

SPP STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

By Percolab Coop 
March 28, 2024



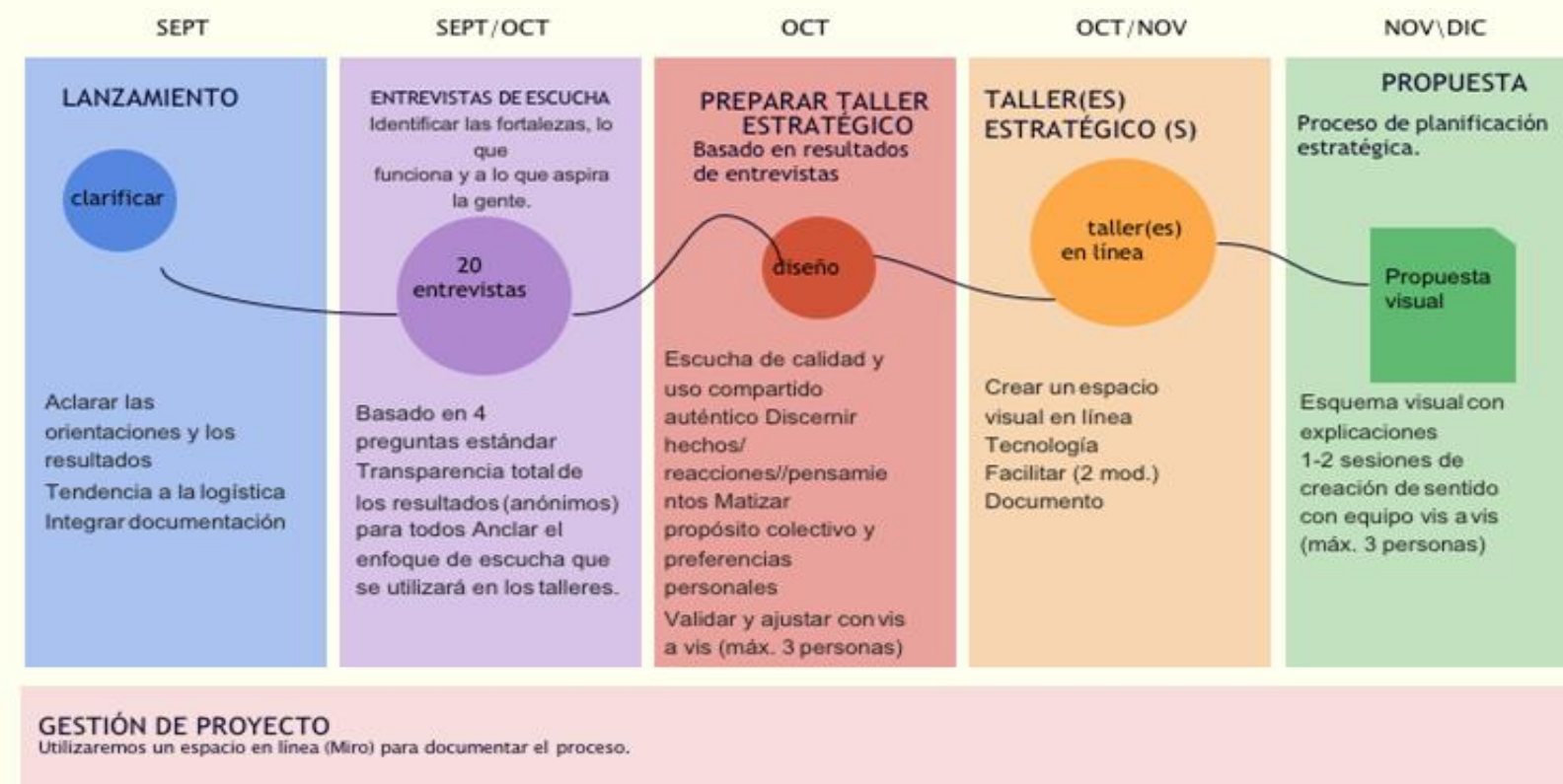
THE PROCESS

Percolab collaborated with SPP with the objective of providing effective guidance for SPP Global to successfully conduct a strategic alignment process regarding its membership, as well as its management and operational structure.

This document outlines the **recommendations**. To better understand the **process**, consult the document SPP Strategic Alignment: Process

The terms of reference outlined three deliverables

1. Diagnosis of SPP Global's initial situation
2. Proposal listing strategic-operational actions to implement in the short to medium-term and
3. Progress report and medium to long-term participatory Strategic planning Critical Path proposal to be presented to the Board of Directors and Surveillance Committee that considers the participation of all SPP stakeholders: producers, SPP bodies, companies and other relevant parties.



