



The Impact of Stakeholder Management in Sumol+Compal's Strategy: a Centro de Frutologia Compal Case Study

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Resumo

Uma das mais relevantes marcas no panorama nacional, a Compal, pertencente ao grupo corporativo Sumol+Compal, beneficia de uma ligação umbilical ao setor frutícola Português. Um dos segredos do seu sucesso na relação com este setor de atividade está na adoção de práticas de gestão de partes interessadas (do inglês ‘stakeholder management’), prática essa que teve origem com a génese do Centro de Frutologia Compal (CFC), um projeto que conta agora com uma década de atuação e um histórico de impacto passível de ser contado, através de indicadores quantitativos e qualitativos.

Este estudo pretende entender a origem do Centro de Frutologia Compal como uma plataforma ‘multistakeholder’ (isto é, uma plataforma que agrega várias partes interessadas), e assume ainda um foco na descodificação do impacto deste projeto na performance da empresa Sumol+Compal em várias das suas vertentes. O presente trabalho pretende assumir-se como um complemento à literatura já existente, servindo de caso de estudo que pode revelar, na gestão de partes interessadas, novas fontes de criação de valor. Partindo de uma base metodológica de 10 entrevistas semiestruturadas, conduzidas com indivíduos com posições de gestão de relevo e/ou históricos de associação ao Centro de Frutologia Compal altamente pertinentes, foram ainda exploradas fontes de informação secundárias e complementares consideradas relevantes.

Os resultados demonstram importantes contribuições do Centro de Frutologia Compal para a performance da empresa Sumol+Compal nas suas vertentes corporativa, gestão e negócio, inovação e conhecimento e, por fim, marketing, algo que é conseguido através do envolvimento das partes interessadas em diversas iniciativas de interesse mútuo e onde o processo de criação é partilhado. Em última análise, fica demonstrado um caso de gestão de partes interessadas de sucesso que pode e deve servir como exemplo para demais empresas e grupos de gestão à procura de melhorias holísticas na sua performance.

Palavras-chave: ‘Partes Interessadas’, ‘Gestão de Partes Interessadas’, ‘Centro de Frutologia Compal’, ‘Caso de estudo’

Abstract

One of the most relevant brands on the national scene, Compal, which belongs to the Sumol+Compal corporate group, benefits from an umbilical connection to the Portuguese fruit-growing sector. One of the secrets of its success in the relationship with this sector of activity is the adoption of stakeholder management practices, a practice that originated with the creation of Centro de Frutologia Compal (CFC), a project that now has a decade of operation and a history of impact that can be counted, through quantitative and qualitative indicators.

This study aims to understand the origin Centro de Frutologia Compal as a multistakeholder platform (i.e. a platform that brings together various stakeholders), and also assumes a focus on decoding the impact of this project on the performance of the company Sumol+Compal in several of its aspects. This work intends to be a complement to the existing literature, serving as a case study that can reveal new sources of value creation in stakeholder management. Based on a methodological basis of 10 semi-structured interviews, conducted with individuals with relevant management positions and/or a highly relevant history of association with Centro de Frutologia Compal, secondary and complementary sources of information considered relevant were also explored.

The results demonstrate important contributions of Centro de Frutologia Compal to the performance of the Sumol+Compal company in its corporate, management and business, innovation and knowledge and finally marketing aspects, something that is achieved through the involvement of stakeholders in various initiatives of mutual interest and where the creation process is shared. Ultimately, this demonstrates a case of successful stakeholder management that can and should serve as an example for other companies and management groups looking for holistic improvements in their performance.

Keywords: 'Stakeholders', 'Stakeholder Management', 'Centro de Frutologia Compal', 'Case Study'

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1. Introduction

The concept of stakeholder management itself is relatively old, having been first introduced in the mid 1980's by Robert Edward Freeman in his work "Strategic Management: a Stakeholder Approach" (Freeman, 2010). At its core, as defended by Freeman, the purpose of managing a company around the interests of its stakeholders allows it to better cope with the diverse number of stimulus and effects that external entities have on its activity (Freeman, 2010). Breaking away with the neo-classical, transaction-based view of the firm (Bosse *et al.*, 2009; Donaldson and Walsh, 2015), proponents of the theory forwarded by Freeman defend that corporate strategy and managerial decision-making should prioritize the understanding of the nature of stakeholder relationships (Perrini and Tencati, 2006), since it is in the ability to create enduring relationships with its stakeholders that lies true value creation (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Barringer and Harrison, 2000; Post *et al.*, 2002; Svendsen *et al.*, 2002; Kujala, *et al.*, 2019).

Stakeholder management has been showed to benefit corporate (Herremans, *et al.*, 2016), business (Chen and Liu, 2020) and innovation (Pucci *et al.*, 2020) sectors of activity. Yet the full potential of stakeholder management to value creation is not completely explored, with some gaps still outstanding, particularly in the marketing field and how stakeholders can help influence marketing strategies to improve firm performance (Aksoy *et al.*, 2021). Additionally, studies of the impact of stakeholder management practices on companies' performance over the years are, at this moment, important contributions to the literature, and would help in justifying why more companies should invest in them (Stocker *et al.*, 2020).

In this context, Sumol+Compal's case takes on added importance. With an history of integrating stakeholder management to managerial decisions for the past decade, it offers the valuable opportunity to study the impact of these practices in performance over time. Greatly involved with the Portuguese fruticulture sector, Sumol+Compal has, for the past decade, made use of Centro de Frutologia Compal's initiative as a multistakeholder management platform to identify needs, shared interests and potential new partnerships towards creating value for both company and stakeholders from this sector. As such, the case of Sumol+Compal is also a great opportunity to further explore how the management of stakeholders can create value at a sector of activity level, namely the agricultural sector, an approach that has been explored very recently in literature (Pucci *et al.*, 2020),

As such, with this study, the goal will be to provide an example of how stakeholder management can generate value for the company, its stakeholders and its sector of activity, through the study of a private Portuguese company - Sumol+Compal - which has integrated stakeholder management into decision-making processes for the past decade, namely through the multistakeholder initiative called 'Centro de Frutologia Compal'. Complementing the existing literature, this case study will provide an important example of a company with an history of stakeholder management practices, and, as such, important case-study to demonstrate their real-life value to a business in several of its aspects.

The main research question for this study can be defined as:

Q1: What impact can be derived from Sumol+Compal's past (and continued) application of stakeholder management?

More specifically, the goal for the study is to unveil why Centro de Frutologia Compal emerged as a multistakeholder management platform for value creation and, most importantly, how it has affected the performance of Sumol+Compal, focusing on the areas of (i)corporate, (ii)business/management, (iii)innovation/knowledge and (iv)marketing.

This study starts with a contextualization of the case study in question, before presenting a review of the available literature on stakeholder theory and the impact of stakeholder management on company performance. This is followed by the methodology, which describes the type of study conducted, presents a characterization of the sample, and describes the process of gathering and analyzing the information obtained. Finally, the results obtained are presented, before proceeding to a critical analysis of them, ending with a conclusion and recommendations for future studies.

2. Case study context: Sumol+Compal, Compal and Centro de Frutologia Compal

Sumol+Compal is one of the biggest Portuguese beverage companies, having totaled a sales volume of upwards of 300 million euros in 2019 (Sumol+Compal, 2019). Born in Portugal, its business model privileges the use of fruits and vegetables of Portuguese origin in its products – in 2019, the volume of Portuguese produces ascended to 40 000 tons (Sumol+Compal, 2019). The company is an active member of BCSD (Business Council for Sustainable Development) since 2006 and subscribed, in 2017, to the principles established in the United Nations' Global Pact (Sumol+Compal, 2019), agreeing with the ambition established by its Sustainable Development Goals, also called SDG's (United Nations, 2021). Sumol+Compal regards sustainability as a source of competitive advantage, and a key factor for a sustained, fair and balanced development (Sumol+Compal, 2021, a). As such, part of the company's mission is to permanently search for a better environmental performance of its products, services and operations (Sumol+Compal, 2019), potentiating stakeholders and supporting the development of local communities (Sumol+Compal, 2021, a). One of the 16 brands that compose Sumol+Compal's portfolio – which ranges products like alcoholic beverages, snacks, waters, soft drinks, juices and nectars - is Compal (Sumol+Compal, 2021, b), a company that began operations in 1952 (Compal, 2021, a), and today specializes in the selling of juices and nectars, snacks and horticultural products (Sumol+Compal, 2019). Compal's positioning, as a brand, favors the axes of naturalness and fruitfulness, a positioning symbolized by the motto "Approaching the tree" (Sumol+Compal, 2019). A pillar in the Portuguese brand landscape, Compal was elected by Portuguese consumers in 2021 as one of the most relevant brands (Marketeer, 2021) and, more recently, as one of the more trusted brands (Marca de Confiança, 2022). The brand furthermore elects fruit, unequivocally, as its preferred raw material to use (Sumol+Compal, 2019). In 2012, Compal created 'Centro de Frutologia Compal' (also known as CFC), a project aiming at stimulating the Portuguese fruit sector throughout its entire value chain (from production, to processing and consumption) (Compal 2021, b). A project with unique collaborative and multidisciplinary characteristics in Portugal, Centro de Frutologia Compal gathers several of the sector's stakeholders, from public and private entities and organizations (governmental, business and associative), to engage in initiatives that span research, training and awareness areas, with the common goal of promoting Portuguese fruit and the Portuguese Fruit Sector (Compal 2021, b).

Centro de Frutologia Compal plays a strategic role in the company's development, by continuing to promote integration in the fruit industry, and promoting Portuguese fruit culture and fruit (Sumol+Compal, 2018).

After conducting a literature review on stakeholder theory, the next section is partitioned into the following subsections: i) a review of the origins of stakeholder management and how it differentiates from the neo-classical view of the firm, ii) the shared-interests and value co-creation nature of managing stakeholders, iii) a selection of stakeholder management models from literature and, finally, iv) a review of the impact of managing stakeholders in the performance of a firm in several of its dimensions.

3. Literature review

3.1 Stakeholder Management

The introduction of a management practices centered around the interests of stakeholders is credited to the work of R. Edward Freeman, first published in 1984, titled “Strategic Management: a Stakeholder Approach” (Freeman, 2010). A big critic of the idea of seeing the corporation as a mere “resource conversion entity”, the author defended the introduction of a new model of management, more suited to deal with the increase in “external demands” placed on the corporations and managers (Freeman, 2010). According to Freeman, the concept of management needed to be broadened, namely because of its failure to take into consideration the wide range parties that were otherwise affecting or could be affected by the corporation. This wide range of parties were the stakeholders, a term which Freeman defined, in that same study, as “any group or individual who is affected by or can affect the achievement of an organization’s objectives” (Freeman, 2010). In his original stakeholder model, Freeman furthermore described seven stakeholder groups: the shareholders of the company, customers, employees, suppliers, competitors, government and communities (Freeman, 2010). Authors have, however, since criticized Freeman’s definition of the term (see Donaldson and Preston, 1995 for an example) and even debated the concept of ‘stakeholder’ itself, pointing out to a lack of uniformed conceptualization in the literature (Miles, 2017) and even contested conceptualizations (Mitchell, 2012). In an extensive literature review work, Miles (2017) reported a dynamic use of the stakeholder concept, that can either adopt a wider-ranging meaning, spanning as much stakeholder groups as possible, or a more specific and strategic meaning, with instrumental purposes.

A compilation of some of the main definitions of the term stakeholder that can be found in the literature is found below in **Table I**.

Table I - Definitions of the term ‘stakeholder’ in the Literature

Author and Date	Definition
Freeman, 2010	“Any group or individual who is affected by or can affect the achievement of an organization’s objectives.” (page 46)
Donaldson and Preston, 1995	“Individuals or groups of individuals who have a legitimate interest in the activity of the organization, and who are affected by its performance” (page 67)
Fassin, 2009	"Individuals or groups of individuals who maintain an interest in an organization." (page 116)

Table I - Definitions of the term 'stakeholder' in the Literature (cont.)

Author and Date	Definition
Ojala and Luoma-aho, 2008	"Groups whose value is not measured by profits, but who variably affect or are affected by the organization." (page 752)
Eden and Ackerman, 1998	"Individuals or groups of individuals who have an interest in and power over the future success or failure of the organization and those who, without deliberate intent, positive or negative, can significantly affect that future." (page 231)

Developing from the seminal work of Freeman, the literature and theory on stakeholder management widely regards value creation as stemming from a *relational* exchange (based on co-operation, collaboration and network influences) between firm and its stakeholders, where, a company will become sustainable if able to build and maintain durable relationships with all members of its stakeholder network (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Barringer and Harrison, 2000; Post *et al.*, 2002; Svendsen *et al.*, 2002), as these are regarded as the most important sources of company wealth (Post *et al.*, 2002). In all, the stakeholder management view directly opposes the neo-classical view of the firm, in which the purpose is to maximize firm value over collective value, and where firm and stakeholders deal in transactional interactions (Bosse *et al.*, 2009; Donaldson and Walsh, 2015).

