

# What NATs left us. An experience systematisation of the Territorial Agroecological Nodes in the Alto Paraná Region of Misiones (2023)

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## Abstract

This article presents a systematisation of the experience of the Territorial Agroecological Nodes (NAT) in the Alto Paraná Region of Misiones, Argentina, implemented in 2023 by the National Agroecology Directorate (DNA). The implementation of the NAT is analysed as an empirical reference to understand the tensions between different production models and the possibilities of agroecology to build fairer and more sustainable food systems. A theoretical approach that integrates political ecology and economic sociology is used to analyse the disputes over the control of natural resources, the distribution of power and the environmental impacts of the agro-industrial model. The results of the systematisation show the main concerns of local stakeholders in the Alto Paraná Region, in Misiones, who participated in the formation of the NAT, including access to resources, training, public policies and market dynamics. The importance of agroecology as an alternative to the dominant agro-industrial model in the region is discussed, and opportunities and challenges for its expansion in a context of environmental and social crisis are identified.

**Keywords:** Agroecology; Production models; Territory; Sustainable food systems; Articulation spaces.

## Introduction

Agroecology is based on ecological principles for the design and management of agroecosystems, promoting productive diversification, biodiversity preservation, efficient use of natural resources, and reduced reliance on external inputs. Moreover, it is considered a strong social component, promoting the participation of farmers,

gender equality, and the construction of local and solidarity markets (Altieri, 1995; Rosset & Martínez-Torres, 2012).

In the last few decades, agroecology has been seen as a scientific and political proposal of environmental sustainability and social justice in Latin America, within the framework of food systems. It has also been considered an alternative to the predominant industrial agriculture model (Altieri & Toledo, 2010; Sarandón & Flores, 2024). The proliferation of initiatives and debates in the realm of agroecology raises new questions regarding the productive, economic, ecological, and institutional scenarios. In Argentina, the process of institutionalisation, along with the creation of the National Agroecology Directorate (DNA) in 2020<sup>1</sup>, has compiled experiences linked to organised family farmers, highlighting coordination around the Latin American and Caribbean Agro-Ecological Movement (MAELA), created in 1992. There has also been an influence of stakeholders linked to the scientific field and academia: the Latin American Scientific Society of Agroecology (SOCLA, 2007), the Argentine Society of Agroecology (SAAE, 2018), the National Agroecology Congress (the first held in Córdoba, 2019), among other important events (Pérez & Gracia, 2021).

The DNA fostered the definition of agroecology as a paradigm that boosts the “design and management of agricultural production systems, harvesting, fishing, manufacturing, commercialisation, consumption, and commensality, which are economically viable, socially fair, and environmentally sustainable, characterised by a greater socioecological resilience, and oriented towards strengthening the well-being of society as a whole.”<sup>2</sup> The perspective of this definition is holistic, as it considers agroecology as a practice, a science, and a movement, reviving various and prolific aspects in Argentina. One of its functions was to “intervene in the design and implementation of policies, programmes and projects that promote intensive and extensive agroecological production at all scales,” liaising with farmers, agricultural organisations, and local and provincial governments.<sup>3</sup>

The Territorial Agroecological Nodes (NATs) were boosted by the National Agroecology Directorate (DNA), the Argentine Society of Agroecology (SAAE), and the National Network of Municipalities and Communities Promoting Agroecology (RENAMA). Their main goal was to foster institutional innovations and the upscaling

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution 1441/2020 of the Official Gazette on August 11, government administration by Alberto Fernández. <https://www.boletinoficial.gob.ar/detalleAviso/primera/233443/20200811>

<sup>2</sup> Conceptual Framework Document on Agroecology from the National Agroecology Directorate, Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Ministry of Economy.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.agribio.com.ar/noticias/se-creo-la-creacion-de-la-direccion-nacional-de-agroecologia>

of agroecology throughout the territory. The NATs were conceived as horizontal, diverse, participative spaces for collective construction, intended for intersectoral, interinstitutional, and transdisciplinary coordination. They intended to strengthen the social fabric and the technical and organisational capacities at the local level, enabling stakeholders involved in agroecology to develop collective ways of organising to address the demands of the agroecological transition. The implementation of the NATs was part of a broader program that included the creation of nodes in different provinces and regions across the country, such as Santa Fe, Comarca Andina (Río Negro), Salta, Jujuy, and Tucumán, among others. In Misiones, NATs were launched in April 2023, with activities in Eldorado, Oberá, and Posadas, involving various stakeholders, such as the National University of Misiones, farmers' organisations, cooperatives, and scientific and technical institutions.