The agreement was for a process from Sept–Nov 2023 .

Due to delays and shifting dates, we adjusted to Oct 2023 –Jan. 2024.

STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL ACTIONS

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1. **Rebuild trust and belonging:** The foundations of a healthy and democratic organisation is trust and belonging.
2. **Clarify financial model:** Is the current financial model the most appropriate for SPP's future?
3. **Strengthen producer voice:** They own and govern SPP
4. **Clarify SPP governance and decision making model:** How do different types of members and stakeholders work and decide together?

1. REBUILD TRUST AND BELONGING : THE SITUATION

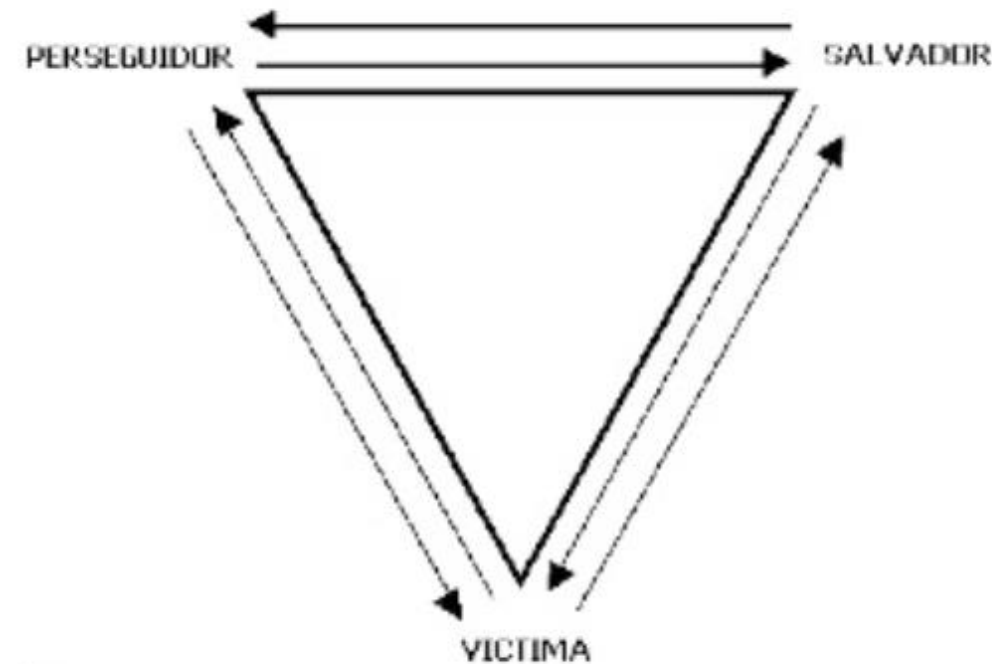
Difficult climate



1. At its origins SPP had a high level of belonging and trust created by the nature of its vision, values and unique positioning.
2. With time this has unravelled to the point that today trust is compromised and belonging is fragile. There is conflict, disrespectful behaviour, even bullying in the CA and AGA and in some spaces this has become normalised. The consequence of this is working together is slow and painful. There is a feeling of disconnect between who SPP wants to be and how it is functioning. We can sense that the whole system can unravel. Capacity is worn down by this situation. A member points out: "Lack of correspondence between values and structure with practice, leading to the need to re-engineer the model to match values with practice"
3. SPP seems to have gained headway *externally* in the area of belonging ie: Global contributions, the new logo, website etc. and these can be leveraged even more.
4. There has been little headway *internally* on a culture of trust and belonging. It is unclear even how much this is valued and a priority. During the workshops we offered collective process to build trust and belonging, checkin, stories, small group conversations, visual etc. This was much appreciated by members present.

1. REBUILD TRUST AND BELONGING : THE SITUATION

EL TRIÁNGULO DRAMÁTICO DE KARPMAN



We witnessed attitudes and behavior from this negative dynamic during our listening phase. We shared this framework during the workshops as we mirrored back about the conflict we had observed.. This framework seemed to land with members present.

What are the shared practices and protocols that can help get out of the drama triangle, and can pro-actively avoid going there?

“Change moves at the speed of trust,” Stephen Covey

1. REBUILD TRUST AND BELONGING : KEY ACTIONS

Ground cultural norms and practices to support trust and belonging.

They can carry you in moments of challenge and difficulty (and help to avoid escalation)

1. Adopt regular Check-ins and Check-outs for respectful listening and human connection

Take a moment to connect with each other, yourselves and the purpose of why you are meeting. A go around, where people witness each other, without reacting or falling into conversation. This creates the condition for flow and productivity thereafter. It can be done in small groups.

