



## **W+ Verification Report**

ERA Brazil's W+ Pollen Program

Tocantins and Bahia Hubs



**VERIFICATION REPORT**  
***ERA Brazil's W+ Pollen Program***  
**Measuring the increase in Knowledge & Education**

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## Summary

The intention of the audit process was to verify the outcomes derived from the implementation of the W+ Standard Knowledge and Education method through projects delivered by ERA Carbon's Pollen Project from 01 January 2021 to 20 October 2023.

The verification activities informing this report took place in November and December 2023 and include review of documentation and evidence provided by ERA Carbon and a series of video interviews. The online consultation activities were undertaken by SAN verifier, Liz Allen supported by colleague Beatriz Pimentel, and included calls with the project developer, stakeholder partners, teachers and women beneficiaries. The verification team met with ERA project leads, key stakeholder partner organisations and with 42 women participating in the ERA Pollen Programme.

The purpose of the verification activity was to establish if the presence of and participation in the ERA Brazil Pollen Programme activities has led to an improvement in the position and condition of women in the community as measured against the W+ Standard Knowledge and Education domain. The verification also sought to validate the W+ units created by this activity.

A combination of methods was adopted in undertaking verification activities including:

- Interviews and discussions with Project Developer team
- Focus group discussions with groups of women participants
- Individual beneficiary interviews
- Interviews with teachers / training facilitators
- Interviews with representatives from partner organisations

In addition, the verification team reviewed the following supporting documents:

- W+ Project Idea Note (PIN)
- W+ Project Design Document (PDD)
- W+ Monitoring Report, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and version updated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 including evidence and appendices.

From the information and evidence presented, the verification team are confident that at least 749 women have benefitted from the ERA Pollen Programme activities in the verification period and felt that significant improvements had been made in the lives of the women participants in terms of Knowledge and Education.

Focus Groups took place with participant groups:

- Women from communities in the Tocantins and Bahia regions of Brazil who live in several remote villages.
- Students from the Graduate School that is partnering with ERA Brazil.

Individual interviews took place with:

- Students from the graduate school that is partnering with ERA Brazil.
- The head of the graduate school.
- Women that have participated in the creation of agro-forestry systems in their own homes with the support of ERA Brazil.
- The project leads of partner organisations Taboa and Arapyau.

Participants attended different courses including:

1. Agroforestry management at community households
2. Native seed collection and implementation of a nursery
3. Turmeric processing
4. Turmeric business planning
5. Native bee keeping
6. Technical assistance on agroecological production and crop diversification

All participants consulted, reported improvements across a range of indicators including confidence, skills and knowledge.

Their testimony evidences positive change from the way the women were living previously and as such the verification team certifies these activities as having made meaningful change to the position and condition of women in these communities, with a reasonable level of assurance and recommend their continuation.

*The total number of 37,755 W+ units generated by the project:*

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Number of Units generated</b>
<i>Knowledge &amp; Education</i>	<i>37,755</i>

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Objective

The intention of the audit process was to verify the outcomes derived from the implementation of the W+ Knowledge and Education methods through the ERA Brazil Pollen Programme delivered in the Tocantins and Bahia regions of Brazil from January 2021 to October 2023. The verification consultation activity included in this report took place over seven days in November and December 2023.

### 1.2 Scope and Criteria

The scope of the audit included the W+ Knowledge and Education domain and considered the following indicators as evidence of successful implementation:

- Increased knowledge and skills.
- Ability to recall.
- Number of women trained in sustainable agricultural technologies.
- Number of women smallholders implementing climate resilient agriculture technologies and practices.
- Increased decision making by women over household and other large item purchases.

Additionally, Do No Harm indicators were sought to evidence that:

- Participation in the training had not led to any physical or emotional abuse, social sanctions, violence or martial problems.

