

Sustainable and Climate-Friendly Palm Oil Production and Procurement (SCPOPP) in Thailand



Context

Thailand has a high number of small-scale farmers or smallholders working in palm oil production: together, they farm more than 70% of the total area under oil palm production. In general, smallholders have limited knowledge of sustainable farming practices (such as improving fertilizer use and applying organic materials; have great potential for reducing GHG in the palm oil sector), and lack sufficient capital to be able to improve their farms. With these constraints, smallholders in Thailand produce low yields, resulting in a low quality of palm oil being extracted in the mills.

Moreover, at present, only around 2% of Thailand's entire palm oil output is produced by Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)-certified smallholders and palm oil mills. Support for a broad-based training programme for smallholders is thus vital in order to advance the production of sustainable palm oil. However, the large-scale rollout of intensive smallholder training courses is proving difficult for the government. This is due, amongst other things, to budget constraints as well as a shortage of suitably qualified national instructors. Capacity deficits also exist in the areas of GHG measurement and reporting, which means that mitigation actions cannot be tracked or documented. As a result of these requirements, the Thai government is looking at ways in which the sustainable palm oil production can be expanded even more rapidly, e.g. through certification of an entire jurisdiction.

Objective

To enable the national government and relevant stakeholders to mainstream sustainable and climate-friendly palm oil production in Thailand

Approaches

The project closely cooperates with the Thai government to

- Enhance oil palm smallholders' capacities in achieving an internationally-recognised sustainable palm oil standard (i.e. RSPO) through an intensive Training of Trainer (ToT) curriculum.
- Increase demand of sustainable palm oil through creating partnerships with the private sector along the value chain.
- Develop tools for monitoring and reporting GHG reduction through adopting the GHG reduction practices of smallholders.
- Formulate a policy framework upscaling sustainable and climate-friendly palm oil production towards a "jurisdictional approach" with a commitment from local government and key stakeholders to ensure that all palm oil produced from one jurisdiction area (i.e. district, province, or national level) is sustainably produced and certified.

Results so far

- The project has engaged with 69 groups of smallholders with 3,300 farmer members growing oil palm on 8,600 ha in three pilot provinces (Surat Thani, Krabi and Chumphon).
- The development of intensive Training of Trainer curriculum, the so-called "Thailand Oil Palm Smallholders Academy: TOPSA", is almost completed and should roll out to 120 targeted trainers and 3,200 smallholders in July 2020.
- Eighteen palm oil mills have engaged and agreed to provide incentives and source oil palm fruits sustainably produced by smallholders through a Partnership Agreement. So far, seven Partnership Agreements have been signed between palm oil mills and smallholder groups.
- A study on appropriate GHG reduction practices has been completed through a series of stakeholder consultations. Five out of twelve practices were assessed, prioritized and recommended as "Appropriated GHG reduction practices". They are now integrated into the TOPSA training curriculum.
- A simplified calculation tool is now ready to use for monitoring and reporting GHG reduction.
- An online campaign was launched in January 2020 to raise awareness and call for action on sustainable palm oil among the general public and smallholders.

Commissioned by: The German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety (BMU)

Countries: Thailand, Indonesia and Germany

Project partners: Department of Agriculture (DOA) and Department of Agricultural Extension (DOAE) under the Thai Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

Project duration: 09/2018 – 08/2022

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