

Monitoring & Evaluation Report

Quarter One:
January - March 2024

About PIND Foundation

The Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) is a Nigerian non-profit organization working to promote peace and equitable economic growth in Nigeria's Niger Delta region by forging multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder partnerships at the regional, national and international levels. With the humble admission that no single organization can solve the complex and interconnected development challenges in the Niger Delta, PIND works closely with numerous partners to implement collaborative market-based, community-owned programs to mitigate conflicts and boost economic opportunities for local businesses. This ensures that economic progress occurs in a systemic, inclusive, and sustainable manner.

PIND's projects span all the nine states in the region: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers, with special focus on the underserved and hard to reach coastal communities of the region that are most forgotten in development programming.

Since 2010, PIND and partners have been contributing to strengthening and stabilizing the region by *reducing poverty, powering coastal communities, nurturing employment, fostering stability, and enabling development*. Learn more about [PINDfoundation.org](https://pindfoundation.org).

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AEAS	Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services Activity
BMP	Best Management Practices
BMO	Business Management Organizations
BoT	Board of Trustees
BRACED	Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Edo and Delta
BSPs	Business Service Providers
CAPABLE	Capacity Building for Local Empowerment
CB	Capacity Building
CBN	Central Bank of Nigeria
CBOs	Community-Based Organizations
CDCs	Community Development Committees
CNL	Chevron Nigeria Limited
CPPs	Crop Protection Products
CRIN	Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria
CSEs	Cassava Seed Entrepreneurs
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DoC	Day-old Chicks
DYEP	Delta Youth Employment Program
EWER	Early Warning and Early Response
FSPs	Farm Service Providers
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GMoU	Global Memorandum of Understanding
HCDT	Host Communities Development Trust
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IPDU	Integrated Peace and Development Unit
LGA	Local Government Area
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIPs	Most Impactful Practices
MNDA	Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
MSD	Market Systems Development
MSP	The Warri Multi Stakeholder Platform
NDDC	Niger Delta Development Commission
NDPI	Niger Delta Partnerships Initiative
NDLink	Niger Delta Link
NDYEP	Niger Delta Youth Employment Pathways
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
P4P	Partners for Peace
PGPA	Policy, Governments and Public Affairs Unit, Chevron
PSPs	Poultry Service Providers
PV	Photovoltaic
PWD	Persons living with disabilities
Q1	Quarter 1
Q2	Quarter 2

Q3	Quarter 3
RDC	Regional Development Committee
SK	Sombreiro Kapital
SMS	Short Message Service
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TV	Television
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Centers
UK	United Kingdom
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAWG	Violence Affecting Women and Girls
VLD	Village Level Dealers
YTD	Year to Date

Background

Our goal at PIND is to identify, catalyze and leverage opportunities, jobs and incomes for our target beneficiaries. In these roles, we robustly engage in the identification of our multi stakeholder partners, and then act as a catalyst for the establishment of an enabling environment for socio-economic growth in the Niger Delta region. The goal of these partnerships is to reduce poverty, increase welfare benefits and reduce conflict by implementing interventions that result in stability and equitable increase in employment and incomes of beneficiaries in the nine target States of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers. To deliver on this goal, PIND tries to understand the root causes of economic instability, conflict, and fragility concerns to forge community-based, market-driven, sustainable results.

PIND's activities fall under two distinct but interrelated program areas:

1. An **economic development program** focused on generating opportunities for pro-poor market development and employment generation.
2. A **peace building program** that strengthens conflict resolution mechanisms for enabling integrated peace and economic growth.

Additional initiatives designed to support, enable and communicate the achievements of the two program areas include:

- **Capacity Building** that builds the service delivery and engagement capacity of business membership organizations, civil society organizations and communities.
- **Advocacy** that seeks to influence policies, practices and programs underpinned by in-depth analyses and understanding of systemic constraints to growth in the Niger Delta region.
- A robust **communications** and outreach effort that enhances PIND's reputation through clear and consistent messaging via multiple channels, of its unique selling points, transformative approaches, impacts and learning.

Together with **Monitoring and evaluation** that independently tracks, verifies and measures program results.

STRATEGIC PLAN TARGETS

For the third phase (2020-2024), PIND Foundation aims to achieve the following targets:

Expand program to reach 300,000 with 200,000 farmers and small-scale enterprises to increase their income by 40%. Facilitate the creation of 45,000 new jobs of which 50% will be youth and other vulnerable groups.

Deliver economic benefits to 10,000 people in GMoU communities through job creation and income generation interventions and facilitation of clean energy.

Strengthen the effectiveness of 5 regional development committees as grassroots development organizations in the GMoU/coastal communities, now HCDTs.

Enable active engagement of 5,000 peace actors in conflict mitigation and reduction and positively affect up to 3 million individuals with peace building interventions.

Influence US\$ 25 million spend by donors, federal and state governments in new projects that reduce conflict and poverty in the Niger Delta; and

Raise US\$ 6.5 million from private sector and donor community for PIND programs.

Introduction: Q1 2024 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Report

This first quarter (January – March) 2024 report is intended to keep our donors, Board of Trustees, and partners aware of project achievements and constraints, share lessons learned, and seek deeper levels of collaborations to consolidate our impact, and advance our collective effort on business development and sustainability. Also, to showcase the nexus between our impact and a peaceful and more stable operating environment in the Niger Delta

Through this, we intend to share successes and challenges for learning and for further collaborations with our Partners. These include the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), The Ford Foundation, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Executive Summary

This report highlights our program intervention achievements in the Niger Delta from January – March 2024 (Quarter 1, 2024), and provides relevant information about program management, lessons learned, and plans for the next quarter. The report demonstrates how we are driving change to ensure broad-based economic growth in the Niger Delta. Our activities are designed to promote and sustain a culture of learning and adaptation, and build a process where evidence plays a significant role in determining policy direction and interventions in economic development, peace building, advocacy, and capacity building of both government institutions and civil society.

1.1 Achievements

In Q1, 2024, several macroeconomic issues experienced in 2023 continued to affect the ease of program delivery by service providers and the participation of farmers and MSMEs. For example, rising inflation and foreign exchange rate dynamics continued to impact inputs purchasing capacity of farmers/MSMEs, and implementing partners. Despite these, programs' outputs within the reporting period were optimal as exemplified below.

Market Systems Development:

The market system development project supports farmers and small enterprises in key sectors to improve their productivity, leading to an increase in income and reduction of poverty. The project utilizes the market systems development approach that relies on a sound initial analysis of market systems to pinpoint the underlying causes of market weaknesses, and inform the design and implementation of interventions that address the underlying causes, rather than symptoms, of market failure. To ensure the sustainability of our interventions, the development activities are further anchored on a service providers' model that equips local service providers with the right skills, tools, and connections to sustainably provide viable market solutions that address the root causes of poor performance by farmers and enterprises in the region. This approach is used to support poor farmers in aquaculture, cassava, cocoa, palm oil, poultry and MSMEs.

Its outputs for Q1 2024 are summarized below:

- Continued to demonstrate progress towards widespread economic prosperity, with 71 out of over 400 Service Providers supported by PIND through direct training and crowding-in, continue to provide support services to farmers/MSMEs in Cassava, Cocoa, Palm oil, Poultry and Business linkages with training in Good Agronomic Practices (GAP).
- Across the Niger Delta region, 12,757 farmers/MSMEs - of which 5,344 (representing 41.8%) were women reached with improved services. This outreach achievement is against the set target of 11,500 farmers/MSMEs for Q1 2024 and the annual target of 85,000.
- PIND's supported Service Providers helped farmers to gain improved knowledge on their businesses leading to changed business behaviors. ₦204,398,000 being invested by farmers/MSMEs in adopting improved harvesting and processing technologies, improved seedlings and other agro-inputs.
- Support to MSMEs, fisherfolks, and processors in CNL coastal communities. As part of PIND's activities to improve the efficiency of MSMEs, fish processors, and fisherfolks in the CNL host communities, PIND in collaboration with Marich Agro, organized a training for fisherfolks on better fishing practices/technologies and established linkages platform through Cooperatives. There was also follow-up on fisherfolks for linkages activities in Ugbo Land -Ilaje, in Ondo state with 99 participants (74 males, 25 females). Following the training, the fisherfolks were linked to dealers of quality fishing equipment which led to the adoption of seven high-quality fishing nets by seven fisherfolks.

Access to Energy:

Access to energy is a fundamental requirement for human development and well-being. However, in many rural Niger Delta communities, access to electricity is still limited. A lot of the MSMEs and households around the coastal Niger Delta in particular still lack access to electricity, often relying on alternative self-generation to power economic activities. The lack of access to modern energy services has far-reaching consequences, such as reducing economic growth, and compromising welfare and safety. As part of the Foundation for PIND's overarching strategy to amplify its impact and extend outreach across the region, a key focus lies in collaborating with private sector clean energy developers equipped with rural enterprise adaptive solutions. This strategic approach is pivotal to the success of the Access to Energy (A2E) programming.

- The first quarter of 2024 marked a period of significant progress and achievements for PIND's Access to Energy (A2E) program in the Niger Delta region, particularly in expanding clean energy access. Through partner-led activities, the program successfully facilitated new connections to clean energy for a total of 1,286 businesses and 5,084 households. This substantial increase in energy access underscores the growing adoption of clean energy projects as a viable alternative to conventional self-generation methods for rural and peri-urban

communities, bridging the energy access gap. As a result of PIND's programming efforts, clean energy access was extended to a total of 31,790 individuals, providing them with electricity connections for the first time.

- Investments from the private sector have played a crucial role in driving clean energy expansion during the first quarter of 2024, with a total outlay of N3,440,615,189.50 allocated towards capital expenditure (CAPEX) and working capital for the operation of four mini-grids. These investments were specifically directed towards community energy cabins, aimed at extending clean energy access to underserved communities across the Niger Delta region. Two key partners, OGB Energy and A4&T, emerged as significant contributors to this investment landscape. OGB Energy invested N12,689,500 in a 15kWp Energy Cabin project in *Bateren, Delta State*, facilitating connections for 35 entities. Meanwhile, A4&T's strategic investments totaled N2,808,375,000, directed towards the development of a 480kWp Energy Cabin in *Araromi Obu, Ondo State*, as well as twin 48kWp Energy Cabin projects in *Ilugha and Epe communities*, also in Ondo State.

Youth Employment Pathways:

The aims of the Youth Employment Program (YEP) are to map the ecosystem of skills development, analyze opportunities for employment creation and develop models of youth job readiness or workforce development that provide disadvantaged young men and women in the Niger Delta opportunities to secure sustainable jobs and enterprises. PIND's approach involves innovative and quality technical occupational training which prepares selected youth with market-relevant skills, and supports their transitioning into work or entrepreneurship.

In Q1 2024:

- The youth employment program successfully expanded to Ondo State with 431 (275 males, 156 females, and 17 PWD) youths on-boarded, and technical/soft skills training is currently ongoing across Ile-Oluji and Owo centers owned by BATVE and in Akure; Ondo State.
- Successful completed training of 74 youths comprising 50 Finished Leather trainees who completed their training in February 2024, conducted by The Footwear Academy, and 24 youths from Meranos (ICT sector) and Ibiteinye Farms (Agriculture sector) who also completed their training in Q1 2024. This set was the last from the 2023 training programs, which spilled over to Q1 2024.
- From the outcome monitoring of the Implementing Partners (IPs) conducted, the number of youths accessing employment and other income-earning opportunities was 127 (78 males, 49 females) in 4 states, with 24 (19%) youths having secured employment while 103 (81%) established new businesses. Further observation shows that the services sector recorded the highest number of job linkages and business start-ups (64 individuals), followed by the ICT sector (33 individuals). This indicates a trend towards entrepreneurship among these cohorts rather than seeking direct employment.

Peace Building:

The strategic thrust of the peace building program is to achieve regional and lasting peace in the Niger Delta. To achieve this, PIND is creating sustainable peace partnerships, encouraging collaboration and cooperation amongst peace actors, providing support for economic development, and strengthening indigenous structures for peace, while also creating and building interfaces with larger state-level or regional peace efforts; thereby creating an enabling environment for sustainable broad-based economic development.

The peace building program consists of two interrelated and interdependent projects: The Integrated Peace and Development Unit (IPDU) and Partners for Peace (P4P) Network. The IPDU focuses on undertaking research and providing training to local and international stakeholders to implement innovative pilot projects that show promise of making a difference on the ground. Responding quickly in a targeted manner to rapidly changing dynamics, the IPDU promotes collaboration and synergy amongst existing local, regional, and national efforts of actors in both public and private sectors to develop/deploy early warning and response mechanisms to address conflict, with a focus on gender and youth.

The P4P Network is PIND's strategy towards establishing social infrastructure and capital across all nine states of the Niger Delta. In the last five years, PIND has established a network of self-identified agents of peace that have deployed the power of grassroots networking towards building peace in the region. Using conflict analyses and early warning as key instruments, P4P identifies, and supports existing initiatives, and creates new ones to address the conflict risk factors. The P4P Network currently has chapters and subchapters in all the 9 States and 119 LGAs of the Niger Delta.

In the current strategic phase (2020-2024), the Peace Network is focusing on establishing and strengthening grassroots conflict resolution initiatives that promote a more enabling, integrated, and peaceable environment conducive for economic growth and development in the region.

- Observed outcomes of PIND's peace efforts has demonstrated an improvement in the overall peace and security situation in the Niger Delta, through a consistent reduction in the level of conflict risks and lethal violence in the region, beginning from the second quarter of 2023 till this moment. For example, a decrease in the level of

conflict risk and lethal violence was observed during the quarter compared to the fourth quarter of 2023. According to data uploaded on the P4P Peace Map, lethal violence decreased by 43.5% from 234 fatalities in Q4 of 2023 to 132 in Q1 of 2024. This observation was sequel to several other decreases in the level of conflict risks and lethal violence already reported in Q2 and Q3 of 2023.

- Reported incidents of conflict risk and violence also decreased by 45.6% from 173 in Q4 of 2023 to 94 in Q1 of 2024. According to data, there was a decrease in organized criminal violence including kidnap for ransom and clashes between hoodlums and government security forces during the quarter, compared to the fourth quarter of 2023. Criminal violence decreased by 52.8% from 193 fatalities in Q4 of 2023 to 91 fatalities in Q1 of 2024. Similarly, violent clashes between cult gangs reduced by 21.7% from 28 fatalities in Q4 of 2023 to 18 in Q1 of 2024.
- There was also a reduction in communal conflict over land and boundary disputes as well as clashes between herders and farmers during the period. Data uploaded on the P4P Peace Map shows that communal violence decreased by 40.6% from 32 reported fatalities in Q4 of 2023 to 19 fatalities in Q1 of 2024. Conflict risk and lethal violence during the quarter were mainly driven by organized criminality including kidnap for ransom as well as clashes between hoodlums and government security forces.
- EU-PIND Violent Conflict and Criminality Transformation Project: One of PIND's key activities during the quarter was technical support towards the implementation of the European Union- Niger Delta (EU-ND) Project titled, "A Community-centered Approach to Transforming Criminality and Violence in the Niger Delta." The 6.5million Euros project is implemented by a consortium of partners - Search for Common Ground (SFCG), Stakeholder Democracy Network (SDN) and Academic Associates Peace Works (AAPW), and PIND. PIND drives the EWER and social cohesion component of the interventions through the IPDU. The Central goal of the project is to enhance inclusivity in community peace and security approaches to address the systemic drivers of violence and criminality in Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers States. Activities commenced with community entry; where 66 communities in 23 LGAs in the 3 benefiting states- (Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers) were visited to create awareness of the project among critical community stakeholders, seek their acceptance and ownership of the project.
- 904 stakeholders utilized PIND's peacebuilding data and analysis during the review period. Also, 19 stakeholders whose capacities had been strengthened through PIND/P4P facilitated training sessions and workshops, applied the skills they had acquired to promote peace and tackle conflict in their communities while, 326 peace actors (P4P members) constructively resolved emerging conflicts in various communities in the Niger Delta, utilizing 30 'quality actions' to resolve these conflicts within the reporting period.

PIA implementation support

*PIND secured grant funding from the Ford Foundation to explore realistic models of community development in which different actors – communities, NGOs, oil and gas companies, and government (particularly the upstream regulator, and state governments), work in concert towards a successful implementation of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA). This is to ensure the active involvement of the community stakeholders in particular and build their capacity to represent their interests adequately in the implementation process. This effort now referred to as **"The Bridges Project"** is being implemented in five Niger Delta states - Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Ondo and Rivers, and comprises a Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) that will coordinate proceedings, awareness creation and knowledge sessions on the PIA requirements for community stakeholders, and building the capacities of CSOs and NGOs to help in the implementation processes.*

PIND has positioned itself work for the smooth take-off of the Chevron's Host Community Development Trusts (CNL HCDTs) through capacity-building on economic development programs, and peacebuilding for the established HCDTs.