Examples:

- What is inspiring you in this project?
- What do you need to let go of to be present for this session?
- What do you appreciate about ...

2. Use breakout rooms to give space to all to think together

- When you meet online, give space to think and dialogue. This means using breakouts with simple invitations BEFORE coming back together as a group i.e. Take 5 minutes to read the document silently, with our mics off, and identify 2 things you really appreciate and 2 things that could be improved. Go into breakouts for 15 minutes to share with each other. Come back to the group with your ideas.

3. Adopt a difficult conversation protocol

Practice and agree on a protocol for exploring difficult topics. We recommend the [Talking circle protocol](#) that we used in the workshops and that people appreciated. This can help to give spaciousness to different perspectives without falling into binary thinking or dysfunctional debates.



2. CLARIFY FINANCIAL MODEL

1. Financial model questions

Over and over throughout our process, we heard questioning around the financial model. In the workshops it was the topic identified and chosen for the talking circle:

How does SPP fund itself in the future? Some comments captured from the circle:

- Achieve more financial autonomy, for better self-management, without depending on any power group, whether buyers, producers or eventual financiers.
- There is a big interest in rebalance power-structures in SPP adjusting financial flows drastically, avoid abuse by dominant people.
- It is necessary to analyse the financial flow of the system and how much money goes to certification and how much to what the actors feel is a priority (promotion, strengthening, etc.).
- SPP is at a good point in time to course correct their vision and revenue stream.
- Some time ago it was proposed that SPP should be 100% producer-financed, 0% buyer-financed.... but it was the buyers who objected.... Why....?
- How to finance SPP in the future without the support of the main buyer who doesn't seem to share everyone's visions. como se financiara el SPP en el futuro sin el aporte del principal comprador que parece no comparte la visión de los demás ?

2. Inability to have the conversation The financial model is a place of tension and emotional reactions and it is tied up with questions around power. Due to the difficult group climate, and the lack of shared protocol and practice it has not been possible to explore this question fully.

2. CLARIFY FINANCIAL MODEL: ACTIONS

1. **Create a financial model overview**

Prepare and share a visual overview of the current financial model .

2. **Map financial model possibilities and inspirations**

It's important to see what is possible, even those models that seem far fetched. (again, visual schematics)

3. **Discuss financial model possibilities amongst Producers**

Once these have been shared, and information clarified, have a conversation using the talking circle protocol with a question:

What financial model can carry us into the next phase of SPP?

It is important that producers have an opportunity to have this conversation amongst themselves, to be able to speak freely.

3. STRENGTHEN THE VOICE OF PRODUCERS

1. Challenge for vision, mission and values to be the leader

It can be a challenge for producer organisations to take voice or even show up when core elements of SPP internal rules etc. are not clearly carried by all. We see that the complexity of certain key elements can be a contributing factor

- a. Current **Vision, mission and values** are unclear, long, and difficult to remember or lack spark.
- b. **SPP Global's Internal Regulations** are well thought through, however the communication of them is not integrated and hence very lengthy (39 pages)

Some comments from the process speak to this need:

- If necessary, update SPP's objectives, mission, vision and values, so that each member evaluates whether it aligns with their own and from there they can decide whether they remain or not, and then have constructive dialogues about where we want to go with the SPP, knowing that we all have a common goal
- Constructive dialogue remembering the principles and values of SPP and ensuring that it is in harmony.
- The vision needs to be reviewed again, to return to the origins. The vision needs to be reviewed again, to return to the origins.

2. Healthy working climate is required

There is both power imbalance and conflictual climate that contribute negatively to SMO's showing up and speaking up. We know that simple and clear protocols are both reassuring and also hold inclusion of voice of producers. It is important to bring back balance.



3. STRENGTHEN THE VOICE OF PRODUCERS: ACTIONS



1. **Simplify and update the vision, mission and values** to be more uplifting. We imagine something like this:

a. VISION

The small producer ecological production model is thriving throughout the world for coffee and more, with cooperative, fair and sustainable commercialization managed by producers themselves in a self-managed way.
(Note: Avoid including SPP itself within the vision statement (a vision is what the organisation is striving to contribute to in the world))

b. MISSION

Uplift /pave the way for ecological small-producer organizations with high-quality coffee and more, with dignified life and contribution to a healthy planet for all. We do this in partnership with committed companies and consumers and legitimized by independent certification.
(Note: Remove the notion of “fight” that is in current version)

c. VALUES

1. Producer owned and governed: participatory and self-managing
2. Locally embedded – local culture, local economy and adding value locally
3. Small scale production and dignified livelihood
4. Care for producer’s health
5. Respect mother nature