3.2 Stakeholder Management: value-creation on top of shared interests

In stakeholder literature, the firm exists through interactions with its stakeholders, and business is about creating value for all (Freeman, 2010). However, in order to fulfill the needs and the interests of its various stakeholders, the firm must first know how to address and engage them (Freeman *et al.*, 2010). The term *stakeholder engagement* is common across both stakeholder management and corporate social responsibility (CSR) literatures (Porter and Kramer, 2006; Greenwood, 2007; Jeffery, 2009; Todorov, 2020). In both cases, it is meant to refer to a process that - beyond mere (reciprocal or non-reciprocal) interactions – implies a willingness, from the firm’s side, to listen to its stakeholders’ issues and needs, adapting its strategy in response to the learnings of that process (Greenwood, 2007; Jeffery, 2009). In turn, the process of *listening* to stakeholders is a type of interpretative work that has been described in literature as “sensemaking”, where the listener’s goal is to figure out what the other party wants and ascribe a meaning to it, a crucial step in determining the ability to create a meaningful and productive relationship between both parties (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). Allowing the engagement of stakeholders in a business will make them feel more

engaged with the organization’s overall mission and activities (Kumar and Pansari, 2016) and thus also make them much more likely to contribute and support the activities and strategy of the corporation, which has positive effects on its long-term performance (Freeman, 2017). In turn, it will enable the firm to understand stakeholder’s expectations about the implemented strategies and balance their interests in the value creation process (Freeman *et al.*, 2010). More than risk management, or a process of avoiding conflict of interests (Girard and Sobczak, 2012), stakeholder engagement presupposes an orientation between parties to find common interests, collaborate and partner in cooperative strategic agreements (Strand and Freeman, 2015) and joint decision-making (Devin and Lane, 2014). Advocates of stakeholder management are also proponents of integrating stakeholder’s interests into the value creation process, with stakeholders themselves becoming an active part of the value creation process (Freeman *et al.*, 2010)

3.3 Stakeholder management and value creation: Models

In the interest of creating an integrated system of monitorization and control of a company’s performance towards its stakeholders, Perrini and Tencati (2006) proposed a model combining economic, social and environmental measurements of performance and long-term value creation. This framework would fit the *sustainability-oriented company’s* objectives to become ever more accountable and in tune with its responsibilities towards its stakeholders’ interests (Perrini and Tencati, 2006). The model aggregates different management tools (social and environmental reporting and key performance indicators) and integrates financial and non-financial performance measures (**Figure I**).

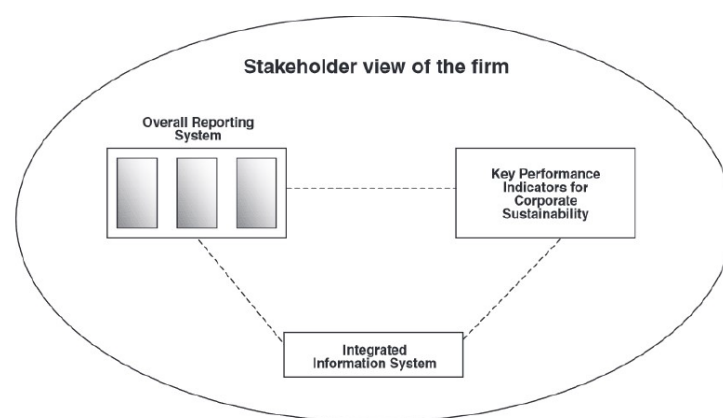


Figure I - The Sustainability Evaluation and reporting System (SERS). Adapted from Perrini and Tencati (2006).

Importantly, this model clearly assumes a relational view of the firm, where its sustainability depends on the sustainability of stakeholder relationships, and the authors forward the idea that corporate strategy and managerial decision-making should prioritize the understanding of the nature of these relationships (Perrini and Tencati, 2006).

Precisely aiming to provide a tool for managers to understand the nature of stakeholder relationships, Kujala *et al.* (2019) proposed a model whereby three attributes of value in stakeholder relationships are defined: (i) joint interests, (ii) ability to collaborate and (iii) trust (**Figure II**).

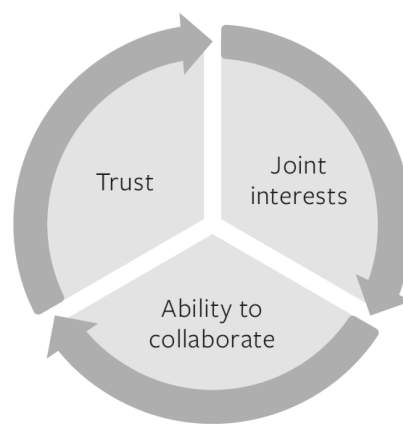


Figure II - Stakeholder Value Creation (SVC) Model. Adapted from Kujala et al. (2019)

The authors defend that only with these three attributes present can organization and stakeholders hold enduring relationships with long-term net-positive outcomes, not only economical, but also societal and for the wellbeing of all parties (Kujala *et al.*, 2019).

In line with the stakeholder view of the firm (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Barringer and Harrison, 2000; Post *et al.*, 2002; Svendsen *et al.*, 2002), this model furthermore establishes that value creation comes from the organization's ability to create enduring relationships with its stakeholders (Kujala *et al.*, 2019).

3.4 Stakeholder Management's impact on Firm Performance

As developed previously, the seminal work of Freeman determined a turning point for the way companies and academics would perceive the impact of stakeholders in a firms' operation and performance. Since then, there has been growing interest in understanding how stakeholder management affects firm performance, specifically how the integration of

stakeholders' claims can themselves contribute to improved performance and reaching of firm objectives (Ranängen and Zobel, 2014; Matos and Silvestre, 2013).

The following section compiles and presents several studies that have focused on the outcomes of stakeholder management on firm performance, partitioning these studies in four areas: corporate, business and management, innovation and knowledge, and marketing.

3.4.1 Corporate

Corporate sustainability, that is, the ability for a company to generate sustainable wealth and continue operating over time, will invariably become dependent on the sustainability of its stakeholders' relationships, and namely its critical stakeholders, as posited by Post *et al.* (2002). Strong collaboration between a company and its stakeholders will result in positive corporate outcomes, such as improved reputation and consequential minimization of risk, improved preparedness to face criticism (as the company will be better aligned with the developing context and its forces), facilitated achievement of corporate goals (Jeffery, 2009; Krstic, 2014), as well as corporate autonomy and flexibility of operations (Dawkins, 2014; Herremans *et al.*, 2016). On the flip-side, examples of companies that failed to manage these relationships provide clear indication of the negative consequences that can come to one company's reputation and business development capacities (Bandura *et al.*, 2002; Bakan, 2004)

Similarly, an outlook on the value of stakeholder partnerships can be found in the United Nations' '2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015). In it, SDG 17 is defined as "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development" and regards multi-stakeholder partnerships as important channels for the transference and sharing of knowledge, technology, and financial resources (United Nations, 2015). For companies, partnerships are vehicles for access to important resources, good governance and sustainable economic development, while also a way to give contribute to community-level goals to reduce poverty and increase peace and security (United Nations, 2021b). In this way, companies are entrusted with finding common interests and create long-term value, at a community level, through stakeholder partnerships (United Nations, 2021b). When designed holistically, prioritizing overlapping issues, partnerships are more effective in achieving community-wide commitment and results (MacDonald *et al.*, 2018).

3.4.2 Business and Management

The potential positive effects of stakeholder management on business are well documented, and include mechanisms such as an increased availability of resources (Chen and Liu, 2020), the facilitation of certain business processes, the improvement of products and services' quality (Krstić, 2014) and competitive advantage (Scruggs and Van Buren, 2016).

Ultimately, stakeholder management will benefit the company in varied financial dimensions, coming in the way of reduced transaction costs (Herremans *et al.*, 2016), improved return on equity (ROE) (Ayuso *et al.*, 2014), increased profitability and market value (Gupta *et al.*, 2020; Jones *et al.*, 2018; Sabate and Puente, 2003), lower agency costs and profit generating potential (Boakye *et al.*, 2020; Cheng *et al.*, 2014). Importantly, engaging stakeholders in the company's project with mutual benefits will grant the firm with a "social license to operate" and fewer constraints on business (Jeffery, 2009).

3.4.3 Innovation and Knowledge

There is widespread recognition of the importance of stakeholders as sources of innovation for business (Bresciani *et al.*, 2013; Vrontis *et al.*, 2017), driven in large part by the fields of innovation management and entrepreneurial development wishing to understand how stakeholder networks can be leveraged as vehicles for the exchange of knowledge, resources and the establishment of collaborative strategies. Recognizing that in-house knowledge and resources are insufficient to assure sustained innovation processes, managers and entrepreneurs have looked to stakeholder networks as crucial for a business' sustainable competitive advantage (Kaufmann and Shams, 2015) and how stakeholder engagement creates an innovation climate in organizations leading to sustainable competitiveness (Gautam, 2017).

Stakeholder engagement also usually appears complementary to the concept of 'open innovation', which defines the process of knowledge flows with external parties to accelerate internal innovation (Chesbrough, 2006). Ayuso *et al.* (2011) called for companies' need to develop new ways to relate to their stakeholders and, from those relationships, extract new ideas for innovations that can benefit both parties. This type of stakeholder-centric innovation, achieved through *stakeholder engagement*, is considered to be more complex than market-

driven innovation (Hall and Vredenburg, 2003) but more readily allows the company to better match fast-paced contextual changes (Ayuso *et al.*, 2011).

Other authors have also described virtuous cycles of co-creation and capture of value between stakeholders (Pucci *et al.*, 2020; Reypens *et al.*, 2016), whereby stakeholders' contribution of knowledge, resources and relationships into the system in turn creates innovation, knowledge and relations (Reypens *et al.*, 2016) with value generated to the firm, stakeholders and even at a local level (Pucci *et al.*, 2020)

3.4.4 Marketing

Since many of the responsibilities of the marketing department are coincidental with stakeholder management – including the understanding and engaging with the market (stakeholders) around a firm, building the brand in the process – there has been a recognition of the potential that the field of marketing has to the shaping process of stakeholder theory (Freeman *et al.*, 2010). Despite this, traditional marketing has been mostly one-dimensional, focusing on the customer and losing sight of the broader range of stakeholders (Hillebrand *et al.*, 2015). For this, traditional marketing has been labelled as inadequate given that (i) stakeholder's interests are interrelated, not independent and (ii) value creation is not driven by the company alone, but by networks of stakeholders (Hillebrand *et al.*, 2015).

Addressing the short-comings of traditional marketing, the concept of 'stakeholder marketing' (Bhattacharya and Korschum, 2008) has recently gained more traction with academics, with proponents recognizing that stakeholder networks are the real drivers of value creation throughout the marketing value chain (Mena and Chabowski, 2015). Stakeholder marketing, regarded by Mena and Chabowski (2015) as the "next frontier" for the field, especially focuses on how stakeholder relationships can be used to improve customer experiences, address societal issues and even address sustainability concerns at a strategic decision-making level (Hillebrand *et al.*, 2015). Despite these advances, stakeholder marketing is yet an incompletely developed and explored concept, especially at a practical level (Miles and Ringham, 2018). Additionally, stakeholder engagement is not research area of significance within marketing (Aksoy *et al.*, 2021), which has resulted in a literature lacking in models and tools that relate stakeholder engagement's effect on the relationship between marketing strategies and firm performance (Aksoy *et al.*, 2021).

3.5 Concept Reference Chart

The following **Table II** compiles the main concepts gathered from literature that are relevant to the academic and theoretical framework of this study.

Table II - Concept Reference Chart and respective definition

Concept	Author and Date	Definition
Stakeholder	Freeman, 2010	“Any group or individual who is affected by or can affect the achievement of an organization’s objectives.” (page 46)
Stakeholder view of Management	Freeman, 2010	Management centered around the interests of the firm’s stakeholders
Neo-classical view of Management	Bosse <i>et al.</i> , 2009	The purpose is to maximize firm value in detriment of collective value for the stakeholders, and firm and stakeholders deal in transactional interactions
Stakeholder Engagement	Jeffery, 2009	The process through which a company evolves its stakeholders, adapting its strategy according to their issues and needs, in a process of co-creation
Stakeholder Value Creation Model (SVC)	Kujala <i>et al.</i> , 2019	Model that establishes that value creation comes from the organization’s ability to create enduring relationships with its stakeholders

4. Methodology

4.1 Type of Study

Given the nature of this study, where “the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context” (Yin, 2009), the chosen research method was a case study.