Training of MSP Members and HCDTs in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) – The Bridges Project

In Q1 2024, PIND as part of its collaboration with Ford Foundation on the Bridges Project, carried out the 5th Meeting of its MSP which also included an M&E training for the HCDTs and other members of the MSP. The M&E training ensured that the MSP members were equipped with the necessary skills for effective project implementation within their communities as part of the PIA processes. There was also a consensus that capacity-building training would be included in subsequent MSP meetings. The MSP meeting continued to harvest experiences, feedback and recommendations on the implementation of the PIA process.

The MSD program has designed and commenced preparations for series of capacity-building programs to strengthen couple of NGOs to implement market systems projects in the region. Also, as part of its plan to provide capacity-building support on economic development program to the established HCDTs, PIND has carried out a baseline assessment to determine the established HCDTs' organizational index, and develop and implement capacity-building plans for their upgrade to effectively deliver economic solutions to the CNL communities.

Under Peacebuilding support, a total of 43 participants from Warri Kingdom Onshore, Oghulagha, Egbema OPUDIS and Gbaramatu HCDDTs in Delta State, 33 from Ugboland HCDDT in Ondo State have been trained on volunteerism, cooperation, leadership, peacebuilding, conflict analysis and conflict management styles. They were also introduced to PIND's SMS-based EWER system as a tool for conflict reporting and managing peace.

Communications:

PIND's communication activities aim to increase its visibility by getting people to know about PIND, talk about it, and engage with it and its programs. They also aim to strengthen PIND's reputation and attract target stakeholders to support its cause, partner with it, fund its programs, and replicate its proven models.

Within the reporting period, we intensified our communications efforts, with 315,394 people gaining new or increased awareness about us and our activities from the mainstream media, and the cumulative of 2,422,755 people gained awareness through our various platforms: newsletters, social media, website, email inquiries, forums and traditional media. Also, in the quarter, we garnered 36 positive media mentions of our work and activities and attracted 67 public endorsements from stakeholders who interacted with our content on the website, newsletters, and social media posts.

Advocacy:

PIND's advocacy focus continued to be on three key work areas: influence spending and funding from government, donors, and the private sector organizations on new projects in the Niger Delta; address issues of inadequate access to arable land for smallholder farmers, and constraints on small businesses brought about by multi-taxation and illegal levies; and support institutionalizing strategies in peacebuilding efforts that will promote conflict prevention across the Niger Delta.

In the first, quarter of 2024, PIND continued to build on the progress made across its advocacy intervention areas and related activities in 2023, providing the needed momentum and aspiring towards ending the 2020-2024 strategic period on a high note. To sustain its government engagement, PIND's strategy has been largely based on working with principal officers in the Civil Service while carrying along the political appointees (Such as Commissioners, Special Advisers, etc.). This approach was intensified in Q1, and efforts towards influencing Government spending funding into the region were prioritized. The following explain key highlights:

- Equitable Access to Land by small holder farmers: In Q1 2024, PIND continued to engage with the arable land committees in Edo and Ondo States through collaboration with the arable land committees to assist in finalizing policy and legislative processes relating to access to land for smallholder farmers. In Delta State, PIND has continued to partner with the State's Ministry of Agriculture to ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the Arable Land Committee, adopted by the state government, to open up more agricultural land for oil palm and cassava farmers in the State.
- Multiple Taxation and Illegal Levy Intervention: In the first quarter, PIND partnered with BMOs, CSOs, and the Tax Justice advocacy group to establish a regionwide tax policy advocacy consortium with the main objective of ensuring the implementation of the communique adopted at the November 2023 inaugural meeting of the group. Also, PIND began the process of collating information and data required for the planned documentary on the impact of the multiplicity of taxes and illegal levies.
- Change in policies and strategies conducive for building peaceful/ non-violent society: The Advocacy team successfully partnered with Peace Building team to engage stakeholders and get the final Niger Delta Peace and Regional Strategy (NDPRS) framework developed and approved by the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs in Q1 2024.

Capacity Building:

As one of PIND's key enablers, the Capacity Building program is designed and positioned to strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of government, civil society, and business associations/service providers; "for effective socio-economic engagement, inclusive governance for growth, and peaceful co-existence in the Niger Delta". It directly contributes to both PIND's long-term objective and overall goal of peace and economic growth of the Niger Delta. The Program focuses on two major areas, the first being to strengthen the capacity of local development organizations in the Niger Delta to adopt the market systems approach through the Capacity Building for Local Empowerment (CAPABLE) Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P) project. The second area of focus is to strengthen Chevron's host community development trust organizations (previously referred to as Regional Development Councils [RDCs]) that carry out developmental projects in the host communities in line with the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA).

- Baseline Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) for HCDDTs: This quarter, PIND carried out the baseline OCA for Ugboland HCDDT in Ondo State, which is one of the HCDDTs established by CNL. The HCDDT was assessed across

13 domains which include leadership, project and financial management, human resource management, fundraising and mobilization, peacebuilding. This assessment was a SWOT analysis helping us to know how to improve the OCA index of the HCDT as we plan their capacity building.

- **Organizations Providing Services:** Two organizations (Development Initiative for Community Impact (DICI) and Asfabet MSS (Management Support Services) that had been supported through PIND’s CAPACITY building activities in the past continued to provide various forms of services. These include:
 - i. DEATOP Centre for Africa Development end line survey on “Talkam Against Trafficking in Persons (TATIP)” program by Asfabet MSS (Management Support Service);
 - ii. Capacity assessment to identifying potential gaps in the Sight savers-OPD (Organizations of people with Disabilities) relationship, gaining insights into challenges faced by OPDs, and collaboratively developing an action plan for OPD capacity building.

Business Development

In line with its efforts to diversify and expand its funding base, PIND continued to engage potential partners to explore new opportunities across its program areas by strengthening and facilitating internal collaboration and coordination to deepen business development efforts. The collective effort on business development and sustainability has yielded significant milestones since the fourth quarter of 2022. Following the establishment of the business development committee and subcommittee, PIND has witnessed an unprecedented level of internal cooperation at board, management, and technical levels to sustain its drive for increased funding, partnerships, and investments for the implementation of development interventions in line with its vision.

- To enhance internal collaboration and coordination to deepen business development efforts, in Q1 2024, the BDS Committee and Subcommittee meetings were held and reviewed progress on PIND’s sustainability efforts. Also, the BDS team followed up with submitted proposals to potential donors and partners.
- In line with its effort to diversify and expand its income, the first quarter of 2024 saw robust engagement with donors, a deepening of partnerships, and several collaboration opportunities. The BDS team facilitated one physical work session on Impact Investment for PIND’s Managers in Lagos, and 3 additional online sessions facilitated by Cross-Boundary as part of internal capacity-building for PIND Program Managers.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

PIND’s commitment to gender and social inclusion underpins its efforts to achieve greater gender equality as a key pathway towards sustainable poverty reduction and shared security and prosperity in the Niger Delta. At the center of PIND’s 2020–2024 strategic plan is the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of poor women and girls, persons with disabilities and the most vulnerable population. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) mainstreaming as a cross cutting theme, is embedded within PIND’s programs and projects to ensure that its activities are inclusive, reflect equitable participation and access to benefits.

PIND has a strategic target of enabling at least 81,000 women (40% of the overall target) to increase their incomes, thereby positioning women’s economic empowerment at the core of its economic development implementation activities.

In Q1 2024, the total outreach, i.e. those who participated in various economic development interventions was 13,188, out of which 7,688 (58%) were males and 5,500 (42%) were females. while 17 persons with disability (PWD) enrolled in YEP training.

Similarly, a total of 274 women (36% of the total beneficiaries); 486 men (64% of the total beneficiaries); 300 youths (40% of the total beneficiaries) and 6 PWDs (0.8% of the total beneficiaries) participated in various peacebuilding interventions including: conflict mitigation, forums on peace and stability, skills enhancements, and mentorships, for the advancement of sustainable peace in the region.

In summary, the organization-wise gender mainstreaming in Q1 2024 was 5,774 (41.39%) from a total of 13,928 surpassing 2023 annual target of 40%; while persons with disabilities (PWDs) were 23 from PB and YEP.

2024 International Women’s Day (IWD) Celebration.

PIND joined the global community to conduct specialized events to celebrate women and girls in its projects across the Niger Delta region, on March 8, set aside globally for the celebration of women’s achievements. The UN theme for this year was “Count her in: Accelerate gender equality through economic empowerment” and “Invest in women: Accelerate progress” while the UN campaign theme was “Inspire Inclusion”. PIND joined the campaign with an in-house activity to

commemorate the 2024 IWD event featuring in a designed IWD social media cards with messages that portrayed support for this year's theme which was posted on all our social media platforms.

1.2 Challenges, Mitigation, and Plans for the Next Quarter

Challenges

Market Development and Peace Building Programs:

- **High Inflation:** Effect of high inflation is negatively affecting farmers and MSMEs in their businesses. For example, Service providers have reduced numbers of on-farm demonstrations due to the soaring cost of transports and other inputs. This is also affecting farmers as their purchasing power has been drastically affected. To mitigate the effect of the current high inflation and other Macro-economic harsh outlook on the activities of farmers/MSMEs, PIND is building the capacity of service Service Providers to explore other options of providing GAP training to farmers, and as well, develop capacity to purchase input in bulk to reduce unit cost of inputs.
- **Insecurity:** unabated farmers - herders' conflicts across the Niger Delta region and other community conflicts also disrupted field activities in some communities within the reporting period such as witnessed recently in Bomadi LGA of Delta state. It hindered mobilization and training of farmers in those locations. The Peace building team would continue to leverage on the P4P and IPDU structure to activate states p4p prevent committee and other network of peace champions across the region for conflict mitigations and resolutions.

Youth Employment Pathways Program:

- During participant mobilization in Akure and surrounding areas, a significant number of applicants were screened out because they were above the desired age range, highlighting the pressing issue of unemployment and the crucial need for vocational skills, particularly in agriculture, within the state. PIND will continue to work with the IPs to innovate and expand their reach to more youths irrespective of their ages, beyond PIND's support.
- Mobilizing trainees from riverine communities, especially those residing in remote areas of Ondo State, proved challenging due to distance. While there was interest in the program, many could not make the final list due to logistical constraints. PIND is exploring innovative options to help IPs expand their coverage within the state.
- Feedback from the implementing Partners was that inflation has led to about a 150% increase in the prices of training materials compared to initial projections during grant bidding, posing financial challenges for the program. PIND continues to explore new and customized options to recommend to the Implementing Partners so as to reduce the burden of transportation and other ancillary costs of participation in the training program.

Access to Energy:

- **Exchange Rate Volatility:** The exchange rate volatility in Nigeria's foreign currency impacted the overall cost of Solar PV renewable energy sector, making it more expensive or difficult for private investors to secure the necessary funding and resources.
- **Macro-economic challenges around inflation and companion energy tariffs:** This is having a knock-on effect on the off grid renewable energy sector by the persistent lack of equity for start-up companies mirrors global trends and shows investors risk aversion after months of worsening macroeconomic factors, such as rising interest rates and volatile forex. PIND will continue to collaborate with the partner power developers, provide capacity building support around entrepreneurship to mitigate risk aversions.
- Market actors in renewable energy mostly operate across the various regions, making it challenging to focus their business plan on a single regional market of the ND. However, to improve the value proposition, PIND's regional strategy therefore makes room for innovation and a holistic consideration of developers participating in wider for-profit initiatives in the sector without necessarily distorting the ND markets.

Lessons Learned

Youth Employment Program:

Implementing Partners collaborating with the Ondo States Board for Adult Technical Vocational Education (BATVE) have facilitated a productive working relationship between the implementing partner and the trainers at the BATVE Training Facility. So far, their enthusiasm and readiness to cooperate have been instrumental in achieving our goals. Implementing Partners are learning the importance of flexibility in material procurement, adapting to changes in pricing and availability to ensure smooth program operations.

Program Management

Governance and Accountability: Meetings of the following PIND sub-committees were held in Q1 2024: Project and Programs, Audit and Compliance, Business Development and Sustainability (BDS), Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

(GESI), and Advocacy and Partnership sub-committee. Key agreements reached at these sub-committee meetings, along with M&E updates on program implementation were reported to PIND’s Board. The team coordinated development of the 2024 operating plans and targets which were approved during the Q1 board meetings.

Also, within the quarter, PIND commenced her Participatory Strategic Review (PSR) with the engagement of New Nigeria Foundation (NNF) as the main facilitator for the PSR process. As at the end of Q1, the PSR planning stages (PSR Framing Strategy and planning workshop) were completed.

Summary of progress against 2024 targets

The summary below presents a view of progress against PIND’s 2024 target as at Q1.

Economic Development Program Indicators	2024 Targets	Cumulative Results as at Q1 2024
Outreach	85,000	12,757
<i>Cassava value chain</i>	36,500 (15,603 direct)	3,811 ¹
<i>Cocoa value chain</i>	14,000	2,176
<i>Palm oil value chain</i>	17,000	3,134
<i>Poultry value chain</i>	9,500	2,132
<i>MSME development</i>	8,000	1,504
Farmers/MSMEs with increased productivity or sales	38,645	Results will be reported in Q3
<i>Cassava value chain</i>	15,145	
<i>Cocoa value chain</i>	6,000	
<i>Palm oil value chain</i>	7,000	
<i>Poultry value chain</i>	6,000	
<i>MSME development</i>	4,500	
Net attributable income change [Naira value]	₦21.12 billion	Results will be reported in Q3
<i>Cassava value chain</i>	₦6.55 billion	
<i>Cocoa value chain</i>	₦2.22 billion	
<i>Palm oil value chain</i>	₦5.53 billion	
<i>Poultry value chain</i>	₦3.48 billion	
<i>MSME development</i>	₦3.34 billion	
Net attributable income change [% change]	40%	Results will be reported in Q3
New jobs facilitated	12,709	Results will be reported in Q3
<i>Cassava value chain</i>	3,200	
<i>Cocoa value chain</i>	1,669	
<i>Palm oil value chain</i>	1,518	
<i>Poultry value chain</i>	2,948	
<i>MSME development</i>	3,374	
<i>Access to energy</i>	98	
<i>Skills development for youth employment</i>	800	
Value of investments by economic development actors [Naira value]	₦13.77 billion	₦3.71 billion Equity (₦3.68 billion) Debt financing (₦25.60 million)
<i>Cassava value chain</i>	₦4.51 billion	Results will be reported in Q3
<i>Cocoa value chain</i>	₦1.26 billion	₦51.0 million ²
<i>Palm oil value chain</i>	₦2.40 billion	₦178.80 million
<i>Poultry value chain</i>	₦1.30 billion	Results will be reported in Q3
<i>MSME development</i>	₦3.19 billion	₦25.60 million
<i>Access to Energy</i>	₦1.11 billion	₦3.45 billion
States adoption of PIND’s model for youth employment	3	-
Youths with applicable skills for employment	1,200	74
Peace Building Program Indicators	2024 Targets	Cumulative Results as at Q1 2024
Stakeholders with applicable skills in conflict management	215	19
Stakeholders utilizing PIND’s peace data and analysis	2,449	904

¹ These are direct farmers in Q1 2024. Indirect cassava farmers will be tracked and reported in Q3

² Investment on 101,650 improved seedlings by 1,500 farmers from 22 PNOs

Peace actors taking action to mitigate conflict	1,284	326
Quality actions taken to mitigate conflict	108	30
Population that feels safe in the area they reside	2%	Results will be reported in Q3
Coastal Community Development Indicators	2024 Targets	Cumulative Results as at Q1 2024
<i>Access to Energy</i>		
Businesses with access to clean energy	1,419	1,286
Households with access to clean energy	2,612	5,084
People with access to energy technologies	15,976	31,790
Financial benefits accruing to users of energy solutions	₦1.68 billion	Results will be reported in Q3³
<i>Capacity Building</i>		
Net change in capacity index of HCDTs/other Organizations	2.0 (average score)	To be updated after the planned impact study
Organizations accessing funds/grants	9	-
Total value of funds raised with PIND's support	₦168 million	₦0
Organizations providing improved services to beneficiaries/Communities (HCDTs and other implementing Partners).	7	2 ⁴
General Enabling Program Indicators	2024 Targets	Cumulative Results as at Q1 2024
<i>Advocacy</i>		
Total value of public spending by governments and other institutions	₦1.0 billion	₦0
Total value of financial and technical assistance committed by donors and private sectors	₦1.28 billion ⁵	₦0
Total value of investments in energy solutions by public and private sectors	₦1.11 billion	₦3.45billion
Change in policy in relation to multiple taxations on small-scale businesses	Qualitative description of progress	In the first quarter, PIND made significant progress in the implementation of activities relating to advocacy for policy change on multiple taxation and illegal levies on small businesses in the Niger Delta by partnering with BMOs, CSOs, and the Tax Justice advocacy group to establish a regionwide tax policy advocacy consortium with the main objective of ensuring the implementation of the communique adopted at the November 2023 inaugural meeting of the group. Also, PIND began the process of collating information and data required for the planned documentary on the impact of the multiplicity of taxes and illegal levies.
Level of responsiveness that facilitates access to land by smallholder farmers	Qualitative description of progress	In Q1 2024, PIND continued to engage with the arable land committees in Edo and Ondo States through collaboration with the arable land committees to assist in finalizing policy and legislative processes relating to access to land for smallholder farmers. In Delta State, PIND has continued to partner with the State's Ministry of Agriculture to ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the Arable Land Committee, adopted by the state government, to open up more agricultural land for oil palm and cassava farmers in the State.
Change in policies and strategies conducive for building peaceful/non-violent society.	Evidence of coherence and coordination of interventions	The Advocacy team successfully partnered with Peace Building team to engage stakeholders and get the final Niger Delta Peace and Regional Strategy (NDPRS) framework developed and approved by the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs in Q1 2024.
<i>Business Development</i>		
Funds raised from other sources for PIND's programs	₦1.37 billion	₦0
Communications	2024 Target	Cumulative Results as at Q1 2024
Forums to share PIND's work and lessons from implementation	47	10
Public endorsements of PIND's work	131	67

³ This includes benefits accruing to users connected in the preceding year.

