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## RSPO NOTIFICATION OF PROPOSED NEW PLANTING

*This notification shall be on the RSPO website for 30 days as required by the RSPO procedures for new plantings (<http://www.rspo.org/?q=page/535>). It has also been posted on local on-site notice boards.*

1. Date of notification: 19<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	This is a completely new development and stakeholders may submit comments.
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This is part of an on-going planting and is meant for notification only.

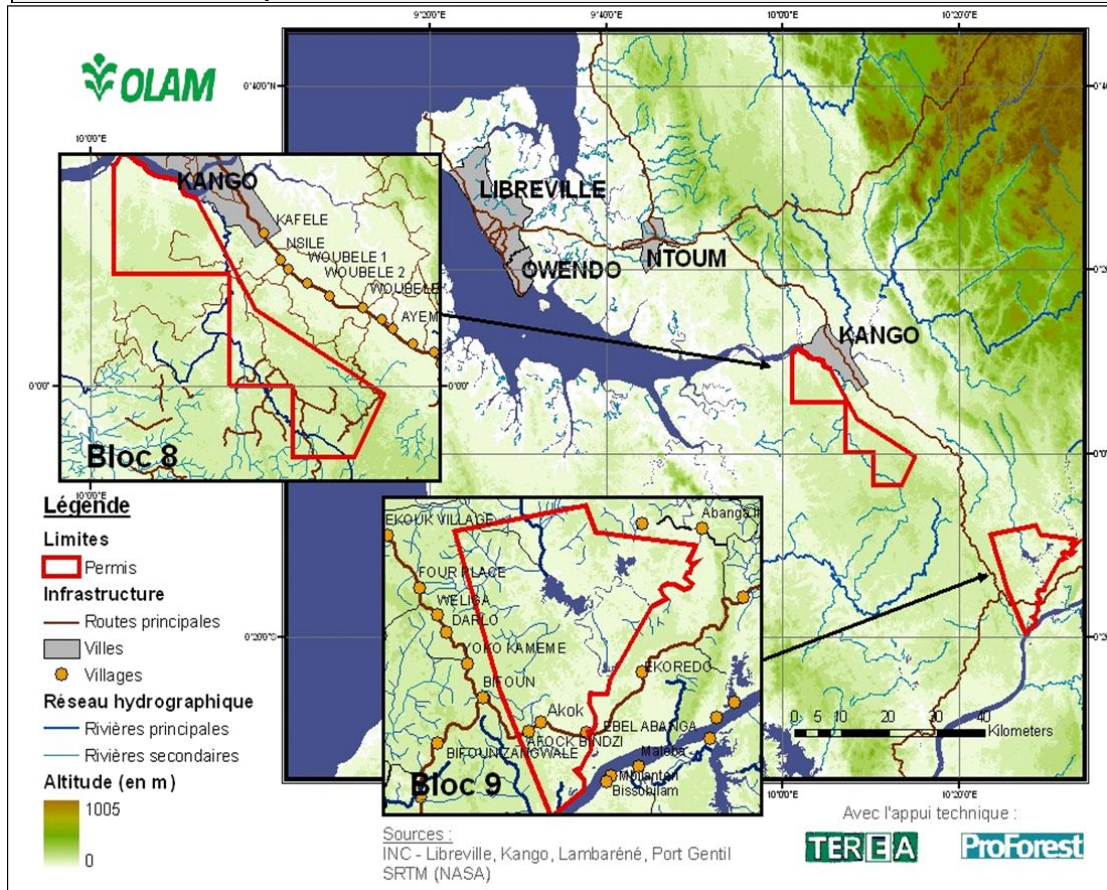
<b>2. Company and contact details:</b>	
Company Name:	Olam International Limited
Address:	#11-02, Suntec Tower 2, 9, Temasek Boulevard, Singapore 038989
Type of business:	Olam International is one of the leading global supply chain managers and processors of agricultural products.
Contact person:	Alexandra Booth
Email address:	Alexandra Booth <alexandra.booth@olamnet.com>
Phone number:	+65 6508 9671.

