

# Collaboration for sustainable production landscapes

Helping companies and stakeholders work together



June 2020

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## About Proforest and the Production Landscape Programme

Proforest is an independent mission-driven organisation that specialises in practical approaches to sustainability in the production and sourcing of agricultural and forest commodities. We support companies to work both within and beyond their own supply chains, to deliver positive environmental and social outcomes in the places where commodities are produced. We foster collaboration between companies and other stakeholders, including peer companies, governments and civil society. This builds the foundation for individual companies to engage with sustainability issues across landscapes and sectors beyond their own supply chains.

The Production Landscape Programme (PLP) was established in July 2018 with support from UK Aid under the Forest Governance, Markets and Climate Programme. The programme aims to support the private sector to align their actions on deforestation and other sustainability issues with national and sub-national policies and initiatives, including those led by civil society.

## About REDD+

Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) is a mechanism developed by the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It creates a financial value for the carbon stored in forests by offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon pathways to sustainable development. REDD+ goes beyond deforestation and forest degradation to include the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. Several of the government initiatives referred to in this document are part of countries' REDD+ programmes, which form a key national process with which the private sector can seek to align.

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Cover photo: Training for agricultural extension officers for Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo regions of Ghana; the Proforest team are visiting the Juaben Oil Mills nursery. Credit: Proforest, 2018.

## The Production Landscape Programme – an introduction

Companies with agricultural and natural resource-based supply chains are increasingly looking to adopt a more sustainable approach to production by ensuring that their commodities are sourced responsibly. For example, they can take action to reduce deforestation, improve labour conditions, support small-scale producers and respect human rights. Collaboration is often the key to delivering commitments and promoting large-scale impact, with companies working closely with other companies, government agencies and civil society organisations.

Proforest's Production Landscape Programme aims to guide companies in aligning their sustainability commitments and actions with ongoing government and civil society processes operating in the landscapes

where the commodities are produced. Working through pilots and case studies in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia, we have developed practical guidance to support such collaborative action (see box).

The present document highlights case studies from our focal countries. The different cases illustrate how the 10-step guidance can be adapted to the local context to build relationships among companies and align these with ongoing government processes. The experiences also show how cooperation can create an enabling environment for companies to invest further in local landscape initiatives and inspire action at a greater scale.

### Engaging with landscape initiatives: 10 steps to success

*Engaging with Landscape Initiatives: A Practical Guide for Supply Chain Companies* identifies a series of actions to help companies understand their supply base and prioritise where to engage with landscape or jurisdictional initiatives. It suggests 10 practical steps for companies working with sustainability initiatives on the ground.

#### Part 1: Preparing to engage in a production landscape

1. Understand the supply base
2. Identify priority landscapes
3. Decide what kind of approach is appropriate
4. Identify and assess initiatives in the selected landscape

#### Part 2: Practical engagement in a landscape

5. Understand local motivation, expectations and decision-making
6. Clarify resources available and scope of engagement
7. Understand governance and build trust
8. Plan and implement interventions
9. Coordinate communication
10. Monitor and evaluate



See: <https://proforest.net/proforest/en/publications/ela-2.pdf> for the full version.

## GHANA

### Towards a deforestation-free cocoa production landscape

*This concept presents a huge opportunity for collaborative action . . . to pursue a deforestation-free, climate-resilient sustainable cocoa landscape.*

*—Extract from the Proforest Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Programme concept note (November 2019)*

#### Background

Ghana's REDD+ strategy focuses on the country's high forest zone. This production and protection landscape encompasses some 5.9 million hectares and includes areas of commercial production of timber, oil palm, cocoa and rubber, as well as protection forest reserves. Agricultural expansion, principally for cocoa production, is one of the main causes of continuing deforestation. Promoting climate-smart, sustainable intensification of cocoa production in dedicated zones therefore has significant potential to reduce emissions.

