

Oil Palm Consultant

Position: Oil Palm Consultant (1)

Location: Monrovia (with extensive travel within Liberia counties)

LoE: 30 Days (including travel days)

Start Date: 05 February 2018

Introduction

Oil palm is indigenous to West Africa. However, the region only produces about 6% of global palm oil which is not enough to satisfy the demand in the region. There are about million hectares of palm oil in West Africa which is mostly low yielding. Consequently, West Africa imports palm oil costing billions of dollars. The average yield of oil palm farms is around 4 tons of FFB per ha per year which is only 25% of what could be produced. Poor agronomy, limited use of fertilizer and use of low yielding planting materials are the main causes for the low yield levels. Much of the oil (about 80%) is processed in small- to mid-sized mills. These mills often have low (10% and below) extraction rates and high levels of free fatty acid in the palm oil. As a result, the oil of these mills is sold on the local market for about half the value of good quality oil which is produced by larger mills.

To address these issues a combination of interventions is required to make significant improvements in the oil palm sector in the West African sub-region.

In view of this, Solidaridad West Africa, with funding from the Dutch Embassy in Ghana developed the Sustainable West Africa Oil Palm Program (SWAPP) with the objective of improving income and livelihoods from oil-palm through increasing farm productivity and the efficiency of processing mills. The program had five components; demonstrating best management practices on farms and in mills; facilitating access to finance; bridging the oil palm knowledge gap; expanding RSPO Certification in Africa and mitigating environmental and social impacts.

Background and context

The sustainable West Africa Oil Palm Programme Phase I (SWAPP I) was implemented in Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria from 2012 to 2016. SWAPP I as an innovation and learning programme, focused on the development, testing and validation of best practices whilst generating data and related business case for the development of a competitive oil palm sub-sector in West Africa.

Key innovations that have been validated in SWAPP I are (a) the introduction and adoption of best farm level management practices. This has resulted in the tripling of the average yields in West Africa of smallholders from 5-6 metric tons per hectare per annum to 16-18 tons per hectare per annum. At the level of plantations with relatively and comparatively good practices, SWAPP's best management practices has resulted in doubled productivity; from an average of 10 tons per hectare/annum to between 18-20 tons per hectare.

Based on the impact of SWAPP I, the Dutch Embassy in Ghana is funding a second phase of SWAPP in Ghana, Cote D'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

To help the Solidaridad Team better understand the Oil Palm sector in Liberia, the services of a Consultant is required to conduct an assessment of the Oil Palm Sector.

Objectives and Scope

The overall objective of the assignment is to have a general overview of the oil palm sector with a view to implementing relevant interventions to support the growth of the sector. The scope covers all activities in the oil palm landscape.

The following areas must be covered;

- **National production and consumption figures**
 - Oil Palm growing areas
 - Estimated hectares under oil palm cultivation in the various growing areas
 - Age and variety of trees planted
 - Availability of planting materials in Liberia
 - Capacity of private sector to set up nurseries
 - Current FFB production (disaggregated by smallholders, mid-sized farms and large plantations)
 - The major players (private sector) in the oil palm sector
 - Number and size (ha under cultivation, capacity of mill, etc.) of large plantations
 - Number of mills and refineries and their locations
 - Existing smallholder schemes and plantations with such schemes
 - Estimated CPO production and consumption (past, present and future)
 - Major challenges and opportunities.
 - Existing policies that affect the sector both positively and negatively

- **Oil Palm Initiatives**
 - Existing oil palm related initiatives (nature, location, funding organizations, implementing agencies, project duration, etc.)

- **Stakeholders**
 - Who are the major stakeholders and their roles (government institutions, NGOs, CSOs, Research Institutions, National Oil Palm Multi-stakeholder platforms, mill fabricators, etc.)
 - Location of the stakeholders

Approach and Methodology

The Consultant is expected to use both primary and secondary sources to collect the required data.

Qualifications

The Consultant must have good knowledge of the oil palm sector with a minimum of 5 years research experience.

Schedule

The assignment is expected to be conducted within 30 days (including travel days)

Deliverables

The following deliverables are expected to be produced by the Consultant

- Report summarizing the information collected with conclusions and recommendations
- Information on oil palm growing areas with recommendations on areas to target for intervention
- List of existing oil palm related initiatives
- List of agencies funding oil palm related activities/projects
- List of oil palm stakeholders
- Exit presentation at Solidaridad Liberia office

To Apply

Interested consultants should submit a proposal of maximum 6 pages that include narrative, timeline, budget and a resume in English vacancies.li@solidaridadnetwork.org and state "Proposal: **Oil Palm Consultant**" in the subject line. **The closing date for the submission of proposal is Monday, February 05, 2018.**