<b>3. Subsidiaries of the above company included in this notification (if any):</b>
Olam Palm Gabon has set up Olam International as a joint venture company with the Government of Gabon to focus mainly in the establishment of oil palm plantations and processing of palm oil for both national and international markets. Olam Palm will eventually develop 50,000 hectares of palm oil in Phase 1. As part of the agreement, the Republic of Gabon has committed to the joint venture an overall land bank of 300,000 ha allowing Olam to identify parcels of land suitable for palm development in multiple phases. Olam has committed itself to developing the oil palm business in full compliance with the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) certification system. Thus far Environmental Impact and High Conservation Value assessments have been completed for two of three lots (hereinafter known as 8,9 and 11) totalling 38,550 ha.

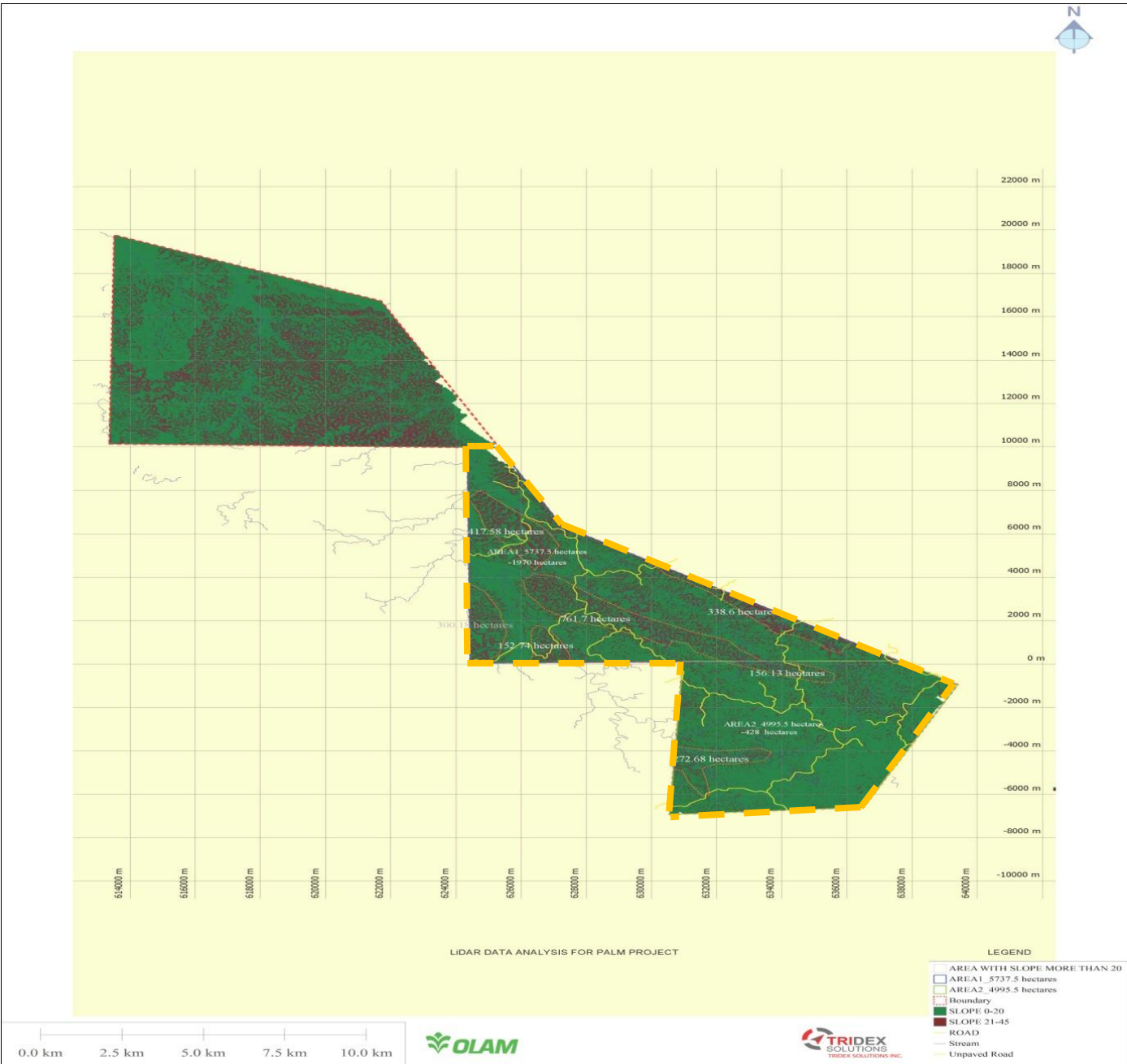
<b>4. Summary of the proposed new planting area and status of the land:</b>
<p>Concessions granted to the company Olam Palm Gabon are under an agreement signed November 26, 2010 between the Prime Minister, Head of the Gabonese Government, the Minister of Economy, Trade, Industry and Tourism The Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, and the legal representative of Olam Palm Gabon. This concession agreement is long-term leases for three (3) lots, for a period of fifty (50) years renewable.</p> <p>Being covered by a particular forest (vegetation capable of providing wood (Article 4 of the forestry code in the Gabonese Republic), the blocks are then part of the forest estate, which consists of the permanent forest estate and rural forests. Being in the forestry sector, the Ministry of Water and Forestry has issued a permit to OLAM exploration, by order signed by the Minister dated 28 October 2010. Section 6 of this permission states that it does not concern the exploitation of timber forest resources. On the other hand, PALM GABON OLAM is "required to conduct surveys within the perimeters set and communicate the results to DIARF. Based on the results of these surveys, the assignment of the surface will be explored in particular specifying the conditions of exploitation of timber and non-timber existing on the ground and the procedures for setting up agro-industrial plantations.</p> <p>Stakeholders involved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Environment, Director General</li> <li>• Ministry of Agriculture, Director General</li> <li>• Ministry of Water and Forest, Director General</li> <li>• Ministry of Inventory and Forest Management, Director General</li> <li>• Prefects and locals of nearby villages, List included</li> <li>• Local Social and Environmental NGOs and Research institutes</li> <li>• WWF, CENAREST, WCS,</li> </ul>