⁴ Development Initiative for Community Impact (DICI) and Asfabeta MSS (Management Support Service)

⁵ Funds raised by the CSOs under Capacity Building(₦168million) and Investment leveraged under A2E ₦1.11billion

Media reports with PIND mention	146	36
Level of awareness of PIND and its programs:		
Newsletter subscribers	899	194
Website new visitors	42,104	21,730
Social media reach	4,510,530	2,085,281
Mainstream media reach	1,703,808	315,394
Email enquiries	308	156

2. Context Analysis

2.1 Socio-economic environment

Analysis on Global Economy shows a milder but better growth outlook for 2024 - *Shared by Proshare Research, Feb 24, 2024*. For instance, 2024 could become the year of normalcy in a range of areas with moderations in the hiked rates, improved global growth to global trade improvements, labour market dynamics, and limited impact from shocks. On the other hand, it could be far below normal, with the full effects of the hiked rates in 2023 taking its toll on the economy in 2024 in the face of global shocks and prevailing geopolitical tensions. Poverty levels projected to remain high globally due to economic constraints and continued conflict, and global growth rates projected to slow in 2024 relative to historical standards, are possibilities.

The question, therefore, remains: *What will be the global and local realities of 2024 in Nigeria?* Key factors that will likely influence development efforts, such as PIND's Program results in 2024 and beyond are highlighted below:

- High Inflation Rates: In January 2024, Nigeria's headline inflation rate rose to 29.90% from 21.83% in January 2023, marking an increase of 8.07%. Effect on purchasing capacities of farmers/MSMEs' inputs in 2024 has begun on negative note.
- Removal of Fuel Subsidy- Soaring pump price of PMS could lead to adverse effect on the economy: This could trigger continuous increase in prices of inputs, transaction costs for famers and MSMEs.
- Foreign Exchange Rate Dynamics – if the current Naira strengthening recedes, the prices of agro-inputs, and transactional costs could continue to skyrocket.
- Insecurity – National and regional – Insecurity remains a concern for famers and MSMEs and could exacerbate their plight if current trends persist or worsen

PIND will continue to monitor the 2024 monetary policy, which is expected to loosen in 2024 in view to designing programs that will aid access to finance for MSMEs and farmers; consolidate promotion of improved agribusinesses and models to generate employments, and contribute to the projected low global unemployment levels.

2.1 Security

While the overall peace and security situation in the Niger Delta in Q1 2024 showed an improvement, several violent crimes were observed across the nine states of the Niger Delta region. For example, around the week of 18 March 2024, there was a heightened security tension around Bomadi, Ughelli and Forcados waterways following an ambush on JTF personnel at Okuoma Community resulting in significant military casualties. Military authorities carried out massive operations in Bomadi/Ughelli areas and Forcados waterways in search of fleeing perpetrators and this expanded to other coastal communities away from the incident area. This has resulted in a large concentration of military personnel at Bomadi and Ughelli along the East – West Road which impacted traffic flow in the area.

Other examples include a violent clash between rival armed gangs in the vicinity of Ibaka, Mbo LGA, Akwa Ibom State on 20 March, where two gang members were arrested in Akwa Ibom State; In Delta State within the same week, gang members shot and killed a man and his pregnant wife in Ogwashi-Uku, Aniocha South LGA, Delta State and in Edo State, on 20 March, suspected herders attacked the Sobe community in Owan West LGA, Edo State, and abducted at least nine people.

Kidnapping and robbery remained major security threats. There has been an observable increase in kidnapping for ransom incidents across Nigeria particularly along the travelling highways. Kidnappers no longer discriminate based on

nationality, wealth, age or social standing - all individuals are potential targets. There is also a notable shift from random highways/farms targeting to residential abductions and this also extends to the FCT. kidnapers are also strategically opting for mass abductions, realizing the economic advantages of such operations. This tactic poses a collective risk necessitating a high situational awareness and extreme caution by all.

3. Economic Development Program

The economic development program comprises three projects: Market Systems Development, Access to Energy, and the Youth Employment Pathways (YEP). The overarching objective of the program is poverty reduction through increases in the number of men and women experiencing positive changes in income and attaining gainful employment. This is achieved through the facilitation of interventions with sustainable outcomes.

The market systems development project portfolio is made up of five agricultural value chains (aquaculture, cassava, cocoa, palm oil, and poultry) and three cross-cutting interventions (access to finance, access to inputs, and business linkages). The project aims to identify binding constraints in the sectors and seek sustainable solutions that can increase the income of thousands of poor men and women. Note: *Impact indicators for the project are typically tracked once or twice a year, to give sufficient time for the adoption of the new practices which would enable effective monitoring. As a result, no targets were set, and no results expected for the quarter under review.

The Access to Energy project focuses on energy efficiency and renewable energy such as the energy cabin and solar refrigeration. While Access to Energy identifies and tests technological solutions, the market development project facilitates activities to develop market systems for uptake and adoption of such technologies.

The Youth Employment Pathways featured the Niger Delta Youth Employment Pathways (NDYEP) project between 2018 and 2021 which was funded by the Ford Foundation and implemented in Abia, Akwa Ibom, and Rivers States. It focused on agriculture, construction, finished leather goods and ICT sectors, and was built on PIND's economic development strategy, which emphasizes sustainable interventions that result in full-time employment for youths. Following its successful piloting of being market-led, and demand-driven, the NDYEP model is being scaled up to other states and kicked off in Delta State in January 2021. This edition under the name, Youth Employment Pathways (YEP) project is funded by the Chevron Corporation. PIND's Economic Development Program contributes to the following global Sustainable Development Goals:



3.1 Market Systems Development

This section highlights key achievements of all initiatives implemented under the Market Systems Development (MSD) project in Quarter 1, 2024.

This project supports farmers and small enterprises in key agricultural sectors in the Niger Delta to improve their productivity, leading to an increase in income and reduction of poverty. The project utilizes the market systems development approach that relies on sound initial analysis of market systems to pinpoint the underlying causes of market weaknesses, to inform the design and implementation of interventions that address the underlying causes, rather than symptoms, of market failure. To ensure the sustainability of PIND's interventions, the development activities are further anchored on a service providers' model that equips local service providers with the right skills, tools, and connections to sustainably provide viable market solutions that address the root causes of poor performance by farmers and enterprises. This approach is used to support poor farmers in aquaculture, cassava, cocoa, palm oil, poultry and MSMEs. These sectors represent the most viable agricultural value chains in the Niger Delta.

3.1.1 Key market system changes through services provision

Solving farmers and MSMEs' lack of access to business services and other support functions is key to boosting productivity. The focus for 2024 market system development activities was to continue to strengthen adaptation strategies such as training, field demonstrations, information sharing, etc. developed by PIND's supported network of market actors to increase reach to 85,000 additional farmers and SMEs, out of which about 38,645 are expected to increase their incomes.

In Q1 2024, 71 out of over 400 Service Providers supported by PIND through direct training and crowding-in, continued to provide support services to farmers/MSMEs in Cassava, Cocoa, Palm oil, Poultry and Business linkages with training in Good Agronomic Practices (GAP)

In summary, 12,757 farmers/MSMEs were reached with improved services through the activities of the 71 service providers, 5,344 (41.8% female farmers) as shown in Table 1 below⁶. This outreach represents 111% of Q1 2024 target of 11,500 farmers/MSMEs, and 15% against the annual target of 85,000. – see table 1.

Table 1. MSD Q1 progress against 2024 annual targets

Indicators	Target	Results Achieved	Performance (%)	Female	PWD	Target	Achieved	Performance	Female	PWD
	Q1	Q1	Q1 %	Q1	Q1	2024	YTD	YTD (%)	YTD	YTD
Number of farmers/MSMEs reached	11,500	12,757	111%	5,344	0	85,000	12,757	15%	5,344	0
Value of investment leveraged	*	₦204.40 m ⁷	-			N12.67 billion	₦204.40 m	1.6%		

* Impact indicators are usually tracked once or twice a year, depending on sector dynamics and through assessments or surveys. As a result, they do not have quarterly targets. Outcome and impact indicators will be measured and reported in Q3.

3.1.2 Farmers/MSMEs Investments in Q1 2024

Farmers/MSMEs' Outcome Through Investment: PIND's supported Service Providers have helped farmers to gain improved knowledge on their businesses. In Q1 2024, the farmers and businesses reached were closely monitored to know how such supports have influenced their business behaviors. The foremost was the adoption of the improved innovations evidenced by investments of ₦204,398,000 in their businesses. The following provide details of the farmers/MSMEs' investments in Q1 2024.

- 89 oil palm farmers purchased 60,000 improved oil palm seedlings at the rate of N2,500 amounting to N150,000,000, through four trained nursery operators in Rivers, Ondo and Imo States.
- Over 1,000 farmers purchased 1,694 improved harvesting tools between January and February 2024 in Edo and Delta States, at the rate of N17,000, totaling N28,798,000.
- A loan of ₦ 25,600,000 was facilitated for 80 MSMEs (68 Female) by three BSPs, who supported them with business skill training and linkages to loans from Homeland Cooperative Society Limited, Okerewa Cooperative Society in Eleme, Zadell Concept Limited and Coastline Microfinance Bank in Delta State

3.1.3 Building partnerships to enhance access to improved seeds in the Niger Delta

Lack of farmers access to improved seeds and other inputs were identified as the core constraints militating against agricultural growth in the Niger Delta region. With farmers' access to quality seeds, productivity will be enhanced. For example, access to improved cassava stems, improved variety of oil palm/cocoa seedlings, improved fish-seeds, and improved day-old chicks, would contribute significantly to farmers' productivity in the areas PIND is intervening. This section explains PIND's facilitations and collaborations with other key partners to mitigate the farmers' risk, attributed to poor access to seeds.

Improving farmers' access to quality cassava stems through CSEs: PIND's collaboration with Umudike Seeds represents a significant advancement in the promotion of improved cassava stems within the region. PIND will leverage on the expertise and infrastructure provided by Umudike Seeds to support the initial 25 Cassava Seed Enterprises (CSEs), which

⁶ Cassava - 3,811 new cassava farmers, 2,088- 55% females, Cocoa - A total of 2,176 farmers were reached, 710 – 33% females, Palm oil - A total of 3,134 farmers/MSMEs participated in the event. 1,031– 33%, Poultry - A total of 2,132 poultry farmers were reached, 920-43% females, MSMSs - A total of 1,504 micro and small enterprises were reached, 595– 40% female owned.

⁷ N178,798,000 leveraged on improved harvesting tools and improved oil palm seedlings + N 25,600,000 debt financing by MSMEs

will stimulate the cassava stem market in the Niger Delta.

Within the reporting period, 8 CSEs facilitated access to 30,126 bundles of improved cassava stems to farmers as the cassava planting season has commenced in most states of the region. Over 41 entities, including state governments, farms, and individuals patronized the CSEs. Also, 4 CSEs in Abia state conducted a training on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for farmers, a crucial component of our strategy to enhance cassava cultivation, and increase productivity of farmers. These CSEs collectively reached 262 farmers (145 males and 117 females) in Abia state, providing them with essential knowledge and skills.

Improving farmers' access to quality cocoa seedlings:

In this quarter, PIND continued its engagement with CRIN for the scale up of the model it jointly developed and piloted with the institute. Rejube farms, a nursery operator in Ikom, Cross River state, who was a beneficiary of the access to improved seed initiative, increased capacity and improved seed production from 10,000 to 20,000 seedlings, with the potential to reach over 700 farmers with improved seedlings. The stimulation of commercially viable production of high-yielding seedlings has led to expanded sales and increasing profitability by the nurseries as well as crowding in from other private nurseries. So far over 22 nursery operators have established nurseries and have currently sold over 101,650 seedlings to over 1,500 farmers across the Niger Delta translating to NGN 51,000,000 worth of sales. In the coming quarters, the sector will continue to track the adoption and yield of these improved seedlings by farmers.

Improving farmers' access to quality oil palm seedlings:

PIND has strengthened coordination amongst market actors to increase access to improved seeds for Palm Oil Farmers in the region. Last year, for example, PIND partnered with two seed companies Alisee and Ghana Sumatra to carry out a seed coordination workshop in Port Harcourt, Rivers state. The major objective of the workshop was to scale-up the activities of the seed companies in the Niger Delta and improve the collaboration and coordination amongst the seed producers and nursery operators. Routing monitoring revealed that 89 farmers adopted 60,000 improved seedlings in new established plantations from four nursery operators' promotional activities in Q1 2024.

3.1.4 Building partnerships to enhance access to finance and markets in the Niger Delta

PIND continues to actively explore opportunities to enhance market access for smallholder farmers, particularly through collaborations and partnerships. In this quarter, we bring you a cross-cutting view of these partnership initiatives in the Market System Development projects below:

Facilitating access to Finance and Markets through Cassava out-grower scheme: PIND initiated efforts to bolster access to markets for smallholder farmers, particularly through partnerships with large processors, recognizing the substantial unmet local demand for cassava roots in industrial processing. One notable collaboration involved linking Dufil Prima Foods with the Ukwuoma Ndi Igbo Multipurpose Cooperative, facilitating the supply of TME 419 cassava roots to Dufil's starch processing plant in Edo State in 2023. Despite the strides made, challenges and lessons learned have emerged, prompting a reflective approach towards further interventions.

In Q1 2024, attention was devoted to identifying additional farmer groups interested in continuing with the access to market intervention based on challenges and lessons learned from the piloted Ukwuoma cooperative farm. Ongoing discussions with Sombreiro Kapital (SK) and CARA are still being held to deepen engagement and address challenges encountered in scaling cassava root cultivation among farmer groups.

Linkages to market: This quarter, PIND continued its engagement with stakeholders to facilitate linkages to market for businesses. PIND in collaboration with CAD Digital Farm Limited and other BSPs continued engagements and market linkages to bulk buyers such as SPAR, Market Square, Ponitec Markets Limited (BuyPlus), Hyper-City Market, DGIT Supermarket in Port Harcourt, and several open markets. Through these linkages, over 20 MSMEs carried out market transactions worth N137.5m for the quarter.

Linkages to finance/market for MSMEs:

As part of its objectives to support MSMEs to access finance for business expansion, PIND supported 3 BSPs to provide advisory and financial linkages to MSMEs. These MSMEs were supported with business skill training and linkages to loans from Homeland Cooperative Society Limited, Okerewa Cooperative Society in Eleme, Zadel Concept Limited and Coastline Microfinance Bank in Delta State. This support during the quarter culminated in a total of 80 MSMEs (68 Female) linked to loans worth N25.6m, already processed and disbursement commenced.

3.1.5 Building partnerships to enhance the quality of Cocoa beans in the Niger Delta

The Nigerian cocoa industry has been associated with producing low-quality cocoa beans due to subpar practices by farmers during production and post-harvest stages. The lack of clear incentives for farmers to enhance their practices and produce high-quality beans further exacerbated this issue. In 2020, PIND introduced an incentive-based model in collaboration with off-takers to address the challenges surrounding poor-quality cocoa beans. This model incorporates incentives such as higher prices or premiums for farmers who produce superior-quality cocoa beans. The pilot phase of this intervention involved reaching out to over 1,000 farmers in Ondo State, in partnership with Subjugate Nigeria Limited and Nivik Investment Limited. After concluding the pilot and assessing things, PIND initiated engagements with additional cocoa processors and exporters in 2022 to replicate the successful model and expand its impact.

In 2024, the intervention focused on partnering and providing support to at least two cocoa off-takers to network new farmers into their quality improvement program, and invest in improving the capacity of their network of service providers.

In Q1 2024, the focus was on developing strategy/plans that would strengthen the off-takers and exporters to optimize Sustainability Systems via pre-audit and ensuring alignment with Rainforest Alliance standards of quality improvement through training in good post-harvest practices; and facilitation of a comprehensive discussion among agro-dealers concerning the upcoming verification process. The Rainforest Alliance tries to combat climate change, protect forests and biodiversity, promotion of human rights, and ultimately improve livelihoods.