The case study method, if well-constructed, will allow for a rich understanding of processes enacted (Morris and Wood, 1991), as well as enable the challenging of existing theories (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). As Yin (2009) also stated, the case study becomes the preferred method when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, such is the case of the research questions proposed in this work.

In this case in specific, the goal for the study is to unveil “why” Centro de Frutologia Compal emerged as a multistakeholder management platform for value creation and, most importantly, “how” it has affected the performance of Sumol+Compal. Given this nature, we can define the work proposed here as exploratory: the goal is to collect information on how a given managerial practice has impacted a specific company. This exploratory nature is yet another reason why the case study research method becomes a good fit (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). This research will rely on the triangulation (Yin, 2009) of primary and secondary sources of data. Primary sources will come in the form of semi-structured interviews with Sumol+Compal’s Executive Commission, as well with some of the firm’s sector and institutional stakeholders; secondary sources will come in the form of the consultation of internal company documents and public records.

4.2 Sample Selection

The choice of interviewees with whom to conduct the semi-structured interviews was intentional and done on basis of their pertinence to the objectives of this case study. The 10 elected interviewees either hold a relevant managerial position within Sumol+Compal and Centro de Frutologia Compal and/or a relevant history of association to Centro de Frutologia Compal (and, as a result, to Sumol+Compal) as one of its stakeholders. Furthermore, all of the elected interviewees were chosen for their extensive knowledge and experience with Centro de Frutologia Compal and its initiatives, thus being well aware (and furthermore capable of relaying) of its impact to Sumol+Compal, the company they represent and to the Portuguese fruit sector in general. This sample is, thus, an intentionally non-probabilistic sample (Saunders, 2009)

Nevertheless, even though they all share a link to Centro de Frutologia Compal and to the Portuguese fruit sector, these interviewees represent an heterogenous sample, if we take into consideration differences in job description and their institutional relationship (past or present) to Centro de Frutologia Compal. This too was a purposeful choice, allowing for a measure of the impact that Centro de Frutologia Compal has had, not just for Sumol+Compal and its managers directly, but to the fruit sector in the entirety of its value chain, and, consequently, to Sumol+Compal indirectly, as a result of the value created within the network of stakeholders.

4.3 Data Sources and Collection

The chosen research method of a case study implies a triangulated data sourcing, as aforementioned, to which follows the necessity to make converge the collected data (Yin, 2009), using different sources in order to corroborate its legitimacy, as well as assess the validity of the final conclusions taken (Yin, 2009). Complementing the semi-structured interviews, which were the primary source of information in this case study, data was furthermore collected from internal and external sources.

All interviews followed a baseline of questions that were designed, beforehand, from a set of specific objectives related to the case study and, in turn, its central objective (**Annex A**); however, depending on the interlocutor, and in order to best fit for individual perspectives, the interview script was built on a case-by-case basis. Because they did not follow a fixed script, these were semi-structured interviews (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). By following this personalized strategy, it was possible to extract the most added-value information from each interlocutor, while simultaneously collect, across all interviews, information on CFC's impact in each of the four dimensions under study: (i) corporate, (ii) business/management, (iii) innovation/knowledge and (iv) marketing.

4.4 Data Analysis

The interviews had a mean duration of 00:55:29 hours (see **Table III** for a better description of the interviews' duration and transcript length). All interviews were audio-recorded and consequently transcribed, so their content could be categorized and posteriorly analyzed. As to control for the integrity of the conducted analysis, the transcript information was analyzed in its integrity, and the most relevant information was partitioned and categorized by theme, and then given a corresponding code.

The chosen coding system was built to reflect the four major lines of questioning that supported the script and that correspond to each of the specific goals that serve as the theoretical backbone of this study. This allowed for a systematic categorization of the collected information, and for a better overview of each individual theme of interest (corporate, business and management, innovation and knowledge, and marketing outputs). Other codes and sub-codes were furthermore created to accommodate for other major answer themes collected throughout the interviews, when deemed relevant for the theoretical framing and objectives of this study (refer to **Annex B** to see the used Coding Tree).

Table III - Interview and Characteristics

Interview #	Duration	Transcript Length (# of pages)
1	01:11:11	7
2	00:48:20	6
3	01:00:08	7
4	00:45:01	5
5	00:43:40	5
6	00:56:25	7
7	00:55:17	8
8	00:45:08	5
9	00:37:50	6
10	01:20:05	7
Total	08:19:25	63

For each theme in scope of analysis, the information collected from the interviews was complemented, when relevant, with an analysis of secondary documentation. This secondary documentation included internal sources to the Sumol+Compal company, including internal reports of metrics and indicators achieved and internal evaluation reports, but also external sources such as public access reports, news and interviews. In addition, research was also carried out on Sumol+Compal's and Compal's own digital media platforms.

By consulting these sources, both internal and external to the company, the aim was to find information to corroborate and/or complement the information provided during the interviews, particularly with regard to the Centro de Frutología Compal and its impact on the aspects under study as a platform for stakeholders' engagement and management. The complete list of sources and complementary documentation consulted throughout the preparation of this report can be found in **Annex C**. This documentation was deemed relevant to consult, having either been referred to (and acquired from external sources) and/or made available by the interviewees themselves. In any case, all information was subject to the same

coding system as that applied to the interview transcripts. The transcription, coding and organization of the information collected for each theme under study followed a theory-oriented approach and was done with the help of the qualitative data analysis software NVivo, which allowed for a systematized processing and organization of the information for subsequent analysis (**Figure III**).

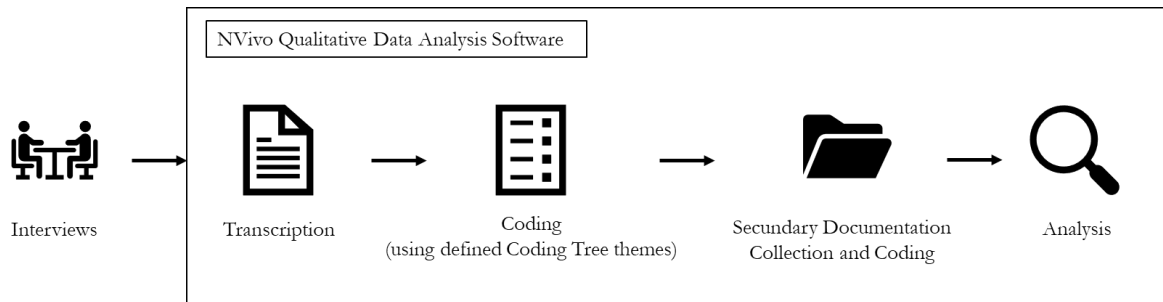


Figure III - Data Analysis Process

5. Results

5.1 Sample Characterization

As previously mentioned, the 10 elected interviewees have relevant connection to Centro de Frutologia Compal's project, and were chosen for their extensive knowledge of its genesis, its stakeholder management nature, its initiatives and impact.

Next, in **Table IV**, is presented the entities represented by the 10 interviewees, and how they relate to Centro de Frutologia Compal (CFC).

Table IV – Interview Characterization – Entity, Sector of Activity and Relation to CFC

Interviewee	Entity	Sector of Activity	Relation to CFC
A	Loyal Ecosystem	Management Consulting	Co-manager, Advisor
B	AJAP	Agriculture, Agroindustry	Advisory Committee Member
C	Quinta do Prado Vasco	Agricultural Industry; Fruticulture	Alumni
D	CONFAGRI	Agriculture, Agroindustry, Forestry and Environment	Advisory Committee Member
E	Sociedade Agrícola Quinta de Lamaçais	Agricultural Industry	Alumni
F	GRAFT	Agricultural Industry	Alumni
G	Sumol+Compal	Food and Beverages	Promoter entity
H	Megainvest	Fruticulture; Forestry	Alumni
I	Sumol+Compal	Food and Beverages	Promoter entity
J	Sumol+Compal	Food and Beverages	Promoter entity

Table V contains more information on the 10 interviewees themselves, their held position and department.

Table V - Interviewees Characterization – Current Position and Department

Interviewee	Position	Department
A	Managing Partner	Stakeholder Management
B	Managing Director	Management Board
C	Co-Owner	Management Board
D	Specialized Technician	Agriculture and Rural Development
E	Founder	Management Board
F	Co-Founder	Management Board
G	Manager	Strategic Marketing and Marketing
H	Co-Founder	Management Board
I	Brand Manager	Brand, Marketing and Stakeholder Management
J	Non-executive Director	Management Board

The majority of the interviewees hold relevant managerial positions at Corporate, Management and Marketing Departments with the entities they represent.

5.2 Genesis of Centro de Frutologia Compal as a multistakeholder platform for value creation

Centro de Frutologia Compal started in 2011, a year of recovery, after a serious economic crisis that deeply affected the social fabric of Portugal. As a result of this economic and social crisis, the agricultural sector was also undergoing profound changes, as interviewee A states: *"There was a lot of unemployment, and above all there were many newly unemployed people. This (...) led to a lot of people who were not from the agricultural area, to want to risk professional activity in this area, especially looking to settle on the land that they owned."* During this most turbulent and troubled time in the sector, there was the persistent lack of cohesion that has always marked the fruit industry in Portugal: *"... there is not a fruit line in Portugal, as there is for other categories (such as the fish line, or the meat line, the milk line, and even yogurts)"* says interviewee G, a gap, also identified by interviewee I, which prevented greater value addition along the chain, as there was *"a gap between the needs of the industry, the fruit growers, the cooperatives and the relevant entities in the sector."* It was in this context that the company's management body realized the aggravating need for the *"presence of an organization/entity, whatever you want to understand, that could connect these loose ends,"* continues the interviewee I, and the value that could be generated by this entity, if it could get that *"these interests could be answered in an aggregated way."* In 2011, the Sumol+Compal company, and specifically the Compal brand, which had been operating in the sector for 60 years, also had internal, business and management weaknesses that could be remedied by getting closer to the primary sector and the beginning of the value chain: *"for a brand [Compal] that has fruit as its raw material and reason for existence, it knew very little about fruit"* confides interviewee J, revealing a little more his perspective on what makes a company strong within the sector of activity in which it operates: *"there is a difference between knowing a lot about making excellent juices and knowing how to sell them well and doing good marketing in terms of a brand, and knowing intrinsically about fruit, knowing where it is produced, knowing its varieties and characteristics, and that was the direction I was talking about."* Sumol+Compal's management body was well aware of the negative impact of this failure on the management, business and marketing aspects of the company, as interviewee J continues, *"The discussion from a management point of view was exactly that: if we can't even be interlocutors with those who sell us fruit or fruit concentrates, then why do we have these almost 'pilgrim' ideas of making these juices with new blends and innovations?"* This weakness was

corroborated by interviewee I, who succinctly explains it as the result of the firm's positioning within the value chain: *"the Compal brand has no vertical integration, which means that, in its value chain it does not integrate the production of the fruit it then uses in its products."* The management body then decided to leverage a project that, while being associated with the brand, had the primary focus of acting in the union and promotion of the value chain of the fruit sector, which simultaneously allowed the company to create a greater connection to the production sector and to national fruit producers: *"We decided then that, despite recognizing our smallness [as a company] in this whole sector, and even our lack of knowledge (...) that it made sense to have here a role of aggregation of stakeholders along the value chain,"* explained interviewee G. With this goal in mind, the management body made use of stakeholder management, and namely of stakeholder consultation: *"There was a very thorough consultation at the beginning to understand where the gaps were, how value could be generated, where the bridges between the parties were, and it was from there that the project developed,"* said interviewee I. When asked about the value of stakeholder consultation as a design tool during this process, interviewee A, corroborated by interviewees G and I, reported that *"it allowed the identification of common needs and perspectives, and mutual interest,"* which later led to the design of a project *"having exactly in mind the needs of all parties, which led to a high rate of acceptance and identification with the project by the stakeholders."* Thus was born Centro de Frutologia Compal, a project that would serve a greater purpose of *"adding value to national fruit, much more than serving the purposes of the brand"* as indicated by the interviewee I, a project that proposed to address and mitigate the main problems, identified during the consultation process, as being the biggest barriers and impediments to a stronger and more coordinated performance of the national fruit sector. These issues ranged from mistrust, *"there was very little willingness to share the so-called 'trade secrets',"* to the romanticization of the agricultural activity by those who were unemployed as a result of the crisis, which led to *"many disappointments, lost money or frustrated businesses"*, as revealed by interviewee A; the *"lack of associativism"* and the difficulty in anticipating *"the price at which they would be able to sell the fruit"*, as identified by interviewee G; and the general lack of communication and collaboration to find solutions, identified by interviewee I: *"there were common needs that were being answered individually and not worked on jointly"*. The stakeholder consultation process determined that the project design of Centro de Frutologia Compal would consist of three pillar initiatives: Academy, Observatory and Laboratory, acting on complementary axes for the promotion of training, awareness and innovation of the Portuguese fruit sector (**Figure IV**). The goal was to create *"a medium to long term project of investment in Portuguese fruit farming, in the valorization of national fruit"* as mentioned by

interviewee G, involving different stakeholders in the creation of specific initiatives in order to achieve the outlined objectives. Given this goal, the interviewee I made clear the importance of creating a multi-stakeholder platform, "...alone we would not be able to set up the right project, nor the necessary know-how, nor set up all the parts of the value chain because we do not have this knowledge and, therefore, it was really essential to find the right people."