This article adopts a theoretical perspective that integrates political ecology and economic sociology to understand the complexity of the relationships among agriculture, nature, and society. It is a systemisation of the experience that aims to retrieve the primary considerations of the local stakeholders in the Alto Paraná Region of Misiones who participated in the creation of the node. We will use the implementation of the NAT in the Alto Paraná Region of Misiones as an empirical reference to analyse the tensions between different models of production and the possibilities of agroecology to build more sustainable and fair food systems.

## Institutionalisation of agroecology

In Latin America, agroecology has advanced unevenly, with varying levels of development across countries. In Cuba and Brazil, agroecology has developed more rapidly, boosted by public policies and social movements. Cuba, for example, has implemented agroecology as a response to economic and political crises, promoting food security and sovereignty (Vázquez, 2017). In Brazil, the creation of the National Policy for Agroecology and Organic Production (2012)<sup>4</sup> reflects the influence of a broad movement advocating for agroecology, composed of family farming organisations, agrarian reform movements, and environmental groups (Guéneau et al., 2019).

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<sup>4</sup> In Brazil, Decree No. 7794/2012 established the National Policy for Agroecology and Organic Production (PNAPO), with the aim of "integrating, coordinating and adapting policies, programmes and actions that promote the transition to agroecology, organic production and agroecological principles, as a contribution to sustainable development and quality of life for the population, through the sustainable use of natural resources and the supply and consumption of healthy food." One of the main instruments of the PNAPO is the National Plan for Agroecology and Organic Production (PLANAPO), also known as Agroecological Brazil.

Over the last decades, progress has been made in consolidating stakeholders' networks, including groups of farmers, support organisations, researchers, and public officials sensitised to agroecology in Latin America. There is growing recognition by public administrations of agroecology and organic farming, opening up spaces for participation, consultation, and negotiation (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Nicaragua). However, limitations remain, including the orientation of policies towards agribusiness and exports, the lack of coordination among movements promoting agroecology and organic farming, and the lack of data on farmers and agroecological markets (Sabourin et al., 2018).

In Argentina in the 1990s, neoliberal policies fostered an agricultural shift that favoured the expansion of agribusinesses, negatively impacting the middle and lower classes in agriculture (Chazarreta et al., 2015). In this context, social organisations and farmers' movements launched a campaign to defend family farming, food sovereignty, and agroecology, promoting traditional knowledge and production without the use of agrochemicals. After the 2000s, with the rise of progressive governments, the discourse and public policies regarding agriculture shifted, with greater recognition of agroecology as an alternative to the agro-industrial model (Altieri & Toledo, 2011). The profile of state policy was developed around "family farming" as a key stakeholder in a diverse rural sector linked to food production and supply (Serpe, 2022).

The institutionalisation of agroecology in Argentina has developed gradually and in a complex manner, encompassing diverse stages and stakeholders. It has combined different projections and definitions, not only from technicians and extension workers, but also from local territories that carry their own traditions and productive landscapes.<sup>5</sup> In this regard, it is very interesting to observe the articulation in territories where small-scale agriculture (family farming) is prominent. In these cases, where collective organisation is presented as a strategy of social reproduction in rural families, the collaboration among diverse stakeholders also implies their transformation and that of their environments (Auer et al., 2020; von Below et al., 2021). Thus, the adoption of agroecology must be understood in terms of subsistence, rather than the processes of dispossession driven by agribusiness (Serpe, 2022).

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<sup>5</sup> A concise and well-written summary of the origins of agroecology in Argentina can be found in the text: "Breve historia de la agroecología en la argentina: orígenes, evolución y perspectivas futuras" (A brief history of agroecology in Argentina: origins, evolution and future prospects) by Sarandón and Marasas (2015).

The creation of the National Agroecology Directorate (DNA) in 2020 was a landmark for this activity in Argentina.<sup>6</sup> DNA's main goal was to promote agroecology as public policy, supporting agroecological production, research and training, and the commercialisation of these products. The public policy was conceived as a transition: this implies "a process of gradual change of the systems of production, manufacturing, commercialisation and consumption".<sup>7</sup> However, this Directorate faced significant challenges during its consolidation, including insufficient funding, resistance from the agribusiness sector, and a lack of consensus on the definition and implementation strategies for agroecology. Sadly, Javier Milei's policies disrupted the process of institutional continuity in agroecology, based on the political-business profile defined for agriculture.<sup>8</sup>

To sum up, although significant progress has been made in the last few years, agroecology in Argentina is still facing challenges for its consolidation. To do so, a paradigm shift in the training of technicians and officials in agricultural administrations is required. This is already happening, but in diverse degrees depending on the local territory.