In this quarter, records show that Johnvent and Nivik (off-takers) are leading the charge in implementing quality improvement measures within the cocoa sector. Nivik has taken a significant step by establishing a 6-person committee at the cooperative level. This committee's primary responsibility is to oversee adherence to the Rainforest Alliance (RA) standard and to monitor the activities of cocoa producers, thereby minimizing instances of non-compliance.

3.1.6 Expansion of business development support to MSMEs, fisherfolks, and processors in CNL coastal communities.

As part of PIND's activities to improve the efficiency of MSMEs, Fish processors, and fisherfolks in the CNL host communities, PIND in collaboration with Marich Agro, organized a training for fisherfolks on better fishing practices/technologies and established linkages platform through Cooperatives. There was also follow-up on fisherfolks for linkages activities. The engagement was held in Ugboland, in Ondo state. A total of 99 participants (74 males, 25 females) were recorded from both engagements.

Following the training, the fisherfolks were linked to dealers of quality fishing equipment which led to the adoption of seven (7) high-quality fishing nets by seven fisherfolks.

3.1.7 Transformation of MSD interventions from sector-based to cross-cutting approach

PIND's Market Development project supports farmers and small enterprises in key agricultural sectors in the Niger Delta to improve their productivity, bringing about an increase in their income levels and ultimately leading to poverty reduction in the region. The key agricultural sectors of focus over the years are cocoa, cassava, palm oil, and poultry with the MSME development and linkages Initiatives providing cross-cutting support across the various sectors while also supporting businesses in other sectors.

With PIND's focus on commodity value chain sectors, PIND has demonstrated very sustainable commodity-specific solutions. PIND is also seeing that many of those solutions are cross-cutting in their impact and ability to service multiple commodities and thus are quite applicable across all of PIND's work, not just the specific value chains. It has also developed a strong network of service providers who can link various input supply, training/skills development, and output marketing overspending. However, there is a need to better capture and document its transformation across those cross-cutting lines through its models, whether it is in access to inputs, technology, technical and business services or markets.

Following a mid-line technical review of the PIND's MSD project in Q3 2022, PIND saw an opportunity to transition towards a more comprehensive strategy by adapting its project portfolio structure to place a greater emphasis on cross-cutting interventions, i.e., a shift from sectoral/commodity-focused programming to cross-cutting intervention thematic areas. This shift entails placing a greater emphasis on addressing common challenges that transcend individual sectors, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of interventions and fostering sustainable and inclusive agricultural growth in the

Niger Delta region.

Finalizing the cross-cutting strategy:

This Quarter, the MSD made significant progress in finalizing the cross-cutting strategy document across the different thematic areas as itemized below. The strategy document benefited from the review and feedback from the technical partners, DAI, and lays out the proposed model for implementation, key activities to be carried out, and stakeholders for engagement to kick start the pilot implementation in preparation for the next strategic phase commencing in 2025.

The various thematic areas and the proposed model are highlighted as follows:

- **Expanding access to agricultural Inputs (Fertilizers, CPPs, Feed, Vaccines, etc.):** This model represents a strategic approach that aims to transform the agricultural input sector by incentivizing and strengthening lead firms and agro-dealers to lead innovations that improve access to quality inputs and knowledge on good agronomic practices. It focuses on fostering innovation, improving the accessibility of quality agricultural inputs, and enhancing farmers' knowledge of best agronomic practices. This includes high-quality feed, vaccines, and day-old chicks (DOCs) for broiler production.
- **Access to agricultural Inputs (Seeds):** This model focuses on promoting the use of quality agricultural seeds across various value chain sectors by identifying and addressing opportunities and constraints limiting access to quality seeds. It aims to ensure farmers have easy access to and understand the advantages of using premium-quality seeds, which can significantly improve crop yields and overall agricultural productivity.
- **Access to Technical Services:** This strategy will incentivize and strengthen the capacity of entrepreneurial technical service providers to lead innovations that improve access to information on good agronomic, climate-smart practices and farm services to farmers across the current boundary sectors and other potential sectors to be identified. The proposed model aims to build and strengthen the support market for technical services to farmers to increase their yield and productivity leading to better performance of the farmers and increased profitability of their farming businesses.
- **Access to Business Development Services and Finance.** This strategy aims to incentivize and strengthen service providers to lead innovations that improve access to information on good business practices, business support services, and access to finance. PIND's business development and linkages initiatives already operate as a cross-cutting and provide support to MSMEs within the MSD boundary sectors, this strategy will further deepen the business support services across the sectors and other potential sectors to be identified in the course of engagements and assessment to be carried out.
- **Access to industrial market and agricultural technology:** This model seeks to improve access to markets and agricultural technologies by incentivizing large buyers, technology manufacturers/distributors, fabricators, and farm machinery operators to promote quality improvement of agricultural products, and improved technologies across sectors. It represents a strategic approach that aims to strengthen access to the industrial market, machinery, and infrastructure technologies which comprises farming equipment used in the field as well as in crop processing, storage, and quality analysis technology. These technologies tend to reduce manual labor costs by increasing productivity through mechanization with an initial focus on the current boundary sectors: Cassava Poultry, Cocoa, Palm oil, and potentially other sectors with opportunities for implementation.

Stakeholder engagement and assessment for Cross-cutting interventions design.

To commence implementation of the cross-cutting strategy, the team planned to carry out an assessment of the various thematic areas to identify opportunities and other potential sectors to further deepen impact, and key constraints that need to be addressed in enhancing the identified opportunities. This quarter, the Terms of Reference (ToR) for engaging technical partners to carry out a comprehensive needs assessment including stakeholder identification and engagement under the guidance of the sector leads for the various thematic areas have been developed and undergoing review and approval.

3.2.0 Skills Development for Youth Employment (YEP)

The aims of the Youth Employment Program (YEP) are to map the ecosystem of skills development, analyze opportunities for employment creation, and develop models of youth job readiness or workforce development that provide disadvantaged young men and women in the Niger Delta with the opportunities to secure sustainable jobs and enterprises. PIND's approach involves innovative and quality technical occupational training which prepares selected youth with market-relevant skills and supports their transitioning into work or entrepreneurship.

In 2018, with funding from the Ford Foundation, PIND started the implementation of the Niger Delta Youth Employment Pathways (NDYEP) Project in 3 states - Abia, Akwa Ibom and Rivers. The pilot project provided market-driven vocational skills training for 4,355 youths in economic growth sectors such as Agriculture, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Building Construction with most of them linked to employment opportunities. With the completion of the Ford Foundation's funded pilot phase, NDYEP scaled up in the pilot states and in Delta State with funding from Chevron Corporation. The scale up project is replicating the model and providing technical skills training and linkage to jobs or enterprise development in the same sectors with the inclusion of Finished Leather and Services sectors.

3.2.1 Q1 2024 Key Achievements in YEP

Facilitating Training and Job/Enterprise Linkage:

Number of youths enrolled for 2024 YEP training in Ondo State: Following the onboarding of implementing partners and the finalization of their grant agreements in January 2024, a call for participants was launched through various publicity campaigns. Screening and interviews were conducted physically at the offices of Implementing Partners, with participant databases vetted by the YEP team. In Q1 2024, a total of 893 applications were received by partners, from which 431 participants (275 males, 156 females, and 17 PWD) were selected based on selection criteria.

A 2-day orientation exercise was conducted for selected participants by implementing partners. All selected trainees have been on-boarded and technical/soft skills training is currently ongoing across Ile-Oluji and Owo centers owned by BATVE and in Akure; Ondo State. Training is structured to be 70% practical and field-based to enhance participants' occupational skills capacity. The soft skills training curriculum will be mainstreamed alongside technical skills training to facilitate behavioral change and participants' preparedness for the ideal work/business environment. An innovation in Ondo State program is the inclusion of weekly mentoring of youth participants on career development. 80% attendance is mandatory for successful completion and to be qualified for recommendation to apprenticeship, job linkage, and certification examinations where provided.

Number of youths with applicable skills: This quarter witnessed a successful completion of training by 74 youths comprising 50 Finished Leather trainees who completed their training in February 2024, conducted by The Footwear Academy, and 24 youths from Meranos (ICT sector) and Ibiteinye Farms (Agriculture sector) who also completed their training in Q1 2024.

Number of youths accessing income opportunities: From the outcome monitoring of the IPs in this quarter, the number of youths accessing employment and other income-earning opportunities was 127 (78 males, 49 females) in 4 states. The breakdown shows that 24 (19%) youths secured employment while 103 (81%) established new businesses.

Further observation shows that the services sector recorded the highest number of job linkages and business start-ups (64 individuals), followed by the ICT sector (33 individuals). This indicates a trend towards entrepreneurship among these cohorts rather than seeking direct employment. Ongoing efforts are directed towards supporting the transition of other youths into waged employment or entrepreneurship. A total of 47 trained youths with need for skill enhancement have been strategically placed in various internship and apprenticeship.

Table 2. YEP Q1 2024 progress against 2024 annual targets

YEP Indicators	Target	Achieved	Performance (%)	Target	Achieved YTD	Performance (%)	Female	PWD
	Q1 2024 Targets	Q1 2024	Q1%	2024	2024	2024(%)	2024	2024

Number of youths with applicable skills (Completed)	74	74 ⁸	100%	1,200 (HCDT 140)	74	6.1%	38 (51%)	0
Number of youths accessing employment and other income-earning opportunities	*	0	*	600	127	21%	49 (39%)	0
Number of job-to-job internship, apprenticeship placements	*	0	*	800	47	6%		0
States adoption of PIND's model for youth employment	*	0	*	3	0	0%	NA	NA

3.2.2 Update on start-up business challenge fund plans

To further facilitate the transition of participants into entrepreneurship, the project has initiated another round of the Start-up Business Challenge Fund aimed at supporting youth entrepreneurship. This fund targets beneficiaries who have completed training in integrated agriculture, ICT, finished leather, fashion design, catering, and building construction under the YEP between August 2022 and November 2023. The purpose of the application process is to enable eligible youths to access small funds to bolster their new enterprises. A call for applications was issued through a Google application form, which remained open for three weeks from March 8th to March 28th, 2024. A total of 559 responses were received, with 306 from males and 253 from females. The first phase of assessment, including screening, shortlisting, pitching, and final selection, is scheduled to take place in Q2.

3.2.3 State governments' adoption of YEP

At the completion of the Niger Delta Youth Employment Program (NDYEP) piloted in Abia, Akwa Ibom and Rivers States, in 2019 and reaching over 4000 youths, the YEP team embarked on several promotional activities to States to woo them to adopt or adapt the YEP model in their States being proven to be a more sustainable approach. For this phase, 2020 – 2024, a target of five States was set, which however is yet to be achieved.

Ondo State Board for Adult Technical Vocational Education 'BATVE': On the 17th of January, 2024, PIND signed a partnership agreement (MoU) with BATVE to implement the YEP program and expand its reach to young unemployed people in Ondo State. PIND and BATVE share common areas of interest in technical vocational training and the socio-economic transformation of the lives of people and communities and the overall prosperity of the Niger Delta region through skills training, knowledge sharing, hosting professional forums, innovative technology competitions, entrepreneurial support, etc. The agreement will ensure a joint effort to promote the PIND Niger Delta Youth Employment Pathways (NDYEP) model and framework for adaptation on BATVE's technical/soft skill training institutions, and entrepreneurial development programs for youth development and such other activities that may result in the socio-economic development and advancement of youth in Ondo State and the Niger Delta Region.

Rivers State Government: On February 8th, 2024, the YEP and Advocacy teams convened with the Special Assistant to the Rivers State Governor on ICT to explore collaboration possibilities with the Rivers State Ministries of Women Affairs and ICT for implementing vocational skills training within the YEP Program. This engagement yielded valuable insights into potential partnerships between PIND, the YEP program, and the Rivers State Government. Subsequent discussions with the Special Assistant resulted in the drafting and of an MoU highlighting collaboration areas between the YEP Program and the Rivers State Ministry of ICT Department. Plans are underway for the signing of the MoU and the commencement of implementation in Q2.

⁸ Carried over from 2023

3.3.0 Access to Energy

The coastal rural communities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria suffer poor rural electrification, with many of the communities not having access to regular electricity supply to power basic economic assets and household needs, leading to reduced economic activities. Expectations for connection to the National grid anytime soon are unlikely due to high-cost implications and the difficult terrains. Since 2018, PIND has been addressing this gap through alternative and affordable off-grid solutions, capable of targeting not only basic energy needs (i.e., lighting and cooking energy), but also productive use of energy at both household and rural enterprise levels (such as use in barber shops and beauty salons).

The first quarter of 2024 marked a period of significant progress and achievement for PIND's Access to Energy (A2E) program in the Niger Delta region, particularly in expanding clean energy access. Through partner-led activities, the program successfully facilitated new connections to clean energy for a total of 1,286 businesses and 5,084 households. This substantial increase in energy access underscores the growing adoption of clean energy projects as a viable alternative to conventional self-generation methods for rural and peri-urban communities, bridging the energy access gap.

As a result of PIND's programming efforts, clean energy access was extended to a total of 31,790 individuals, providing them with electricity connections for the first time. Furthermore, various mini-grid projects empowered essential community institutions such as primary health care facilities and community town halls with the necessary electricity to enhance cultural and socioeconomic activities within these communities. This holistic development outcome goes beyond mere welfare improvements, fostering enhanced business productivity and community welfare.

Additionally, the quarter witnessed knowledge and capacity building initiatives for potential mini-grid entrants through PIND-facilitated demonstrations on clean energy solutions. These demonstrations provided stakeholders with valuable insights into the program's models and firsthand accounts from PIND-supported businesses, empowering them to make informed decisions regarding clean energy adoption. There was recognition by many partners that the primary drivers for electrification across many Niger Delta communities remain agro-processing and the productive use of energy. Therefore, through innovative entrepreneurship and effective utilization of PIND's tailored technical assistance, including access to community gatekeepers, trust-building, capacity building, access to consumer networks, and grants, willing power businesses are substantially derisked to explore the Niger Delta off-grid energy markets. Overall, this progress reflects PIND's ongoing commitment to driving sustainable energy solutions and fostering socioeconomic development in the Niger Delta region.

Empowering communities through Private Sector Investments in Clean Energy Infrastructure

Investments from the private sector have played a crucial role in driving clean energy expansion during the first quarter of 2024, with a total outlay of ₦3,440,615,189.50 allocated towards capital expenditure (CAPEX) and working capital for the operation of four mini-grids. These investments were specifically directed towards community energy cabins, aimed at extending clean energy access to underserved communities across the Niger Delta region.

Two key partners, OGB Energy and A4&T, emerged as significant contributors to this investment landscape. OGB Energy, a newly onboarded partner focusing on swamp communities, invested ₦12,689,500 in a 15kWp Energy Cabin project in *Bateren*, Delta State, facilitating connections for 35 entities. Meanwhile, A4&T's strategic investments totaled ₦2,808,375,000, directed towards the development of a 480kWp Energy Cabin in *Araromi Obu*, Ondo State, as well as twin 48kWp Energy Cabin projects in *Ilugha* and *Epe* communities, also in Ondo State.

These investments underscore a concerted effort by the private sector, influenced by PIND, to upscale clean energy infrastructure and sustainable solutions for underserved communities in the Niger Delta. This milestone signifies the effective deployment of clean energy solutions to support numerous local businesses in Q1 2024. Among the notable achievements, 1,151 MSMEs in *Araromi Obu*, Ondo State, along with 75 MSMEs in *Ilugha* and 55 MSMEs in *Epe*, also in Ondo State, were connected to electricity for the first time.

Table 3. Q1 2024 Access to clean Energy outputs from SPs scale-up

Q1 2024 Access to energy Outputs					
Developers	Locations	Capacity delivered	Households	Businesses	Investment Leveraged (NGN)
OGB Energy,	Bateren, Delta State;	15kWp mini-grid in Bateren, Delta State	33	5	12,689.50
A4&T	Araromi Obu, Ondo state;	480kWp mini grid at Araromi Obu	4081	1151	2,808,375,000
A4&T	Ilugha, Ondo state;	48kWp mini grid at Ilugha	525	75	335,587,500
A4&T	Epe, Ondo State	48kWp mini grid at Epe communities, Ondo State	445	55	296,640,000
Total			5,084	1,286	3,440,615,189.50

Promoting Decentralized Renewables for Grassroots Livelihoods

One of the barriers to the large-scale creation and sustenance of grassroots-based livelihoods around the HCDTs/coastal communities in the Niger Delta include unreliable access to energy and allied infrastructure services. This is complicated through multiple complex factors amongst which are the proliferation of inefficient and outdated community-owned diesel generators on one side, and the high costs of capital to invest in clean energy projects on the other. To address this, PIND introduced and is promoting a business model around decentralized renewables that offer opportunities for private sector developers to provide energy as a service by creating an efficient support ecosystem for indigenous power entrepreneurs and HCDTs/coastal communities to work together.