However, social and environmental challenges are not limited to a single commodity; a more holistic and inclusive approach is required. The landscape approach brings all relevant stakeholders together to identify issues, agree shared goals and align their activities.

Asunafo and Asutifi Districts are within one of the 'hotspot intervention areas' identified by the Ghana Forestry Commission as a key zone for REDD+. Private-sector engagement in REDD+ is being supported through the Cocoa Forest Initiative Joint Framework for Action, which the Government of Ghana and around 30 cocoa supply chain companies have signed up to. With many companies now seeking to establish more sustainable cocoa supply chains, there is a need for a mechanism to build collaboration among the companies and government actors working in the landscape.



Ghanaian cocoa farmers explain how they look after their crops. Credit: Proforest, 2019.

## Objectives and approach

The Production Landscape Programme (PLP) is building on this background of emerging cooperation by working with the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme in Asunafo and Asutifi Districts. The goal is to establish a deforestation-free, climate-resilient, sustainable cocoa production landscape through building a consortium of private companies working in collaboration with farmers, civil society, landowners and government agencies. Adopting a landscape approach will help to ensure collaborative activities are in alignment with the national REDD+ programme and the Joint Framework for Action. Proforest is acting as a facilitator, coordinating the multi-stakeholder partnership and mobilising resources for the landscape governance structure.

## Impacts

As a credible neutral platform, Proforest is ideally placed to play the role of facilitator and catalyse action. To date, eight large private sector companies have agreed to be part of a consortium for landscape-

scale action, namely Cargill, Ecom, Lindt, Mars, Mondelez, Olam, Sucden and Touton. The World Cocoa Foundation has also joined the consortium to act as an intermediary between Proforest and the eight companies.

These companies are all looking to adopt a more sustainable approach to their cocoa supply chains. They are funding the baseline studies that will underpin a joint landscape management and investment plan in line with the Ghana Cocoa Forests REDD+ Programme implementation procedure. The plans will allow the companies to calculate their contributions to Ghana's REDD+ emissions reductions targets, thereby fulfilling their commitments to the Cocoa Forests Initiative Joint Framework for Action.

This case demonstrates how a neutral facilitator can create an enabling environment to encourage companies to work together in the landscape rather than in competition with each other. It also shows how pooling resources can benefit all stakeholders by exerting greater impact.

## GHANA

### Adapting production landscape guidance to the local context

*We envisage that the specific and adapted guidance for Ghana will encourage more companies to align their efforts and invest in landscape-scale action towards REDD+.*

—Augustus Asamoah, Principal Project Manager, Proforest Africa

#### Background

The Proforest guidance on *Engaging with Production Landscapes* provides advice for companies looking to establish sustainable supply chains through supporting ongoing initiatives. To ensure relevance to the local situation, the guidance needs to be adapted to the context of the landscape or country in which it is to be applied. Proforest has been working closely with the Ghana Forestry Commission through their work to build partnerships for action within the Ghana Cocoa Forests REDD+ Programme (see previous story). This relationship led to the Commission asking the team to produce a full document, based on the guidelines, but with specific consideration of the challenges and

opportunities facing forest landscapes in Ghana, and in line with the implementation procedures of the national REDD+ programme.

#### Objectives and approach

To ensure full participation in adapting the guidelines, Proforest organised a series of technical meetings and stakeholder consultations, inviting representatives from national and district government offices, including the Regional Directorate of Agriculture, the Ghana Cocoa Board and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. The team then modified the guidelines based on extensive feedback from the participants. The document is due to be finalised during 2020.

#### Impact

The adapted guidance document represents a ready-made blueprint that can be used to encourage private sector investment and enhance cocoa productivity.



Oil palm best management practices training at the Benso Oil Palm Plantation for Ministry of Food and Agriculture technical officers, Ghana. Credit: Proforest, 2019.

It also provides a useful communications tool that the Ghana Forestry Commission can use to attract further interest from donors and the private sector in supporting the Ghana Cocoa Forests REDD+ Programme.

