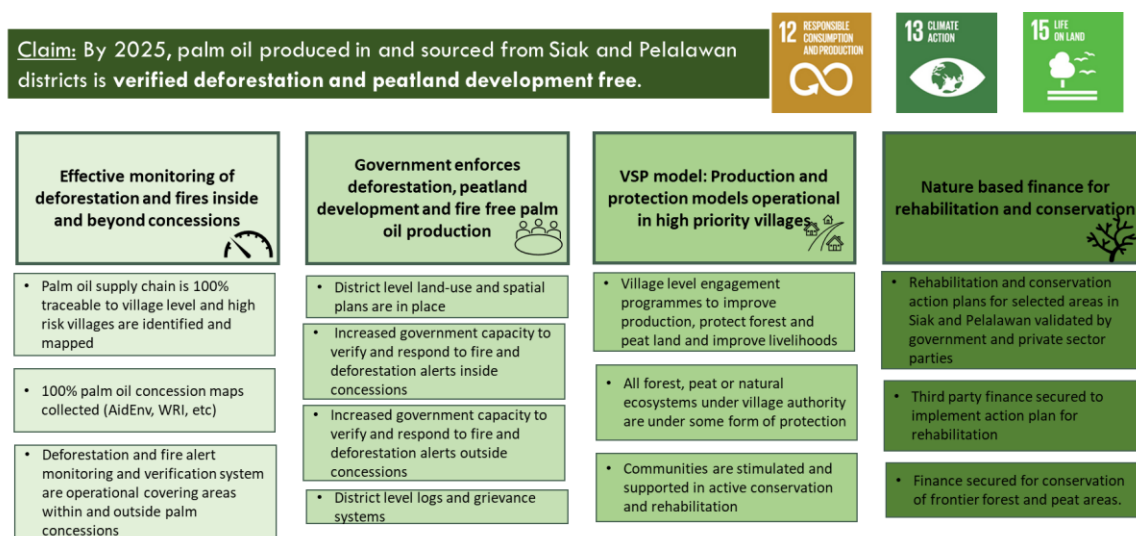


## The Village Support Programme of the Siak Pelalawan Landscape Programme

A group of 8 palm oil sourcing companies, including Cargill, Danone, GAR, l’Oreal, Musim Mas, Neste, PepsiCo and Unilever agreed to collaborate and set up a landscape programme to achieve deforestation and exploitation free palm production by addressing underlying root causes in the districts of Siak and Pelalawan.

To deliver its goal of protecting forest and peatlands in Siak and Pelalawan districts, SPLP has identified a holistic approach structured around 4 main pillars. The figure below presents these 4 pillars and outcomes under each that are expected to deliver **verified deforestation and peatland conversion free** production.

Figure 1- Holistic approach to deliver Verified Deforestation Free production



In summary, SPLP aims to support the development of these 4 pillars as follows:

- Effective monitoring** – this starts with mapping and ensuring full traceability of palm production up to the village level, where villages are subdivided into low and high-risk villages from the perspective of risk of conversion of peat and forest land. All large palm concessions and villages mapped will be subject to a district level monitoring and verification system to be developed.
- Enforcement and response** - The remaining forest and peat areas to be conserved are part of a district level spatial and land-use plan that is subject to government enforcement. As such, in collaboration with WRI, SPLP is developing a response protocol for deforestation and fire alerts, aiming to include collaborative action of companies to respond to alerts outside concessions.
- Village Support Programme** – Identification of high priority villages in Siak and Pelalawan based on forest and peat conservation priorities (including priority villages of the Peat Restoration Agency BRG). In these high priority villages SPLP has started to roll out a Village Support Programme (VSP) to engage farmers and village communities in participatory mapping, raising awareness on importance to protect forests and rolling out training programmes to implement good agricultural practices, good practice to manage peat and protect forests and biodiversity and help improve livelihoods.
- Incentives** – ensure long term (financial) incentives for the district, to protect larger and connected forests and rehabilitate forest and peat land where relevant.

The SPLP programme is centred around rolling out the Village Support Programme (VSP) in all of the high priority villages that are identified in the districts of Siak and Pelalawan. The focus is to work with farmers and communities in the village to move towards a forest positive and verified deforestation free village that improves the livelihoods of farmers and communities.

Villages represent a micro-cosmos of the issues that need to be addressed to move to deforestation-free palm oil production; how to balance production and protection, how to facilitate communication and discussions between various stakeholders, starting from different groups within the community and with other external stakeholders, how to best provide support for oil palm smallholders and make local livelihoods more resilient?

