a story that explains the summary of the underlying logic.

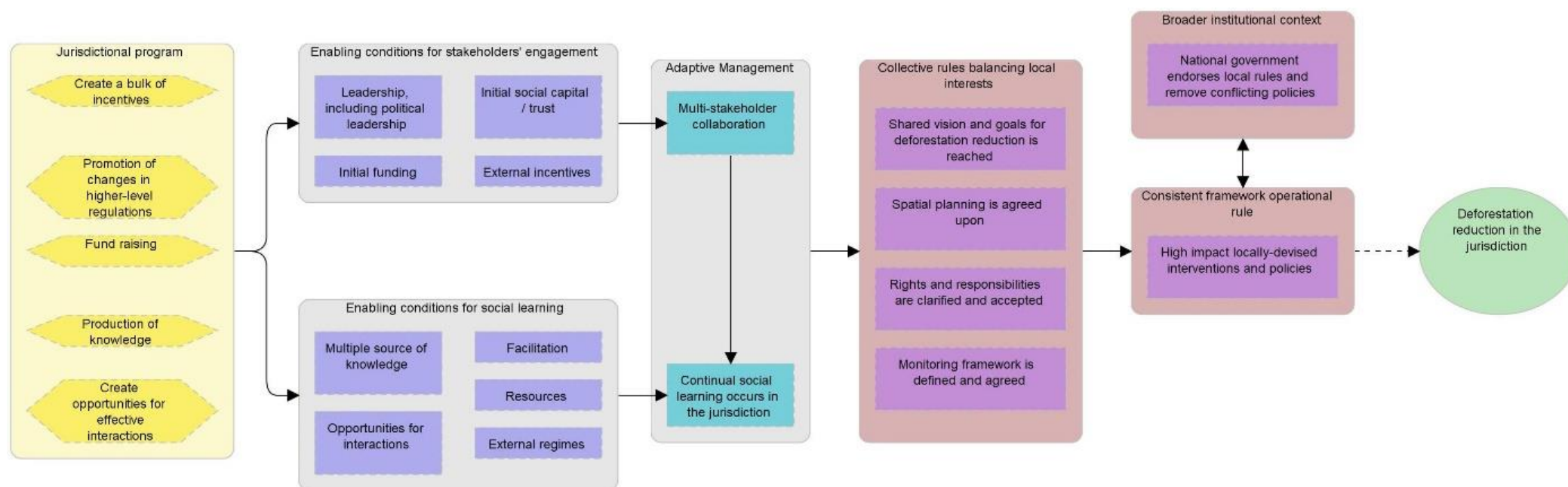


Figure 1. Example of a Theory of Change for Jurisdictional Approaches

Source: Chervier et al. (2020)

According to Palmer and Paoli (2017), a JA to sustainable land use is a multi-stakeholder effort rooted in a credible strategy to address the primary drivers of unsustainable land use within a defined political jurisdiction. In this approach, local government reforms policies and governance structures, while developing a shared vision, programs, indicators, and a monitoring framework to support sustainability.

A Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system is essential for JA to ensure that data on progress toward objectives is regularly integrated into multistakeholder discussions and adaptive management processes. JA implementers in Indonesia should be supported to develop a Theory of Change (TOC), apply it adaptively, and share insights with other practitioners. The role of the convening or 'backbone' organization facilitating the JA is critical for driving progress throughout the development phase (Palmer et al 2023). The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF) is also used in implementing the Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes at the jurisdiction level. Monitoring enables

programs to track progress by regularly collecting information. This process supports timely decision-making, ensures accountability, and forms the foundation for evaluation and learning. Meanwhile, evaluations will aim to improve the relevance of the program, enhance the achievement of results, optimize resource use, and address grievances (BioCarbon Funds, 2023).

CIFOR and partners outlined an approach to developing a regional palm oil action plan with stakeholders to provide strategic direction for the Jurisdictional Approach program with the following steps: (i) conducted a context and problem analysis to provide an overview of the situation at the jurisdictional level, identify relevant key stakeholders, and conduct an assumption/risk analysis. (ii) conducted several multi-stakeholder discussions to develop the TOC; (iii) the visuals and narrative of the TOC structure were thoroughly examined and improved; (iv) the development of the logic model, TOA, and MEF ensued.