<b>5. Legal and reference documents:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Social Environmental Impact Assessment report, dated February 2011.</li> <li>✓ High Conservation Value Assessment report, dated February 2011</li> <li>✓ Legal documents and regulatory permits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Documents Cartographiques du Projet Palmeraie Olam Palm Gabon', <i>Ministere des Eaux et Forets</i>, October 2010.</li> <li>• 'Projet de convention portant; Concession de trios baux emphytéotiques à Olam Palm Gabon SA', <i>Ministere de L'Economie, Du Commerce, De L'Industrie et Du Tourisme</i>, 28 October 2010.</li> <li>• 'Décision portant autorisation d'exploration des concessions forestières d'une superficie de 51,920'. <i>Ministere des Eaux et Forets</i>, 28 October 2010.</li> <li>• 'French (France) Convention:Portant Concession de Baux Emphyteotiques" (<i>Land title deed</i>), <i>Ministere de L'Economie, Du Commerce, De L'Industrie et Du Tourisme</i>, 26 November 2010.</li> <li>• Redéfinition des points cartographique des parcelles agricoles d'Olam Palm-Gabon', <i>Ministere des Eaux et Forets</i>, 17 December 2010.</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Location maps</li> <li>✓ Area of new plantings and time-plan for new plantings.</li> </ul>	
<b>6. Area statements:</b>	
Gross area:	Concession area of 3 Lots: 51,920 ha. Lots 8: 20,030 ha. Lot 9: 18,530 ha. Lot 11: 13,360 ha.
Net area to be planted:	At date of this report: Lot 8 only. 8,334 ha have been identified as being suitable for oil palm development.
<b>7. Location of the land:</b>	
Three concessions located in the provinces of Estuary and Middle Ogooue areas in the forest zone of Gabon, for agro-industrial oil palm plantation development.	
Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The findings of the HCV assessment recommended that Lot 11 should not be developed and this has been accepted in totality by Olam Palm Gabon.</li> <li>• The findings of the HCv assessment further recommend that only Lot 8 be developed at this time.</li> <li>• The findings of the HCV assessment further conclude that only the western side of Lot 9 is potentially suitable for oil palm development but this is subject to confirmation with Gabonese authorities and Ramsar secretariat that this potentially plantable area is no longer included in the Bas-Ogooué Ramsar site</li> </ul>	
This notification therefore only covers part of Lot 8 at present.	

7.1 Location map of the concession areas. Lots 8 and 9:



**7.2 Location of 8,300 ha identified in Lot 8 for planting activity:**



## 8. Summary from the HCV and SEIA assessments:

The HCV assessment was conducted by teams from Proforest and Terea whilst the SEIA was conducted by a team from Terea.

**Proforest** is an independent company working with natural resource management and specialising in practical approaches to sustainability. The team leader, Abraham Baffoe MSc, is an Associate Director at Proforest and accredited by RSPO as team leader for HCV assessment.