The process of adapting the guidance brought the Forestry Commission into close contact with various private sector companies during discussions on

landscape-level action towards REDD+. This is likely to inspire further achievements; using the cocoa supply chain as an entry point, the collaborative activities could be adapted to other crops or commodities (e.g. natural rubber) through landscape approaches. Companies with supply chains involving other commodities have already expressed an interest in engaging with landscape approaches.

## Training as an entry point to support small-scale palm oil producers

There are more than 3 million small-scale palm oil producers around the world, generating about 40% of global palm oil production. They therefore have the potential to make a significant contribution to a sustainable palm oil industry. However, their lack of relevant training and access to knowledge means they typically produce low yields and generate small incomes.

To address this need and opportunity, Proforest acted as a facilitator in a partnership aiming to support the livelihoods of some of Ghana's small-scale palm oil producers. The project came about through a collaboration between Wilmar and the Benso Oil Palm Plantation, companies that were looking to increase the supply of sustainable palm oil by recruiting new out-growers. It was supported by the Partnership for Forests (P4F) programme under UK Aid.

Combining resources from both P4F and the Forest Governance, Markets and Climate Programme, Proforest worked with the companies to deliver training in oil palm best management practice, gender equality and inclusion, and High Conservation Value identification and management. The training provided an entry point to promote livelihoods while also reducing deforestation and forest degradation connected with oil palm production. Participants included farmers and agricultural extension agents. The training helped the farmers in the out-growers' scheme to change the way they cultivate oil palm, to exclude conservation areas from cultivation and to explore alternative livelihood options. They also established a community forest protection committee. By growing sustainably, they could access the assured market and better prices offered by palm oil mills, which accept only sustainably produced palm oil based on Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) certification.

In addition to improving the livelihoods of small-scale palm oil producers, the training connected a wide range of stakeholders, including the private sector, government agencies, agricultural extension agents and farmers. These links will benefit further training and extension activities in the future.

## LIBERIA

### A multi-stakeholder approach to addressing landscape issues

*Training is important – it should be offered to companies as well as political, opinion, community and youth leaders to reduce suspicion and conflict around land allocation for agro-commodity production.*

—Vero Heuston, Unión Personal Auxiliar de Casas Particulares, Liberia

#### Background

Liberia has a history of government land ownership, with the public sector having the authority to grant land-use concessions. In addition to being open to corruption, land allocations often fail to take account of the needs of current land users. The system has a high

risk of conflict, hampers commercial profitability and impedes the transition to more sustainable landscapes. The land reform act of 2018 gave more power to communities over land use but they first need to register as a legal entity. This can be problematic, especially when rural villages are widely dispersed and have different needs. Land use conflicts have therefore continued to hamper development, especially concerning commercial crops such as palm oil.

The National Bureau of Concessions (NBC) was set up to support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of land concessions in Liberia. With funding from the United Nations Development Programme,



Participants in multi-stakeholder processes training during the presentation by Emmanuel Urey of Landesa on the 2018 Land Rights Act and its implications for agro-commodity production. Credit: Proforest, 2019.

NBC established 17 platforms for dialogue with village facilitators as the focal points for local consultations. NBC asked Proforest to undertake a capacity needs assessment to identify how best to support the facilitators and their communities. The goal was to help communities understand and benefit from the new land rights legislation as a means of supporting more sustainable landscapes.

### Objectives and approach

The needs assessment highlighted a lack of knowledge among the 17 village facilitators on how to engage stakeholders, create a neutral platform and minimise conflict in discussions on land use. Proforest responded by offering to host training on multi-stakeholder processes, working in partnership with NBC, the land rights organisation Landesa, and a local sustainable development organisation, SESDev. The aim was to create a neutral platform for discussion and to develop capacity among the village facilitators for conflict resolution, as well as building knowledge on a range of environmental and social issues associated with the

production of agricultural commodities in Liberia. The first course, held in October 2019, attracted participation from the 17 facilitators designated by NBC as well as representatives from the National Oil Palm Platform of Liberia, the Ministry of Agriculture, civil society groups and non-governmental organisations.