### 1.3 Level of Assurance

The stakeholder engagement and verification consultation process evidence the descriptors outlined below:

W+ Domain	Desired Outcome
Knowledge & Education	Share knowledge with family, friends and/or neighbours – Reasonable.
	Women have applied skills acquired from training courses - Reasonable.
	Women have gained status in their households and are making purchases and decisions on their own – Limited at this stage but likely to increase over the next 12 months.

This is coupled with statistical analysis of numeric data gathered from surveys undertaken by the project monitoring team that also evidence increases across the domain.

The level of assurance gained is considering the project duration to date, improved access to knowledge leading to new growing systems, crop diversification, and resulting in enterprise opportunities which elevate the women's roles in their communities. There is a clear improvement from the baseline of low levels of knowledge and education.

**These improvements justify a 'reasonable assurance' level.**

## 1.4 Project Monitoring & Evaluation Report Summary

ERA Carbon applied the W+ Standard over one domain (Knowledge & Education) and measured the impacts from the project's activities to women and their communities through increased agri-business knowledge and skills.

The following summarises the impacts and percentage change as evidenced in the Monitoring report. The number of individual women experiencing this level of change has been reviewed and evidenced through the verification process.

### Knowledge & Education Domain

The W+ Knowledge & Education Domain was applied to measure the ability of 749 female beneficiaries to recall and apply knowledge and skills.

- The change in Knowledge & Education from baseline conditions is 60.64%.
- **The total number of W+ Knowledge & Education units generated is 37,755.**

The application of the domain shows that there is a positive achievement for 749 women, the number of individual women beneficiaries that have benefitted from the ERA Brazil's W+ Pollen Program during this reporting period.

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## 2. Verification Process

### 2.1 Method and Criteria

This verification report has considered one W+ domain, Knowledge & Education. Monitoring data has been gathered from field research and this data has been verified using these approaches.

- Examination of the data gathered and presented in the Monitoring Report and consideration of its accuracy and consideration of the domain method.
- Interviews and group discussions to:
  - Verify the presence of the projects and their activities.
  - Gain an understanding of the level and nature of the impact on women who have participated in the projects.
  - Gain perspectives of the level and nature of impact from other stakeholders including the Graduate School, Taboa and Arapyau.
  - Appreciate the Project Developer's view of the purpose and processes of implementing the activities.

### 2.2 Document Review

The following method documents were reviewed to complete the verification of Knowledge & Education domain results:

- W+ Project Idea Note (PIN)
- W+ Project Design Document (PDD)
- Monitoring Report, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023, including:
  - formula calculation for the statistical analysis of surveys undertaken.
  - additional evidence: videos from events and activities; social media posts; course information; minutes of meetings.

Each document was crosschecked against the others and with the findings from the interviews and stakeholder consultation to ensure consistency and accuracy.

Additional information was sought and provided during the verification process regarding the number of project participants in both Tocantins and Bahia hubs.

The review of documentation adequately reinforced the findings presented.



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## 2.3 Interviews & Consultation

An initial verification interview took place with the Project Developers on 27 October 2023 followed by a series of verification video calls undertaken remotely during the period 9 November 2023 to 6 December 2023. A schedule of verification consultation activities is presented in Appendix A. The discussions were intended to verify the details presented in the Monitoring Report 20 October 2023, updated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023.

The discussions were facilitated by Liz Allen, an experienced community facilitator and W+ Verifier, with support from Beatriz Pimentel. The discussions were structured around a series of questions devised by the verification team to elicit responses that could prove/disprove the details of the Monitoring Report. The questions listed below were arranged as higher level and supplementary questions and acted as a guide rather than being prescriptive, to ensure flexibility and for the verifier to gain insights into the reported experiences of the women.

### Higher Level Questions

#### Confirmation that women have participated in activities to build knowledge and skills.

- Invite women to share examples of training / study visits etc. undertaken.
- What new information or knowledge did they gain from participating in activities?
- What do the women do differently, are there any changes to the way they cultivate crops?
- Have the women shared their learning with others?