**TEREA** – Terre Environnementt Aménagement – is a consulting firm registered in Gabon in 2005. TEREA works on projects and programmes relating to the environment and sustainable management of the natural resources in close cooperation with forestry and environmental institutions and the private sector in several countries in Central Africa. TEREA is also registered and operates in Europe.

The assessment period coincided with the period of maximum flooding in November 2010 and both included two phases.

### The HCV assessment:

The study was to:

- a) Identify HCVs;
- b) Identify HCV areas in the concessions.

Review of documents aimed at

- Gathering available documents;
- Reports and information about the concessions;
- The landscape.

Field assessment:

- Helicopter over flight;
- Detailed on site surveys using appropriate expertise.

### The SEIA assessment:

The study aims were to:

- c) Identify and assess the impacts of the following factors:
  - Development and operation of the site access roads and internal site tracks;
  - Establishment and operation of remote sites;
  - Method to produce seedlings;
  - Methods of planting (including land preparation);
  - Methods of operating and maintenance costs;
  - Measures for environmental and social protection, management of household and similar waste, industrial waste and sewage.
- d) Propose measures to mitigate negative impacts and enhance positive impacts;
- e) Propose alternatives for some aspects of the project whose impacts are too severe.

Review of documents including:

- Information on the project provided by Olam Emergent Gabon;
- Existing Literature on similar projects in Gabon and other countries;
- Various bibliographic.

Field studies:

- Field visit (overall match);
- Sample collection and analysis of samples of surface water and soil;
- Geological / hydrogeological study;
- Ichthyological study;
- Ornithological study;
- Herpetological study;
- Study botany
- Study mammalian fauna
- Socio-economic study, complemented by field surveys

### Notable findings with a direct influence on the management plan:

- i. Lot 11 was found to be mainly wetland with closed canopy forest in the south-eastern part and is assessed as being inappropriate for conversion to oil palm under the RSPO criteria for new planting
- ii. Lots 8 and 9.
  - Each Lot contains one or more HCV that must be maintained.
  - It is clear from the HCV report that these Lots have been significantly transformed and degraded through several activities including over-exploitation of timber, hunting, fishing and farming.
  - Whilst it is considered unlikely to support concentrations of endemic species (HCV 1.3) within the forests themselves, signs of endangered, protected and threatened species such as the chimpanzees and gorillas were observed in the northern part of Lot 8 and western part of Lot 9; these are at a low density but there was insufficient data to determine the significance of these populations.
- iii. Further research is needed in the North of lot 8 prior to any conversion (potential HCV 1.2). This is reflected in the management plan.
- iv. The hydrological systems of Lots 8 and 9 support nationally significant temporal concentrations (i.e. migrations) of birds and fish (HCV1.4) and the presence of a threatened manatee population (a large aquatic mammal) is considered nationally significant (HCV 1.2). In Lot 8, these important aquatic ecosystems include tidally influenced rivers (North part of the Lot).
- v. The importance of Lot 9 in particular is highlighted by the fact that it is entirely comprised within the Bas-Ogooue Ramsar site.
- vi. Lot 9 contains two important permanent lakes, Lakes Nguene and Azougue, and an extensive seasonally flooded area, which extends from the eastern end through to the mid-portions around the lakes to the mid-western end of the concession. The two lakes and the associated rivers serve as habitats for a nationally significant population of manatees, an endangered species (HCV 1.2).