SPLP designed the Village Support Programme to provide support to communities to tackle these interconnected and complex issues. Elaborate consultation with stakeholders has resulted in the following four phases:

1. **Phase 1 - Initial village engagement:** a local village facilitator leads participatory methods on land-use planning and identifying opportunities to collaborate towards forest friendly production. This is based on the model of the peat care village programme of the Indonesian Peat Restoration Agency (BRG). SPLP is supporting the implementation of the peat care village programme and has jointly with BRG provided training to the local village facilitators, which are now based in 7 high priority villages.
2. **Phase 2 – Village level regulation for forest and peat conservation and rehabilitation:** Further detailed mapping and identification of forest and peat conservation areas and integrate into village regulation. This includes mapping and addressing issues of land title claims in frontier areas.
3. **Phase 3 - Train the Trainer and scaling up:** The full package of on-site training for farmers consists for the following modules:
  - Forest Friendly Farming (FFF) package including awareness raising on forest and ecosystem values, adapting and implementing precautionary measures in the village and farms to maintain HCVs areas, a simplified protocol for farmer self-verification and monitoring of focal species (see box 1).
  - Good practices to protect and improve management of peatlands with Winrock
  - Good Agricultural Practices to help increase oil palm productivity, as current yields in the villages are very low, building on Musim Mas and IFC ESP smallholder programme
  - Demonstration plot, including alternative sources of livelihoods

#### **Box 1 - Forest Friendly Farming package**

The Forest Friendly Farming (FFF) package is a set of tools that seeks to help small-scale farmers to cultivate crops while conserving forests, biodiversity and other High Conservation Values (HCV) in and around their lands.

The core objective of FFF is to engage small farmers on forest conversion frontiers in an FFF training programme, and connect them with companies who can provide incentives in exchange for protecting natural ecosystems.

#### ***What components does the FFF package include?***

**1. Precautionary practices for farmers:** A generic set of practices farmers implement to maintain HCVs - including focal species, focal ecosystems and ecosystem services - where they occur and avoid new land clearing. These practices are identified, discussed, and agreed with farmers and programme coordinators.

**2. Manuals for FFF project initiators and training leaders:** Guidance on: developing farmer compacts and incentives packages, procedures for selecting locally adapted focal species lists, how to adapt the generic practices in dialogue with local farmer groups, and on training farmers how to implement them the precautionary practices.

**3. User-friendly templates for self-verification:** Simple checklists and a mobile app for farmers to score their performance and monitor and document application of the HCV precautionary practices.

#### 4. Phase 4 – Monitoring and response

The training modules and content of this fourth phase builds on the fire free village model in Indonesia combined with the HCVRN Forest Friendly Farming package and includes:

- **Farmer Implementation:** Trial monitoring framework with smallholder palm oil farmers and community members as part of self-verification, linked to the concept of village level deforestation free. This includes that farmers or farmer groups monitor and report on their own implementation of precautionary measures.
- **Village monitoring:** Strengthen the capacity and structure of village level fire free management committee with forest management training and staff. Expand fire monitoring with training on participatory monitoring of forest loss and degradation, including the Forest Integrity Assessment Tool of the HCVRN (see box 2).
- **Supply chain:** Exploring how village level monitoring and response can be linked to district level and supply chain verified deforestation free monitoring and reporting.

#### Box 2 - Forest Integrity Assessment Tool

The Forest Integrity Assessment Tool (FIAT) is a simple, accessible way to evaluate and monitor the biodiversity condition of forest. It uses an integrity score, with natural forest as the maximum score reference. Differences in the score over time or space, indicate changes in forest condition and threats. This is used to make management decisions and monitor effectiveness. Non-specialists, such as communities, smallholders and company staff, can do the assessments, following basic training and adaption of the checklist to the region and ecosystems.

The FIAT can be used for:

- Self or participatory assessment and monitoring over time of forest conditions for biodiversity in managed forests, HCV areas or set-aside reserves.
- Guiding responsible forest management and forest restoration, by identifying forest elements that are missing, and which managers could help to recreate.
- Raising awareness and educating non-biologists about forest conditions that are important for biodiversity

In 2020 SPLP started with rolling out Phase 1 of the VSP in 7 villages, 3 in Siak and 4 in Pelalawan. An experienced local village facilitator, trained by the BRG, CORE and other experts is based in each village. During this first phase, the focus is on using participatory methods to describe the current conditions, gain an understanding of the key underlying issues and identify opportunities to collaborate with the community towards sustainable palm oil production and improving livelihoods. Phase 1 will be completed for all 7 villages in December 2020, resulting in 7 village specific profiles.