



## HENKEL AND SOLIDARIDAD'S PARTNERSHIP IN NIGERIA

### CONTEXT

Oil palm is native to West Africa and the expectation is that palm oil production will accelerate across this region in the coming years.<sup>1</sup> Nigeria is one of the major producers of palm oil in West Africa. In Nigeria, as elsewhere, smallholders are an integral part of the palm oil industry, accounting for 89% of palm oil production in the country. The average smallholder land size is 1.5 hectares. The Niger Delta is a key production hub in the country, accounting for about 57% of total production. This production is dominated by the collection of fresh fruit bunches (FFB) from wild groves or aged trees.

There are some critical issues in Nigerian palm oil production. Unfortunately yields in many Nigerian oil palm farms are low, partly due to a lack of access to the finance and inputs that would allow them to develop their plots. These low yields put pressure on farmers, encouraging unsustainable land use in the effort to increase outputs. This risks uncoordinated expansion into existing forest cover.

Apart from low yields, Nigeria's distinct relationship to mills causes some further issues. In contrast to other oil palm regions across the globe, Nigerian smallholders process their FFB using small artisanal mills, generally owned by private operators. Due to the poor oil extraction rates of these mills, farmers' profit is eroded as the final outputs are impacted. At the same time, these artisanal mills, often outdated and inefficient, emit a high level greenhouse gas (GHG), contributing to the negative environmental impact of the sector. These issues can be addressed. Yields can significantly increase by applying best management practices (BMP), adopting climate smart agriculture (CSA) and sustainable land use management practices. And with the right support, farmers and mills can move on from outdated and damaging technology.

<sup>1</sup>[https://www.solidaridadnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Palm-Oil-Barometer-2022\\_solidaridad.pdf](https://www.solidaridadnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Palm-Oil-Barometer-2022_solidaridad.pdf)

### SUPPORTING SMALLHOLDERS LIVELIHOODS IN NIGERIA

As part of this partnership, Solidaridad has been working with smallholder farmers in two states of the Niger Delta (Cross River and Akwa Ibom). In light of the challenges in this region, the partnership has focused on different interventions to improve smallholders' yields and incomes. Between 2016 and 2020, the partnership worked with smallholder farmers to implement BMP and to facilitate farmers' access to inputs. Women's involvement was prioritized during this project. The project also addressed the need of farmers to replace aging palms by linking farmers to organizations that facilitated access to improved planting materials. The success of the project with farmers in Cross River and Akwa Ibom, led to an increased number of farmers wanting to participate in future projects.

**“My palms do not produce from September but after I did BMP, I am harvesting even in November”**

Mr. Osam, Etung farmer

The project also benefited from Solidaridad's continuous engagement with national and local authorities. Agricultural extension officers were involved in the several trainings with the aim of deepening the knowledge on best management practices throughout the region. Participants are expected to pass this knowledge onto farmers in their networks and as such multiply the impact of this project.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

### Farmer's Capacity Building 2017 - 2020:

- 5,463 farmers trained in best management practices (46% were women)
- 360 smallholder farmers trained on RSPO principles and criteria
- 40 independent smallholders groups trained on group dynamics, lobbying and advocacy (21 in Akwa Ibom and 19 in Cross River State)

### Sustainable production and productivity

#### 2017 -2020:

- 8,567 hectares reached with best management practices
- Estimated 6,000 tons of CPO
- Yield increase: from 3 ton/ha to between 5.2tons/ha and 10.8 ton/ha

The 2016-2020 project laid the foundations and created connections with smallholder farmers, local communities and other key stakeholders in Cross River and Akwa Ibom. Despite the success of the interventions, many more farmers were still in need of support with moving towards sustainable oil palm production. In addition, the sector is still at a very rudimentary stage of development. Increasing the efficiency of artisanal mills continued to be a major challenge given the high costs associated with technology upgrade. Lastly, farmers faced the challenge of replacing old, low yielding oil palms.