### Agroecology in the Alto Paraná Region of Misiones

The Alto Paraná Region of Misiones became an extractive front (Abíznano, 1985), advancing into the rainforest without considering indigenous people, and timber exploitation was developed to meet the needs of Buenos Aires' harbour between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. With the consolidation of the national development project in the mid-20th century, the timber and cellulose industries were bolstered, becoming the main attraction for migrant workers from neighbouring countries. These workers, mainly Paraguayan, not only started working in the factories but also formed rural settlements (Ramírez, 2019a; 2019b).

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<sup>6</sup> Resolution 163/2020, within the framework of the actions of the National Agroecology Directorate (DNA), established the Programme for the Promotion of Local Employment, Settlement and Supply (PROTAAL). This programme aimed to promote the agroecological transition in family, small-scale and indigenous agriculture (SAFCI) through, among other strategies, the creation of "Associative Family Farming Production Units" (UPAF). These UPAFs were conceived as associative entities so that producers could organise themselves, access support, strengthen their agroecological practices and improve their production and marketing capacity, thus contributing to local supply and roots.

<sup>7</sup> Conceptual Framework Document on Agroecology from the National Agroecology Directorate, Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Ministry of Economy.

<sup>8</sup> Un pasito pa' delante, dos pasitos pa' atrás: La gestión de Vilella en Agricultura decidió eliminar el área específica que fomentaba la Agroecología, <https://bichosdecampo.com/un-pasito-pa-delante-dos-pasitos-pa-atras-la-gestion-de-vilella-en-agricultura-decidio-eliminar-el-area-especifica-que-fomentaba-la-agroecologia/>, June 2025.

In the 1990s, the Alto Paraná Region of Misiones was affected by the processes of agricultural modernisation and the expansion of the forest agribusiness (Ramírez, 2017). The proliferation of crops with industrial aims impacted the landscape, rural migration, and the emergence of new business stakeholders. With the dismantling of rent economies following the disruption of agro-industrial chains, small-scale family production shifted to the cultivation and commercialisation of fresh produce, leading to the creation of alternative markets (Schiavoni, 2022).

However, the expansion of forest agribusiness has not occurred without opposition. Local resistance groups emerged to advocate for family-based and indigenous peoples' agriculture. Environmental causes were the common root among organised resistance groups, among which we can highlight the anti-dam movement as one of the most important in the defence of the land (rivers and ecosystems) and in its ability to challenge state-business development projects (Melon, 2022). PP-AL's research —<https://www.pp-al.org/es>— (Sabourin et al., 2017) highlights the importance of social movements, crisis responses and social initiatives as key elements in the legislation of policies that favour agroecology. This may be one of the main factors that makes Misiones, considered by many stakeholders from other regions, a beacon of agroecological production.

In the Alto Paraná Region of Misiones, many of the organisations' directors and leaders, who have always championed liberation, kept their social commitment within their communities (Reck & Ramírez, 2024). The combination of activism, advocacy, productive initiatives, and subsistence activities created different spaces to think about production and the environment "from the bottom up". One of the most important of these was the Misiones Organic Farming Network (RAOM), which turned 30 in 2023. This network was created in May of 1993 during a meeting of farmers, technicians, and institutions held at Eldorado's Agrotechnical School. It is also worth mentioning the influence of public officials who worked on public policies aimed at addressing rural poverty, such as the Agricultural Social Programme (PSA). The relationship between the RAOM and the PSA led to a work of articulation which combined technical and ancestral knowledge (Reck & Ramírez, 2024). ProHuerta, a programme developed by the National Agricultural Technology Institute, was created in 1995 and was very relevant in the organisational promotion of women farmers (Schiavoni, 2022), facilitating the transition from production for self-consumption to production for direct sale.