Demonstrations, model sharing, capacity building and community engagement therefore remains integral to PIND's technical assistance program within the Niger Delta clean energy markets, and in Q1 2024, PIND facilitated two activities on clean energy solutions to address both demand and supply side actors in the market. At *Okibou Zion* community, a technology field day was staged for fisherfolks as potential adopters of a communal solar refrigeration solution while businesses and entrepreneurs were sensitized on the various models for partnerships during the 2024 annual A2E model sharing workshop in Warri. This particular event served as a platform for capacity building, knowledge sharing, cross learning and linkages for the supply side actors of the off-grid energy industry – with a view to enhance the adoption, sustainability and scaling of the successful models across the region.

Consequently, two coastal communities, *Bateren*, a HCDT community in Delta state and *Okibou Zion (Agge Delta)* another coastal community in Delta State, were assessed as potential locations for selected clean energy private sector partnerships. Of this two, *Bateren* was successfully powered by an investor OGB Energy Limited, while *Okibou Zion* has been linked successfully with a partner that is considering investing in the next two quarters.

Strengthening Cross-Sectoral partnerships to scale up decentralized renewable energy solutions for Livelihoods

The A2E program, functioning as an economic development lever, aims to bolster local economies through cross-sectoral partnerships, fostering meaningful economic activities, rural business innovation, and the adoption of new technologies. In Araromi Obu, a rural community in Ondo State characterized by high levels of rural poverty, a partnership between PIND's lead energy partner and the government-owned Rural Electrification Agency (REA) has resulted in the establishment of one of the single largest investments for a community energy project in the Niger Delta - a 450kWp community mini-grid.

This project exemplifies the collaborative effort to drive sustainable development through PIND's A2E model. *Araromi Obu* is renowned for its production of two prominent agricultural commodities - palm oil and rubber - crucial to both the local and national economy. The expanded processing capacity enabled by access to electricity represents a pivotal intersection of energy with agriculture and local economic empowerment, creating opportunities for income generation and inclusive jobs for the local population.

The partnership with A4&T Power Solutions Limited, one of PIND's strategic partners, extends beyond typical mini-grid provision to explore the Power-Agriculture nexus within this opportunity-rich rural community. This partnership is underpinned by an important social enterprise business philosophy, which has evolved into a thriving enterprise capable of syndicating investments for mini-grids and attracting large-scale financed projects to the Niger Delta.

The portfolio of projects across communities in Ondo State in Q1 2024 alone boasts a combined investment outlay of over N1 billion, serving as a testament to the growth trajectory for small businesses through partnerships with PIND

Foundation. This partnership model stands as a beacon of sustainable economic development, driving positive change and fostering inclusive growth in rural communities across the Niger Delta.

3.4.0 SOMBREIRO KAPITAL (SK)

Over the years, poor or no access to finance has consistently hampered the productivity of businesses in the Niger Delta due to systemic constraints (existing laws, infrastructural deficit, and knowledge gap), which influence the demand and supply of financial services. To address these constraints, Sombreiro Kapital (SK) was incorporated in 2020 to facilitate lending to businesses by issuing credit guarantees to partner Commercial banks to de-risk lending, thereby unlocking the flow of finance to intended beneficiaries.

SK Mandate:

At Sombreiro Kapital, we innovatively develop and integrate target focal crops/livestock value chain in addition to the issuance of partial credit risk guarantee to partner financial institutions, as a de-risking mechanism against credit default by smallholder Farmers (SHFs) and SMEs, thus incentivizing and stimulating financial institutions, and unlocking the flow of funds along the value chains.

SK outlook for 2024 was to consolidate in prior years achievements; it's target for the year 2024 is to facilitate loans worth N100 million to 300 businesses in the selected value chains of aquaculture, poultry, cocoa, oil palm and cassava across the focal states of Delta, Edo, Bayelsa, Imo and Ondo. This is set to achieve through financial linkages, interest subsidy and risk sharing mechanism. Part of SK intent is to promote gender parity, targeting 40% women inclusion. SK plans to sustain this objective in 2024 through support to women groups and established businesses/cooperatives with substantial women participation and business groups

The Q1 2024 was devoted to housekeeping activities to include though not limited to desk reviews of prior period activities, projects monitoring and relationships management, product development, screening of applications and strategy sessions with partners institutions. We received applications, worth ₦250million during the review period, they are under processing. Successful applicants would be supported accordingly in Q2. Also, through our linkage initiatives, four (4) medium scale producers/processors with excess of 500 SHFs base, were successfully linked with sources of finance. Beneficiaries under the linkage programme includes fishermen/fish processors in the coastal communities, smallholder Oil Palm and cassava farmers situated in Edo and Delta states respectively.

Development of the Nano credit Scheme

In Q1, following our core attribute in developing financial product that address specific needs within our focal value chain, SK in partnership with MSD and PIND service providers (Habeeb Agritech Global Consult Ltd) on Aquaculture/poultry value chain designed a scheme that address the flow of finance to the bottom of the micro-operators who function below the SHF threshold. Therefore, over 200 Nano operators under their spheres of business service engagement would benefit from these Nano funds.

Collaborations/Linkages

The enlisted entities were linked to funding sources. They operate in the Niger-Delta region, their activities range from primary production, processing to last mile distribution. SK will continue to play the pivotal role in financial and market linkages to ensure a thriving agro sector in the Niger Delta region as alternative means of livelihood.

Table 4: Entities linked to funding in Q1 2024

S/N	Partner	Sector	Ha/Qty	Scope	Linkage
1	Abdebiri Cassava Processing Mill	Cassava Processing	4000	Bayelsa, Delta, Edo State	NDDC
2	Value Agric Food	Cassava Processing	2000	Delta and Edo State	Development Bank/ Ecobank
3	Aventium Songhai Delta	Integrated Farm	Integrated	Delta State	Sterling Bank/Premium Trust Bank

The profiled groups through PIND service providers would be engrafted into the portfolio of loans facilitated while forging further collaboration with other agencies in channeling funding to agro-businesses via SK's platform.

Strengthening SK Strategic Operating Framework

To ensure sustainability, SK is ensuring that the following measures work.

- Supporting unregistered self-help groups to formalize as a cooperative society through registration with the relevant government agency (ies). This will give them legal status, making them attractive for financing. This will facilitate the ease of monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the SK model; ensuring establishment of leadership structure to ease project monitoring and reporting.
- Capacity building on risk management and loan monitoring for SPs. The SPs will, in turn, carry out a step-down training in each project location for a monthly consideration to be agreed upon by management. Since the SPs will be on retainers, they will also support the monitoring of projects.
- Remodeling of partner's deliverables with SK last mile in focus.
- Funding is channeled through major players and off-takers with the financial capacity to offtake. Still, it must have a pool of smallholder farmers as a base for local impact in line with SK's strategic objectives.
- Channeling funding through major players will also ensure ownership of credit, which is a credit default risk mitigation strategy, minimizing capital erosion.
- Access to finance by input providers with internal financing arrangement with a group of farmers or SMEs, the preceding being the basis for SK financing intermediation role.
- Non-financial intermediation (Access to finance) through value chain development services and linkages to fund service providers (Broker services) without guarantee cover (Development Financial Institution, Govt Agencies, Impact Funds).
- Reduce risk exposure by partnership with other developmental companies for risk syndication.

3.5.0 Feed the Future Nigeria Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services Activity (AEAS) – Q2 FY24

The Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services (AEAS) Activity is jointly-funded by USAID and PIND over a five-year period (May 25, 2020 – May 24, 2025). Like PIND, the Activity utilizes a facilitative approach to market development by partnering with micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and key market actors within the aquaculture, cowpea, maize, rice, and soybean value chains to pilot proven technologies, scale up successful ones, and promote the adoption of improved production practices. It also aims to improve service delivery that will rapidly, effectively, and sustainably provide access to agro-inputs and disseminate extension messaging to at least two million smallholder farmers in Benue, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Kaduna, Kebbi, and Niger states.

The Extension Activity uses Lean⁹ production principles and tools to develop a deep understanding of the existing production systems to identify the most promising opportunities (also known as most impactful practices- MIPs) and the most important constraints to improve efficiency and increase return on investment for farmers. The Extension Activity leverages MSMEs as change agents around the identified on-farm opportunities. These MSMEs are strategically placed intermediaries for upstream and downstream movement of inputs and commodities through the market system; and their businesses depend on and can grow with the enhanced competitiveness and profitability of their core customers, the smallholder producers.

Expectedly, Q2 was a lean period in the present Nigeria agricultural system. The quarter featured harvesting and marketing of FY23 dry and wet season crops, as well as planning and preparation for the FY24 wet cropping season by MSMEs and their SHFs. The preparation for the FY24 wet cropping season included mobilizing new farmers, provision of extension services and marketing of agricultural inputs to SHFs through demand stimulation, and digital extension tools by partner MSMEs.

Overall, for the FYQ2 under review, Extension Activity used demand stimulation support, video-enabled extension, and (3) agro-evangelism in faith-based organizations to promote the use of technologies and disseminate extension messaging to smallholder farmers. It continued to influence partner MSMEs to invest resources and provide agricultural financing to increase the availability and accessibility of quality agricultural inputs and services to an expanded farmer client base. The Extension Activity supported the forum of community of practice to promote partnerships and strengthen linkages among

⁹ Lean is a process-driven analytical and management set of principles and tools the Activity will use to develop a deep understanding of the existing production systems to identify the most promising opportunities and the most important constraints to improve efficiency and increase return on investment for farmers. Lean principles emerged from the Toyota Production System, known for efficiency and high net margins within its industry, and have been applied in agriculture as well as other sectors and industries in the recent decades.

institutions and stakeholders in extension to institutionalize private sector extension practices.

This report summarizes the performance of Extension Activity in the two Niger Delta states – Cross River and Delta states during the quarter (FY24 Q2).

Farmers outreach:

The Extension Activity collaborated with 17 MSMEs in Cross River and Delta states and reached a total of 3,526 farmers in FY24Q2 using mass mobilization and extension dissemination strategies including: demand stimulation and digital agricultural extension – rice app, field area measure, Plantix app, and video enabled extension. Table 1 shows the distribution of the farmers reached with extension messaging in the two states.

Table 5: Total participants in Q2-FY24

FY24 Q2 total participants	Cross River	Delta	Total
Number of individuals participating	2,745	1,462	4,207
Number of farmers participating	2,074	1,452	3,526

Demand stimulation: The Extension Activity continued to use demand stimulation as a strategy to reach SHFs through partner MSMEs. The aim of this approach is to increase access to agricultural inputs for farmers by leveraging the relationships and understanding of the farming communities within MSMEs' catchment. The Extension Activity utilized the partnership and innovation fund (PIF) to co-invest with six MSMEs in Cross River state and four MSMEs in Delta state to conduct an intensive community-level campaign on the use of improved technologies in fish and rice value chains. Through the demand stimulation, the MSMEs reached a total of 1,868 farmers in the two states with extension messaging.

Commercialization of MIPs: The Extension Activity continued to support the cohort of MSMEs to promote and commercialize improved agricultural practices for adoption by smallholder farmers. In Cross River state there are six active cohorts comprised of 62 MSMEs at the end of the current reporting period, while in Delta state, there are 13 active cohorts comprised of 137 MSMEs. The MSMEs are trained on the use of Juveniles, use of improved seeds (maize, rice), mechanized land preparation, mechanized threshing, nutrition messaging, use of biofertilizer, use of duckweed and black soldier fly larvae as complementary fish feed, optimum use of herbicides as key instruments to further grow their business and enhance farmer productivity.

Digital agricultural extension: The Extension Activity promoted the use of the following ICT tools: SMS, videos, radio, and suite of digital apps (rice app, field area measure, Plantix app) to disseminate extension messaging to smallholder farmers. It reached 1,658 smallholder farmers with extension messaging through the digital tools. Building on the success of the deployment of these ICT tools in fiscal year 2023, the Extension Activity finalized three engagements to stimulate the wider adoption of ICT tools in disseminating extension messages in the remaining quarters of the fiscal year:

- The Extension Activity utilized the partnership and innovation fund (PIF) to co-invest with six MSMEs in Cross River state and four MSMEs in Delta state to deploy the suite of digital applications including the rice app, field area measure, Plantix app, and Farmer Chatbot to smallholder farmers in their catchment area.
- The Extension Activity liaised with the Cross River Agricultural Development Program (CRADP) and Delta Agricultural and Rural Development Agency (DARDA) to assess the FY23 performance of the agencies on the video-enabled extension delivery, how to improve the quality of video extension in FY24, and how to scale the adoption of video extension in rural communities.
- The Extension Activity supported the University of Calabar to develop and integrate digital extension systems training in the university's agriculture curriculum. The Extension Activity trained lecturers in the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Calabar on digital agricultural extension and private sector extension delivery systems. About 36 senior lecturers in the faculty were trained.

Investment leveraged and Jobs:

To increase the availability and accessibility of quality agricultural inputs or services to an expanded farmer client base, the MSMEs invested in restocking inventory, purchasing new equipment, facility acquisition and expansion, and business expansion. Equipment or goods purchased includes construction of new ponds, boreholes, pumps, broodstock, feed, agrochemicals, fertilizers etc. Through capacity building of MSMEs, Extension Activity leveraged a total of NGN 402.5 million as private sector investment in Cross River and Delta states in the current reporting period. As a result of business

expansion, to serve an increasing number of customers, four MSMEs in Delta state employed nine persons as hatchery assistants to provide technical assistance in the production and commercialization of juveniles for fish production.

Access to Finance:

The Extension activity intervened in various agricultural activities during Q2 of FY24, including (i) follow up on existing deal pipelines started by erstwhile USAID-funded Agricultural Investment Activity to facilitate financial credit for produce offtake, (ii) generate business leads for partner financial institutions (iii) bundling agriculture extension with financial services, and (iv) fine-tuning of the framework for digital financial services. In Cross River state, a female owned MSME accessed NGN 94.5 million from the Bank of Agriculture to provide input financing to the 378 farmers in her network.

Collaboration and Partnerships:

The Extension Activity supports partnerships and strengthen linkages among institutions and stakeholders to promote sustainable food systems in implementing states.

In Delta state, the Extension Activity in collaboration with other agencies and agricultural stakeholders, hosted the first post inauguration meeting of the State Community of Practice in Agriculture. The forum composed of representatives of the universities, research institutions, NGOs, development partners, trade and commodity unions, lead farmers, input suppliers and MSMEs, and government agencies discussed how to increase access to government interventions for smallholder farmers. The forum also reflected on custom solutions to challenges faced by farmers in Delta and the urgency of an action plan to address these challenges. This innovative forum has brought together individuals usually working in silos to provide scalable solutions to agriculture in the state.

In Cross River state, the following are the notable collaborations and partnerships in the current period in focus:

- The Extension Activity and LIFE-ND conducted an on-spot assessment of the level of work at the model hatchery unit in Calabar to ascertain completion modalities and agree on the launch of the facility. The modern hatchery complex sits on a 1458.577 square meter of land, situated in the Cross River Agricultural Development Programme (CRADP) premises. The land is under a 5-year lease by the Calabar/Akpabuyo and Calabar fish hatchery cohorts with 21 members, subject to continuous subscription. The hatchery unit, broodstock bank, training hall, staff quarters, complementary unit, water storage unit and laboratory are near completion.
- Following the allocation of 5000 ha of land by the Cross-River State Government to Brains and Hammers in Bansara and Ntara farm belt, brokered by the Extension Activity, mapping and surveying of 1300 hectares has been completed. The community is expected to draft a term of reference which they will share with Extension Activity for a review in preparation for the proposed meeting with the Government and Brains and Hammers to sign a MOU. A female-owned partner MSME who is a member of the community serves as the representative of the community in this partnership.

The Extension Activity in partnership with the CRADP and LIFE-ND provided technical support to the State Ministry of Agriculture on the digital soil mapping in the state. The soil mapping was conducted in the three senatorial districts in the state, with CRADP capturing key activities with ICT equipment support from the Extension Activity. Similarly, the Extension Activity partnered CRADP and LIFE-ND to establish a fish hatchery and fish business incubation center. The facility has the capacity to provide and supply 12 million juveniles to fish farmers annually, train more than 500 fish farmers and provide over 1000 jobs to women and youth.