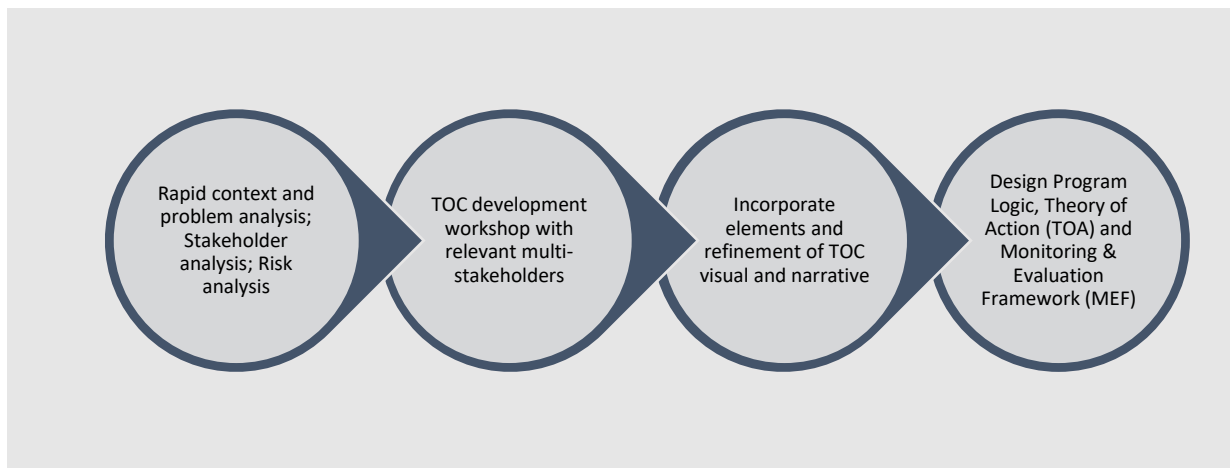


Figure 2. TOC development steps to prepare a sustainable palm oil action plan with stakeholders at the jurisdictional level.

Developing the TOC required stakeholders to take part in a group discussion. Prior to the collaborative drafting of the TOC, the participants held a brainstorming session to discuss the issue, potential risks, and stakeholder analysis. Context analysis provides a foundation for identifying current potential, opportunities, and barriers to future development. Likewise, problem analysis involves identifying key problems and determining the causes and effects associated with those problems. This analysis will be crucial in identifying and addressing the root causes of problems, not just their symptoms, in program design. Initiatives that focus on the symptoms of an issue rather than its root causes are unlikely to achieve long-term benefits. Risk analysis is the process of identifying potential issues that could negatively impact a key initiative or program. The organization uses this process to help avoid or mitigate specific risks. Risk analysis makes it possible to recognize the risks that the organization faces and helps in the decision-making process.

IV. Integrating the TOC and JA in sustainable palm oil regional action plan development

This practical note employs a qualitative approach, specifically focusing on the observation of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) process conducted during the workshop. This approach was chosen to gain in-depth insight into the perspectives and experiences of the stakeholders involved in the sustainable palm oil sector. The workshop was designed to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders. The objective was to create a participatory platform where these stakeholders could discuss and address key issues related to sustainable palm oil production.

The CIFOR team and local partners conducted the TOC co-design in four regencies and facilitated four workshops and focus group discussions at the regency level and three workshops at the national level. In the 1st workshop, the contexts/ issues, stakeholders, and risks were analyzed. In the 2nd workshop, the first draft TOC was discussed, in the 3rd

workshop it was finalized, and in the 4th workshop formulated the recommendations to enhance regional action plans for sustainable palm oil (RAD KSB) based on the TOC developed. Stakeholder participation was encouraged in the process to reflect the relationship between activities, outputs,

outcomes, and goals, aiming to achieve substantial impacts in the medium and long term, drawing from their experience in developing TOC and then sharing lessons learned from the regencies to facilitate the co-design process at the national level workshop.