## CREATING LONG TERM IMPACT IN CROSS RIVER AND AKWA IBOM

For the next phase of the project (2020-2023), the partnership focuses on the most pressing issues that were identified in the previous phase (see key interventions in box 1). Through the partnership, Solidaridad aims to continue the support of smallholders' livelihoods in Cross River and Akwa Ibom. The project does not only focus on increasing yields through training, but also on supporting farmers with the replanting of low-yielding trees. In addition, the partnership helps to improve oil extraction rates of artisanal mills and reduce mill-level GHG emissions. Lastly, the project promotes forest protection and the reduction of negative environmental impacts through coordinated land use planning and monitoring. Smallholder farmers are being trained on forest protection. In close collaboration with communities, forests around the project communities are identified and mapped.



## Interventions between 2020 - 2023

- Community facilitators, smallholder farmers, agricultural extension officers, women and youths trained on BMP, community-based Biodiversity Conservation & Forest Protection (CBC & FP), Sustainable Land Use (SLU) and CSA practices
- Formation of farmers groups to facilitate access to inputs and finance
- Capacity building for community facilitators, smallholder farmers, agricultural extension officers, women and youths on BMP, CSA, SLU, CBC&FP practices
- Establishment of oil palm nurseries to replace aged and wild oil palm varieties
- Technology upgrade for 4 palm oil artisanal mills for higher extraction rates and trainings on climate smart palm oil milling processes
- Smallholders farmers digitally profiled and mapped
- Support communities to develop land use plans through multi stakeholder platforms

## PARTNERS

Henkel, The Oil Palm Growers Association of Nigeria, (OPGAN), National Agricultural Land Development Authority, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Cross River State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Plantation Owners Multipurpose Cooperative Society (POMCS)



## MORE ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

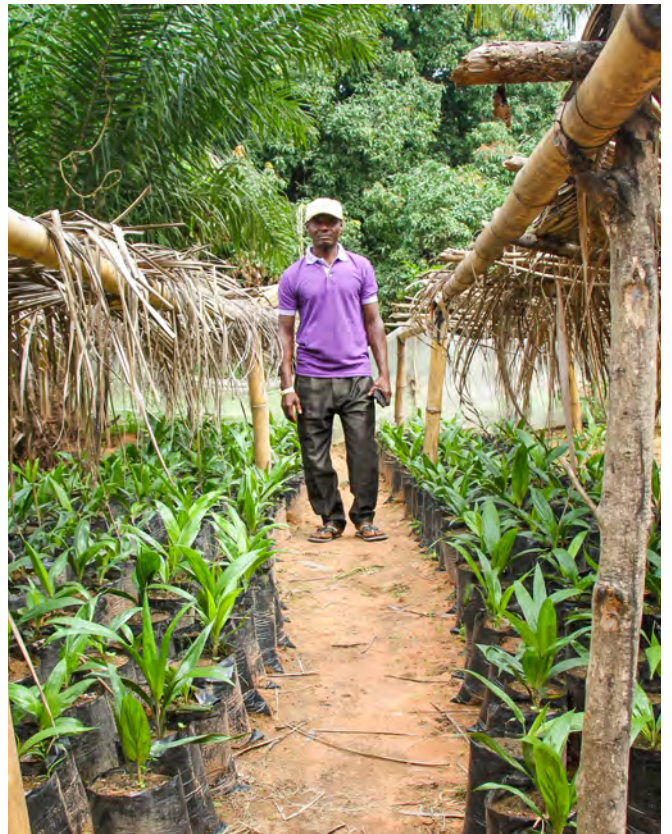
Henkel and Solidaridad are committed to improving oil palm smallholder livelihoods, while driving progress towards sustainable palm and palm kernel oil globally, and making a positive impact on both the environment and the people in the palm oil community. Since 2013, Henkel and Solidaridad have joined forces to reach farmers in all major palm producing regions.

### HENKEL

Henkel operates globally with a well-balanced and diverse portfolio. The company holds leading positions in both industrial and consumer businesses thanks to strong brands, and strategic, technical innovations. Henkel uses palm oil products and derivatives in its home, laundry care and personal care products. The company is committed to responsible sourcing of palm oil, establishing full traceability and transparency for palm (kernel) oil in its products, and improving the livelihoods of smallholders farmers and protection of nature. For more information visit: <http://www.henkel.com>

### SOLIDARIDAD

Solidaridad is an international civil society organization with 50 years of experience in improving the sustainability of global supply chains. Over the years, Solidaridad has built a strong track record for improving sustainability in palm oil worldwide. For more information visit: <http://www.solidaridadnetwork.org>



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