### Impacts

Evaluation conducted after the course showed that the facilitators have been using their knowledge to identify key actors and organise their own multi-stakeholder engagement events. They have also established criteria for recruiting additional facilitators, which includes excluding anyone who is involved in a potential conflict situation.

NBC set up a WhatsApp group to monitor progress and this has evolved into a two-way knowledge transfer system. The facilitators provide status updates and can also receive specific information on request from NBC or other sources. This communication channel is providing useful updates that will be used to refine the training and adapt it for wider use.



The Proforest team is now developing an online training programme based on feedback from the facilitators. The real-life examples provide useful experiences that others can learn from. The training has shown that it is important to gauge the level of education of the participants before designing course

materials. The team has therefore designed an online survey that will help to adapt future courses to the right level. Further courses are planned in gender mainstreaming and corporate social responsibility, as well as the concept of High Conservation Value landscapes.

## Recognising the role of women in sustainable landscapes

In Liberia, women represent more than half of agricultural producers, yet their important role in food security and the economy is hardly recognised. As part of the Proforest PLP work to identify the challenges to building sustainable landscapes, the team recognised the lack of gender equality and inclusion in decision-making as a key issue. PLP therefore produced an assessment report aiming to increase understanding of how policies, laws and initiatives on deforestation, smallholder inclusion, forced and child labour, and land rights affect women and men differently in the cocoa, oil palm, rubber and timber sectors in Liberia. The goal is to identify gaps and challenges in these policies and use our programme work to identify ways to improve gender equality and women's rights.

In November 2019, we held a workshop to build awareness and gather feedback on the findings. In addition to producing useful recommendations to take forward, the work on gender in Liberia has had broader impacts. The Minister of Agriculture highlighted that the gender research would help to inform the development of Liberia's food security programme. Additional ministries are now asking Proforest to help them design appropriate initiatives and the private sector has established a gender working group for the cocoa and oil palm industries/landscapes. The gender work to bring the public, private and civil society sectors together is therefore creating an expanded community for action, and this will help to influence large-scale change.

"Addressing women's issues in the agriculture sector requires a holistic approach that includes strengthening institutional capacity and policies and raising awareness among key actors to facilitate women's access to relevant training and support," said Zina Gbarbea, Champion for Market Women Empowerment, who attended the workshop. She welcomes the intervention by PLP and believes it has potential to create broad impact.

See: <https://proforest.net/en/publications/gender-assessment-of-the-policy-environment-in-relation-to-the-cocoa-oil-palm-rubber-and-timber-value-chains-in-liberia>

## CAMEROON

### Linking public and private sector action towards REDD+

*With its experience in West Africa, we know Proforest can help us facilitate the involvement of the private sector in the REDD+ process in Cameroon.*

*—Maxime Nguemadji Moussa, National REDD+ Technical Secretariat*

#### Background

Cameroon's REDD+ strategy identifies private sector companies as key actors in addressing deforestation and forest degradation. However, the majority of companies have yet to engage fully in the national

process. The main drivers of deforestation are expanding agro-industry, particularly palm oil and rubber, and growing small-scale cocoa and coffee production. A landscape approach is therefore a logical tactic. The PLP in Cameroon focuses on the emissions reduction programme for the southern humid forest plateau, the main landscape initiative within the national REDD+ strategy. This area includes most of Cameroon's remaining forests, where there is commercial production of timber, cocoa, coffee, rubber and palm oil. When Proforest held initial discussions with stakeholders on implementing PLP activities in

Cameroon in early 2019, the Technical Secretariat for the REDD+ strategy suggested we should take the role of facilitator to increase private sector engagement.