Table 1. Participative TOC development process at regency and national levels

Location	Number of Workshop	Participants	
		Individuals	Organizations
Sintang	4 Workshops	85	13
Pelalawan	4 Workshops	85	13
Kutai Kartanegara	4 Workshops	70	12
Pulang Pisau	4 Workshops	70	12
National	3 Workshops	200	35
Total	19 Workshops	510	85

By observing the FGD process during the workshop, the study determined the advantages of integration of TOC and JA in sustainable palm oil regional action plan development. Firstly, TOC and JA encourage multi-stakeholder collaboration, create value propositions, and connect the dots between several types of initiatives at various levels or sectors. Second, it enhances regency and national action plans for oil palm plantations by engaging government authorities to strengthen policies, data, governance, and strategies to implement these policies. Third, promote sustainability by maintaining biodiversity, improving local livelihoods, and resolving disputes between communities, farmers, palm oil companies, and other actors. We identified actions based on the five main activity components in the RAN KSB and

we provided recommendations for output indicators based on the TOCs. Four strategic issues were identified in Sintang Regency: (a) traceability, (b) productivity and economic enhancement, (c) biodiversity and ecosystem conservation, and (d) orientation to sustainable, competitive, and just markets. In Pelalawan Regency, the goals or impacts would be achieved through three change pathways: (a) data, regulation, and legal compliance, (b) biodiversity and ecosystem conservation, and (c) economic empowerment and enhancement of sustainable enterprises. The developed change pathways can also encourage gender transformation. Kutai Kartanegara comprises five components: (a) strengthening data, coordination, and infrastructure, (b) capacity building for growers and accelerated replanting, (c)

environmental management and monitoring, (d) governance and handling disputes, (e) The implementation of ISPO certification and support market access for palm oil products.

Pulang Pisau Regency had yet to issue its own RAD KSB regulation. Accordingly, a study using jurisdictional approaches was required to help in preparing an RAD KSB for Pulang Pisau Regency. The study looks at five critical issues that align with the National Plan (RAN KSB).

In jurisdictional programs (JPs), all stakeholders collaboratively design the TOC, and the lessons learned vary across regencies. The JA and TOC co-design process intends to address stakeholder challenges, including accelerating the implementation of the one map policy, environmental governance, managing conflict over land, achieving the certification of Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO), enhancing the capacity of farmers, and establishing access to the palm product market.

A senior landscape ecologist at CIFOR-ICRAF stated, *"JA can strengthen governance by emphasizing inclusivity, integration, and the provision of valuable information."* (Laksmi, 2024)

Indonesia Country Director, CIFOR-ICRAF, shared key findings emphasized that *" JA and the ToC facilitate the inclusion of diverse stakeholder voices and interests, deepen understanding of local contexts and challenges, establish shared goals, articulate pathways for*

change, enhance participation, and promote collaboration." JAs aim to address a wide range of issues, including social, production, legality, and environmental concerns, such as tenure disputes, supply chain inefficiencies, land conflicts, and overlapping land use and interests." (Laksmi, 2024)

IV.1. Meaningful stakeholders' collaboration in TOC development for regional sustainable palm oil action plans and supporting factors

During the regency-level workshop and focus group discussion, the stakeholders agreed on the main goal of the program, sustainable palm oil. To achieve sustainable palm oil practices at the jurisdictional level, the Integrated TOC and JA effectively listened to stakeholders' voices and interests in a participatory manner, understood the local context and issues, defined the problems to address, formulated objectives, articulated the expected changes, and established collaboration among different sectors.

Stakeholder participation is an effort to improve engagement strategies. The organization can use the important insights gathered from the stakeholder data to recognize the unique characteristics of each stakeholder or stakeholder group and determine the most effective strategies for engagement and implementation. Meaningful

engagement is a continual process that requires constant feedback, dialog, and adaptation. Establishing feedback mechanisms ensures the incorporation of stakeholder viewpoints into decision-making and implementation processes. Monitoring and evaluation regularly make it easier to track progress, identify challenges, and modify the TOC and collaborative efforts as needed. There are at least four important supporting factors that should be considered in the multi-stakeholder discussion process:

1. The capacity and network of local partners: This includes the capacity to facilitate forums attended by multi-stakeholder representatives with different interests. The capacity and network of local partners are essential for promoting cooperation and mutual understanding among stakeholders with diverse objectives and interests. They foster the potential for meaningful discussion, sharing of knowledge, and decision-making that considers the perspectives of all parties involved and helps create and carry out more effective and inclusive programs and policies. Local partners' responsibilities are an essential component in advancing consensus-based and participatory methods for addressing complicated issues.
2. Local government support: This is essential for increasing public involvement, which leads to more efficient and fair decision-making. Gaining the support of local government institutions and the regent makes the process

straightforward to include more stakeholders in the discussions. Multiple stakeholders' involvement in decision-making processes can create inclusive and more understanding results, develop local capacity, and encourage trust in the public and private sectors.