### Supplementary Questions

- Have you got greater influence over household / community decisions?
- Since gaining new information / knowledge have you been taking more decisions? Or are you a bigger part of the discussions / decision making processes?
- Did the project cause any conflict between you and your partner?
- Any negative impact of participating in these activities?

From these conversations it was clear that:

- There has been a significant increase in knowledge and skills for those women participating in knowledge & education activities.
- Women are applying their acquired knowledge and skills in their own households through agroforestry systems, supporting neighbours and other community members to improve their practices and generating income from sales of products.
- Some women have greater participation in decision making including around household expenditure and community discussions.

## 2.4 Site Inspections

No in-person site inspections took place for the verification due to the remote nature of the sites. However, live video calls and supplementary video recordings were used to evidence the presence of the activities and the women participants.

## 2.5 Resolution of Findings

There were 2 corrective actions or significant clarifications required during the verification process.

1. The initial project monitoring issued on the 20th of October 2023 included reporting of the 'do no harm' question used in the project evaluation. This question was not deemed to be effective in comprehensively assessing the possibility of harm to the women participants because of their participation in the programme. The verification team required a sample of women to be re-questioned with a new 'do no harm' question to ensure the safety of the women participating and 100% of the respondents reported feeling safe and experiencing no harm as a result of their participation. This resulted in a re-issue of the final project monitoring report which was approved by WOCAN and received by the verification team on the 2nd of November 2023.
2. The verification team requested clarification regarding the participant numbers as there was concern that individuals participating in multiple activities had been counted more than once. ERA Brazil provided a detailed breakdown of participants on each course and as a consequence the number of beneficiaries has been reduced from 887 to 749.

## 2.6 Forward Action Requests

Ongoing delivery of the programme will enable more women to improve their condition and position in terms of Knowledge and Education.

However, it is requested that future reporting:

- be clear about the numbers of beneficiaries with participants lists provided as supporting evidence.
- include 'do no harm' questions which adequately ensure women participants are able to report any harm without fear. Any 'do no harm' question must be sufficiently curious to ensure women have a freedom to speak up about their experiences and to be taken seriously.
- ensure that the ERA Brazil Women's Empowerment Plan and Statement of intent is reviewed and updated over time.

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The benefits, positive outcomes and likely longer-term impacts at a community level have also been noted and the ERA Brazil team are seeking to apply to consider including the Income & Assets and Leadership domains in the future. It is hoped that by including these domains wider impact can be captured and reported.

## **3 Validation Findings**

### **3.1 Project Description Deviations**

There are no deviations from the project description.

### **3.2 Project eligibility of any new activities initiated during monitoring period**

The project meets the eligibility criteria for consideration under the W+ Standard. The verification team has explored the methods (Knowledge & Education) and after checking the method document to this data and wider consultation, it can confidently state that the activities and methods implemented meet the stated purpose of the project described, and that they have been effectively applied and verified.

### **3.3 Method Deviations**

There have been method deviations applied to this programme due to an initial failure to secure baseline data related to women's knowledge and education prior to completion of the programme.

The ERA Brazil evaluation team took advice from a WOCAN approved consultant and following changes to the survey documentation managed to address the challenge securing baseline data; this was coupled with an expansion of the sample size and the verification team feel confident that the data used is a good reflection of the baseline knowledge of the participant group.

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## 4 Verification Findings

### 4.1 Project Implementation Status

The project has been implemented in line with the project description. The project has been monitored effectively using appropriate sampling techniques, group and individual interviews. There are no material discrepancies between the actual monitoring system and the monitoring plan set out in the project description and the applied W+ methods. The verification team can confidently confirm that the project has been implemented as described in the project description.

### 4.2 Accuracy of Calculations of Women's Empowerment Benefits

Process for calculating the number of W+ units

1) Measurement of results: The formula of each domain is applied two times: at the time of the baseline survey, and again at the time of the monitoring survey (determined by the schedule established in the Project Design Document (PDD)). The difference between the two numbers is the quantified result that is used to determine the number of W+ units generated.

