

# Paraguay

## Soy & Beef: In Detail

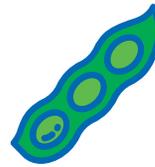
Agricultural commodities are often a big contributor to the economy of developing economies, supporting food security and poverty reduction. In Paraguay, the agricultural sector contributes 30% of the local Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

### SOY IN PARAGUAY:



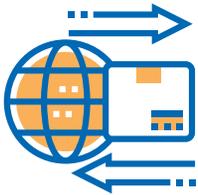
#### In the 1960s soybean entered Paraguay

Its cultivation grew rapidly from 1990 onwards. The cultivated areas went from 1 million hectares in 1997 to 3.4 million in 2018.



#### 10.2 million tons of the grain are produced

every year and over 5 million tons of soybeans are exported, equivalent to US \$ 1,963 million every year.



#### Paraguay is the 6th largest producer of

soybeans and the 4th largest global exporter. This sector employs around 40,000 people (small, medium and large producers).



#### Soybean is Paraguay's top export,

extensively contributing to the country's agricultural engine.

### BEEF IN PARAGUAY:



#### Livestock represents 12.1% of GDP.

Paraguay has more than 150,000 cattle herds with 13.9 million head of cattle on some 26,000,000 hectares.



#### Paraguay is the 8th largest exporter of beef

and the 16th largest producer of beef globally.



#### The sector employs more than 358,000

people among large, medium and small producers.



#### It represents 11.3% of the workforce,

which makes cattle ranching very important to the economy and many people's livelihoods.

*But the production of beef, and other agricultural commodities including soy, has a high environmental cost and is the largest driver of forest loss in the region – mainly in the areas of **Alto Paraná Atlantic Forest**, located on the border with Brazil, and the **Chaco** region, the Biosphere Reserve located in northern Paraguay and bordering with Bolivia and Argentina. The country is now wrestling with the challenge of maintaining or expanding its soy and cattle sectors—which can continue to bring economic success—without further threatening its forests.*

*The good news is the country is in a better position than ever before to meet this challenge.*

The preservation of the **Alto Paraná Atlantic Forest** (or BAAPA) is of worldwide importance as a valuable source of genetic material and as a catalyst for air and water quality throughout the region. According to several environmental organizations, the BAAPA has lost 85% of forest cover in the last 10 years. Globally, estimates predict a loss of 170 million hectares between 2010 and 2030 in the world's most vulnerable ecosystems, including BAAPA and the Chaco.



The **Green Production Landscapes (PPV)** project seeks to encourage soy and beef producers in this Eastern Region to comply with environmental laws and works for the creation of financial and market incentives.

The **Chaco** is a globally significant biome, a vast semi-arid region encompassing the entire western half Paraguay. Over the last 15 years, the country lost a greater share of forest than almost any other country on Earth. The government's plan to increase Paraguay's agricultural exports relies largely on further exploitation of the Chaco. But, if this expansion is not managed sustainably, scientists fear that the unique biodiversity and indigenous cultures of the Chaco could be wiped out for good by 2035.



The **Green Chaco project**, under the Good Growth Partnership, aims to balance these pressures by working with beef producers in the Western Region of the country to increase their productivity on existing land while preserving the environment through the application of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). It also works on improving the policy and regulatory environment for production and land use, as well as on land-use planning that fosters forest and biodiversity conservation.

### Projects working together

The Green Production Landscapes (PPV) and Green Chaco projects work together. Although they operate in different regions of Paraguay, they join efforts at the national level through government-led dialogues on beef and soy.

### The projects' key efforts:



**Sustainable Investment** – Through the Roundtable for Sustainable Finance (an initiative supported by the Good Growth Partnership), Paraguay's major banks - responsible for over 80% of the agricultural and livestock loan portfolios – are incorporating environmental standards into their lending procedures and developing new credit lines for producers.

*Local financial institutions are promoting the application of Good Agricultural and Livestock Practices as well as industrial practices with sustainability criteria and standardized processes for lending through the publication of guidelines, which have been applied by 13 local banks (private and government) and all members of the Roundtable for Sustainable Finance.*



**Best Practice Trainings** – Training needs of farmers are assessed to distribute region-wide technical assistance to small, medium and largescale producers through government channels and services. Capacity development assistance includes, among many others, identifying soy diseases, management of GPS (geo-location) tools, as well as agricultural pesticide management.