### Objectives and approach

The objectives are to bring the private sector and government together to foster awareness and understanding of each other's perspectives. The final aim is to facilitate private sector engagement in sustainability initiatives, including the REDD+ process.

### Impacts

The fieldwork and workshops held principally to identify stakeholders and build awareness have provided a useful entry point for capacity building on important aspects of development aligned with government strategies. The team was able to introduce training on various issues connected with gender equality and abolishing child labour, in addition to promoting a landscape approach to implement the national REDD+ strategy.

In September 2019, Proforest worked with the Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and

Sustainable Development to organise a workshop and roundtable meeting. This promoted discussion around designing an action plan for increasing private sector engagement. The meeting brought representatives from cocoa, rubber and palm oil companies together with stakeholders from producer cooperatives, professional associations, civil society and relevant government ministries. Participants agreed that it was important to create a neutral space for dialogue and affirmed the need to improve multi-stakeholder communication around REDD+ issues. They committed to improve communication, update the mapping of private sector actors, work with priority local stakeholders, and develop and implement a private sector engagement plan. The team will also seek to build partnerships with other relevant agencies, including the Tropical Forest Alliance.

There have been some encouraging results already, with increased participation from the private sector in a REDD+ meeting held in November 2019. A further workshop to seek feedback on draft guidance on engagement with landscape initiatives in Cameroon was postponed due to COVID-19.



Sensitisation and capacity-building meeting. Credit: Claude Tatuebu, 2019.

## CHINA

### Sustainability guidelines for Chinese companies working overseas

*We would like to express our gratitude to Proforest for engaging in the development of the tools of 'Guidance for Sustainable Natural Rubber' during InFIT Phase 1, working together towards sustainable development of the natural rubber industry.*

—Rubber Project Secretariat, CCCMC

#### Background

The growing global demand for rubber is generating increased awareness of the social, environmental and governance impacts of its production and processing. China is a major investor in the production of natural rubber overseas, as well as being a key importer and processor. The country therefore has an important role to play in setting standards for sustainable supply chains.

Proforest started working with the China Chamber of Commerce of Metals, Minerals and Chemicals Importers & Exporters (CCCMC) in 2017 on producing sustainability guidelines for its overseas companies. Led by the International Forest Investment and Trade

(InFIT) Programme, the *Guidance for Sustainable Natural Rubber* (SNR Guidance) was developed following a multi-stakeholder approach and is the first comprehensive and risk-based standard in the global natural rubber industry.

#### Objectives and approach

Chinese companies are increasingly prominent in the investment, production, trade and processing of many agricultural commodities. It is therefore crucially important to support Chinese institutions and agencies like CCCMC to develop guidance for their members' companies and engage with sustainability processes around agricultural commodity production and sourcing.

Proforest has played a key role in this work by bringing private sector connections together with the Chinese government-driven initiative on natural rubber. Working with CCCMC, InFIT and a group of international experts, Proforest provided technical support to the development of the SNR guidance,



Members of the expert advisory team (which included Proforest) receiving recognition for their efforts at the Sustainable Natural Rubber conference held in Beijing in 2018. Credit: CCCMC, 2018.

which was shared with key stakeholders at the Sustainable Natural Rubber Symposium and Project Results Conference held in January 2018 in Beijing.

With support from PLP, CCCMC convened a further meeting of stakeholders in sustainable natural rubber in May 2019 in Shanghai, bringing Chinese government representatives together with companies involved in the rubber supply chain. As part of the second phase of InFIT, it is important to test the SNR guidance in the field.

Proforest has therefore helped broker a relationship between CCCMC and Halcyon Agri to field test the SNR guidance through its subsidiaries, HeveCam and SudCam plantations, which are located in Cameroon. To build the relationship between CCCMC, InFIT and Halcyon, the PLP team organised a field visit to HeveCam and SudCam for Chinese representatives from InFIT and CCCMC in September 2019. Following these activities, CCCMC and Halcyon Agri signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to guide further field testing and other sustainability efforts.