In 1996, Movimiento Semillero (Seed Movement) was created. This organisation is responsible for the Provincial Fair of Seeds (Perez et al., 2018). The founding event took place in the Locality of San Vicente in 1997, with the promotion and creation of a

“seed bank” at each producer’s farm. 200 farmers from Misiones, Chaco, Entre Ríos, Corrientes, Santa Fe and Formosa participated in that first fair, and over 500 types of seeds were presented (Rech & Ramírez, 2024). Another organisation that has contributed to agroecology in Misiones was the National Health Movement LAICRIMPO. This national and Latin American space provides a sensitive perspective on popular and community health. There, a strong mystical approach draws on the retrieval of knowledge from the Guaraní people, in dialogue with the experiences and practices of young people who have migrated from the city to rural areas and are looking for a different way of eating.

Finally, over the last 15 years, the implementation of national public policies aimed at the family farming sector was essential (Pérez & Gracia, 2021). Within this framework, technicians committed to territorial work have joint forces with grassroots organisations, some with a long history and others that have emerged in the new millennium. Some of the farmers’ organisations that have worked with technicians are the Misiones Agrarian Movement (MAM), Piray Independent Producers (PIP), the Union of Land Workers (UTT), the Movement of Excluded Workers, rural branch (MTE), Delicia’s United Producers (PUD), Santiago de Liniers’ United Producers (PUSALI), and the Central Commission for Agricultural Labour (CCTA), among others. The interaction between family farming organisations—with demands related to access to land and environmental narratives—and agricultural technicians who provided the tools to access state resources favoured a territorial development management centred on pesticide-free food production. As Serpe (2022) states, in the face of a lack of formal jobs in the area, an “agroecology out of necessity” has emerged (p. 284). This concept highlights that, for many producers, the transition to agroecology is not only an ideological choice but also a pragmatic response to social, economic, and environmental pressures, particularly in contexts shaped by agribusiness. Agroecology emerges as a strategy of survival and reproduction.

Nonetheless, agroecology policies sometimes find cultural limitations in the territories, since many farmers learnt to produce using “poison”, as can be evidenced in the following statement of a producer regarding a social organisation:

(...) I notice that women are the ones who embrace the cause of pesticide-free production, of pesticides not being used on farms, because that is what we call them: “poison.” Therefore, agrochemicals or poisons were never used in the collective part, made up of 17 hectares. Production was always carried out using agroecological methods, and many families also embrace and defend this approach.



Indeed, after 2 years of working, we discovered that some of our coworkers used the excuse that the grass growing in their area was too tall and they were not able to control it, as their plot of land was at the very end (...). And there was a big debate” (director of PIP, interview carried out in 2022).

In essence, the formation of NATs proposed by the DNA is part of Misiones organisational and territorial history, which has several organisational and collective aspects, with the historical (political, economic and cultural) particularities of the Alto Paraná Region. This provides a specific footprint to activities, participants and discussions in the framework of this area, referring to an articulation of heterogeneities of organisations and leaderships.

Developing an agricultural agro-food model not only in Misiones, but also in Argentina and Latin America requires a deep transformation of the current system and a solid commitment by the different social sectors. The path towards a fairer, more sustainable and resilient food system requires coordination between social movements, public institutions and consumers.

## **Materials and methods**

For this study, the Experience Systematisation technique was used, which aims to gather critical learning involving classification, organisation and interpretation of the reconstructed experiences. It is not a mere data collection; it is about a technique developed by popular education, which aims to gather critical learning (Jara Holliday, 2012).

Experience systematisation involves, on the one hand, classifying and organising information and, on the other, interpreting the reconstructed experiences. Research, systematisation and evaluation are processes that feed into each other and aspire to improve the quality of our practices. The final goal is developing “scientific knowledge that can be incorporated into systems that need to be permanently enriched by the contributions of the scientific community” (Jara Holliday, 2012).

An important question to carry out this technique is whether systematisers are committed to the participatory process. Well then, as professors and researchers of a public university, we took part of the initiative called by the DNA, contributing, in this way, with the logistic and the design of methodological participatory techniques for the diagnose which, at the same time, allowed the retrieval of opinions and insights of different participants (farmers, technicians and of social organization



representatives). The engagement was due to our interest in contributing to agroecological strengthening and organisational processes of the family farming sector in the region, while the same base organisations used to frequently request the systematisation of processes and experiences on their professional paths.

Three introductory workshops were held to establish the NAT, which also involved the other regions:

General workshop: It was held in the School of Forest Sciences (FCF) at the National University of Misiones (UNaM) on November 15, 2022. Students, professors and researchers from UNaM, INTA technicians and social organisation representatives took part in it. This workshop played a key role in reaching a consensus on the importance of the NAT and on defining the composition of the driving committee.