A full list of current member entities that make up Centro de Frutologia Compal can be found in **Table VI**).

Table VI - List of the 27 member entities, including the 8 with presence in the Management Committee, of Centro de Frutologia Compal

Acronym	Full Designation	Sector of Activity	Role in CFC
AFA	Associação de Fruticultores de Armamar	Agricultural Production	Member
AJAP	Associação de Jovens Agricultores de Portugal	Agriculture, Agroindustry	Advisory Committee
ANP	Associação Nacional de Produtores de Pera Rocha	Agricultural Production	Member
APAS	Associação dos Produtores Agrícolas da Sobrena	Agricultural Production	Member
APN	Associação Portuguesa de Nutrição	Food and Nutrition, Literacy	Advisory Committee
CACIAL	Cooperativa Agrícola de Citricultores Do Algarve Crl	Agricultural Production	Member
CAFCB	Cooperativa Agrícola dos Fruticultores da Cova da Beira, CRL	Agricultural Production	Member
CATAA	Centro de Apoio Tecnológico Agroalimentar	Technologies, Agroindustry and Agri-Food Industry	Member
CONFAGRI	Confederação Nacional das Cooperativas Agrícolas e do Crédito Agrícola de Portugal	Agriculture, Agroindustry, Forestry and Environment	Advisory Committee
COOPVAL	Cooperativa Agrícola dos Fruticultores do Cadaval	Agricultural Production	Member
Coopérnico	Cooperativa de Desenvolvimento Sustentável C.R.L	Literacy, Environment	Member
COTHN	Centro Operativo e Tecnológico Hortofrutícola	Technologies, Agroindustry and Agri-Food Industry	Advisory Committee
Crédito Agrícola	Caixa Central de Crédito Agrícola Mútuo	Banking Industry	Member
DGADR	Direção-Geral de Agricultura e Desenvolvimento Rural	Government	Advisory Committee
FCNAUP	Faculdade de Ciências da Nutrição e Alimentação da Universidade do Porto	Education	Advisory Committee
Frutalmente	Frutalmente SA	Agricultural Production	Member
FRUTECO	Fruteco - Fruticultura Integrada	Agricultural Production	Member
Frutus	Frutus - Estação Fruteira de Montejunto	Agricultural Production	Member
Geodouro	Geodouro - Consultoria e Topografia Lda	Land and Property Services	Member

Table VI - List of the 27 member entities, including the 8 with presence in the Management Committee, of Centro de Frutologia Compal (cont.)

Acronym	Full Designation	Sector of Activity	Role in CFC
Hortas d'Idanha	Hortas D'Idanha SA	Agricultural Production	Member
INIAV	Instituto Nacional de Investigação Agrária e Veterinária	Research, Agriculture, Veterinary	Advisory Committee
ISA	Instituto Superior de Agronomia	Education	Advisory Committee
Madre Fruta	Madre Fruta - Centro de Vendas Hortofrutícolas, Lda	Agricultural Production	Member
Quinta de Lamaçais	Sociedade Agrícola Quinta de Lamaçais, L.da	Agricultural Production	Member
Terra Pro	Terra Pro Technologies - Agricultura de Precisão	Technologies, Agriculture	Member
UTAD	Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro	Education	Member
Wisecrop	Wisecrop	Technologies, Agriculture	Member

As listed, Centro de Frutologia Compal is composed of member entities that include stakeholders involved with the entire value chain linked to the fruit sector, from production, sale and distribution, to peripheric sectors such as the agroindustry, nutrition, banking, environment, education and research sectors. The stakeholders are diverse in nature, involving a total of 6 producer organizations, 5 associations, 4 cooperatives, 3 higher education institutions, 3 companies in the sector, 2 technological development and support centers, 1 research center, 1 confederation, and 1 government entity.

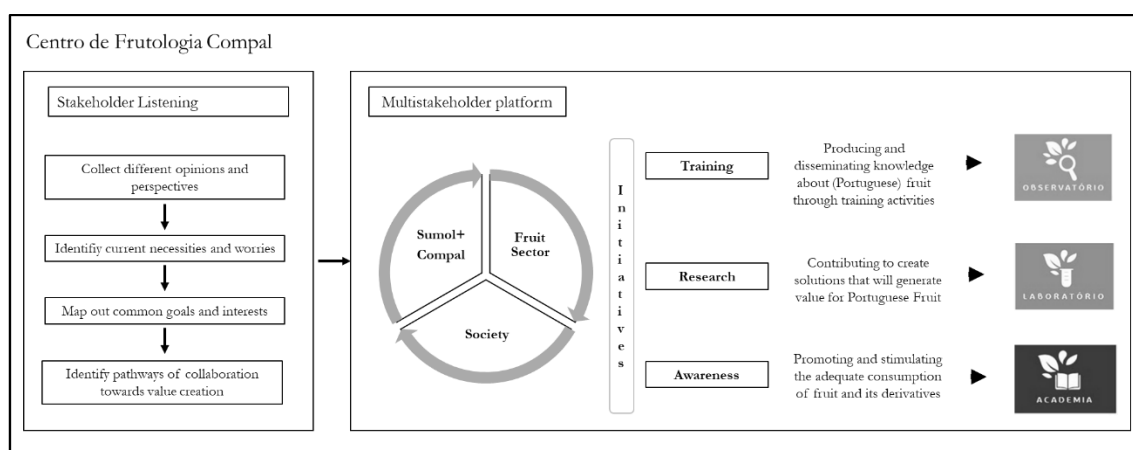


Figure IV - Genesis of Centro de Frutologia Compal as a multistakeholder platform in the Portuguese fruit sector

As explained by Interviewee A, the stakeholders of Centro de Frutologia Compal are, since its inception, regularly consulted by Sumol+Compal, in new consultation initiatives: *"Each year, the Advisory Committee and the Management Committee (made up of people from the company Sumol+Compal and the Compal brand, from different departments) meet to present the results of the previous year and to hear the Advisory Committee on what should be the future. This reunion in practice serves as a sounding board meeting."* Operating since 2012, Centro de Frutologia Compal has acted, as a multistakeholder platform, in a vision of creating mutual value within the Portuguese fruit sector. The major focus, said interviewee A, has been on the Academy initiative, where the goal is to *"train and strengthen the technical and business skills of professionals in the sector,"* but also supporting new producers *"during their transition into the agricultural area"* continued interviewee A, so that *"there were no disappointments or disappointments [with this area]"*.

5.3 Outcomes of Centro de Frutologia Compal

5.3.1 Corporate outcomes

When asked about the impact of Centro de Frutologia Compal's actions on the Sumol+Compal company, Interviewee A succinctly explains, *"The brand doesn't exist if it can't buy fruit, if there is no fruit. The brand will get weaker if it can only buy foreign fruit."* Interviewee G corroborates this point of view, from the company's perspective, saying that Centro de Frutologia Compal has a direct beneficial impact on the strength of the Portuguese fruit sector *"(...) at the end of the day our producers will be of better quality, and Portuguese fruit will also have better quality and will be more valued by the consumer, which is what we want."* It is understood, in this way, that the interviewees understand the strengthening of the Portuguese fruit sector as Centro de Frutologia Compal's main corporate outcome for the Sumol+Compal company, a company that *"depends a lot on fruit, our prime raw material, which is largely Portuguese fruit"*, as stated by interviewee G. Implicitly, interviewee A revealed how the Academy initiative is particularly relevant in achieving this goal for the company: *"if the brand has a project that serves to strengthen the sector, and specifically serves to strengthen fruit producers and those who contribute to successful businesses, the brand is managing to work those who produce its raw material of choice, which is Portuguese fruit"*. The Academy initiative, which has taken place every year since the creation of Centro de Frutologia Compal, is aimed at groups of 12 trainees each year *"and this number is a minimum, because every year there are members of the trainees' technical teams who also accompany them during the training,"* explains

interviewee A, who goes on to explain that at the end of the training, there is *"financial support, which comes in the form of an installation support grant - usually worth €20. 000 - for those who submit one of the best projects at the end of the Academy"*.

At the end of a decade, and having occurred in all the years of existence of Centro de Frutologia Compal, the Academy presents quantitative indicators that reveal the scope of impact of this initiative focused on training, from the number of graduates, the number of projects supported, and the monetary value allocated in the form of scholarships to support agricultural installation. These indicators were collected from the firm's internal documentation and are displayed in **Table VII**.

Table VII - Main quantitative indicators of Centro de Frutologia Compal's Academy

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
# Editions	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
# Graduates	12	12	12	12	12	12	0	12	12	96
# Grants Attributed	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	29
€ Amount Awarded in Grants	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	30,000	60,000	100,000	550,000
# Projects Supported	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	108
# Trainers	7	9	16	18	21	17	8	12	20	128
# Training Hours	46	56	59	65	98,5	84,5	8	39	58,45	514,45
# Field Sessions	12	12	12	12	6	6	0	0	10	70

Of note, after a decade, the Academy's initiative has supported 108 fruit-growing projects, delivered €550,000 in installation support grants, and provided more than 500 hours of training to its trainees. This training is supported by a program that is *"very transversal (...), very complementary, from agricultural training, to management training, to training in the field"*, as described by interviewee C, who went on to explain the importance of this complementarity: *"they led us to question a lot of things, and to look at certain areas that we didn't look at so closely, such as internationalization, English, marketing, design, seeing and knowing what is done in other countries"*; interviewee H also highlighted the importance of field sessions in creating a complementary program, *"making the link between theoretical and practical, and reinforcing the need for scientific knowledge to be in parallel with the agricultural sector and the practical sector."* The training is given by Centro de Frutologia Compal's own stakeholders, *"professionals from the sector (businessmen, agricultural technicians and other stakeholders with relevant knowledge about the area)"* explains interviewee A, something that brings an important dimension to the Academy as an initiative that promotes the

strengthening of the sector by *"fostering networking (...) linking the fruit growers in training to stakeholders in the fruit sector and other related sectors (such as the technology sector) ... that can contribute to enhance the fruit business."*, to which interviewee D adds *"In addition to theoretical and practical training, these entrepreneurs will also have the opportunity to join a large network, opening doors for new collaborations and partnerships."* Networking is *"one of the strengths of Centro de Frutologia Compal"* said interviewee G, allowing trainees *"direct access to the people who know most about fruit in Portugal (...) [which] allows them to accelerate the learning curve,"* something also expressed by interviewee H, reporting his own experience *"it allowed me, when making the decision to install my orchard, to do things right and without taking so many risks"*. Interviewee I points out that the real impact lies in the combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators: *"above all I think it is relevant the number of people who were trained and the impact of these projects, later on, in the sector and in the industry, by how the quality of young fruit growers in Portugal was leveraged"*.

Also in view of a strengthen sector, the interviewees highlighted the important contribution of the Observatory initiative, an initiative that develops multistakeholder projects in order to *"understand fruit and promote fruit consumption among families and especially among children"* as explained by interviewee A. The most remarkable projects, within the Observatory, in the opinion of interviewee I, *"because they really involved a very deep stakeholder management work"*, were the *"Map of Fruits of Portugal and the Pedagogical Orchard"*. As explained by interviewee A, the development of the 'Map of the Fruits of Portugal' involved *"very specific partners, including the army for mapping and cartography and institutions like ISA and DGADR"* for the development of a map *"that teaches about the geographical delimitations of PDO and PGI production in Portugal"*. As explained by interviewee I, with the creation of this map, *"that would show the origin of the varieties of fruit that only exist in Portugal"* the company was once more contributing *"to this goal of valorizing the national fruit and the difference of our fruit"*. In turn, the 'Pedagogical Orchard' initiative, described by Interviewee I as an interesting example *"from a stakeholder management point of view"* involved bringing together partners, from *"the Lisbon City Council, the Quinta Pedagógica dos Olivais and other partners of ours (like ISA)"* to give new life to a *"completely abandoned orchard"* and create an educational orchard *"with almost 60 different varieties of fruit trees"* in downtown Lisbon. Interviewee I went on to explain the added value of a project like this from the point of view of awareness and knowledge: *"this also resulted in different activities within the orchard itself, run by the Quinta Pedagógica dos Olivais' monitor to teach children about fruit and the various components of fruit, from the seasons, to how they are planted and harvested, to the more nutritional part"*. As pointed out by interviewees A and I, this awareness becomes especially relevant for the urban population:

"we realized that children who lived in the city often thought that fruit came packaged from the supermarket, nor did they have the sensibility to understand what an orchard is".