Output Level Results: Table 6 summarizes the results of performance indicators of Cross River and Delta states in comparison to the overall portfolio value for the indicators

Table 6: Output indicators for Cross River and Delta states

Performance Indicator	Cross River	Delta	Aggregate (C. River & Delta)	Overall portfolio
Number of individuals participating in USG food security programs (EG 3-2) <i>smallholder farmers</i>	2,745	1,462	4,207	70,342
Number of private sector firms providing new or improved extension and advisory services as a result of USG assistance (output; custom)	6	11	17	57
Value of new private sector investment leveraged by the USG to support food security and nutrition - EG.3.1-15	\$296,986	\$56,264	\$353,250	\$8,725,445
Increased number of new jobs, especially for youth and women, resulting from technical supports to private service	-	9	9	85

providers (outcome; RFP Section C.7)				
Value of agriculture-related financing accessed as a result of USG assistance (EG.3.2-27)	\$ 58,675	-	\$ 58,675	\$ 10,585,932
Total number of clients benefiting from financial services provided through USG-assisted financial intermediaries, including non-financial institutions or actors (EG. 4.2-1)	378	-	378	1565

Outcome Results: The outcome results will be derived from the FY24 annual survey.

4.0 Peace Building Program

The strategic thrust of the peace building program is to achieve regional and lasting peace in the Niger Delta. To achieve this, PIND is creating sustainable peace partnerships, encouraging collaboration and cooperation amongst peace actors, providing support for economic development, and strengthening indigenous structures for peace, while also creating and building interfaces with larger state-level or regional peace efforts; thereby creating an enabling environment for sustainable broad-based economic development.

The peace building program consists of two interrelated and interdependent projects: The Integrated Peace and Development Unit (IPDU) and Partners for Peace (P4P) Network. The IPDU focuses on undertaking research and providing training to local and international stakeholders to implement innovative pilot projects that show promise of making a difference on the ground. Responding quickly in a targeted manner to rapidly changing dynamics, the IPDU promotes collaboration and synergy amongst existing local, regional, and national efforts of actors in both public and private sectors to develop/deploy early warning and response mechanisms to address conflict, with a focus on gender and youth.

The P4P Network is PIND’s strategy towards establishing social infrastructure and capital across all nine states of the Niger Delta. In the last five years, PIND has established a network of self-identified agents of peace that have deployed the power of grassroots networking towards building peace in the region. Using conflict analyses and early warning as key instruments, P4P identifies, and supports existing initiatives, and creates new ones to address the conflict risk factors. The P4P Network currently has chapters and subchapters in all the 9 States and 119 LGAs of the Niger Delta.

In the current strategic phase (2020-2024), the Peace Network is focusing on establishing and strengthening grassroots conflict resolution initiatives that promote a more enabling, integrated, and peaceable environment conducive for economic growth and development in the region.

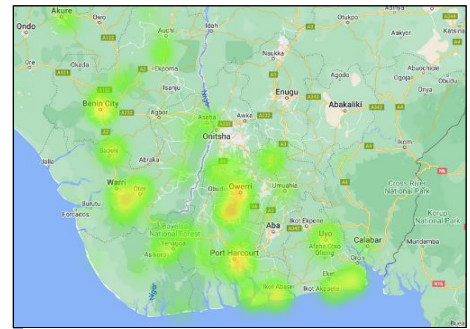
PIND’s Peace Building Program contributes to this global Sustainable Development Goal:



This section highlights key achievements of the Peace Building program in Q1,2024.

4.1 Niger Delta Peace Outlook in Q1 2024

PIND is relentlessly undertaking interventions to engender conflict prevention, conflict management and peacebuilding in the Niger Delta region as part of the plan of action aimed at keeping the level of violence low, particularly in key communities of interest. This is through continued building of the social infrastructure and social capital of peace actors across the region for long term sustainable peace. Our strategy recognizes the need for an integrated and comprehensive approach to tackling the complex causes and drivers of conflict; adopting innovative approaches to work on problems of militancy, election violence, gang/cult violence, communal violence, and the cross-cutting issue of Violence Affecting Women and Girls (VAWG).



Niger Delta Conflict Fatalities Heat Map, Q1 2024

There were improvements in the peace and security situation in the Niger Delta in the first quarter of 2024, to which PIND's efforts is contributing. A decrease in the level of conflict risk and lethal violence was observed during the quarter compared to the fourth quarter of 2023. According to data uploaded on the P4P Peace Map, lethal violence decreased by 43.5% from 234 fatalities in Q4 of 2023 to 132 in Q1 of 2024. Reported incidents of conflict risk and violence also decreased by 45.6% from 173 in Q4 of 2023 to 94 in Q1 of 2024. According to data, there was a decrease in organized criminal violence including kidnap for ransom and clashes between hoodlums and government security forces during the quarter compared to the fourth quarter of 2023. Criminal violence decreased by 52.8% from 193 fatalities in Q4 of 2023 to 91 fatalities in Q1 of 2024. Similarly, violent clashes between cult gangs reduced by 21.7% from 28 fatalities in Q4 of 2023 to 18 in Q1 of 2024. There was also a reduction in communal conflict over land and boundary disputes as well as clashes between herders and farmers during the period. Data uploaded on the P4P Peace Map shows that communal violence decreased by 40.6% from 32 reported fatalities in Q4 of 2023 to 19 fatalities in Q1 of 2024. Conflict risk and lethal violence during the quarter were mainly driven by organized criminality including kidnap for ransom as well as clashes between hoodlums and government security forces.

4.2 Peace building highlights of activities in Q1 2024

In Q1 of 2024, PIND produced and disseminated numerous data-driven and research-based conflict early warning products to update peace and security stakeholders and facilitated several preventive interventions in the Niger Delta. PIND produced 14 data-driven research and analytical products including 13 weekly conflict briefs and 1 Niger Delta Annual (2023) conflict report. These were disseminated to local, national and international peace actors to create situational awareness, stakeholder's update, conflict mapping/analysis, and to share information, knowledge and best practices on conflict mitigation and peacebuilding in the Niger Delta. These conflict reports spotlighted key thematic conflict issues in the region including organized criminality, gang violence, communal conflict, mob violence, and human rights including sexual violence during the period.

Peace actors' interventions to positively transform the peace and security landscape in the region were of various context and dimensions. Being the first quarter of the year, most of P4P activities centered on administration for smooth implementation of the 2024 work plan as designed. However, several activities of Q4 of 2023 that were not completed continued. Some of them were strengthening of the existing subchapters of P4P and peace clubs in schools in all the states.

EU-PIND Violent Conflict and Criminality Transformation Project:

One of PIND's key activities during the quarter was the technical support of the integrated peace development unit (IPDU) towards the implementation of the European Union- Niger Delta (EU-ND) Project titled, "A Community-centered Approach to Transforming Criminality and Violence in the Niger Delta." The 6.5million Euros project is implemented by consortium of partners - Search for Common Ground (SFCG), Stakeholder Democracy Network (SDN) and Academic Associates Peace Works (AAPW), and PIND. PIND drives the EWER and social cohesion component of the interventions through the IPDU. The Central goal of the project is to foster inclusive community peace and security approaches to address the systemic drivers of violence and criminality in Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers States. It has four activities streams as follows:



PIND project team on community entry trip to Bayelsa community

- **Stream 1:** will foster intra-community collaboration around issues of social exclusion, lack of economic opportunity, and environmental degradation.
- **Stream 2:** will build trust and collaboration between communities and government and security actors for more participatory, community-centered security operations.
- **Stream 3:** will leverage arts- and culture-based approaches to foster social cohesion between divided communities both online and offline.
- **Stream 4:** will facilitate policy change to institutionalize community-centered security approaches at the local, state, regional, national, and international levels.

Activities commenced with community entry; where 66 communities in 23 LGAs in the 3 benefiting states- (Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers) were visited. The objective of the community entry was basically to create awareness of the project among critical community stakeholders, seek their acceptance and ownership in order to kickstart the project.



EU Project National Launch, Abuja

The project was already launch in the Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers respectively with over a thousand persons in attendance from federal, states and local government. Others in attendance were national and international CSOs, community leaders and intergovernmental organizations. Similarly, over 330 persons were trained in EWER system. The purpose of the training was to expand PIND’s EWER infrastructure by adding new peace monitors to the existing system to ensure timely reporting of violence and criminal activities in the Niger Delta communities, especially within the project communities.

4.3 Key/immediate peace building outcomes in Q1 2024.

Analysis of the utilization of PIND’s data products revealed that 904 stakeholders¹⁰ utilized PIND’s peacebuilding data and analysis during the review period. Also, 19 stakeholders whose capacities had been strengthened through PIND/P4P facilitated training¹¹ sessions and workshops, applied the skills they had acquired to promote peace and tackle conflict in their communities while, 326 peace actors (P4P members) constructively resolved emerging conflicts in various communities in the Niger Delta, utilizing 30 ‘quality actions’¹² to resolve these conflicts within the reporting period.

4.4 Quality and comprehensive policies and strategies that promote a peaceful non-violent society.

Progress was made towards the validation and launch of the Niger Delta Regional Peacebuilding Strategy (NDRPS) in Q1 2024. After deliberations with the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA) on the draft report submitted to it last year, suggestions were made to harmonize the draft report with a report produced by the Civil Special Tactical Services (CSTS). This harmonization has been carried out, and a final draft report was produced, with a validation session and a formal report launch scheduled for Q2 2024.

4.5 Behavior changes by peace actors to tackle conflict and promote peace in Q1 2024.

PIND’s peace efforts are geared towards preventing and resolving conflicts. Through its Integrated Peace Development Unit (IPDU) and the Partners for Peace (P4P) network, PIND has continued to facilitate training and workshops to enhance capacities of peace actors to constructively mitigate conflicts. Some examples of the way these peace actors have applied skills gained to promote peace and tackle conflict in Q1, are given in table 4.

Table 7. Examples of quality actions carried out by peace actors in Q1 2024

Resolving Leadership Tussle in Rivers State Community
<p>Christopher, a community leader from Erema community, attended the conflict resolution and leadership training PIND organized in February 2024. In March 2024, he was part of a team of community leaders that intervened and resolved a chieftaincy tussle between two chiefs in Erema, Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni LGA of Rivers State, which have lasted for more than three months. Both claimed to be the rightful ruler of the community. One of the chiefs arrested the other, detained him in a Police station and the case taken to Court. The case generated high tensions</p>

¹⁰ Local/international organizations and individuals who used conflict tracker as a source of security information to support their program planning and works in the Niger Delta region.

¹¹ Training areas: capacity to provide further training to others; engage in conflict mitigation efforts in their communities; write proposals to receive funding for their organizations; enable them to become better leaders in their communities; report conflict issues to the PIND/SMS platform; engage in peacebuilding awareness campaigns against electoral violence; empowerment to make a difference as regards conflict issues in the community; and ability to analyze conflict trends and patterns.

¹² Actions have to meet at least three of five criteria to be considered as ‘Quality actions’. 1. All key stakeholders consulted. 2. Intervention focuses on identified risk. 3. Intervention contributes to risk reduction/ mitigation of group-based violence. 4 Intervention affects a significant number of people positively. 5 Impact of the intervention is long lasting (based on the context and nature of the problem).

in the community as supporters of the detained Chief mobilized against the supporters of the other Chief. Meanwhile, Chris, who just got trained in conflict mitigation/resolutions decided to apply his peacebuilding skill by coopting relevant people to secure the release of the detained chief from Police detention. He invited the two chiefs for a dialogue and insisted that the case be settled out of Court. Eventually, the case was withdrawn from Court. He is working with the elders of the community to resolve the issue permanently. Right now, several meetings to decide who becomes the community chief have been held, while both have maintained peaceful outlook.

Preventing Ethnic Conflicts in Uzuakoli, Abia State

Agnes, a P4P member whose capacity was enhanced in conflict management and EWER intervened in a community conflict between Hausa communities and the locals in Uzuakoli, Bende LGA of Abia State. For a long time, the Uzuakoli community were not happy with the Hausa youths' scavengers, as some accusations were pointed at them for theft and other vices. The Uzuakoli people have been complaining about their activities in the community to each other. In February 2024, one of them was caught for stealing and was being beaten by the irate youths. When Agnes saw it, her conflict sensitivity was provoked, and she decided to act immediately. Trained as a peace champion, possessed skills to mitigate and resolve conflict, Mrs. Agnes called the police who came to the rescue of the scavenger and he was taken to a hospital for treatment. This is a demonstration of a community-based conflict mitigation efforts as death of the boy would portend a heavy conflict risk between the Hausa and Igbo communities.

5. General Enabling Program

PIND's interventions fall under two distinct but interrelated program areas: (1) an Economic Development program focused on generating opportunities for pro-poor market development and employment generation; and (2) a Peace Building program that strengthens conflict resolution mechanisms for enabling integrated peace and economic growth.

Additional initiatives designed to support, enable, measure, and communicate the results and achievements of the 2 core pillars of Economic Development and Peace Building include:

- Capacity building that will build the service delivery and engagement capacity of business membership organizations, civil society organizations and communities.

- Advocacy that seeks to influence policies, practices and programs underpinned by in-depth analyses and understanding of systemic constraints to growth in the Niger Delta region.

- A robust communications and outreach effort that enhances PIND's reputation through clear and consistent messaging via multiple channels, of its unique selling points, transformative approaches, impacts, and learning.

PIND's General Enabling Program contributes to the following Sustainable Development Goals:



This section shows key achievements in Quarter 1 of 2024 for all initiatives implemented under the General Enabling Program.

5.1 Capacity Building

As one of PIND's key enablers, the Capacity Building program is designed and positioned to strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of government, civil society, and business associations/service providers, "for effective socio-economic engagement, inclusive governance for growth, and peaceful co-existence in the Niger Delta". It directly contributes to both PIND's long-term objective and overall goal.

The Program was designed to focus on two major areas, the first being to strengthen the capacity of local development organizations in the Niger Delta to adopt the market systems approach through the Capacity Building for Local

Empowerment (CAPABLE) Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P) project. M4P is an overarching approach to development that provides agencies and governments with the direction required to achieve large-scale sustainable change by focusing on underlying constraints that prevent the poor from participating effectively in markets. As part of its continued support to CAPABLE organizations this year, PIND is providing direct mentorship to selected organizations to implement projects using the market systems approach, and handholding on proposal writing and fund mobilization to diversify their funding base.

The second area of focus for the project is to strengthen the institutions that support the Chevron Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) community engagement process and enable them to carry out developmental projects that improve the livelihood of people living in the communities. Between 2020 and 2021, PIND carried out a series of activities aimed at strengthening the institutions that support the Chevron GMOU and Regional Development Committees (RDCs) now HCDTs, including supporting the implementation of the recommendations from the 2018 Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) conducted on the RDCs. These include coaching, mentoring and training conducted for various committees of the RDCs including those in Video production and photography, Sustainable Project Management, and on gender equality and social inclusion.

This year, PIND's focus is on supporting CNL's transition from RDCs to HCDTs by developing appropriate Capacity building activities to support the various structures of the HCDTs including the Board, Advisory, and management committees. Chevron, in compliance with the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) of 2021, is establishing Host Community Development Trusts (HCDTs) to drive community development projects in their host communities. This legally backed structure is replacing Chevron's Regional Development Councils (RDCs) which were previously saddled with this responsibility. PIND is expected to support the HCDT organizational capacity for effective operations as it did with the RDCs as part of its ongoing collaboration with CNL through its PGPA unit.

Baseline Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) for HCDTs

PIND carried out the baseline OCA for Ugboland HCDT in Ondo State, which is one of the HCDTs established by CNL. The HCDT was assessed across 13 domains which include leadership, project and financial management, human resource management, fundraising and mobilization, peacebuilding, etc. The overall findings revealed that the Ugboland HCDT has an organizational capacity index (OCI) of 0.5 against a total of 5 which showed that the organization has a very low capacity and is in its earliest or nascent stages of development, and thus needs significant support. A capacity development plan was also developed for the HCDT to support its growth and strengthening. In the coming quarters, a validation workshop will be carried out to validate the findings which will lead to implementation of the capacity development plans. The baseline OCA will also be carried out for three other CNL-registered HCDTs.

Training of MSP Members and HCDTs in M&E – The Bridges Project

In Q1 2024, PIND as part of its collaboration with Ford Foundation on the Bridges Project, carried out the 5th Meeting of its MSP which also included an M&E training for the HCDTs and other members of the MSP. The M&E training ensured that the MSP members were equipped with the necessary skills for effective project implementation within their communities as part of the PIA processes. There was also a consensus that capacity-building training would be included in subsequent MSP meetings. The MSP meeting continued to harvest experiences, feedback and recommendations on the implementation of the PIA process.



MSP M&E training participants

Organizations providing services:

Two organizations that have been supported through PIND's CAPACITY building activities in the past continued to provide various forms of services, applying skills and learnings gained from the support. These organizations include **Development Initiative for Community Impact (DICI)** and **Asfabetta MSS (Management Support Service)**

DICI has been applying the knowledge and skills gained from PIND in supporting the organizational capacity strengthening of various institutions to drive economic growth in the Niger Delta. She has supported two HCDTs that were established by other IOCs to develop capacity-building plans and trained them on various areas of organizational strengthening. Asfabetta MSS has provide several services and assessment which includes an end line survey under the *Talkam Against Trafficking in Persons (TATIP) for DEVATOP Centre for Africa Development*. It also carried out a capacity assessment to identifying potential gaps in the *Sight savers-OPD* (Organizations of people with Disabilities) relationship, gaining insights into challenges faced by OPDs, and collaboratively developing an action plan for OPD capacity building.