Agroecological committee workshop for the Southern Region: It was in the UNaM university canteen located in Posadas, Misiones, on April 18, 2023. 53 people from different social organisations, movements, universities, as well as government and non-government institutions and private individuals. Addressed topics in this workshop were the strengths, difficulties, challenges and needs of agroecology in the Southern Region.

Agroecological committee workshop for the Northern Region: It was carried out in the FCF at the UNaM located in Eldorado, Misiones, on April 17, 2023. Students, professors and researchers from UNaM, INTA technicians and social organisation representatives took part in it. The workshop addressed several topics, such as the need for resources, technical knowledge, mindset/social representations/imagery, public policies, markets, workforce, climate change/environment/global warming, external pressures, financing, certification, and the territorial node.

Agroecological committee workshop for the Central Region: It was held in the School of Arts and Design (FAyD) at the UNaM, located in Posadas, Misiones, on April 18, 2023. INTA technicians, extension workers, yerba mate producers, social organisations, universities, as well as government and non-government institutions. This workshop addressed the problems and solutions for the development of agroecology, while proposals for its implementation were also presented.

Data gathered from different materials were used for experience systematisation:

NAT records: NAT meetings and workshops, including the main expectations, concerns, strengths, difficulties, challenges and proposals of local stakeholders. These records were employed in order to identify the key topics addressed by the NAT as well

as the perspectives of local stakeholders on agroecology and their development possibilities in the Alto Paraná Region of Misiones.

Stakeholder mapping enabled the identification of the main institutions, organisations, and social stakeholders involved in the NAT. Mapping information was used to understand the participation structure and actor diversity that made up the NAT.

The experience systematisation of the NAT was developed through three stages:

Previous planning: with the participation of the DNA and several local stakeholders in the formation of the NAT, the structure, topics to be addressed in the workshops, and geographical areas to be covered were defined. This stage was critical to ensure the participation of local stakeholders and the relevance of the NAT.

Regional workshops: they were carried out via on-site modality and organised by work groups. Participants were selected according to their experience and knowledge on agroecology, as well as their representation in different organisations and institutions. In addition, different methodological participatory techniques, including brainstorming, analysing cases, elaborating maps and developing proposals. Three workshops were carried out per geographical region (Northern, Central and Southern Region) in the Alto Paraná Region of Misiones.

Information analysis: information gathered in the workshops was analysed systematically, identifying the main topics discussed and the perspectives of local stakeholders on agroecology. On the other hand, qualitative analysis techniques were used to interpret the data and draw conclusions from the NAT experience.

## Results and discussion section

Analysis of the workshops which have established the NAT in the Alto Paraná Region of Misiones reveals a series of concerns (Table 1) and challenges (Table 2).

The first area focuses on access to basic resources for agroecological production, such as electrical energy, water, roads and land. The lack of these resources represents a critical challenge for rolling out agroecology, as it interferes with the ability of producers to carry out their activities and their productivity. This is connected with ideas from political ecology, which emphasises disputes over control of natural resources as a key factor in understanding power relations in the field (Robbins, 2012). In the Alto Paraná Region of Misiones, the expansion of forest

agribusiness has generated a debate on land and water control, impacting the living and working conditions of family producers, while also affecting State resources that can either ensure or, on the contrary, restrict access to the above-mentioned natural resources. The development model, based on intensive forestry, where a multinational company has pre-eminence, has created a situation of precarious land tenure for farming families, limiting their access to resources and creating a scenario of vulnerability (Ramírez, 2019b).

**Table 1.** Main concerns regarding access to resources for agroecological production, identified by local stakeholders in the NAT workshops held in the Alto Paraná Region of Misiones (2023)

Resources	Concerns
Electrical energy	Lack of access in rural areas hinders entrepreneurship development and food processing.
Water	Limited access to fresh water and its declining availability, alongside the impacts of the expansion of forest agribusiness.
Roads	Lack of roads in good condition to transport products and trade them.
Land	Difficulty accessing land, precarious tenure and conflicts with agro-industrial companies.