The impact of the different projects of the Observatory's initiative can be evaluated according to accumulated quantitative indicators - collected from the firm's internal documentation - indicators that cover different metrics, from square meters of recovered land, number of schools and people covered (**Table VIII**).

Table VIII - Main quantitative indicators of Centro de Frutologia Compal's Observatory

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 (to date)	Total
# Visitors	7,500	30,000	30,000	256	56	88	172	68,072
# Schools	39	109	298	184	112	23	59	824
# Children	817	3,602	7,000	7,257	2433	501	1,072	22,682
# Maps Distributed	20	868	240	155	73	0	0	1,356
# sqm Requalified	1,300	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,300

The figures presented above refer to the quantitative impact of the Observatory initiative since 2016, the first year in which the Observatory was in operation, and show the impact of this initiative in raising awareness in society and schools. In all, there are more than 68,000 visitors, 22,000 children and 800 schools covered. As mentioned by interviewees A and I, these indicators should also be used as metrics of the indirect impact of Centro de Frutologia Compal in strengthening the sector, as they serve to promote *"smart choices, like consuming the right amount of fruit per day"* says interviewee I, supported by what interviewee A described: *"it is well known that Portugal falls short of the World Health Organization's recommendations when it comes to fruit consumption"*. From a qualitative analysis of the interviews, it was possible to register several outcomes pointing to Centro de Frutologia Compal in strengthening the Portuguese fruit sector, either directly by conferring technical expertise to fruit growers and creating networks of cooperation, or indirectly, by promoting better land management, conferring greater visibility to the sector and promoting fruit consumption and awareness with society. The result of this qualitative analysis can be found in **Table IX**.

Table IX - Outputs of Centro de Frutologia Compal on Sector Strenght

Outputs	Reference Expressions	References
Technical Expertise	'Evolving' 'Complementary'	"The very design of the CFC allowed a greater complementarity of knowledge and skills applied to the fruit business. Ten years ago, we didn't talk about sustainability in agriculture as we do today, nor about technology and precision agriculture as we do today" - Interview A
		"There is a visible evolution of technical knowledge." - Interview B
Networking and cooperation	'Knowledge Sharing' 'Bonding'	"We strengthen the industry by fostering networking, not only between the trainees themselves, but also between the trainees and professionals in the industry (business people, agricultural technicians and other stakeholders with relevant knowledge about the field) who teach them during the training." - Interview A
		"The CFC has contributed to the improvement of our sector, by making it possible to bring fruit growers closer together and to have more discussion about the importance of training and contacts among them" - Interview B
Outlook	'Originality' 'Attitude' 'Forward-thinking'	"I was impressed by the originality of the trainees, who already show that they have overcome 'taboos' that used to be frequent in the sector, namely regarding marketing issues and product valorization" - Interview B
		"Basically, the graphic answer to this question is: I think the CFC has managed to change the attitude of Portuguese fruit farming; I think that's the first point and also the best answer I can give." - Interview J
Land Management	'Better land use'	"Our country is a country of "spots" (...) If no one takes the initiative to take advantage of these "spots", these important areas [for fruit-growing] may be lost. The CFC awakened and stirred wills, aroused feelings "Why don't we go there and make it happen?" - Interview B
Image and Reputation	'Social Status' 'Access' 'Improved image'	"The CFC project also has an arm related to communication and media, and through it has led many farmers to do interviews, to go on television and be present in public opinion, and this has increased the social status of this profession." - Interview A
		"I am, for example, a member of CAP's Young Farmers Advisory Council (...), I was invited by the government to participate in a working group related to new technologies (...). All that comes a lot from my association with the CFC and Compal brand." - Interview C
		"This CFC initiative has given us a hand so that we can talk about and pass on a more positive image of production to consumers (...)." - Interview F
Sector Visibility	'Visibility'	"The combination of these players, Compal's commitment and investment (...) gives the sector much greater visibility" - Interview B
		"The CFC brought the ability to aggregate and visibility that the industry was (and is) lacking." - Interview D
Fruit Awareness & Consumption	'Awareness'	"We have, through the Observatory initiative, promoted some initiatives to understand the fruit and promote fruit consumption among families and especially among children, something that also contributes to the strengthening of the sector. - Interview A
		"I think it benefits the fruit sector, also indirectly, because if we start raising children's awareness about the importance of fruit consumption from an early age, they will be more able to make smart choices, such as consuming the right amount of fruit per day. - Interview I
Installation Success	'Efficiency' 'Lower Barriers'	"The work was intense and specific in the CFC that then led me to move into the field effectively and quickly." - Interview C
		"The CFC brought me some freedom, in the sense that I was no longer dependent, or at least afraid that the building owners would terminate contract - and in that sense it brought freedom." – Interview E
Number of Producers	'More Projects'	"the great proof [of the CFC's impact] is in the number of installation projects of young farmers that in the last decade have taken place in the fruit sector in small fruits and in fruits that have been recovered, such as quince, pomegranate, fig, pistachio, dragon fruit, and others." – Interview B

The role of Centro de Frutologia Compal is multifaceted, best summarized by interviewee G as having a *"role of aggregating stakeholders along the value chain to promote initiatives that make sense for us to enhance the value of Portuguese fruit, and these initiatives can range from initiatives closer to production, to processing, to sensitizing the consumption of fruit and its derivatives."* Within this role, its impact in both the Portuguese fruit sector and in Portuguese society in general - namely through the initiatives of the Academy and the Observatory described here - also contributes to the strategic corporate sustainability performance for Sumol+Compal and is in line with the achievement of various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as described by the United Nations. A comparative analysis between Centro de Frutologia Compal's performance and the indicators described by the Inventory of Business Indicators, developed by the United Nations and GRI Standards, allows us to identify that Centro de Frutologia Compal contributes to the SDGs with various specific indicators (**Table X**).

Table X - Centro de Frutologia Compal's contribution to Sustainable Development Goals

SDG	Business Theme	Indicator ID and Description
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	Healthy and affordable food	Former FP4 - Nature, scope and effectiveness of any programs and practices (in-kind contributions, volunteer initiatives, knowledge transfer, partnerships and product development) that promote access to healthy lifestyles; the prevention of chronic disease; access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food; and improved welfare for communities in need
	Responsible content dissemination	M4 - Actions taken to improve performance in relation to content dissemination issues (accessibility and protection of vulnerable audiences and informed decision making) and results obtained
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	Education for sustainable development	EO11- Number, type and impact of sustainability initiatives designed to raise awareness, share knowledge and impact behavior change, and results achieved
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	Jobs supported in the supply chain	G4-EC8 - Significant indirect economic impacts, including the extent of impacts
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	Inclusive decision making	GRI Standard 102-21 a. - Processes for consultation between stakeholders and the highest governance body on economic, environmental, and social topics
		GRI Standard 102-29 - Whether stakeholder consultation is used to support the highest governance body's identification and management of economic, environmental, and social topics and their impacts, risks, and opportunities.

Table X - Centro de Frutologia Compal's contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (cont.)

SDG	Business Theme	Indicator ID and Description
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development: Systemic issues: multi-stakeholder partnerships	N.A.	No indicators have been identified

Finally, a relevant outcome of Centro de Frutologia Compal with direct impact on the Sumol+Compal company has been on company reputation issues, according to the interviewees. According to interviewee A, this is due to the design of the project and the nature of Centro de Frutologia Compal as a multistakeholder platform of engagement and value creation for critical stakeholders: *"From the moment a brand brings together critical industry stakeholders and puts them in relationships with each other with a single purpose with a lot of significance (which is to share knowledge, share experiences, create networks and partnerships), this brand has reputational gains, because it is strengthened with these stakeholders"*. Interviewee G corroborates, saying that the company has felt a positive response from stakeholders to the nature of the project: *"we try to make an investment so that fruit growers can really have better conditions, and this is something that we realize that our partners value a lot and it ends up putting the reputation of the Compal brand and the Sumol+Compal company at a very interesting level."* Here, as the interviewees representing the company state, the results of Centro de Frutologia Compal's impact are demonstrated *"whenever we go and talk to governmental or non-governmental entities"*, acting as a *"very important credibility flag"* says interviewee G, although the gains are difficult to quantify or tangible in economic terms. As mentioned by interviewee J, although *"it is not possible to measure someone's goodwill"* it is, however, *"evident [that] we have managed, as public entities are added to this universe [referring to Centro de Frutologia Compal], to create goodwill with these entities"*.

The inputs collected throughout the interviews were complemented with complementary references and listed in **Table XI**, which organizes some of the outcomes in terms of corporate reputation for the Sumol+Compal company that are attributed as a result of the actions of Centro de Frutologia Compal.

Table XI - Outputs of Centro de Frutologia Compal on Corporate Reputation

Outputs	Reference Expressions	References
Goodwill	'Engagement' 'Belonging' 'Commitment' 'Value for all'	"I remember commenting to someone that I never imagined (...) that Compal would be a 'reachable' brand for a producer like me. I thought it was a huge brand that only dealt with big producers. And the simple fact [that Compal] is so interested in small producers, but especially national producers, ends up giving a great incentive." – Interview E
		"I think the CFC project was so successful because it had such a great involvement from all parties. I think across the board to all the partners, if you ask, they'll all say that they feel the project is theirs, and that's because the project is theirs, really." – Interview I
		"[One of the] best indicators of the impact of the CFC is the fact that all the members of the CFC, in its different components, remain committed and available to the project." – Interview D
		"I was talking to one of this year's trainees, half English and half Portuguese, (...) [who said that] when she found the CFC, she couldn't believe it, because she found it so unusual to have [a project of this nature] in Portugal, and so she made herself available, and said that we could count on her in whatever was needed, in publicizing the project and promoting it." – Interview G
		"I, as a member, (...) say: never forget our participation, our commitment and the value that we contribute to [this project], because we all win (...); we are not hanging on to anything, all together we are part of a project that wants to grow; and what wants to grow is the image of Agriculture, the weight of Agriculture and, in this case, of fruit farming." – Interview B
Institutional Credibility	'Institutional Relationships'	"We should also note the continued investment in the Centro de Frutologia Compal, which maintains its status as a strategic and priority axis for the development of the brand in institutional terms (...)" – Relatório Único Integrado, 2018
		"It [referring to Centro de Frutologia Compal] is a perfect interchange between Production, Industry, Government and Education that shows that when there is a will and commitment to create innovative and sustainable projects, anything is possible." – Interview D

5.3.2 Business and Management outcomes

The impact of the Centro de Frutologia Compal has not only been important to the corporate reputation of Sumol+Compal but, as a direct consequence of that, and as interviewee J reports, has resulted in greater operational freedom and fewer constraints on business: "...and it's obvious that from the point of view of public policy and even taxes and fees and things like that, the government will have a very hard time overcoming the objections of people who say 'hey, are you going to hurt these pedestrians? Think about it, because they've done an absolutely extraordinary job [referring to the Centro de Frutologia Compal project]." In contrast, when asked about the direct impact of Centro de Frutologia Compal on the business of Sumol+Compal, and specifically on the impact of this project on the acquisition of new suppliers, the interviewees representing the brand minimized, saying that "around 4 of the Academia's alumni are now suppliers for us, but I have doubts that

it is still a relevant indicator" as put it interviewee G. This attitude of the management body has its origin, as explained, in the very nature of the project itself, which does not have the supply needs of the company as its primary objective - *"there is no obligation to sell the product for the brand to the fruit grower trainees who come through Centro de Frutologia Compal"*, mentioned interviewee A - but also explained by the long term nature of partnerships between company and trainee, when established, as explained by interviewee G: *"We already buy some fruit from the previous Centro de Frutologia Compal trainees, but above all, what we then try to do with them are projects that are medium to long term; that's because any installation takes time before it can give fruit - from the moment you plant it's at least 3 years, and so it's always a medium to long term path."* Nevertheless, the interviewees pointed to an important role of Centro de Frutologia Compal in the process of sourcing raw material, not only as a vehicle to approach the national fruit producing sector, but also to bring the company closer to its raw material of choice, Portuguese fruit: *"We have our channels open, namely through our agricultural division, which is responsible for the purchase of raw material (...) but Centro de Frutologia Compal allows us, and allows this agricultural division, to get to know new potential suppliers, to also understand what is being done in the [Portuguese] sector, to understand what the role of industry is in this sector, or what that role could be and what it is desirable for producers to be [the role of industry in the sector]. And so, in terms of business, in the sense of purchasing raw materials, it is also fundamental that we have this proximity."*

Presented in **Table XII** are references derived from secondary documentation consulted, which attest to the impact of Centro de Frutologia Compal in linking Sumol+Compal to the Portuguese sector and its importance in sourcing raw materials.