Number of persons trained:

This quarter, the Capacity building team facilitated training on the Market systems Development approach for the staff of PIND foundation. This training was organized to enable staff to have a better understanding and appreciation of the development approach as well as to create a synergy among the various units of the organization. This training became necessary considering the large number of new persons who have joined the organization over the last one year. A total of 25 participants including 11 females attended the training.

Also, a knowledge-sharing workshop was organized for 10 implementing partners and co-facilitators for PIND's Economic Development (ED) program. This workshop was facilitated by DAI, the technical partner for PIND's ED program, and also served as a refresher for the participants on some key concepts of MSD as well as helped to share knowledge on its application in the region.

5.2 Advocacy

PIND's advocacy focus continued to be on three key work areas: to influence spending and funding from government, donors, and the private sector organizations on new projects in the Niger Delta; address issues of inadequate access to arable land for smallholder farmers, and constraints on small businesses brought about by multi-taxation and illegal levies; and to support institutionalizing strategies in peacebuilding efforts that will promote conflict prevention across the Niger Delta.

In Q1 of 2024, PIND continued to build on the progress made across its advocacy intervention areas and related activities in 2023, providing the needed momentum and aspiring towards ending the 2020-2024 strategic period on a high note. To sustain its government engagement, PIND's strategy has been largely based on working with principal officers in the Civil Service while carrying along the political appointees (Such as Commissioners, Special Advisers, etc.). This approach was intensified in Q1, and efforts towards influencing Government spending funding into the region were prioritized. There is adequate evidence to suggest that states are increasing their spending and reporting increased support for development activities despite the current level of contracting economic activities in the country as a whole.

The implementation of the PIA Bridges Project was intensified with the MSP deliberations advancing towards achieving the project's set objectives. There is real hope of harvesting the valuable contributions from the platform and opportunities from the project implementation in 2024.

The FAO's FOLUR project started in Cross River and Ondo States with PIND playing key implementing roles in Q1. PIND also collaborated with the state governments on groundbreaking non-program activities relating to the restoration and preservation of the mangrove forest, and the preservation of the ecosystem for conservation and environmental sustainability, and signed an MoU with SERENDIB to support and participate in the carbon reduction space

Equitable access to land by smallholder farmers.

PIND continued its collaboration with arable land committees in Edo and Ondo states to assist in finalizing policy and legislative processes relating to access to land for smallholder farmers in Q1 2024. PIND is supporting the articulation and review of draft policies and legislation in collaboration with the respective States' arable land committees and the Ministries of Justice to develop a draft policy document.

Multiple Taxation and Illegal Levy Intervention

PIND consolidated its multiple taxation and illegal levies implementation activities based on the successes of the last quarter of 2023 and made notable progress towards fulfilling its set strategic objectives in this regard. Part of the action item set for this intervention in 2024 is the production of a documentary on multiple taxation and illegal levies and their effect on small businesses in the Niger Delta and the publication of the final report has been submitted for external editing and printing. In Q1 2024, sufficient progress was made towards preparing for the production of the multiple taxation and illegal levies documentary.

Also, PIND's policy advocacy efforts in this regard which include the submission of a Memorandum and engagements with the Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms have been yielding promising positive responses, as what is emanating from the committee's activities towards tax reforms are in line with PIND's recommendations. The

chairman of the committee has made commitments towards curtailing the use of touts to administer the collection of taxes and levies, retraining tax collectors and ensuring civility in the collection process, harmonizing taxes, and also exploring the use of a mobile platform to collect taxes which is a step towards digitalization of the tax collection process as recommended by PIND. The committee also announced a directive by the Presidency to reduce the number of taxes which are presently over 40 to 9. Efforts to accomplish this are presently underway by the President of the Committee and the FIRS. This marks a huge step in the advocacy for the harmonization of taxes across all levels to create a conducive environment for businesses – [“We are not recruiting area boys to collect tax; Groundbreaking Economic Reforms for Nigeria’s Revival”](#)

Engagements with the Tax Justice and Governance platform continued in Quarter 1 with discussions on establishing a body of BMOs and CSOs to help intensify the advocacy for tax policy reform in the focal Niger Delta States and to also contribute to the implementation of PINDs advocacy efforts towards these policy reforms.

Government Engagement

PIND collaborated with agricultural development and environmental conservation organization to support mangrove conversation efforts in five Niger Delta states. This initiative attracted the support of the Edo State Governor, His Excellency Godwin Obaseki, who reached out to other Niger Delta State Governors to solicit for a common regional approach to the mangrove issues. The issuance of a communique to this effect at the BRACED Commission Governor’s meeting in February 2024 was a testament to this commitment. PIND collaborated with agricultural development and environmental conservation organization to support mangrove conversation efforts in five Niger Delta states. This initiative attracted the support of the Edo State Governor, His Excellency Godwin Obaseki, who reached out to other Niger Delta State Governors to solicit for a common regional approach to the mangrove issues. The issuance of a communique to this effect at the BRACED Commission Governor’s meeting in February 2024 was a testament to this commitment.



Serendib and Delta State Government MoU Signing

Also, in this regard, PIND supported the signing of the MoU between Serendib and the Delta State government. Serendib Capital is an advisory service and financial asset restructuring firm that specializes in carbon offset projects and seeks opportunities to reduce emissions and create marketable carbon offset credits that contribute to climate change mitigation efforts. PIND will facilitate community engagement for SERENDIB on alternative livelihood and community relationships. This signifies a crucial step towards the restoration, conservation, enhancing sustainable development and fostering economic growth in the region

On the FAO FOLURIP project, PIND participated in the inception and project flag-off meeting organized by FAO and Cross River State government, and contributed to crafting the project implementation strategic work plan.

PIND facilitated a linkage between the Special Assistant (SA) on ICT to the Governor of Rivers State and the Youth Empowerment Program (YEP). The purpose was to establish a working relationship between the Rivers State government and PIND through the Youth Employment Pathways project and the state-owned capacity-building program. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed in March 2023 to guide this collaboration.

NDLink

NDLink consolidated the gains it had made due to innovations and strategies which led to improved platform traffic in 2023. The key focus of Q1 2024 was facilitating improved engagement on the platform, delivering more value to its stakeholders, and exploring feasible strategies for revenue generation. Improved engagement was made possible with the implementation of a content plan with positive results evident in the number of comments indicator which saw increased numbers compared to the previous quarter. The NDLink jobs & opportunities page also attracted a high amount of engagement from stakeholders attracting 4,207 visits, with users recognizing the NDlink platform as a valuable source for opportunities in the Niger Delta. This ensures that clients and other stakeholders can have a wider selection of options regarding paid-for services on the NDLink platform.

PIND responded to the recommendation of referencing user data to track the NDLINK performance records. This highlighted the need for improved engagement and the need to create a content plan to address consistency issues on the platform. In response, a content plan was created to guide weekly posts on the platform, highlighting topics which have the potential to generate engagement and activities which organically improve the reach and brand recognition of the platform amongst stakeholders. This has yielded positive results, contributing to NDLINK’s organic marketing strategy



with improved reach across all platforms.

Due to NDLINKS improved engagement and visibility during the reporting period, two Niger Delta-based organizations with international affiliations reached out to NDLINK for partnership/collaboration considerations. These are: Wikimedia Niger Delta group, a local subsidiary of Wikipedia, the world’s largest online Encyclopedia. This group aims to amplify facts, research, and stories from the Niger Delta and identified NDLINK as the most valued organization to partner with. The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) also sought to collaborate with the NDLINK platform concerning the facilitation of advocacy activities on gender equality within the region.

Within the reporting period, NDLINK developed content to celebrate World Education Day, and International Day of Clean Energy and was pivotal in developing a strategy for PIND Foundation’s celebration of International Women’s Day 2024. To mark International Day of Education, NDLINK profiled an organization based in Niger Delta, Keeping It Real Foundation (KIR) which campaigns for educational inclusivity within the region. NDLINK also provided support for GESI activities and PIND’s Communications to develop an online campaign to mark International Women’s Day 2024. NDLINK supported PIND’s Peacebuilding program with the weekly dissemination of the Conflict tracker, which was extensively downloaded by platform users.

NDLINK’s result for the three target indicators showed that there were 3,479 downloads of development resources; 3,047 people became aware of development programs implemented in the Niger Delta via NDLINK and 48 people gave comments or feedback on issues catalyzed by PIND NDLINK platform. As value for money action, the NDLINK platform focused on an organic marketing campaign with positive results, leveraging robust engagement strategies to improve website engagement and reach, without using paid adverts in this quarter.

5.3 Communications

PIND’s communications’ activities focus on boosting visibility and engagement, and strengthening its brand to attract partnerships and encourage the adoption of PIND’s models of sustainable development.

Sharing Knowledge on PIND’s Development Models

In Q1 2024, PIND participated in or hosted 10 forums where it shared its models for socio-economic development in the Niger Delta, evidence of its work, and lessons learned to 579 target stakeholders of the Foundation. These forums seek to stimulate increased visibility, promote the Foundation’s business development objectives, possible replication of the Foundation’s development models, and foster opportunities for new partnerships –ANNEX 1 for detailed forums.

1. Social Media

PIND shared 477 social media posts during the period in review, which led to 433,640 engagements in the form of likes, comments, and shares. We reached 2,085,281 people with content on PIND’s social media platforms.

Table 8: Summary of the social media posts during the period in Q1 2024

S/N	Social Media Platform	Number of Persons Reached
1	Facebook	1,637,089
2	Instagram	393,605

3	LinkedIn	23,641
4	Twitter	26,606
5	YouTube	4,340

2. Newsletter

PIND produced and disseminated three newsletters to recipients in target stakeholder groups during the quarter in review reaching 2,680 subscribers for the quarter. PIND also had 194 new subscribers this quarter and there was an overall average open rate of 27% for the quarter. (The opening rate is the percentage of subscribers who opened the newsletter from the email inbox).

3. PIND Website

In Q4, we actively posted content on the PIND website and strategically used social media to drive traffic to the web posts. This attracted 21,730 individuals to PIND’s website for the first time, exposing them to PIND’s work, results, and models.

Table 9: PIND’s website performance summary in Q1 2024.

Website Performance Summary for Q1 2024:

- 21,202** new visitors learned about PIND for the first time.
- 8,455** repeat visitors returned to the website to learn more about PIND;
- 59% were male, and 41% were female** users reached by the website
- 58** new content about PIND, and partners shared
- 36,651** new views of posted content. PIND pages that increased awareness of PIND
- 10,570** total page views of posted content, and PIND pages that increased awareness of PIND
- 43%** of visitors searched directly to access the website
- 16,971** downloads of PIND’s knowledge products to learn more, making PIND a thought-leader

The website had most of the new and repeat visitors attracted from high donor countries like the USA, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Norway, France, Netherlands, Canada and our Nigerian audience.

4. Email Enquiries

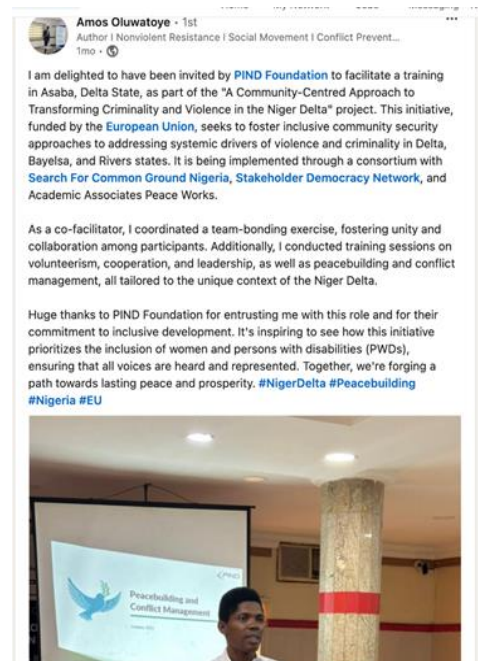
PIND received 156 email and social media inquiries in Q1. Most of these inquiries sought information on partnerships or collaborations, job opportunities, and invitations for PIND to share knowledge at academic research, case studies on PIND, and access to PIND-promoted technologies and services, among others. Inquiries also included more information on the YEP Program. These inquiries indicate increased visibility and better positioning of PIND as a thought leader and go-to organization on issues of socioeconomic development in the Niger Delta.

5. Mainstream Media

A section of PIND’s target stakeholders are individuals with little digital media presence or activities. These stakeholders are usually not subscribed to our digital platforms. We work to reach these stakeholders using the mainstream/ traditional media – which are print and broadcast. In Q1, 2024 PIND reached 316,000 individuals via mainstream media. PIND had 36 mainstream media mentions, all positive. A majority of our media outreach was on Peacebuilding activities such as the launch of the European Union-funded project “A Community-centered Approach to Transforming Criminality and Violence in the Niger Delta.”

6 Public Endorsements of PIND

PIND received 67 public endorsements, appreciating, acknowledging, or commending the Foundation’s work in the region. These endorsements are public statements by key stakeholders: government, partners, the media, project participants, and the general public. The figure below is an example of an endorsement by **Amos Oluwatoye – Author Nonviolence, Social Movement Conflict Prevention**: *“I am delighted to have been invited by PIND FOUNDATION to facilitate a training in Asaba, Delta State, as part of the Community-Centered Approach to Transforming Criminality and Violence in the Niger Delta Project”.....*



5.4 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

PIND's commitment to gender and social inclusion underpins its efforts to achieve greater gender equality as a key pathway towards sustainable poverty reduction and shared security and prosperity in the Niger Delta. At the center of PIND's 2020–2024 strategic plan is the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of poor women and girls, persons with disabilities and the most vulnerable population. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) mainstreaming as a cross cutting theme is embedded within PIND's programs and projects to ensure that its activities are inclusive, reflect equitable participation and access to benefits.

Organizational Gender mainstreaming summary

PIND has a strategic target of enabling at least 81,000 women (40% of the overall target) to increase their incomes, thereby positioning women's economic empowerment at the core of its economic development implementation activities.

In Q1 2024, the total outreach who participated in various economic development interventions was 13,188, out of which 7,688 (58%) were males and 5,500 (42%) were females. We recorded 17 PWD who got enrolled in YEP training.

Outreach - Gender Summary Q1-Q4 2024						
		Total	female	% females	males	males %
MSD	Cassava	3,811	2,088	55%	1,723	45.2%
	Cocoa	2,176	710	33%	1,466	67.4%
	Palm oil	3,134	1,031	33%	2,103	67.1%
	Poultry	2,132	920	43%	1,212	56.8%
	MSMEs	1,504	595	40%	909	60.4%
	Total	12,757	5,344	41.89%	7,413	58.1%
YEP	YEP	431	156	36%	275	63.8%
EDP	YEP+MDP	13,188	5,500	41.70%	7,688	58.3%
PB	PB training	760	274	36%	486	64%
Overall average		13,948	5,774	41.39%		
PWD (YEP)			17			
PWD (PB)			6			

Table 10: Outreach – Gender disaggregation for Q1 2024

Similarly, a total of 274 women (36% of the total beneficiaries); 486 men (64% of the total beneficiaries); 300 youths (40% of the total beneficiaries) and 6 PWDs (0.8% of the total beneficiaries) participated in various peacebuilding interventions including: conflict mitigation, forums on peace and stability, skills enhancements, and mentorships, for the advancement of sustainable peace in the region.

In summary, the organization-wide gender mainstreaming in Q1 2024 was 5,774 (41.39%) from a total of 13,928 surpassing 2023 annual target of 40%. While persons with disabilities (PWDs) were 23 from PB and YEP.



2024 International Women's Day (IWD)

Every year, PIND joins the International Community to celebrate the International Women Day.

This year's IWD was celebrated on May 8. The UN theme for this year was "Count her in: Accelerate gender equality through economic empowerment" and "Invest in women: Accelerate progress" while the UN campaign theme was "Inspire Inclusion".

In PIND's usual practice, joined the campaign and carried out in-house activities to commemorate the 2024 IWD event.

In collaboration with PIND's Communications and NDLink teams, PIND staff featured in the IWD

social media cards designed with messages that portrayed support for the theme which was posted on all our social media platforms.

5.3 Business Development

In line with its effort to diversify and expand its funding base, PIND continued to engage potential partners to explore new opportunities across its program areas by strengthening and facilitating internal collaboration and coordination to deepen business development efforts. The collective effort on business development and sustainability has yielded significant milestones since the fourth quarter of 2022. Following the establishment of the business development committee and subcommittee, PIND has witnessed an unprecedented level of internal cooperation both at the board, management, and technical levels to sustain its drive for increased funding, partnerships, and investments for the implementation of development interventions in line with its vision.

To enhance internal collaboration and coordination to deepen business development efforts, in Q1 2024, the BDS Committee and Subcommittee meetings were held to discuss the progress of PIND's sustainability efforts, and projects in view or being implemented. Also, the BDS team followed up with submitted proposals to Heritage Energy Operation Ltd, online donor research, and engagement meetings with potential donors and partners such as Population Services International (PSI). We have also subscribed to one philanthropic association (African Philanthropy Foundation) and two impact investment development foundations (AVPA and Impact Investment Foundation).