3. Trust among stakeholders: Building trust before bringing stakeholders together for discussions is essential to promoting efficient communication, teamwork, and the achievement of common goals. Public engagement can foster trust and potentially reduce communication barriers. Stakeholder trust correlates with enhanced social cohesiveness, better governance, and enhanced democratic legitimacy.
4. Timing or momentum: It is imperative to consider the timing of TOC development and ensure its alignment with the timeline of local government programs.

V. Challenges and Potential Solutions in the Implementation of Integrating TOC and JA to Generate Meaningful Collaboration among Stakeholders

V.1. Challenges of the participatory TOC development process at the jurisdictional level

There are some challenges faced during the TOC development process with multi-stakeholders at the jurisdictional level:

- Identifying key issues and developing appropriate and logical cause-and-effect pathways, particularly if the issue is complex and involves many factors to influence the desired change.
- Involving multi-stakeholders and dealing with divergent perspectives and interests. Managing the interactions between various stakeholders, including power dynamics and conflicts of interest, is one aspect of the complexity. Diverse stakeholders could have divergent perspectives about the underlying causes of the issue, the intended results, and appropriate solutions. Unequal stakeholder representation of some stakeholders, often those with greater power, influence, or resources, may dominate discussions and decision-making processes, marginalizing the opinions and contributions of others. The distribution of costs and benefits of the program and the workload distribution among the institutions involved may be unequal and unfair, thus increasing inequality and injustice.
- Determining the indicators, targets, and period for the expected changes that are more realistic considering the resources available.
- Time and resource constraints determining points of consensus and overcoming the different perspectives may require extensive discussion and negotiation. The process of developing a TOC can become more

difficult and time-consuming when dealing with a wide range of viewpoints, coordinating feedback, managing resources, managing relationship dynamics, and having iterative discussions and improvements.

- Communicating the TOC structure both visually and narratively, especially when the concepts are complex and challenging to understand by the stakeholders or community at large.

V.2. Potential solutions based on supporting factors

- Invest in initiatives that assist local partners in becoming more capable communicators to expand their networks and improve their facilitation abilities. Provide forums or collaborative platforms where local partners, stakeholders, and professionals can come together to exchange best practices and expertise.
- Provide training and capacity-building support to improve local government officials' awareness of multi-stakeholder approaches and the advantages of inclusive decision-making. Encourage communication and collaboration between local partners, the private sector, regional government entities, and community leaders to harmonize objectives and strategies.
- To foster trust among stakeholders, it is essential to employ transparent and inclusive communication techniques

that prioritize integrity, transparency, and mutual respect. Provide feedback channels to resolve issues, create commitments, and improve relationships among stakeholders.

- Involve stakeholders as early in the planning process as possible to take advantage of their advice and assistance when developing initiatives and action plans. To ensure relevance and coherence, schedule multi-stakeholder conversations in connection with major initiatives or milestones within local government programs, and continue focusing on emerging potential, issues, and priorities in the local context.

VI. Conclusion and Lesson Learned

- The Theory of Change (TOC) supports the Jurisdictional Approach (JA) by illustrating how interventions can lead to the desired outcomes. It also lets you include stakeholder feedback, consider local context, and encourage collaboration between different actors.
- Integrating the JA and TOC in sustainable palm oil regional action plans offers multiple advantages. It fosters collaboration among stakeholders, enhances action plans through governmental engagement, and promotes sustainability by addressing various challenges in a participatory manner.
- The Palm Regional Action Plan based on the TOC narrative and visuals will contribute to enhancing the

inclusiveness and sustainability of palm oil production in Indonesia. This plan will produce analyses and reports that will help educate the government, private sector, and civil society on the pathway to developing and implementing a jurisdictional program on scale.

- Understanding the unique characteristics of stakeholders enables effective methods for meaningful stakeholder engagement and collaboration. Early stakeholder involvement in planning should be prioritized to leverage their advice effectively.
- Enhancing the capabilities and network of local partners, gaining the support of the local government, building stakeholder trust, and taking the right time and momentum of TOC development into consideration are some viable solutions to the challenges.

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Declaration of conflicting interest statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Annex 1. An example, one of the visual TOCs developed at the jurisdictional level

Theory of Change - Enhancing inclusiveness and sustainable palm oil production in Sintang Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