2) Calculation of the percentage of change= 
$$\frac{[\text{Result} - \text{Baseline}]}{\text{Baseline}} \times 100$$

3) Calculation of the number of W+ units

1 unit = 10 % improvement in one woman's life, in relation to one domain over the monitoring period.

*Total number of units= percentage of change x number of woman beneficiaries*

As described in the Monitoring Report, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023, updated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 data has been checked, no manual transposition errors have been identified and all calculations are good.

The calculation of the units has been completed using the original arithmetic methods identifying change from the baseline and the percentage change of the participant group against a control group.

The values applied are real values taken from the survey data and the verification team is confident that the women's empowerment benefits have been quantified correctly in accordance with the project description and applied W+ method(s).

**W+ Units Generated:**

A total number of 37,755 W+ units were generated by the programme of activity.

Domain	Number of Units generated
Knowledge & Education	37,755
Total	37,755

### 4.3 Quality of Evidence to Determine Women’s Empowerment Benefits

The evidence used to determine the women’s empowerment benefits are:

- The Monitoring Report, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023 updated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023, including the explanation of data flows from data generation to data aggregation and unit calculation.
- Interviews and discussions with women participating in ERA Brazil Pollen Programme activities.
- Interviews with the Project Developer and leads from partner organisations.
- The process of converting data from written to electronic formats is accurate and the information deduced from the data set is comprehensive and reliable.
- The information gathered from the discussions and interviews is excellent in its reliability and rigour as it is source data from the women beneficiaries and other stakeholders. An expert facilitated the conversations, who has considerable experience in ethnographic research techniques.

Overall, the quality and quantity of evidence is appropriate and comprehensive, ensuring the voice of the person served is heard and that the data set gained during monitoring activity reflects the findings from stakeholders.

## 5 W+ Results

### 5.1 W+ Domains

<b>Method (W+ Domain)</b>	<b><i>Knowledge &amp; Education</i></b>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<p>Share knowledge with family, friends and/or neighbours.          Women have applied skills acquired from training courses.          Women have gained status in their households and are making purchases and decisions on their own.</p>
<b>Indicators</b>	<p>Increased knowledge, skills, and ability to recall.          Number of women trained in sustainable agricultural technologies.          Number of women smallholders implementing climate resilient agriculture technologies and practices.          Increased decision making by women over household and other large item purchases.</p>
<b>Situation</b>	<i>A very high percentage change in Knowledge gained and applied was evidenced with significant increases in confidence, application of knowledge and independent decision making, as well as sharing of knowledge.</i>
<b>Justification</b>	<p><i>There has been a significant increase in knowledge and skills for those women participating in education &amp; knowledge activities.</i></p> <p><i>Women are applying their acquired knowledge and skills in their own households through agroforestry systems, supporting neighbours and other community members to improve their practices and generating income from sales of products.</i></p> <p><i>Some women have greater participation in decision making including around household expenditure and community discussions.</i></p> <p><i>As a result, it is considered that this outcome has been evidenced and the circumstances of the women has become very much better and is scored as +2.</i></p>
<b>Evidence</b>	<p><i>Monitoring report</i>  <i>Interviews and discussions with participants from the two regions</i>  <i>Interviews and discussions with Project Developer team</i></p>



## **5.2 Direct Payment Mechanism**

The programme has committed to returning 25% of profits to women participants. Based on the profits for the period this will equate to \$US 118,931 (Tocantins - \$US 62,900, Bahia - \$US 56,031).

The benefit sharing value from the advance sale of 2,500 units was allocated to the Dois Irmãos' women's group that did not have a formal women's organization. As a result, two meetings with the beneficiary women were held and recorded in the meeting minutes so that the women could decide how the amount would be returned to them.

After the meetings, the woman decided to create a turmeric processing facility at one of the beneficiaries' homes who also is an owner of an agroforestry plot. This processing facility enables women to apply their knowledge, as well as generate increased income from selling turmeric and other crops in their homes.