Table XII - Impact of Centro de Frutologia Compal on Portuguese raw material sourcing and connection to the Portuguese sector

References
<i>"The work developed under the CFC project is based on adding value to what is Portuguese, by promoting closer contact with fruit growers, allowing us to learn about different forms of production and gain fundamental knowledge about the value chain".</i> – Interview with Sumol+Compal's Strategic Marketing Manager, Agronegócios, 2020
<i>"We can highlight some data, such as the fact that the Compal brand currently collaborates with 42 national suppliers, with Portuguese fruit representing approximately 64% of the total raw material absorbed by the Compal brand, originating in 25 different Portuguese municipalities. For this work, the contribution of the work developed by the CFC has been invaluable."</i> – Interview with the President of Centro de Frutologia Compal, Jornal Económico, 2017

A current survey of quantitative indicators, available in internal company documentation, allows a clearer and more up-to-date view of the scope of the Centro de Frutologia Compal project. Through the 96 graduates supported through the Academia initiative, the result of

the survey shows a total of 1074,93 of fruit-producing hectares installed, representing a total of 24 different fruit varieties covered, in 17 Portuguese districts, relevant indicators of the national scope of the project. In addition to the impact that this represents in bringing the company closer to the production sector and the sourcing of raw material, as stated by interviewee G, this proximity will also benefit the quality of the final product, by allowing it to *"be harvested at the optimum point of ripeness, which makes it much tastier"* as explained by interviewee D.

5.3.3 Innovation and Knowledge outcomes

Identified by the interviewees as an important outcome of Centro de Frutologia Compal was the way in which this project, functioning as a multistakeholder platform, has enabled the incorporation of new perspectives and knowledge which, in turn, has given rise to and accelerated internal innovation processes in the company, and has also contributed to the transfer of skills to the work teams and management bodies. Born with the purpose of contributing to the creation of new solutions to add value to national fruit, Centro de Frutologia Compal dedicates one of its initiatives, the laboratory, to *"everything that has to do with new products and innovation"* as stated by interviewee A. To date, the Laboratory initiative has already given rise to two new product ideation projects, consisting of *"initiatives with former students of the Academy, in which dynamics were created to promote interaction between them and promote the ideation of new juices,"* continues interviewee A. The direct result for the brand was visible, having led *"to the creation of two new products for the Compal brand, limited editions given, of course, the limited production capacity of each individual producer. (...) [one of these editions] the one of Pera Rocha do Oeste with raspberry from Montijo even led the brand to later adopt a regular edition (...), which is still marketed today. There were even competitors copying the flavor that same year. It was really successful"*.

Using secondary documentation internal to the company, it was possible to gather the most important quantitative indicators of this initiative: two innovation sessions, conducted with 21 of the Academia's alumni, resulting in the launch of two limited editions and one regular edition of new products for the company.

As explained by interviewee I, the success of these initiatives, and the reason why they represent great added value for the company, lies in the *"fact that we bring to the discussion people who are not so addicted to the innovation process, so that [these people] can bring value in a more 'unlearned' way"*. The incorporation of these new perspectives brought by stakeholders becomes of particular importance for the marketing and innovation department of the company, in a

disruptive process perspective, continues the interviewee I: *"many times when we think about innovation and ideation, we end up being very addicted to the cycle of what we already know"* (...) [so] *I think it's very rich (...) to bring people who have, on the one hand, the ability to think outside the box, but also, on the other hand, that don't have all the barriers that many times we who work in marketing already have."* Another important contribution lies in the 'carefree' dimension of these multistakeholder innovation processes, which adds a previously unexplored creative dimension: *"[the stakeholders] had no barriers to entry, nor did they think about production limitations, or quantities, or limitations on how to sell the final product, and so they were able to be very creative in the way they presented their ideas."*, further commented interviewee I, who finishes by saying, *"that also challenged us (company) to make limited editions that we otherwise would never have done just from an experimentation standpoint."* In sum, the interviews revealed an important contribution of the Laboratory as a multistakeholder innovation platform at the boundary between company and producers. Not least, it allowed to bring Sumol+Compal closer to potential suppliers: *"It's interesting to see also how the Laboratory's initiative leads producers to think differently about selling their fruit to the brand, and the avenues you have to explore if you want to sell to the brand, there again, through cooperation and collaboration with other stakeholders."*, as evidenced by interviewee A.

Table XIII compiles references, from secondary sources consulted, concerning the impact of Centro de Frutologia Compal on new innovations for the company.

Table XIII - Impact of Centro de Frutologia Compal on new innovations

References
<i>"The relationship between the rock pear from the West and the raspberry from the Algarve was a real result of Frutologia. In an action of generating ideas of new flavors with trainees of the Centro de Frutologia Compal, where producers combine the fruits produced by them to try to generate new flavors, two producers came together and created a unique flavor."</i> – Website Compal – Origem das Frutas Pera e Framboesa
<i>"As innovation is an integral part of Compal DNA, the brand surprised again its consumers with unusual combinations of fruit, from qualified raw materials, always in search of the best flavors that Frutologia, a combination of science and art, can provide. To this title we highlight the new Compal Origens Pêra Rocha do Oeste D.O.P. and Framboesa do Algarve, developed from Portuguese fruit of recognized quality".</i> - Relatório Único Integrado, 2019

Adding to the innovation processes, the interviewees also came to point to an important role of Centro de Frutologia Compal as a platform for the transfer of knowledge - technical, management and strategic - to the Sumol+Compal company. To a large extent, this was due to the fact that Centro de Frutologia Compal provides a direct means of contact between the company and the production sector, thus filling an obvious gap in terms of sources of

knowledge: *"Centro de Frutologia Compal (...), by bringing brand employees closer to the origin, the sector and the raw material (...) helps in the transfer of knowledge within the brand as well, within the teams that work with the brand and within the company as well,"* explained interviewee A. Interviewee B also sees clear advantages for the company, mainly by allowing it to gain knowledge about the structure and dynamics of the Portuguese fruit-growing sector and, from there, extract greater benefit from the value chain where it operates: *"[with the CFC] Sumol+Compal discovered that there is a lot more fruit-growing beyond the large producers already perfectly identified (...) [and get to know] how much the small and medium fruit-growers contribute to the sector, the experience, the information and the contacts that they gather"*. Interviewees E and H, on the other hand, share the opinion that this connection to the industry and growers allows the company to become more aware and knowledgeable about its reality, making it better prepared: *"[Through the CFC] they [company managers] are direct witnesses of the quality of fruit (...) and they see the difficulties that a fruit grower goes through for various reasons, be it the weather, a disease that appeared in the orchard,"* commented interviewee E, to which interviewee H added *"[With the CFC], Sumol+Compal now has a more direct link to the production sector (...) and they also get a know-how of the production sector (...).) and they also get a know-how of the reality of what is happening in the field and this is important for the brand to be able to know what is being done well or less well"*.

This connection to the reality of the sector becomes a factor of extra importance, as explained by the interviewee A, for a company with the period of activity of Sumol+Compal: *"We know that, when brands turn 70 years old, they are already more distant from their creation and, therefore, more distant from what was the origin 70 years ago (it means, the agricultural sector)"*.

Precisely in order to foster greater proximity of the company to its origins, Centro de Frutologia Compal has been developing, over its 10 years of operation, editions of the 'Bootcamp', a project within the Academy initiative *"in which we would choose a part of the country and a fruit, and we would go and learn everything there was to learn about that fruit. We reversed the roles and it was the CFC trainees and partners who trained us"* as explained by interviewee I.

The main indicators of this project were collected, from internal secondary sources, and compiled in **Table XIV**

Table XIV - Main quantitative indicators of Centro de Frutologia Compal's Bootcamp

	2015	2016	2017	Total
# Sumol+Compal Employees	16	19	20	55
# Stakeholders/Trainers	6	6	4	16
# Training Hours	10	10,15	8,15	28,3

In three editions, 55 of the company's employees received this training, and almost 30 hours of training were given. In a transversal way, the interviewed representatives of Sumol+Compal were unanimous about the importance of the Bootcamp and, in general, of Centro de Frutologia Compal, in the transfer of knowledge to the company over the last ten years. In this respect, a qualitative analysis and organization of the themes identified during the interviews can be found in **Table XV**.

Table XV - Impact of Centro de Frutologia Compal on knowledge transfer to Sumol+Compal

Scope	Business Theme	References
Firm	Value chain and raw material knowledge	"[before CFC] we were not interlocutors for those who went out into the field to produce peaches or any other fruit. However, today, we are stronger. – Interview J
		"There began to be much more sensitivity on the part of the company's teams about the constraints of the value chain and the specifications of the fruit we were working with". – Interview I
Brand	Strategy and Brand Management	"Especially for those who work in brand management, it is extremely interesting and strategic to have more knowledge about fruit, about Portuguese fruit and about, deep down, the desires, anxieties, concerns, successes and failures of those who work with this fruit every day. Because this ends up playing a very important role in how we manage the brand and how we make decisions." – Interview G
		"[Through CFC] we have close contact with the fruit growers to be able to work on brand management in terms of innovation, in the sense of new flavors and fruits to launch, and also in terms of tone of communication." – Interview G
	Communication	"the Bootcamps ended up being one (not the only) complementary way that the brand management team had to have access to certain knowledge about fruit that then allowed us to also work along the entire value chain, and namely in terms of communication." – Interview G
Employees	Technical Expertise	"The Bootcamps were also very useful for us to learn about fruit, because we usually say that the Compal brand ends up having a differentiator against competitors in fruitology (...) and fruitology, according to our definition, is the science, art and ideology of working with fruit (...) in terms of agricultural techniques, origin of fruit varieties, nutritional science relating to fruit, and the like" – Interview G
	Teambuilding	"On top of that [the Bootcamps] enabled super-interesting teambuilding that everyone loved and that the company got value out of as well." – Interview I

Looking back at a decade of operation, the management team feels reinvented by the success of Centro de Frutologia Compal and believes the project has been of greater value to the company's know-how, as revealed by interviewee J: *"We always knew we were taking a huge risk [in starting the Centro de Frutologia Compal project], but as we went [forward] there, my team turned to me and said 'we see why you said we didn't know anything about fruit'"*.

5.3.4 Marketing outcomes

Deciphering or quantifying the impact of Centro de Frutologia Compal from a marketing perspective is somewhat complicated, given that the project was, for many years, *"a silent*

project, not communicated externally to the consumer" as explained by interviewee G, and as such, the study of the contribution of this project to the perception of the Compal brand among Portuguese consumers is still in an exploratory phase, as explained during the interview process. However, it was possible, together with the interviewees, to extract information about how the communication strategy adopted by the brand for Centro de Frutologia Compal was strategically defined around a project with a multistakeholder nature, enhancing it and giving credibility to its purpose of co-creation of value for a stronger fruit-growing sector and, in the end, also resulting in greater marketing value for the brand. As explained during the interviews, there was an initial purposeful decision *"that was correct, in my opinion"* (as interviewee A put it) not to communicate the Centro de Frutologia Compal project to the consumer. Instead, the story of this project was to be told *"in reverse, starting by saying that the fruit growers are the most important piece"* told interviewee J, and only revealed to the general public *"at the moment when we had really conquered that credibility and already had the project very well recognized within the sector and with the stakeholders of the sector"* corroborated interviewee I. On the heels of the first communication campaign about Centro de Frutologia Compal, made in 2021 - *"the first time that the project was communicated to the public, after almost 10 years"* as interviewee J said - the results obtained were *"very positive, serving to reinforce the link between Compal and the fruit growers, and the support [Compal] gives to fruit growers, which is something that from a branding point of view is very important."* This positive reaction reinforced the idea that brand managers had at the start of the project, as confided by interviewee I, that *"a stakeholder management project must first gain robustness, relevance and credibility, and only then is it prepared to eventually serve a brand purpose."* This was, in fact, the biggest insight resulting from the interview process with the brand managers, and it was the common opinion of all interviewees from Sumol+Compal. The premeditated decision to hide the Centro de Frutologia Compal project from the consumer turned out, in the opinion of the brand management body strategists, to be crucial, allowing a later communication campaign to show the public *"what we were already doing and had been developing for the sector"*, continued interviewee I, which further added: *"if we had communicated the CFC to the consumer from the outset, it probably wouldn't have the impact it has today, because in the beginning we didn't have the story to tell"*. Today, at the end of a decade, the project's robustness means that it *"is already prepared to be another anchor in the positioning of the brand"*, concluded the interviewee I.