(Note: Reduce current 19 values to a handful)

3. STRENGTHEN THE VOICE OF PRODUCERS: ACTIONS



2. **Simplify and integrate the Internal Regulations**

Create one single page that integrates the 4 types of members, and their decision making method, quorum. (all same unless a good reason for difference) and one single page that integrates all of SPP's committees and shared approach to functioning – both via a schematic. Doing this should reduce psychological and physical weight of document (currently 39 pages)

3. **Set up some producer only spaces**


These are spaces where producers are able to speak openly and authentically together, ideally using a protocol such as the talking circle. Whatever the protocol, ensure that the same one is used in wider meetings to build a shared culture. This creates more ease for speaking.

4. GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING



1. Decision making is a fraught space in SPP.
There is a decision making model that can be gleaned by reading the full internal regulations and it is based on *consensus decision making*, however this method is not being used when we witnessed decision making.
Voting is being used instead which is not in the vision and when voting takes place, it is without any agreement or procedure for how it should function, causing lost time and confusion.
Decision making is a fraught space in SPP.
2. There are 4 types of members, one of which is the SPOs, small producer organisations. This voice is meant to be in the centre of all decision making. and to be listened to and trusted.
Non-producer contributions are meant to offer support to the producer voice. This is currently not flowing for a range of reasons, including power dynamics, lack of shared protocols and practices and non-producers defending their perspectives. This is problematic.
3. The conflict in the board meetings has escalated and there does not seem to be any conflict mechanism or culture in place to calm the tensions or talk it through and escalation has taken place.
4. There seems to be both a desire to widen the community involving further stakeholders and a desire to keep closed with the current climate. "Incorporate more members, both producers and buyers, who want to share the vision of the SPP and its values, to grow the movement globally, making it better known worldwide, and trying to rebalance the powers for better autonomy and independence of SPP, to be able to positively direct this great idea of a different and respectful trade."
5. Despite a desire to be in a self-managing governance system, like most cooperatives, the hierarchical structure creates confusion around leadership.

4. GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING: ACTIONS

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- 1. Experiment a collective decision making protocol**
 - Make sure the protocol is in alignment with the values and vision of the organization. Without a protocol, corporate decision making reflexes will most likely dominate.
 - We suggest [Proceso de Toma de Decisiones Generativo por Consentimiento](#) (existe en español, francés y inglés). Start with **small** collective decisions to begin.
 - 2. Practice some collective decision making amongst producers only**

Start with producers and then grow out to a wider group.
 - 3. Support producers to decide the decision model they want**

Based on this experiences above, the producers will be more able to clarify key elements of the decision making model. This includes Decision making spaces, *types of decisions*, *decision making method* for each type of decision, *types of members* can take part in which type of decisions, Minimum diversity (quorum) required for a decision to be considered wise
 - 4. Begin a reflexion and experimentation on how SPP global can itself embody self-managing ways.** With doing this intentionally, hierarchical structure and culture dominate.
 - 5. Reflect on how producer voice could be more present within the board meetings and AGA.** This is important to address proactively dysfunctional behaviours or power dynamics.

ACCIONES OPERACIONALES ET ESTRATÉGICAS: RECOMENDACIONES GENERALES

Move forward with those members who wish to cocreate respectfully with producers at the centre, in service of the vision and mission, even if this means letting go of partners.



STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL ACTION: GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

We have mentioned many actions to put in place.

We expect that SPP is accompanied by external support to enact these actions.

Here are a few freelancers who might be able to offer this type of support in Spanish, with appreciative and horizontal culture:

- Rowan Simonsen rowan.simonsen@gmail.com
- Patricia Garcia pgarciaz@yahoo.com
- Mira Bangel mirabangel@gmail.com



FUTURE STRATEGIC PLANNING

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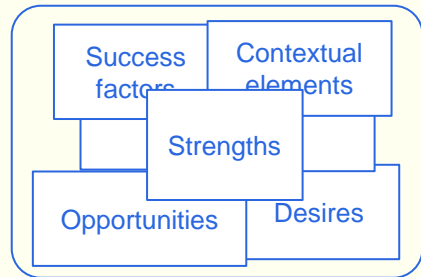
Any future strategic planning process needs to support the SPP Global and the ecosystem of members to experience, practice and develop a shared culture in the spirit of a democratic self-organisation. This has been a lacking element and the system is reaping the repercussions right now.

