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Olam Palm Gabon leads Africa's sustainable plantation development with RSPO Certification of Awala, boosting Africa's total certified production hectares by 30%

Press release

4th Oct, 2016

Olam is first in Africa to achieve RSPO certification for new oil palm plantation development

Olam International ("Olam") has crossed a significant milestone after its first palm plantation went from being the first in Africa to receive the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil[1] ("RSPO") New Planting Procedure verification to also becoming the first-ever new development in Africa to have its working plantation RSPO certified, including the mill.

The Awala plantation in Gabon was Olam's first venture into upstream palm plantations in a joint-venture with the Republic of Gabon[2]. Development began in 2011 as one of two major projects for Olam Palm Gabon (OPG) in the country.

The plantation of 6,700 hectares (ha) lies within a 20,000 ha lease, the remainder of which is actively managed by Olam for conservation of biodiversity and forest carbon, and protection of water catchments, in fulfilment of RSPO requirements. This certification has single-handedly boosted Africa's RSPO certified production hectares by 30% from 21,666 ha[3].

The other major development for OPG is the Mouila plantation which lies to the south of Awala. In Mouila, OPG has already planted 31,000 ha in full compliance with RSPO guidelines and is progressing towards certification of that area in 2017 as planned. As in Awala, Mouila will also have a very significant area set aside for conservation requirements as per the RSPO guidelines. Upon reaching full production capacity by 2023, the two plantations will deliver up to 22 metric tonnes of fresh fruit bunches ("FFB") and 5.2 metric tonnes of oil per hectare, significantly complementing the existing stock of sustainable palm production in Africa.

Datuk Darrel Webber, CEO of RSPO said, "We commend Olam for embedding sustainability at the very start of their operations, it's a good step to avoid any negative impacts to people, planet and profit. It is critical for all companies, especially those operating in a new frontier like Gabon, to plan and account for sustainability practices in land development processes from the start. We rely on all of our members in Africa to be outstanding ambassadors for sustainability, hopefully as models for sustainable transformation in Africa."

Ranveer Chauhan, Managing Director and CEO of Palm Oil and Natural Rubber at Olam, said, "Of all vegetable oils, palm oil produces the highest yields per hectare. Currently, about 17% of the world's supply of palm oil is certified as sustainable. However, customer demand for sustainable palm oil is rapidly increasing and RSPO is targeting 100% uptake of certified oil in Europe alone by 2020. Ensuring we are certified is therefore not just the right thing to do but makes sound business sense. Africa is the home of oil palm and many think it does not have the necessary infrastructure or governance to support high international standards. This certification shows what can be achieved for any new or old palm plantation development on the continent."

The Awala plantation employs some 1,200 staff, more than 90% of whom are Gabonese nationals. The land for the plantation ventures in Gabon was acquired on leasehold from the government and the well-recognised Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process was diligently followed. The social management plan was developed through active consultations and as per these plans, OPG has also supplied infrastructure and amenities to surrounding communities such as roads, lighting, water pumps and schools, as well as providing medical facilities.

Gagan Gupta, Country Head of Gabon at Olam, said, "Our teams have worked hard to ensure that the development has brought social and economic benefits. With our partner, the Republic of Gabon, we are conscious of the environmental responsibility that we carry which is why across our palm plantations we have set aside a total of 61,000 ha for biodiversity. We were also the first to publish a fully independent High Carbon Stock analysis of our plantation footprint. We recognise that plantations can only remain sustainable if we maintain those high levels of commitment every day."

Olam's core purpose of Growing Responsibly – ensuring profitable growth in an ethical, socially responsible and environmentally sustainable manner – cuts across all product platforms and businesses. For its continual efforts in ensuring positive social impact through its core business strategy, Olam was recently recognised in Fortune's 2016 Top 50 Change the World list.

[1] RSPO certification is a global standard for sustainable palm oil, requiring compliance with rigorous social, environmental and economic criteria.[2] Olam Palm Gabon is a joint venture between Olam and the Republic of Gabon, respectively 60% and 40%.[3] Certified production area only. Does not include conservation set asides which are also certified.

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Olam-palm-gabon-leads-africas-sustainable-Plantation-development-with-rs

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Notes to Editors

Olam International is a leading agri-business operating across the value chain in 70 countries, supplying various products across 16 platforms to over 16,200 customers worldwide. From a direct sourcing and processing presence in most major producing countries, Olam has built a global leadership position in many of its businesses. Headquartered in Singapore and listed on the SGX-ST on February 11, 2005, Olam currently ranks among the top 50 largest listed companies in Singapore in terms of market capitalisation and is a

component stock in the S&P Agribusiness Index and the DAXglobal Agribusiness Index. This year, Olam was featured in Fortune “Change the World” list of 50 global companies aligning social and environmental impact with their economic objectives.

More information on Olam can be found at www.olanmgroup.com (<http://www.olanmgroup.com/>).

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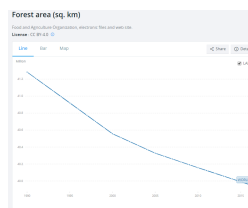
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24th Dec, 2019

News

Reorganisation of Gabon Special Economic Zone

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9th Jan, 2020

Blog

How do we sustain a growing population without sacrificing our natural resources?' Olam Cocoa CEO Gerry Manley ponders this

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