

Africa: An Overview of the Environmental & Social Dimensions

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As African countries endeavour to expand their agricultural sector and build towards self-sufficiency, they have an opportunity to join hands with players in the palm industry to develop a mutually beneficial sector. New areas identified for developing palm in Liberia, Nigeria, Cameroon and Gabon amount to an estimated 1.5 million hectares. Africa is primed for production of sustainable palm oil as environmental frameworks are comparably better established than they were when oil palm cultivation took off in SE Asia, owing to active engagement by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), World Bank Group (WBG), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other stakeholders in development and implementation of the same in the region. Paired with the valuable lessons learned during the growing decades in Southeast Asia, the face of plantation development is changing, raising the benchmark for sustainable development in Africa and creating opportunities for customer partnerships in domestic, US and European markets.

This presentation examines the social and environmental dimensions and potential impact on those, resulting from oil palm development in Africa. It also shares experiences of Olam, with the Government of Gabon, in the responsible development of oil palm plantation in the country. Olam will not only implement RSPO standards including the New Planting Procedure, but also support the development of responsible land use plans, a suitable National Interpretations and improve of livelihoods of rural communities in which we operate.