Moving forward all strategic work should integrate the following:

1. Appreciative proces
2. A participatory process with producers at the centre
3. A creative and visual process with visual output

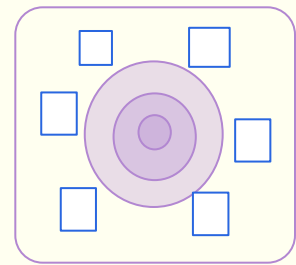
FUTURE STRATEGIC PLANNING

An appreciative process



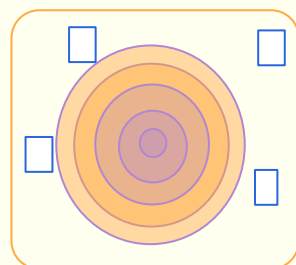
Appreciative grounding

Start by creating visuals that summarise the strengths, success factors, contextual elements, important opportunities, what you are proud of and stakeholder desires that can be built upon. **We suggest focusing on the 4 outcomes named prior: culture and belonging (internal and external), financial model, producer voice, governance and decision making**



Desired future

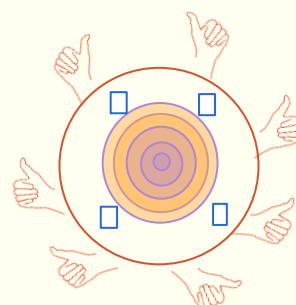
A joyful co-creative process to clarify the main priorities of transformation in a 3, 4 or 7 year time frame. Ideally limit to 4.



Priorities and actions

Converge on 4 key priorities and action pathways that can take SPP to its desired future.

This is not a work plan. The challenge here is to make a cut.



Collective decision

Holistic visual representation of the final plan. Stakeholders have an opportunity for a final round to improve it and then proceed to a collective decision using whatever protocol has been established.

Like many organisations SPP can fall into the blame and critique culture, which drains life from work, and also compromises the capacity to learn and to innovate. An appreciative process and culture is required.

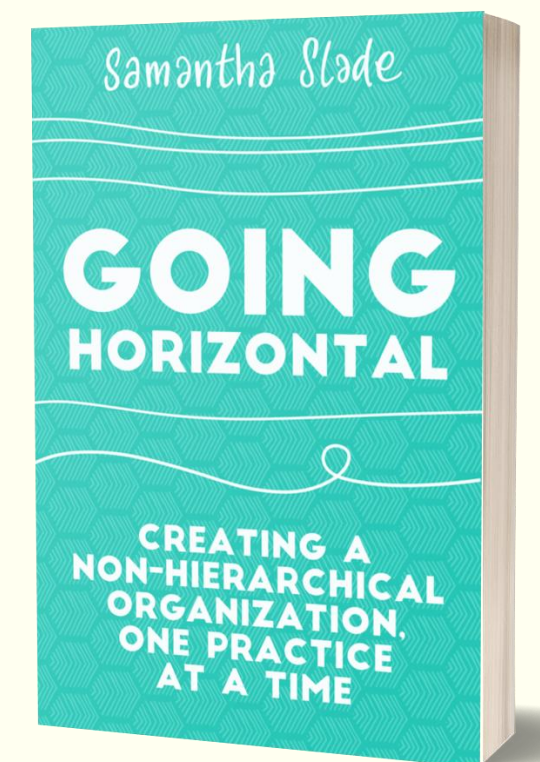
FUTURE STRATEGIC PLANNING: A participatory process with producers in the centre.

The voice of small producer organisations is core to SPP. Their voice and their stories need to be given time and space.

This should take place with all 4 types of members and even contribution of wider community, but led by **producers**. The process requires use of participatory leadership protocols to help everyone show up in contributive manner.

Use the processes that you experienced in the 2 workshops:

- Clarifying purpose and flow each time (visuals)
- Catch up: Visuals to summarise what has been done and people take a moment in break outs to connect around the work and what resonates.
- Story sharing, identifying strengths and connect
- Identifying questions and living in them
- Circles practice for respectful dialogue and exploration.



FUTURE STRATEGIC PLANNING

A creative and visual process with a visual output.

SPP like many organisations and even cooperatives has become accustomed to western spreadsheets and lengthy documents that feel tiring to integrate.

There are more holistic ways of expressing a strategic plan. We strongly recommend making a break with the traditional strategic plan format and creating a visual document that inspires people and speaks with heart to the actual vision.

Some inspirational examples for you:

- [Chartered Human Resources association Strategic plan](#)
- 2 First Nation strategic plans that are tending to more holistic approaches [Cote First Nation strategic plan](#) and Indigenous Justice strategic plan (visual)





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