- vii. The only area in Lot 9 which is potentially plantable is a stretch of upland along the western boundary. However, findings from this assessment suggest that Lot 9 is wholly contained in the Bas-Ogooué Ramsar site.
- viii. Since Lot 9 is prone to heavy flooding and identified to be wholly contained within a Ramsar site, and that these wetlands support concentrations of species of ecological and conservation significance, and that the lakes and forests also support the critical subsistence needs of several villages (HCV 5 and 6 – see below).
- ix. The HCV assessment team recommended that Lot 9 be excluded from any conversion activities until it is established that potentially plantable areas at the western side of this Lot are not located in the Bas-Ogooué Ramsar site.
- x. Forest blocks deserving sanctuary :
  - Fragments of forest existing in the vicinity of each site.
  - Lobe area and south of Lot 8.
  - Wetlands that form a transition between the lakes or rivers and dry land forest (distance of least fifty (50) meters from the highest water level in the rainy season).
  - The forests and swampy areas prone to flooding, particularly in Lot 9 near Abanga, lakes and Nguen Azougué, but also in the Lot 8 around the Komo estuary, and smaller rivers such as the Lobe, the None and the Bikoum should be preserved
- xi. Vegetation Corridors recommended for conservation:
  - Corridor of fifty meters on either side of the banks, which follow the River Lobe to the north and south;
  - Fragmentation of planting sections divided by bands of forests (by extending to the forest to the indentations in the area of block 8 to divide into several blocks, and leaving two or three radii directed towards the forest for Lake Nguene block 9).
- xii. Lots 8 and 9 are estimated to have low population of about 9,200 people due to an exodus to big cities for work.
- xiii. Small holder agriculture is a highly and fishing is very active in the Kango community and in the area of Bifoun and Ebel Abanga.
- xiv. Although hunting is an interim (ad hoc) activity, it is an important source of income for buying essential commodities.
- xv. Artisanal exploitation in the surrounding forest is practiced by the indigenous peoples in Lot 8 and along the banks of Anabga, Ogooué and the lakes by the peoples of Lot 9.
- xvi. Water supplies are identified and the importance of the two major watersheds: the Ogooué and Komo ,upon which nearly 600,000 inhabitants in Lambaréné, Port Gentil and Libreville depend are highlighted.
- xvii. The environmental sensitivity of Lots 8 and 9 was assessed as low, medium or high and mapped in accordance with the sensitivity. This information was then used for management planning purposes.
- xviii. The significance of land issues and customary rights must not be under-estimated.
- xix. Mitigation measures have been proposed:
  - Management and operation of access roads and internal tracks.
  - Implementation and operation of base camps.
  - Nursery methodology.
  - Land preparation and best planting practice.
  - Maintenance and agronomy of the plantations. Use of agro-chemicals and integrated pest management.
  - Management of household and industrial waste and sewerage.
  - Social-Economic impacts.
  - Land conflict issues.
  - Safety and health.
- xx. An environmental and social management plan has been prepared.
- xxi. Small holder development will take place after completion of phase 1 development.

**Abraham Baffoe MSc (HCV Team leader)**

Abraham has over 15 years of experience working on natural resource management with a specialisation in sustainable forest management, forest policy and forest and oil palm certification. His experience involves managing forestry projects, developing and implementing forest certification programmes and providing support to forest standard setting and policy implementation as well as leading HCV assessments for oil palm. As the Forest Programme Leader at the WWF West Africa Forest Programme Office in Ghana, he coordinated several forestry projects including providing technical support to the FLEGT/VPA process. He has also participated in a number of certification audits and has provided training and technical support to companies on forest certification for the Global Forest and Trade Network, a programme he managed in Ghana during 2003-2007. Abraham is an Associate Director at Proforest and accredited by RSPO as team leader for HCV assessment.

**Rodolphe Metayer (SEIA team leader)**

Mr. Métayer is an expert in the environment field. He joined TEREА more than 3 years ago, where he has the responsibility of the Environment branch. He supervises the environmental studies, ensures the management of TEREА Staff in charge of environmental issues. He is the main interlocutor of TEREА with the "Direction Générale de l'Environnement" with which he works in close cooperation. He gained a broad experience in Gabon, in various sectors such as mining, oil, forest....Because of his experience and his knowledge of the different actors and of the site of study, and his establishment in Gabon, Mr Métayer was appointed as the leader and the coordinator. He was the privileged interlocutor of OLAM Emergence Gabon during the study. He is the Environment Director of TEREА

Nick Gildas (Fauna expert).

Nzuiegui Firstguestime (Fauna expert).

GIS expert.

**Rémi Duval MSc.**

Rémi has a background in quality and environmental management and has specialized in sustainable management of natural resources. He worked in Gabon for a timber company where he was in charge of the Sustainable Forest management service for a Forest Management Unit and was implied in the FSC certification process. Previously, he worked in Chile with Mapuche communities on participatory process for the development of a management plan for a national park. He joined Proforest as project manager by the end of 2009 and work on HCV, certification and forest management projects. Rémi is accredited by RSPO as a discipline specialist for HCV assessment.