*180 cooperative producers who are associated with the National Central Cooperatives (UNICOOP) incorporated Good Agricultural Practices into their farms thanks to the Protocol for Sustainable Soy.*

*835 farmers have participated in workshops and training curriculum designed to promote the benefits of improved land-use management in cattle ranching in the Chaco region. Insights from the training and local farming cooperatives will inform a Chaco-wide farmer support strategy, currently being developed by the Partnership in collaboration with local government agencies.*

*In collaboration with the Rural Association of Paraguay (ARP), 130,000 seedlings were donated for the application of Good Agricultural Practices (silvopastoral system) on 200 hectares of pilot projects in the department of Caazapá.*



**Raising Awareness** for the preservation and restoration of forests, supporting training for the conservation of natural resources as well as providing technical assistance for the restoration of water sources.

*The Technical Manual for the Restoration of Protected Forests of Watercourses has been produced, a document based on the successful experience in Naranjal, a pilot site promoted by the project in which several local actors agreed on the implementation of sustainable agricultural practices for the conservation of natural resources. It is intended to be replicated at the national level for biodiversity conservation and water channel recovery.*

*Protection of 25 springs of water (tracking, geo-referencing and negotiating with landowners) from the area of influence of the eco-region of the Atlantic Forest of Alto Paraná (BAAPA).*

*Promotion of reforestation through the installation of nurseries to produce seedlings in the Alto Paraná Forestry Center, the Cooperative Naranjito de Itapúa and the Caazapá National Park.*

*In collaboration with UN REDD, the Good Growth Partnership supported the South-South exchange on Sustainable Livestock and Forests. The two-day regional workshop, held in November 2019, brought together industry and government from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.*



**Analysis, Monitoring and Evaluation** –The projects contribute to knowledge and environmental information management, and support new studies on the use of new technological tools to tackle the current lack of digital and registered information available.

*A multi-stakeholder analysis of the causes behind unsustainable beef production was published at the end of 2018. This analysis is being used to inform a government-led Chaco Action Plan for Sustainable Beef which aims to introduce incentives for good practice, establish a national sustainability standard and also strengthen the legal framework for responsible land use.*

*Digital environmental information has been made publicly available through the " Environmental Information System " (SIAM), which gives information on requested and granted environmental and forestry licenses.*

*For the first time, everyone can access this information in real time and monitor the procedures, as well as verify that there are no damage or impacts to third parties.*

*Through the Green Production Landscapes Project, support was provided to the Paraguay's National Forestry Institute (INFONA) to register the Land Use Plans of the Chaco.*

*With this, we achieve better tracking of the Land Use Plans and subsequent monitoring so that legal norms are complied with, in addition to being able to control illegal deforestation.*

*Through the systematization and digitalization of information from the national forest registry, land use change monitoring is being improved to provide official information to the Global Forest Watch digital platform.*



**Reinforcing Regulations** – In partnership with the Government, technical support is provided to improve the laws that direct commodity expansion away from forested and important conservation areas.

This includes the revision of national definitions for land use planning, conservation areas, zoning and land conversion.

*Legal and environmental regulations have been reviewed and analyzed to unify criteria for sanctions and responsibilities.*

*The PPV Project has carried out a review study of 50 environmental laws with their respective adjustment proposals.*

*This has been incorporated as inputs in the process of preparing the Environmental Legal Code, currently underway, which also has the support of the PPV project.*

*The Environmental Legal Code for the country, which aims to integrate all environmental and forestry laws, is on its final stages of production after public consultation, ensuring the participation of all sectors.*

*With the alliance of the Rural Association of Paraguay, 2000 hectares of Caazapá forests are in the process of gaining environmental services certification. Besides protecting the forests, the certification becomes an economic alternative for forest owners, as well as for agricultural and livestock producers.*



# The National Platforms for Sustainable Commodities (Soy and Beef)



**The National Platforms for Sustainable Commodities in Paraguay are the first initiatives in the country working in multi-stakeholder dialogue to enjoy the support of the country's biggest producers' unions, small producers' representatives from different regions in the country and the Paraguayan government.**

The **National Platform for Sustainable Soy** was created as a joint effort between the departmental soy platforms (see below) to achieve several goals: including small soy producers from different areas in Paraguay in the national dialogue, working towards nationwide policies and regulations and achieving consensus on standard definitions for sustainable agricultural practices. It began operations as a result of the Green Production Landscapes (PPV) in 2019.

The **National Platform for Sustainable Beef** is yet to be launched. The three different departmental and regional beef platforms are currently joining efforts to unite at the national level.

The National Platforms for Sustainable Commodities are an open dialogue space where representatives of different sectors participate in order to agree on a vision and future path of actions that builds sustainability in the soy and beef supply chains. It is led by the Paraguay National and Departmental Governments, driven by participants and enabled by UNDP's Green Commodities Programme

## Structure of the Ongoing Platforms for Soy and Beef:



In all, the Platforms have brought together more than 1330 stakeholders to work collectively to achieve systemic change.

### Supporting Partners