Secondly, data reveal another concern related to training. The lack of specific technical knowledge and resistance to change hinder the adoption of agroecological practices by producers. In this case, economic sociology provides us with an insight into the social relationships that are established in learning and knowledge transfer processes (Granovetter, 1985; von Below *et al.*, 2021). The role of technicians and extension workers is fundamental in developing knowledge and agroecological identities.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> In the case of the Municipality of Bermejo in Chaco Province, experiences from ProHuerta and PSA programmes included training, inputs and technical assistance, which constituted a key part in transforming the identity of family producers, who transitioned from working as sugar mill labourers to becoming “small-scale producers in transition toward agroecology” (Serpe y Hernández, 2020).

**Table 2.** Difficulties and needs related to training in agroecology identified by local stakeholders in the NAT workshops held in the Alto Paraná Region of Misiones (2023)

Category	Difficulties/needs
Access to information	Limited spread of agroecological practices, lack of information on the benefits of agroecology.
Producer-Technician interaction	Complex interaction, lack of confidence or effective communication and lack of in-field techniques.
Knowledge transfer	Difficulties in the integration of diverse knowledge and deficient training in agroecology at universities.

The absence of public policies in order to promote agroecology and unfair competition with the agribusiness sector represents important barriers for its expansion and consolidation. The inadequacy of markets and marketing channels, together with the difficulties faced by agroecological producers in accessing fair prices, also pose challenges when it comes to expanding this model. Consumers are progressively interested in agroecological products and are willing to pay a higher price, but the lack of infrastructure and an adequate regulatory framework hinders the connection between consumers and producers (Sabourin *et al.*, 2018). The experience of NAT highlights the importance of fostering the creation of local and cooperative markets, which allow agroecological producers to access fair prices and quality products.

## Conclusion

On the one hand, NATs have made it possible to diagnose territory challenges and, on the other hand, to advance in articulations that have engaged new institutional stakeholders in Misiones, such as the Agrotechnical School of Eldorado and the School of Forest Sciences at the UNaM, which have expressed their interest in participating in and contributing to the consolidation of NATs. Although it should be noted that there have been many instances of self-managed meetings in the province, there are not always records and systematisations that make it possible to retrieve central discussions and their respective conclusions. That is why we consider it appropriate to take advantage of the materials provided by the experience of NATs. We understand that it is crucial to analyse how agroecology is being incorporated into

public policies in the region, considering its capacity to propose a transition towards fairer and more sustainable food systems.

The experience systematisation of the NAT in the Alto Paraná Region of Misiones, implemented by the National Agroecology Directorate in 2023, reveals which are some of the complexities and challenges that the expansion of this model is facing in the region, while demonstrating its potential as an alternative to the agro-industrial model. The NAT enabled the identification, based on the perceptions of local stakeholders, main concerns, opportunities and challenges for the expansion of agroecology in the region, which is crucial to develop fair and sustainable public policies that allow the transition to resilient and equitable food systems. That said, despite its potential, agroecology in the Paraná rainforest faces obstacles related to accessing resources, training, public policies and market dynamics. Agroecological farmers often have issues accessing quality seeds, biological inputs and financing. In addition, the lack of specific technical knowledge and resistance to change might hinder the adoption of agroecological practices.

At the institutional level, the absence of public policies that promote agroecology and unfair competition with the agribusiness sector represents important barriers. Nevertheless, there are also opportunities for the expansion of agroecology in the region: the increasing demand for healthy and sustainably produced food, the emergence of local markets and the coordination of agroecological producer organisations offer an encouraging outlook. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting that in Misiones, agroecology has a longer history “from a lower level” (driven by social movements) than “from a higher level” (promoted by State institutions). In this way, a lot of committed collective stakeholders have driven agroecology throughout the region.

The NAT in Misiones was characterised by high expectations: the proposal was thought to thrive with the support of the School of Forest Sciences, which proved a great proactivity in terms of stakeholder engagement and institutional capacities. In spite of this, tensions also materialised among different groups, creating barriers when building a space for joint dialogue and work.

However, the experience in Misiones gave rise to a positive perception of the commitment of local stakeholders, based on their convictions for good living and a significant number of local initiatives. For sustained ecoregional development, it will be essential to promote participatory spaces in which diverse stakeholders can interact synergistically, harnessing their respective experiences and knowledge. The experience of the NAT, despite being interrupted by the change in national

government, underlines the relevance of strengthening participation and a solid political framework that is able to promote agroecology throughout the region.

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## Appendix

Several photographs are presented at different moments and days of the workshops, documenting the various spaces for participation and exchange. The participants gave their express consent to share these photographic documents.