## Impact

This is one of the first demonstrations of support from the Chinese government for the development of sustainability guidelines for Chinese companies investing or operating overseas. In addition to reducing negative impacts on the production landscape, the SNR guidance will facilitate long-term investment in responsible rubber production. The work sets a valuable precedent that has potential for impact in a wide range of commodities in landscapes around the world. The MoU between CCCMC and Halcyon is an important demonstration of a new public-private partnership involving the Chinese government agency. In addition to strengthening sustainability systems and practices within the Halcyon organisation, this formal collaboration will help CCCMC test the applicability of the SNR guidance and contribute to robust standards and tools that can be used by natural rubber companies more widely.

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## INDONESIA

### Towards sustainable palm oil supply chains

*We need to sit together often and exchange ideas.*

—Suharyono, Head of the Natural Resource Conservation Agency, Riau Province, Indonesia

#### Background

Indonesia is the world's leading producer of palm oil, with the islands of Borneo and Sumatra producing 96% of national output. The expansion of these predominantly monoculture plantations at the expense of biodiverse rainforest and carbon-rich peatlands has focused global attention on the need for a more sustainable production model. Many companies are therefore seeking to establish sustainable palm oil supply chains and, in response, the government has adopted the Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO) system, which aims to reduce carbon emissions, draw attention to environmental issues and support a sustainable palm oil industry.

Siak and Pelalawan Districts of Riau on the island of Sumatra are long-established palm oil production

areas with significant numbers of independent smallholder producers. Riau is also a hotspot for deforestation and peatland fires. Here, Proforest works in partnership with Daemeter Consulting under the Consortium of Resource Experts (CORE) to support sustainable production and responsible sourcing. The consortium aligns its efforts with ongoing government-led initiatives. Siak District is also a founder member of Lingkar Temu Kabupaten Lestari (LTKL or the Sustainable District Association), which aims to unite administrative districts in efforts to seek investment from the private sector and climate finance sources for action on sustainability.

#### Objectives and approach

The overall work of PLP in Indonesia involves engaging with and learning from these various platforms and initiatives. The learning process has contributed to the development of Proforest's *Engaging with Landscape Initiatives* guidance for supply chain companies engaging with landscape and jurisdictional

initiatives. At the same time, through PLP, the Proforest team has focused on building relationships with District governments, civil society organisations and companies, to create an environment where private sector collaboration can flourish.

We are also learning from the Siak-Pelalawan Landscape Programme (SPLP), in which Proforest works with Daemeter Consulting under CORE. The consortium has facilitated the establishment of a coalition of seven palm oil purchasing and consumer goods companies working in the two Districts: Cargill, Danone, Golden Agri-Resources, Musim Mas, Neste, PepsiCo and Unilever. These major international corporations agreed to co-fund and collaborate on implementing a landscape-scale programme to meet the criteria for sustainable palm oil supply chains. The initiative builds upon existing efforts to advance a shared vision of sustainable, inclusive production, as well as promoting collaboration with the government-led Siak Green District initiative and other development partners such as LTKL and the Tropical Forest Alliance.

The goal of SPLP is to transition large parts of both districts towards sustainable production practices, producing deforestation- and exploitation-free palm oil, and maintaining or enhancing key conservation areas. With a number of sustainability initiatives already being implemented in this region, a key concept of the programme is building local ownership and collaboration among stakeholders that have shared interests. Working towards this goal, CORE is acting as a convenor and facilitator to oversee liaison among communities, local government, processing mills and other key stakeholder groups.

In 2019, also under SPLP, CORE brokered a further collaboration among the coalition of private sector companies and the Siak District government to support the Siak Green District initiative. This aims to achieve a sustainable palm oil production landscape that protects the environment and supports livelihoods by aligning companies' sourcing commitments with the development goals of the District. The objective is to provide a space for discussion and agreement within a multi-stakeholder platform.