Now communicated, the story of Centro de Frutologia Compal, and what the project represents for the national fruit sector, has enabled a campaign aligned with the values of the larger

Compal brand, giving greater credibility to a narrative *"that comes from the other side, in the sense of saying 'our proximity to the Orchard is unparalleled'"* said the interviewee J, and attesting to the mother-brand's value proposition of *"the way we act in the good treatment of fruit"*; this further contributed, in the opinion of Interview I, to add to confidence in Compal's brand *"that anyway already exists in the Portuguese consumer"* but also adding a new axis of *"Humanization, because we really have given a face to our fruit growers and highlighted what is this new generation of fruit growers in Portugal"* the interviewee concluded. When asked directly about results of consumer studies on the impact of the Centro de Frutologia Compal project on the perception of the Compal brand among Portuguese consumers, interviewees representing the management body pointed to results that are still preliminary, although positive and that already *"show very well that this project [of the CFC] resonates with consumers"*, especially with the *"younger generations, more driven by a sense of purpose"* as mentioned by interviewee G. With this younger public, Centro de Frutologia Compal is quite popular: *"when we show them the project, they ask us if we are accepting CVs, because they want to join it"* continues interviewee G.

The results of a consumer study carried out in 2022, using focus groups (provided by the brand to construct this study), show a role for Centro de Frutologia Compal in giving credibility to the term 'frutology', as well as adding a dimension of 'seriousness, development and formalization' to the Compal brand. They also show that the sample of interviewees perceived a more extensive, deeper and more serious relationship between the Compal brand and fruit growers than initially anticipated, especially given the usual behavior of Portuguese companies. The pedagogical aspect was valued above all by parents and teachers present in the sample, while the relationship with universities and state bodies serves to reinforce the scientific and social intervention character of the brand and gives credibility to its innovation potential. Finally, the idea of supporting national fruit is also reinforced - despite the already known launches of ranges made from Portuguese fruit - which with Centro de Frutologia Compal makes it a brand mission, something that contributes positively to brand equity, as it transcends the product.

Interviewee G's perspective corroborates the generalized opinion of the other brand interviewees on this point: *"[With the CFC project] We are working on brand equity in a very solid way, and with proven track records [of a decade of operation]; so, it's not something that's 'touch and go', and consumers realize this when they are now presented with the [CFC] project. They see it, they recognize value, and they realize that there's a purpose behind the medium- to long-term investment."*

The multistakeholder nature of the Centro de Frutologia Compal project also results in

greater brand strength, a product subsequent of the "universe of wills that has been created around this project" as stated by interviewee J, who assesses the strength of a brand by the reaction that the market would have to its sudden disappearance: "How many of our brands [in Portugal] would people feel sorry if they disappeared? If you think about it, there wouldn't be that many, but Compal is absolutely in that territory." From this perspective, the presence and impact of Centro de Frutologia Compal takes on a new meaning as an additive force: "[imagine] even if you keep the Compal brand, but this universe of ideas and pooling of interests in these stakeholders disappears [referring to the CFC]; a lot of people would be deeply upset, starting with the trainees and former trainees, who are going to think 'so, why did these people stop the CFC?'". In the opinion of interviewee J, this strength, rooted in the brand's connection with its stakeholders, also serves to defend it against possible new competitors: "I have said, as president of the European Juice Association (...) that they cannot come to Portugal to beat Compal in this game; they have no chance of dislodging a brand as strong as ours, with such an umbilical relationship with civil society and connection to Portuguese citizenship." Finally, through the unusual universe of stakeholders that Centro de Frutologia Compal has been able to create, the Compal brand has also been strengthened in new areas of positioning, cementing it as a unique brand on the national scene: "Let's also look at the impact of having people from the nutrition area interested in being connected to an initiative like this [referring to the CFC]! These things are worthwhile for the impact they have on brand positioning, for the history part of the brand, but above all they are worthwhile for the Compal brand as part of Portuguese cultural heritage. Yes, because this no longer has anything to do with the brand having commercial interests. There is a cultural and heritage layer here that is already associated with the Compal brand, and there aren't many brands in Portugal that achieve this." In addition to the testimonies of the representatives of the Sumol+Compal management body, it was also possible to collect, throughout the interviews, the opinions of the Centro de Frutologia Compal's stakeholders on what impact this project brings to the positioning, perception and identity of the Compal brand. The survey of these references is shown in **Table XVI**.

Table XVI - Impact of Centro de Frutologia Compal on the Compal brand

Outputs	Reference Expressions	References
Humanization	'Support for Producers'	"Therefore, it [the CFC] is a project that strengthens all the brand's positioning axes. We can inclusively say that it came to contribute with a new positioning axis, that of humanizing the brand because the project has distinctly humanistic characteristics." – Interview A

Table XVI (cont.) - Impact of Centro de Frutologia Compal on the Compal brand

Outputs	Reference Expressions	References
		"Yes, [we can speak of a humanization of the brand], but also the association with the family, (...) humanitarian sustainability in the sense of working with national producers and of having a certain care with national producers" – Interview C
		"There is a strengthening of the human image of the brand, via support for its suppliers" – Interview F
Rejuvenation	'An image of a younger Sector'	"It [the Compal brand] became very much associated with young producers, producers with enthusiasm, with the will to do well. I think that image of the old fruit grower, in his 70s and wearing a straw hat has been lost, and the brand has become younger." – Interview C
Portugality	'A brand from all over Portugal'	"of the CFC project, the major perceptions that come out are the perceptions of "Portugal", "naturalness" and "fruit"; a perfect match with those that are the perceptions that the Compal brand has in its DNA and in its positioning." – Interview A
		"(...) because the brand would also be very associated with Lisbon, because of the 'little bottles' and because it was a big brand; [with the CFC] it became a brand for the entire national territory, [it gained] a Portugal axis, [and became] a Portuguese brand." – Interview C

On the other hand, the interviews revealed a distinct, more direct involvement of the Centro de Frutologia Compal's stakeholders in the communication campaigns that the Compal brand has been doing over the last decade. To this effect, interviewee C told us a very pragmatic case of this type of involvement: *"I remember we were doing a marketing campaign in the Algarve and there was an actress picking oranges wearing garden (rubber) gloves; I sent a mouthful like 'Oh girl, in the Orchard you wouldn't go past lunchtime, picking fruit wearing gloves so as not to damage your nails.' They stopped everything and came to talk to me to find out what I was talking about. I explained that to pick the fruit you have to be sensitive, to feel and touch the fruit, so the gloves didn't make sense and, in fact, that doesn't happen at the Orchard. They repeated the ad without the gloves."* This one-off case is however representative of the credibility that the Compal brand seeks to lend to its communication campaigns, a credibility that becomes even more important *"since we present ourselves as 'fruitologists' and as knowing a lot about fruit"* told interviewee G, and as such, the knowledge and reality transmitted by the Centro de Frutologia Compal's stakeholders is essential in the way the brand also presents itself to the consumer: *"It is also important to have knowledge here beyond what is on the internet, that is, to have a source of knowledge that is a bit deeper and more technical, so that the storytelling that we tell [to the consumer] is really based on that knowledge."*

6. Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 Discussion and Conclusion from the present case study

This study sought to answer its central question, 'What impact can be derived from Sumol+Compal's past (and continued) application of stakeholder management?', from a company-centric perspective, exploring the process and rationale that led Sumol+Compal to engage various stakeholders in the sector in which it operates, and how this engagement led to synergies and co-creation processes with beneficial impact for the company, centered on a multistakeholder platform: Centro de Frutologia Compal. This impact was decoded by blocks, covering several aspects, namely (i) corporate, (ii) management and business, (iii) innovation and knowledge, and finally (iv) marketing. It was of interest to the purpose of this study to also include a description of the stakeholder consultation process that was at the genesis of this project, describing the contextual forces at work and allowing the reader to understand what factors and stimuli led the company's management to decide that a multi-stakeholder approach would be the best solution. A first caveat should be made to the approach to the term 'stakeholder' that was adopted throughout this study. The term stakeholder was used to refer to all those entities that were active parties in the initiatives promoted by Centro de Frutologia Compal, that were and are part of it, and directly impacted by it. These include the company Sumol+Compal, the member entities of the project, agricultural producers, the Portuguese fruit sector, consumers and civil society in general.

During the process that gave rise to this project, it became apparent how the ultimate goal of what was to become Centro de Frutologia Compal - in this case, the valorization and promotion of the Portuguese fruit industry - shaped its design, in terms of the initiatives to be promoted, and also, consequently, which partner-stakeholders would have to be involved in the project in order to achieve this goal. In the literature, the process by which a company identifies which stakeholders it should involve is part of a larger process of stakeholder integration and referred to as 'identification and knowledge of stakeholders' (Plaza-Úbeda *et al.*, 2010). The stakeholder engagement process in the genesis of Centro de Frutologia Compal, however, did not stop at stakeholder identification, but included an in-depth listening process to identify "*common needs and perspectives, and mutual interest*", as mentioned throughout the interviews, to build a project that all parties could identify with and benefit from. This second level of stakeholder involvement, more complex and already involving the implementation of bilateral communication, is called 'interaction between stakeholders and company' (Plaza-

Úbeda *et al.*, 2010). Finding other parallels with what is described in the literature, we can also match the stakeholder consultation process in the genesis of Centro de Frutologia Compal to a process of 'consultative participation', within the stakeholder participation system described by Green and Hunter-Clarke (2003), a higher level of stakeholder integration that requires communication mechanisms that involve interviewing stakeholders at a deeper and more exploratory level.

It was evident from the interviews conducted that the degree of identification of stakeholders with the purpose of the project is indeed high, with a generalized opinion that all parties involved contribute to the same objective, greater than the objectives of the company or the Compal brand - *"all together we are part of a project that wants to grow; and what wants to grow is the image of Agriculture (...) and, in this case, of fruit farming"* (interviewee B) was a remarkable attesting statement. The example of Centro de Frutologia Compal showed the importance of including stakeholders during project design to maximize their degree of identification with the project and, thus, make them naturally more willing to contribute to its activities, in a behavioral phenomenon that is in line with what is described and explained in the stakeholder management theory (Freeman, 2017).

In the boundary between company and stakeholders, one of the most important contributions of Centro de Frutologia Compal is, as demonstrated here, in the way it contributes to the strengthening of the Portuguese fruit sector, something that, in a vicious circle, is also reflected in a positive return for the **(i) corporate** side of the company. The goal of a stronger sector was clearly at the root of the project, for a company, as mentioned, that *"depends a lot on fruit, our prime raw material, which is largely Portuguese fruit"* (interviewee G). This involvement of the company with important stakeholders in the sector in a joint project, marked by common objectives of valorization of the sector's activity, was also reflected positively in gains in reputation, originating in the acquisition of goodwill and commitment from its stakeholders, but also in institutional credibility with governmental and non-governmental entities. These reputational gains are in line with what is described in stakeholder management and stakeholder collaboration literature (Jeffery, 2009; Krstic, 2014, Herremans *et al.*, 2016) and, in the case of Centro de Frutologia Compal, come mainly from the recognized effort made to keep the project active (*"there's a lot of commitment and investment from Compal on this project"* - interviewee B), and regularly involve and consult with member entities of Centro de Frutologia Compal in new auscultation processes. In this study it was also made, for the first time, the parallelism between Centro de Frutologia Compal and its multistakeholder nature

activities, and its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2021), thus allowing deciphering how this project has been a key strategic factor in the corporate sustainability performance of Sumol+Compal, considered a source of competitive advantage for the company (Sumol+Compal, 2021, a).

This study also tried to understand the impacts of Centro de Frutologia Compal on a second aspect, **(ii) business and management**, and it was made clear that Sumol+Compal gained from this multi-stakeholder approach, aimed at getting closer to the sector, by allowing the mitigation one of the major internal business and management problems of the company a decade ago: the absence of production channels, which prevented a complete verticality within the value chain. Through Centro de Frutologia Compal, the company is now able to get closer to the primary sector (*"a complement to the purchasing division, allowing new forms of raw material prospecting"* - interviewee G), an important corrective in the positioning of the Portuguese company, especially considering how much the company would be harmed by the use of foreign fruit, in terms of business but also brand identity (*"The brand will get weaker if it can only buy foreign fruit."* – was an elucidative insight from interviewee A).

We can thus point to a double contribution of Centro de Frutologia Compal in this regard, in the increased availability of resources but also in terms of competitive advantage, reinforcing stakeholder management literature that has observed similar phenomena (Scruggs and Van Buren, 2016; Chen and Liu, 2020). Not only that, but it was possible to realize with this study a direct contribution of the Centro de Frutologia Compal project in a greater operational freedom and fewer constraints on business of Sumol+Compal. This finding has parallels with the so-called "social license to operate" described in the literature (Jeffery, 2009), accessible to companies that engage with their stakeholders in co-creation and mutual gain projects.

