

Press release – 16 April 2019

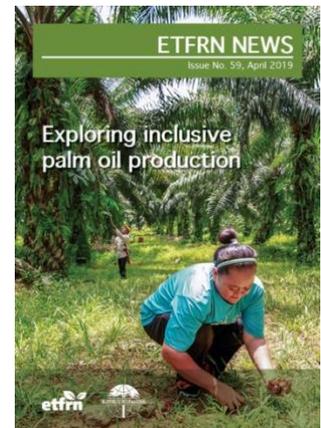
Exploring inclusive palm oil production

ETFRN News 59

Widespread palm oil production causes much controversy due to its negative impacts in the tropics. But whatever is said about it, it is big business and getting bigger by the day due to increasing global demands. Alongside this, the size and depth of the social and environmental debates surrounding palm oil production are also growing. As a major globally-consumed commodity, its production in the humid and sub-humid tropics raises concerns due to its impacts on the environment, biodiversity, local communities, smallholder livelihoods, land rights and climate change.

One possible solution proposed is to improve the ‘inclusiveness’ of smallholders who make up a substantial part of the palm oil value chain. This *ETFRN News* presents potential opportunities by looking at the experiences, perceptions and perspectives of individuals, companies, institutions and NGOs on what has been done and is being done on the ground to increase the involvement of and benefits to smallholder oil palm farmers. And in doing so, it focuses on the following key questions: How do such actions and their impacts differ between different smallholder types and organizations? How do they differ between countries, regions and corporate contexts? What are the effects of various enabling policy environments? And what do the authors in this edition mean by ‘inclusiveness’?

This *ETFRN News* edition brings together 24 articles and interviews from around the world that reflect on these questions and it identifies means of improving smallholder inclusiveness in palm oil production and the ones that could be scaled up. These rich experiences are discussed and compared in a summary review, drawing out nine common key lessons.



Key lessons:

1. “Inclusiveness” is interpreted in different ways and a common definition is needed.
2. Empowering smallholders is an essential prerequisite for increased inclusiveness.
3. Increased uptake of certification schemes is correlated with improved smallholder inclusiveness.
4. Smallholders benefit when they can take on more roles in the supply chain (e.g., co-owning mills).
5. Diversifying livelihood options through intercropping or other means is important for smallholders.
6. Companies must consider smallholder producers more as partners and co-investors.
7. Build trusting relationships with smallholders is crucial, and patience is paramount.
8. Inclusive palm oil production requires innovative technological and business models.
9. Policies at all levels have key roles in creating enabling conditions to stimulate inclusive businesses.

This publication and the associated evidence-based analysis from a globally-respected independent knowledge broker is expected to support a common and integrated series of actions between sectors and interests, but for the benefit of all.

This edition of *ETFRN News* has been produced on behalf of the [European Tropical Forest Research Network](#) by [Tropenbos International](#).

The EFRN News 59: Exploring inclusive palm oil production is available for download at:

<http://www.etfrn.org/publications/exploring+inclusive+palm+oil+production>

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About European Tropical Forest Research Network (ETFRN)



Established in 1991, the European Tropical Forest Research Network (ETFRN) aims to ensure that European research contributes to the conservation and sustainable use of forest and tree resources in tropical and subtropical countries. ETFRN promotes a dialogue between researchers, policy-makers and forest users, the increased coherence of European tropical forest research, and increased collaboration with researchers in developing countries through partnerships and other forms of capacity building. www.etfrn.org

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About Tropenbos International



Tropenbos International (TBI) envisions a future in which forests and trees are used sustainably for the benefit of local people and the global community. By making knowledge work for forests and people, Tropenbos International contributes to inclusive and evidence-based decision making for the improved management and governance of tropical forests. TBI's longstanding local presence and ability to bring together local, national and international partners makes it a trusted partner in sustainable development. TBI is ETFRN's coordinating member and national focal point in the Netherlands. www.tropenbos.org

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