Local stakeholders share their views through the 'Value Proposition Canvas' as part of a design-thinking exercise. The process was convened by one of Proforest's partners, the Sustainable District Association (LTKL), and aimed to identify common aspirations and visions from multiple actors about what the people of Siak can do to achieve the Green District policy objective. From a PLP perspective, this is closely related to Step 5 of *Engaging with Landscape Initiatives*, which is about understanding local motivations, expectations and decision-making. Credit: Proforest, 2019.

## Impacts

PLP has helped to foster an environment in Siak and Pelalawan that is supportive of private sector engagement with local government and local civil society organisations. SPLP has also yielded important insights about company collaboration processes and how companies can work with other stakeholders in production landscapes. These have been incorporated in Proforest's *Engaging with Landscape Initiatives* guidance for supply chain companies, and the adaptation of the guidance specifically to the local context. The guidance has been well received by private sector actors in the palm oil sector. "All steps make sense to me," said Ian Suwarganda, Head of Policy and Advocacy, Golden Agri-Resources (one of the world's largest palm oil plantation companies). "The challenge is in the detail; we need to have critical mass such as big brands, and we need to educate communities on basic ecology, so they can demand

sustainable policy from the leaders and sustainable production from the companies."

The guidance has also been shared with the pulp and paper sector, an additional driver of deforestation and peatland fires in Riau, and with the cocoa sector in South Sulawesi.

The private sector coalition is creating an enabling environment for further investment in sustainable palm oil supply chains, particularly in Siak District. This case illustrates the benefits of public-private collaboration around shared goals, with Proforest and Daemeter sharing resources and acting as neutral convenors to build trust among the private sector companies. "With this kind of new collaboration to deliver a joint vision . . . we hope that all communities, NGOs and the private sector have concern for the environment, particularly peatland and forest, so the fires will not happen again," said Dr Alfredri, Head of Siak District government.

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## INDONESIA

### Supporting village sustainability networks

*The training has broadened my perspective on the interlinkages between communities and economic aspects, as well as between communities and the ecosystem.*

—Rafi Merbamas, Peat Restoration Agency  
Village Facilitator and Coordinator of  
Riau Practitioners' Network

#### Background

The Village Facilitators Network was established in 2019 in Riau Province, Indonesia in response to the urgent need to combat peatland degradation and forest fires. This area has valuable peat and forest ecosystems but is also a key producer of palm oil, with many mills and small-scale producers located here. Our role as a convenor for responsible sourcing and links with the private sector in this area made Proforest a logical partner for the Peat Restoration Agency (Badan Restorasi Gambut or BRG), the government-funded agency leading the initiative.

#### Objectives and approach

This is essentially a community empowerment project aiming to mobilise resources, raise awareness and

increase understanding of sustainable landscapes among local communities, as well as supporting alternative livelihood development opportunities. Establishing a network of village facilitators also creates an effective entry point for community training, exchange of knowledge, and feedback of information from the local level.

#### Impacts

Proforest has convened a series of training events for village facilitators, focusing on raising awareness and sharing information on the concepts of High Conservation Value (HCV), the High Carbon Stock approach and gender equality. Further courses on free, prior and informed consent and social impact assessment are planned for 2020. In addition to building the capacity of local stakeholders, the events have created useful links among communities and government actors. It is hoped that these will attract private sector investment through companies' support for responsible sourcing in their supply chains, along the lines of a 2017 initiative in which Cargill supported smallholders to assess HCV landscapes.

It is especially important to mobilise a network of key community members in a remote area such as Riau, since most government and non-government organisations working on sustainability are located at a distance and contact may be infrequent. In addition

to building ownership for landscape initiatives, the village facilitators provide an important hub for information transfer that can exert broad impact beyond the immediate area and extending to a range of commodities.