## 6. Analysis of W+ Results

### 6.1 Current Performance

This verification focused upon the Knowledge and Education domain.

**Overall project score: +2**

The score reflects consideration of all the evidence provided to the verification team coupled with findings from the interviews and feedback.

Whilst the project is considered to be performing well, with clear evidence supporting the achievement of immediate and intermediate outcomes (+3), there is limited evidence of delayed outcomes being achieved (+1). The Project Developer recognises that there is scope to do more.

W+ Domain	Desired Outcome	Very Much Worse (-3)	Much Worse (-2)	Some-what Worse (-1)	No Change (0)	Some-what Better (+1)	Much Better (+2)	Very Much Better (+3)
Knowledge & Education	Share knowledge with family, friends and/or neighbours.							X
	Women have applied skills acquired from training courses.							X
	Women have gained status in their households and are making purchases and decisions on their own.					X		

### 6.2 Non-Permanence Risk Analysis

The verification team do not see any non-continuity risks currently. The range of courses offered by the programme are meeting the needs of the women participating in the activity and benefitting the wider community. It is the view of the verification team that continuation and development of this activity can only be positive for the women and their communities, and we note that the expected end date of the project activities extends to 31 December 2031.



## 7 Verification (Audit) Conclusion

The project complies with the verification criteria for projects and their women’s empowerment benefits as set out in W+ Standard and Programme Guide. The verification team can confirm that the project has been implemented in accordance with the project description.

The total number of W+ units achieved by the project during the verification period is 37,755.

Net women’s empowerment benefits	W+ Units generated Verification Period 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share knowledge with family, friends and/or neighbours.</li> <li>• Women have applied skills acquired from training courses.</li> <li>• Women have gained status in their households and are making purchases and decisions on their own.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Knowledge &amp; Education units</p>
<p><b>Total</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>37,755 W+ units</b></p>

### W+ Verification – Statement of Assurance

When undertaking a verification of a W+ project our verification team have sought evidence of material change in the position and condition of the women participating in the project.

The change that the project is seeking to make in the lives of the women participants was explicit in the project documentation and referenced in the Monitoring Document – these stated changes were then the focus of the verification activity.

Specifically, the team looked for positive and negative change in:

- the recognition and regard to women in the community
- their living experience which may be seen across one or more domains, in this case the Knowledge & Education domain

The extent of the change identified, and its likely permanence has determined the assurance level given. The ERA Brazil’s W+ Pollen Program is given reasonable assurance.

Signed, 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Liz Allen, SAN

Reviewed and agreed with Project Developer,  
Lisa McMullan, SAN, 4th January 2024  
Sophia Simmons, ERA, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024

## Appendix A: Consultation Schedule

### Hub Tocantins

Date	Subgroups	Proposed consultation activity	Actual / outlook
09 Nov	Taquaruçu Women's Group	2 x interviews with individual women	Y
09 Nov	Teacher, UFT	1 x interview with individual teacher	Y
14 Nov	Students / training beneficiaries, EFA	Group interview with 5 women (advanced training)	Y
14 Nov	Teachers, EFA	2 x interviews with individual teachers	y
15 Nov	Dois Irmãos Women's Group	Group interview with 5 women	Y
15 Nov	Students / Alumni, UFT	Group interview with 5 women	Y
15 Nov	Alumni, EFA	Group interview with 2 women	Y
15 Nov	Alumni, EFA	Group interview with 2 women	Y
		<b>Total: 24 individuals consulted</b>	

### Bahia Hub

#### Hub Bahia: 455 beneficiarias, 23 interviews

When?	Subgroups	Proposed consultation activity	
28 Nov	Nova Vitoria	2 x interviews with individual women + Group interview with 5 women	y
28 Nov	Rochedo	2 x interviews with individual women + Group interview with 5 women	y
01 Dec	Serra de Areia	1 x interview with partner + Group interview with 7 women	y
07 Dec	Arapyau	1 x interview with partner	Y
		<b>Total: 23 individuals consulted</b>	