With a reflection on the impact on **(iii) innovation and knowledge**, one of the objectives of this study was to understand to what extent Centro de Frutologia Compal allowed the company Sumol+Compal to make use of stakeholders as vehicles and sources of new knowledge and new innovations for its business. In the literature, stakeholder networks are considered important sources of complement to the knowledge and resources of companies (Kaufmann and Shams, 2015), and associated with open innovation processes, processes of knowledge exchange with external entities that accelerate internal innovation processes (Chesbrough, 2006). In a virtuous cycle, stakeholders can even integrate a feedback loop of knowledge and resources that generate new innovations and more knowledge (Reypens *et al.*,

2016). In this study, it is clear how Centro de Frutologia Compal enabled disruptive innovation processes (leading to the creation of new products for the company), through the integration of stakeholders in brainstorming initiatives. By bringing perspectives and unlearned outlooks, without barriers or limitations to creativity, stakeholders allowed creative processes beyond the reach of the company's internal teams, something that was not lost on the company's interviewees: *"the main learning is this idea that involving stakeholders from different areas, who may not be so specialized in the final objective, allows us to bring very rich perspectives"* - interviewee I.

Finally, in relation to the **(iv) marketing perspective**, the present study tried to understand in what ways the Centro de Frutologia Compal's stakeholders have impacted Sumol+Compal company in the operations of its marketing department, in the strategies taken and benefits collected. In the literature, the concept of stakeholder marketing (i.e. the leveraging of stakeholder networks for marketing purposes) is relatively recent and still little explored, but there is recognition that there is value to be derived from this approach (Hillebrand et al, 2015; Mena and Chabowski, 2015). In this sense, it was possible, with this study, to decipher the value of Centro de Frutologia Compal in two aspects: firstly, in terms of communication, and secondly in terms of reinforcing the positioning and strength of the brand. The benefits in terms of communication are closely related to the knowledge acquired by the brand in the relationship with stakeholders in the sector. The brand's strategic marketing manager attested to this with a revealing statement: *"[With the CFC] we are working on certain fruits (...), we end up building a narrative of that fruit, which we also want to bring to the consumer, not only because for the consumer it is interesting to have narratives associated with products (...) [but also] it brings us some credibility when we communicate."*, to which were added first-hand testimonies from stakeholders reporting their contribution in the design of the brand's communications. We can thus point to a role to be played by stakeholders, within a multistakeholder platform, in lending a seal of credibility, directly and indirectly, to the co-communication of the brand to the consumer. Added to this, in turn, is the beneficial impact of having a co-creation project with the Portuguese fruit industry in serving the 'Portugality' and 'Naturalness' designs of the Compal brand. Here, Centro de Frutologia Compal becomes an additive force - working on top of a brand that already has a strong positioning with the Portuguese consumer (Marketeer, 2021) - by enabling ties with new stakeholders. These new stakeholders, from the Portuguese fruit sector and adjacent, in turn allow the brand to strengthen its knowledge and reinforce its differentiation as the brand of 'frutology' (*"the science and art of knowing fruit, as we define it"* - interviewee G) in Portugal, but also create an additional layer of connection to the Portuguese

heritage, which make it stronger on the national scene and more difficult to dislodge by potential competitors.

The Centro de Frutología Compal case study also allows the extrapolation of an important strategic insight in the contribution of stakeholder engagement to the marketing side of a company, related to the timing of communication to the consumer, as was revealed in testimony ("*there is a lot of work already done [to communicate] and it is this need to wait that is often not possible in FMCG brands, but that Compal managed to do*" - interviewee I). Being a multistakeholder project, this example demonstrates how the value for the brand can be enhanced by a refracted communication strategy, as it will benefit from a more credible narrative based on a message of co-creation *with* and *for* stakeholders.

6.2 Contribution from this case study to the available Literature

The first contribution of this study lies in the way it complements the available literature with a case study that focuses on the impact that a company can draw from adopting a stakeholder management strategy in the medium and long term, cases that provide an important contribution to the benefit perceived by this type of management (Stocker *et al.*, 2020). In fact, in addition to demonstrating, through qualitative and quantitative indicators, the impact of Centro de Frutología Compal across several firm dimensions, it was also demonstrated more than once that the benefits in company performance are enhanced by the longitudinal nature of the initiatives promoted with its stakeholders, an insight that may prove very useful for management bodies seeking to implement this type of model.

A second contribution of this study, related to the first one, is the exploration of the relationship between stakeholder engagement for the marketing side of a company, a relationship still largely ignored in the literature (Aksoy *et al.*, 2021). Here, it became clear that it is possible to have a project of multistakeholder nature serving the various axes and designs of a brand positioning, especially when strategically communicated in time. No less important, the case of Centro de Frutología Compal is one of the few cases described in literature that demonstrates a successful case of engaging agricultural producers (usually ignored as stakeholders of interest, given a tendency to be described as 'low-power stakeholders' - see Civera *et al.* (2019) for a more in-depth analysis of this phenomenon) and creating value with these stakeholders and for these stakeholders. Not limited to agricultural producers, this study above all demonstrates a wide panoply of mechanisms through which it is possible to put

stakeholder management at the service of value creation in the agricultural activity sector, an approach still exploratory in the literature (Pucci *et al.*, 2020).

In general, the Centro de Frutología Compal case study should be considered a successful example of stakeholder management, and should serve as a benchmark for other companies and management groups, and this constitutes a third and perhaps most important contribution to the literature. After a decade of operation, it demonstrates a track record of important contributions to the company's performance at various levels, achieved through the development of various initiatives (depending on the initiative, stakeholders assume specific roles) of mutual interest - benefiting the company with reputational gains, relationships with critical stakeholders (including new suppliers), a strengthened positioning, and stronger differentiation in the industry - and continues to show great commitment and commitment from the stakeholders involved.

6.3 Limitations and suggestions for future studies

The major limitation of this study is in the size and alignment between the sample of interviewees chosen and the purpose of the study. With the intention of decoding the impact of Centro de Frutología Compal from a perspective centered on the company and its performance, the study would benefit from a more extensive sample of interviewees representing the company and/or linked to the decision-making process of the company's management body. In this study, only 5 of the 10 interviewees met one of these requirements, which prevented a more in-depth study of this impact. The case study presented here, based on a set of interviews as a methodological basis, has a necessarily qualitative nature, to which we sought to complement with the research of several quantitative indicators and other relevant studies and sources. Nevertheless, it is possible to complement what has been demonstrated here with new information of a tangible quantitative nature, particularly with regard to the marketing aspect.

Future research work may complement and corroborate some of the points made in this report, especially if focused on the study of the impact of Centro de Frutología Compal on stakeholders and the sector. This work will benefit from a wider and more varied (in typology) range of interviewees, especially by collecting testimonies from stakeholders from across the value chain.

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Annexes

Annex A – Script baseline of questions that supported the interviews conducted

General Objective	Specific Objective	Question
OG 0) Characterization	OE 0.1) Company and Position	0.1 What company do you work for and what is your position in that company?
OG 1) Realize the emergence of the CFC as a platform for multistakeholder management and mutual value creation	OE 1.1) Understanding the reasons, the process, and the objectives behind the genesis of the CFC	1.1 What reasons led to the creation of the CFC and why did it make so much sense to be a multistakeholder project?
OG 2) Understand the (historical) impact of the CFC on the value created for S+C and the other stakeholders	OE 2.1) Understanding the impact of the CFC on the body-work and strengthening of the sector	2.1.1 How did the CFC come to strengthen and promote the activity of the Portuguese agricultural/fruit-growing sector? What concrete indicator can you point to in this regard? If unable to answer, help with the following questions:
		2.1.1.1 How has the CFC contributed to the increase in the volume of raw material produced in Portugal available for S+C, over the last 10 years?
		2.1.1.2 How many new Portuguese fruit suppliers have you started working with due to or as a result of participating in the CFC Academy?
		2.1.2 In what ways is the CFC promoting the skills, knowledge and business of fruit growers?
		2.1.3 In what ways does the CFC provide direct business support to newly established domestic fruit growers?
		2.1.4 What problem(s) in the Portuguese fruit sector 10 years ago has the CFC mitigated or helped solve? What indicators are there in this regard?
		2.1.5 Has the CFC contributed indicators in terms of sustainability and specifically the SDGs?
	OE 2.2) Understanding the impact of CFC on business and management	2.2.1 How many of the CFC alumni are currently suppliers to Sumol+Compal?
		2.2.2 Are Compal products often sold in CFC alumni establishments? What concrete examples can you give of partnership models created with Alumni?
		2.2.2.1 How relevant are these initiatives to the company's business?

Annex A (cont.) – Script baseline of questions that supported the interviews conducted

General Objective	Specific Objective	Question
OG 2) Understand the (historical) impact of the CFC on the value created for S+C and the other stakeholders	OE 2.3) Understanding the impact of the CFC on innovation and knowledge	2.3.1 In what ways has the CFC been promoting innovation processes and new product ideation?
		2.3.2 (1) How has the CFC contributed to the transfer of knowledge to the value chain and specifically to fruit growers?
		2.3.2 (2) In what ways has the CFC promoted the transfer of knowledge and reinforcement of the skills of the Sumol+Compal team, regarding the value chain in which they operate?
		2.3.3 In what ways has the CFC contributed to the general awareness of society? What is the impact of these initiatives on the fruit sector?
		2.3.4 In what ways has the CFC enabled the continuous consultation of stakeholders (on social, environmental and economic issues), and what future impact is expected from this consultation? Have you worked with these stakeholders (Alumni or others) on innovation projects?
	OE 2.4) Understanding the CFC's impact on marketing	2.4.1 In what ways did (and does) the CFC contribute to strengthening the positioning and image of the Compal brand, within the national market?
		2.4.1.1 What results does the company S+C have in terms of indicators such as Trust? And what results does the Compal brand have in terms of Trust, Consumer Choice (what studies exist and what results does the brand have)?
		2.4.1.2 And in terms of market research done by the S+C company and the Compal team, what conclusions were drawn regarding the CFC and its contribution to strengthening the brand and its relationship with consumers?
		2.4.2 How many new product launches can be attributed to the CFC and the exchange of ideas between stakeholders?
		2.4.2.1 And how involved have the Alumni been in the brand's launches?

Annex B – Interview Coding Tree

	Category	Code	Sub-code
A	Characterization	A.1 Company A.2 Position	
B	Genesis of CFC	B.1 Reason B.2 Process B.3 Objectives	
C	Outcomes of CFC	C.1 Corporate	C.1.1 Corporate Reputation C.1.2 Sector Strength
		C.2 Business/Management	C.2.1 Suppliers C.2.2 Production and Material Purchase
		C.3 Innovation/Knowledge	C.3.1 Innovation C.3.2 Knowledge Creation and Sharing
		C.4 Marketing	C.4.1 Brand Perception C.4.2 Brand Positioning C.4.3 Communication Campaigns

Annex C – Secondary Documentation Consulted

Entity/Platform consulted	Type of Document	Name
Agrotec	Interview	Para ser rentável, a atividade agrícola requer dimensão e tecnologia, 2021
Observador	Interview	Cristóvão Ferreira: Não há maçãs como as de Alcobaça, 2021
	Interview	Já comeu uma maçã hoje?, 2021
Briefing	Interview	Sustentabilidade, 2021
Sumol+Compal	Public Access Report	Relatório Único Integrado, 2018
		Relatório Único Integrado, 2019
	Institutional Website Page	Sobre Nós
		Sustentabilidade
Compal	Institutional Website Page	Centro de Frutologia Compal
		As Nossas Raízes
		Origem das Fruta Pera e Framboesa
	Internal Report	Relatório de Avaliação Bootcamp, 2015
		Relatório de Avaliação Bootcamp, 2016
		Relatório de Avaliação Bootcamp, 2017
		Academia: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2012
		Academia: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2013
		Academia: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2014
		Academia: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2015
		Academia: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2016
		Academia: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2017
		Academia: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2018
		Academia: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2019
		Academia: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2020
Academia: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2021		
Observatório: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2016		

Annex C (cont.) – Secondary Documentation Consulted

Entity/Platform consulted	Type of Document	Name
Compal	Internal Report	Observatório: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2017
		Observatório: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2018
		Observatório: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2019
		Observatório: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2020
		Observatório: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2021
		Observatório: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2022
		Laboratório: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2016
		Laboratório: Relatório e Reporte de Atividades e Resultados, 2017
Jornal Económico	Interview	Compal já garante 62% da produção com fruta nacional, 2017
Agronegócios	Interview	O impacto do Centro de Frutologia Compal na agricultura nacional, 2020
SDG Compass	Public Access Inventory	Inventory of Business Indicators