Members of the Village Facilitators Network visit the forest in Riau Province to learn about the concept of High Carbon Stock. Credit: Proforest, 2019.

## Summary, lessons learned and next steps

The case studies showcased in this document demonstrate how the Production Landscape Programme has supported early steps in aligning companies' actions to improve sustainability in their supply chains with government development processes. They also show how partnerships and collaborations are creating an enabling environment within which a range of stakeholders can invest in more sustainable production practices.

Ongoing work in Cameroon, Ghana, Indonesia and Liberia has allowed us to develop, test and adapt the

guidance on *Engaging with Landscape Initiatives* in different national contexts. Working with government, private sector and civil society actors has provided essential insights and learning to support this adaptation. This has already been welcomed and applied in practice in Ghana, where the nationally adapted guidance has been endorsed by the Forestry Commission as part of the implementation procedure of the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme. Future directions include our work with soy in Brazil, where Proforest is supporting soy buyers to identify where and how to engage with landscape initiatives to reduce

deforestation related to soy production. A related discussion paper, *Working at Scale to Implement Soy Sourcing Policies*, has already built on lessons from Ghana and Indonesia, as well as experience in Brazil.

The China market is a key area for our work on the demand side. Proforest is supporting CCCMC to produce and test clear sustainability guidelines for the rubber industry. This has involved building a collaborative relationship with Halcyon Agri to test the *Guidance for Sustainable Natural Rubber* in Cameroon. Furthermore, CCCMC is planning to carry out field testing of the guidance in Southeast Asia and we are currently identifying local companies and other organisations that can participate in the process. This will help strengthen the guidelines and ensure they are widely applicable.

Our work in Indonesia highlights the value of private sector collaboration. Sustainability challenges are shared by many suppliers and cannot always be

solved by companies working alone. Companies are increasingly recognising the value of working with local government to achieve responsible production at a large scale. The key is often to include an environmental or development organisation as a neutral convenor to ensure trust is built among participating companies, and this can take time.

Findings of a lessons-learned study based on our work to engage the private sector in the landscape initiative in Indonesia highlighted that collaboration can help share risks as well as resources. Including different types of companies (producers, traders and buyers) helps ensure collaboration throughout the value chain, but too many partners can result in extended timelines and difficulties in coordination. The study also found that a neutral convenor is essential when building collaboration among competing commercial interests, and that local government commitment to sustainability is vital and needs to be reflected in policy and practice.

## The Proforest 'value added' approach

- Multi-stakeholder initiatives create a larger community for action with synergistic effects leading to larger impacts than could be achieved individually.
- Dialogue and collaboration are important ways to promote the sharing of information and experiences. They also help to build trust and achieve a sense of ownership among public, private and civil society sectors, leading to longer-term commitments and more meaningful actions.
- Capacity building and other multi-stakeholder programmes create dialogue and provide entry points through which to build further impact; for example, mainstreaming gender issues or extending activities to additional commodities.

### Contact

To find out more about the Production Landscape Programme, contact Sophie Higman ([sophie@proforest.net](mailto:sophie@proforest.net))

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[info@proforest.net](mailto:info@proforest.net)



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### Proforest contact information:

International Office (UK)  
T: +44 (0) 1865 243 439  
E: [info@proforest.net](mailto:info@proforest.net)

Africa (Ghana)  
T: +233 (0)302 542 975  
E: [africa@proforest.net](mailto:africa@proforest.net)

Latin America (Brazil)  
T: +55 (61) 3879 2249  
E: [latinoamerica@proforest.net](mailto:latinoamerica@proforest.net)

Latin America (Colombia)  
T: +57 (2) 3481791  
E: [latinoamerica@proforest.net](mailto:latinoamerica@proforest.net)

Southeast Asia (Malaysia)  
T: +60 (0)3 2242 0021  
E: [southeastasia@proforest.net](mailto:southeastasia@proforest.net)