Key BDS highlights in Q1 2024 are as follows:

- Enyimba Economic City Development (EECD) – an MoU drafted: EECD is the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Company empowered by the Afrexim Bank, the Federal Government of Nigeria, and other private-sector partners to develop and manage the Enyimba Economic City (EEC), 9,464 hectares of Greenfield Integrated City, connecting 11 States of South/South and South East within 150Km radius and captive population of close to 60 million. PIND has had an initial meeting with EECD and has drafted both an NDA and an MOU for potential collaboration in several of the PIND's MSD and peacebuilding programs.
- CRESCENDO - an MOU on identified areas of collaboration: During the quarter under review, PIND met with CRESCENDO Worldwide, a leading global management consulting firm that supports organizations, governments, countries & individuals to improve their performance & foster sustainable growth, it is also a business consultancy and financial advisory firm with a global presence and clientele in over 150 countries. PIND has developed an MOU on possible areas of collaboration with CRESCENDO. The MOU has been reviewed by PIND and awaiting review from CRESCENDO.
- Bank of Industry (BOI)- a joint committee by BOI and PIND formed: A high-level meeting was held at the Bank of Industry office in Abuja within PINDs efforts to collaborate with BOI on access to energy and finance by MSMEs. It was agreed that both parties form a joint committee of BOI and PIND to progress a proposal and Mou around interventions on Access to Renewable Energy projects in the Niger Delta. The committee has been formed but has yet to meet to deepen the discussion as agreed.

6 Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges

Market Development and Peace Building Programs:

- High Inflation: Effect of high inflation is negatively affecting farmers and MSMEs in their businesses. For example, Service providers have reduced numbers of on-farm demonstrations due to the soaring cost of transports and other inputs. This is also affecting farmers as their purchasing power has been drastically affected. To mitigate the effect of the current high inflation and other Macro-economic harsh outlook on the activities of farmers/MSMEs, PIND is building the capacity of service Service Providers to explore other options of providing GAP training to farmers, and as well, develop capacity to purchase input in bulk to reduce unit cost of inputs.
- Insecurity: unabated farmers - herders' conflicts across the Niger Delta region and other community conflicts also disrupted field activities in some communities within the reporting period such as witnessed recently in Bomadi LGA of Delta state. It hindered mobilization and training of farmers in those locations. The Peace building team would continue to leverage on the P4P and IPDU structure to activate states p4p prevent committee and other network of peace champions across the region for conflict mitigations and resolutions.

Youth Employment Pathways Program:

- During participant mobilization in Akure and surrounding areas, a significant number of applicants were screened out because they were above the desired age range, highlighting the pressing issue of unemployment and the crucial need for vocational skills, particularly in agriculture, within the state. PIND will continue to work with the IPs to innovate and expand their reach to more youths irrespective of their ages, beyond PIND's support.
- Mobilizing trainees from riverine communities, especially those residing in remote areas of Ondo State, proved

challenging due to distance. While there was interest in the program, many could not make the final list due to logistical constraints. PIND is exploring innovative options to help IPs expand their coverage within the state.

- Feedback from the implementing Partners was that inflation has led to about a 150% increase in the prices of training materials compared to initial projections during grant bidding, posing financial challenges for the program. PIND continues to explore new and customized options to recommend to the Implementing Partners so as to reduce the burden of transportation and other ancillary costs of participation in the training program.

Access to Energy:

- Exchange Rate Volatility: The exchange rate volatility in Nigeria's foreign currency impacted the overall cost of Solar PV renewable energy sector, making it more expensive or difficult for private investors to secure the necessary funding and resources.
- Macro-economic challenges around inflation and companion energy tariffs: This is having a knock-on effect on the off grid renewable energy sector by the persistent lack of equity for start-up companies mirrors global trends and shows investors risk aversion after months of worsening macroeconomic factors, such as rising interest rates and volatile forex. PIND will continue to collaborate with the partner power developers, provide capacity building support around entrepreneurship to mitigate risk aversions.
- Market actors in renewable energy mostly operate across the various regions, making it challenging to focus their business plan on a single regional market of the ND. However, to improve the value proposition, PIND's regional strategy therefore makes room for innovation and a holistic consideration of developers participating in wider for-profit initiatives in the sector without necessarily distorting the ND markets.

Lessons Learned

Youth Employment Program:

Implementing Partners collaborating with the Ondo States Board for Adult Technical Vocational Education (BATVE) have facilitated a productive working relationship between the implementing partner and the trainers at the BATVE Training Facility. So far, their enthusiasm and readiness to cooperate have been instrumental in achieving our goals. Implementing Partners are learning the importance of flexibility in material procurement, adapting to changes in pricing and availability to ensure smooth program operations.

7.0 Program Management

Governance and Accountability: Meetings of the following PIND sub-committees were held in Q1 2024: Project and Programs; Audit and Compliance; Business Development and Sustainability (BDS); Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI); and Advocacy and Partnership sub-committee. Key agreements reached at these sub-committee meetings, along with M&E updates on program implementation were reported to PIND's Board. The team coordinated development of the 2024 operating plans and targets which were approved during the Q1 board meetings.

Also, within the quarter, PIND commenced her Participatory Strategic Review (PSR) with the engagement of New Nigeria Foundation (NNF) as the main facilitator for the PSR process. As at the end of Q1, the PSR planning stages (PSR Framing Strategy and planning workshop) were completed.

Organizational Sustainability: In line with its effort to diversify and expand its income, the first quarter of 2024 saw robust engagement with donors, a deepening of partnerships, and several collaboration opportunities. The BDS Team facilitated one physical work session on Impact Investment for PIND's Managers in Lagos, and 3 additional online sessions facilitated by Cross-Boundary as part of internal capacity-building for PIND Program Managers. The BDS also engaged several potential impact investment partners including the Ministry of Finance Incorporated (MoFI), Bank of Industry (BOI), Development Bank of Nigeria (DBN), CRESCENDO Worldwide, Enyimba Economic City Development, and Population Services International (PSI).

Organizational effectiveness, health, safety, and security:

PIND continued to invest resources to promote wellbeing and safeguard employees' lives. This quarter, Operations provided optimal and seamless services to consultants and stakeholders which invariably contributed to the overall quality and value addition to PIND's operations. In addition to seamless logistics support for the smooth execution of operations and projects implementations, PIND Integrated Platform (PIP) was constantly being reviewed and updates done to enhance IT management.

In addition, the team successfully completed the training on incident /emergency/crisis management, capacity building of PIND support staff, processing of utility bills, management of communication equipment and relationship with stakeholders/vendors, vehicle maintenance and repairs, managed events and workshops within and outside PIND’s premises, onboarding of new staff and general equipment and facilities management.

Project support services:

PIND’s procurement and contract administration services ensured that procedures, processes, protocols, and systems were utilized in line with PIND’s policies and procedures. 34 contracts/grants worth ₦356.52 million were awarded in Q1 2024. There was more use of the Service Order instrument as contracting instruments compared to the others as most annual contracts were renewed and engagement of consultants for the implementation of the EU Consortium project.

Table 11. Contracts awarded in Q1 2024 in their types, total amount and by type of recipient

Instruments	Number processed	Total Amount committed till date (NGN)	Total Value Committed by Gender (NGN) in Q1			
			Female	Value Committed	Female Headed/Owned Organizations	Value Committed
Professional Services Contract	8	121.58 Million			4	68.82 million
Services Order	20	195.70 Million	3	94.37 million	2	7.72
Purchase Order	6	39.24 Million	-	-	1.95 million	-
Master Services Contract	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grants	-	-	-	-	-	-
MOU	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	34	356.52 million	3	94.37 million	7	78.49 million

8. Looking Ahead

Priority actions for next quarter

In Q2 2024, the **market development project** will undertake the following activities:

- **Cassava:** Facilitate technical training for increased productivity for cassava farmers as well as the onboarding of service providers; monitor and report outcomes of the Cassava Seed Enterprises (CSEs); and support cassava farmers with linkages and access to finance in collaboration with SK.
- **Cocoa:** Organize at least one webinar for cocoa stakeholders for increased program delivery; undertake a technical review and development of the climate-smart Cocoa GAP manual; organize training for service providers using the revised manual and engage a consultant to drive activities on cocoa quality improvement.
- **MSMEs:** Provide support to strengthen the Business Development Service Providers (BDSPs) to provide business development services to MSMEs, facilitate linkages to market and finance for MSMEs and continue the expansion of support to MSME, fisherfolks and processors in the Chevron host communities
- **Palm oil BMP:** Promote the benefits of improved seeds and a facilitate a workshop to improve collaboration and coordination in the seed industry.
- **Poultry:** Support at least one PSP to organize poultry linkage workshop; finalize PSPs performance assessment and develop report; support PSPs & VLDs to train poultry farmers with climate-smart good poultry practices and linkages to quality inputs, markets and finance; work with SK to facilitate access to finance for poultry farmers in Edo & Ondo State; and organize stakeholder workshop on access to technical support services across the various sectors
- **Cross cutting:** The market systems development will progress work on the cross-cutting themes which are: **Expanding access to agricultural Inputs (Fertilizers, CPPs, Feed, Vaccines, etc.), Access to agricultural Inputs (Seeds), Access to Technical Services; Access to Business Development Services and Finance, and Access to industrial market and agricultural technology.** An assessment would be carried out to determine the opportunities and also identify

potential new sectors where the cross-cutting themes can be implemented. It will also carry out a stakeholder engagement with key stakeholders and market actors to share findings and co-create innovations to be piloted ahead of the next strategic phase.

The **access to energy project** will advance new partnerships through the initiation of a challenge fund for 5 off grid community energy installations in 5 riverine communities of Delta state; collaborate with NDPI and Total impact to originate the first pipeline of impact investment products for identified developers; facilitate the signing of MOUs with 3 new developers to expedite the deployment of interventions in two coastal communities, focusing on solar refrigeration and Energy Cabin. Other focal areas include industry exhibition to showcase the PIND-A2E Model with a view to sharing insights that will drive adoption and investments into the ND; conduct impact assessments for HETA projects to build evidence around project impact with a view to scaling up through multilateral donor activity; and support ecosystem partners around the improvement of the Competency Standards for training of skilled technicians to grow the off-grid energy markets.

The **Youth Employment Pathways Project** will do the following:

- **Ondo State Implementation:** Work with partners and BATVE to monitor activities of technical/soft skills training for 431 youths in Ondo State.
- **Government engagement for the adoption of the NDYEP model and framework:** Pay courtesy visit to the new Rivers State Commissioner of Youth Development to reintroduce the YEP Program, reaffirm commitment to collaboration, and explore opportunities for the adoption of the NDYEP model; Commence the implementation of the YEP training with Ibom-LED in Akwa Ibom state; Continue engagement with the Rivers State ICT Department on the signing of an MoU on adoption/adaptation of the NDYEP Model.
- **2024 rollout of YEP (Commencement of Technical Vocational & Soft Skills Training) in 4 States:** Onboard the selected implementing partners into the project to commence new batch of technical and soft skills training for target beneficiaries in Abia, Akwa Ibom, Rivers and Delta states.
- **YEP Start-up Business Challenge Fund:** The first level of assessment, screening, shortlisting, pitching, final selection and grant signing of successful beneficiaries will be done in Q2.

The **peacebuilding program** will: Supervise the execution of the EU/SFCG funded project in selected states; Establish Peace Club (Bayelsa State) and strengthen mitigation of youth restiveness in the Niger Delta; Facilitate EWER training in HCDDTs; Jointly integrate Peacebuilding activities with Economic Development (Conflict Sensitivity); and carry out quarterly maintenance of database and website.

Other areas to focus in Q2 are: Produce Factsheets, PB Annual Intervention Catalogue, Herders/Farmers interventions compendium; Facilitate the development of the Niger Delta Regional Peacebuilding Strategy (NDRPS) in collaboration with Advocacy; Facilitate P4P and MSP activities; Produce briefs and trackers; Facilitate the Niger Delta Peace and Security Network fora; Facilitate Prevent Council operationalization in selected states; Engage with Fund for Peace (FFP) to deliver set 5 KPIs and operationalize PB consultancy services to selected firms for a fee.

The **advocacy project** will: Review of the implementation of PIND-supported programs and projects in the relevant states; Embark on advocacy visits to establish and strengthen ongoing relationships with newly elected government officials; Provide advocacy support to prospective programs and projects; Continue the next phase of multiple Taxation intervention; Track and report stakeholders' engagements across board; Continue to support PIND Business Development and fundraising initiatives; Engage in NDLink sustainability drive and engagement with clients; Continue the implementation of the Bridges Project MSP and the development of an M&E Template and provide advocacy support to the FAO FOLUR project.

ANNEX

Communications

These forums as detailed below seek to stimulate increased visibility, promote the Foundation's business development objectives, possible replication of the Foundation's development models, and foster opportunities for new partnerships:

Ondo YEP Program Launch: PIND launched its Youth Employment Project (YEP) in Ondo State, where it shared details of its intervention areas and success stories. The event in Akure, Ondo State on January 17, 2024, also featured the grants signing ceremony for new project beneficiaries. Attendees included 31 representatives from the state government, youth enterprises and stakeholders.

Engagement with Ondo State on Adoption/Adaptation of the NDYEP Model: PIND organized an engagement session with the Ondo State government as part of its goal to influence key stakeholders to adapt and adopt its existing Youth Employment Project (YEP) model. The session took place in Akure, Ondo State on January 17, 2024 and had 31 representatives from the state government, youth enterprises and stakeholders.

Ondo YEP Program Inception Workshop with Implementing Partners: PIND organized an Inception Workshop with key implementing partners in Akure, Ondo State on January 18, 2024. The workshop provided a platform for PIND to share its NDYEP Model, YEP Implementation process, Intervention Sectors, Soft Skills modules and reporting with 19 attendees inclusive of State (Representatives from 1 State Government Partner (BATVE) and 4 private Implementing Partners).

Joint Consortium Meeting on the EU-Niger Delta Project: PIND organized a joint consortium meeting in collaboration with Search for Common Ground (SFCG) to discuss the centralization of the Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) Platform. The meeting took place at PIND EDC, Port Harcourt on January 18, 2024 to familiarize and introduce consortium members from Search for Common Ground, AAPW, and SDN to PIND's EWER Infrastructure. This initiative harnesses the strength of PIND's comprehensive Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) system in the Niger Delta region. It had 16 attendees from the donor and peacebuilding landscape.

Validation meeting for the proposed Rivers State Gender Policy: PIND in collaboration with Stakeholder Democracy Network (SDN) and the Ministry of Women Affairs, Rivers State organized a validation meeting to discuss its gender mainstreaming approach in peacebuilding to help put together a comprehensive Rivers State Gender Policy. The meeting took place at the Ministry of Women Affairs, Rivers State on January 30, 2024 and had 40 attendees comprising State Government, gender advocates and stakeholders.

EU-Niger Delta Project Launch: PIND in collaboration with Search for Common Ground (Search), Academic Associates PeaceWorks (AAPW), and Stakeholder Democracy Network (SDN) launched the EU-Niger Delta Project where it shared its peacebuilding approach. The event took place on February 06, 2024 - Yenagoa, Bayelsa State; February 08, 2024 - Port Harcourt, Rivers State; February 09, 2024 - Asaba, Delta State and had 320 participants from the State Government and Peacebuilding landscape.

Engagement with Rivers State Government on Adoption/Adaptation of the NDYEP Model: PIND organized an engagement session with the Rivers State government as part of its goal to influence key stakeholders to adapt and adopt its existing Youth Employment Project (YEP) model. The session took place in Port Harcourt, Rivers State on February 8, 2024 and had 11 representatives from the state government, youth enterprises and stakeholders.

EU-Niger Delta Project National Launch: PIND in collaboration with Search for Common Ground (Search), Academic Associates PeaceWorks (AAPW), and Stakeholder Democracy Network (SDN) launched the EU-Niger Delta Project where it shared its peacebuilding approach. The event took place on February 29, 2024 at the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Abuja and had 60 participants from the State Government, Donor and Peacebuilding landscape.


Access to Energy (A2E) Model Sharing Workshop: PIND organized an engagement session to share its Access to Energy model. The session took place in ATED Building, Warri on March 12, 2024 and had 21 stakeholders in the clean energy ecosystem.

Community Engagement and Solar Refrigeration Hub Demonstration: PIND organized a workshop to enlighten key stakeholders of its solar refrigeration hub. The demonstration session took place at Okibo Zion, Agge-Delta on March 13, 2024 and had 30 Okibo Zion FisherFolks and Community Members in attendance.

Communications supported these Forums with a range of services, including speeches/talking points development, press releases, social and mainstream media publication or broadcast, photography, videography and video production, live streaming, branding, and other forms of corporate communication support.



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