**Sophie Dirou MSc Socio-economic study team leader.**

Mrs. Dirou has a tropical forestry Masters from "Ecole Nationale du Génie Rural des Eaux et des Forêts", Montpellier, France. She couples forest natural resources management with scientific and social approaches. Mrs. Dirou has a large experience in the installation and the analysis of forest inventories in tropical forest ecosystems, and thus acquired a very good knowledge of the ecology of the principal tree species in Central Africa. She also takes part in the evaluation of the environmental baseline and social assessments of projects installed in Gabon. Within the frame of this study, Mrs. Dirou was in charge of the inventory of the large fauna (Mammals primarily), of the vegetation. She was also the leader of the social team.

**Julia Biloghe (social expert)**

Mrs. Biloghe, a sociologist at TERE, regularly carries out investigations within the frame of forestry projects or industrialists in rural areas. Her experience and her approach enabled her to build trust with local populations and to collect successfully of much information allowing a good comprehension of the local socio-economic context and to comprehend the difficult relations between the economic operator and the populations. Mrs. Biloghe was specifically in charge of the field investigations with 2 investigators who regularly work with TERE: Amédée MBIKILA, Rebecca ZAME, and Chrystlain MBIRA.

**Jean-Daniel Mbega PhD (Ichthyologist)**

Dr. Mbega was the leader of the ichthyology and hydrobiology part of the study. Doctor of biological Sciences, specialized in Ichthyology, Hydrobiology, Fishing and Aquiculture, Mr. Mbega is the Director of the Institute of Technological Research (I.R.T.) and researcher at the Laboratory of Hydrobiology and Ichthyology of the IRAF in Gabon. He has been working in the field of ichthyology and hydrobiology for nearly twenty years and has an excellent knowledge of the river and lake ecosystems in the country, of which he is one of the major specialists. Mr. Mbega works in partnership with TERE on many impact studies in Gabon. He worked with Jean Hervé MVE BEH.

**Patrice Christy (Ornithologist)**

Mr. Christy was the lead ornithologist. Based in Gabon, Mr. Christy has been for 28 years consultant in avifauna inventories, studying the distribution of the avifauna but also conducting environmental impact assessment studies and analyzing environmental legislations. He is recognized as being one of the largest specialists of avifauna in Gabon. He took part in the redaction of many documents on avifauna in Central Africa. He is the author of "the Ornithological Atlas of Gabon".

**Mr. Olivier Pauwels (Herpetologist)**

Mr. Pauwels was in charge of the herpetological part. Accomplished conservation biologist with significant experience in Africa and Asia, he is specialized in environmental project management, Environmental Impact Assessments and relationships with governments and NGOs. For several years he has been working as Country Manager of the Smithsonian Institution's Gabon Program in partnership with Shell Gabon. He develops recommendations about wildlife and safety issues and assesses conservation priorities within the oil-research partnership. He is also involved in the search for compromise between stakeholder expectations and requirements for biodiversity and conservation.

Other discipline specialists such as Biodiversity/Ecology (fauna and flora) experts for this study included:

Ngoua Louis-Marie (Forest Engineer, Botanist).

Awome Sylvester (Forest technician, Botanist).

Guiroussou Landry: (Botanist).

Moele Boussengui (Fauna expert, large mammals).

**9. Summary of the management plans.**

Olam Palm Gabon has prepared a management plan in which it is recognised that the HCV and SEIA reports are fundamental to ensure the successful development of the areas that have been identified as being suitable for oil palm development within the requirement of the generic RSPO principles and criteria.

Olam Palm Gabon clearly state that they will not carry out any development within Lot 11.

The gross area of the concession is 51,920 ha out of which 8,334 ha have been identified as suitable for planting at this time. The management plan recognises the importance of training staff with regard to the process of free, prior and informed consent, the need to continue with the process of identifying and compensating for customary rights and the importance of ensuring local employment and local economic development.

Following the survey conducted of lots 8 and 9, an initial contiguous area of approximately 8,300 hectares, below 20deg gradient has been identified in lot 8 for planting activities. The area in the northern section of Lot 8 will not be planted due to environmental and HCV concerns. Further surveys will be conducted within Lot 9 and consultations conducted with the DGEF whether suitable areas can be planted keeping in view the HCV areas highlighted in the HCV report.

The management plan identifies the measures to be taken to protect identified HCVs and how to implement conservation programs.

#### 10. Verification statement.

The assessment and plan are comprehensive, professional and compliant of RSPO principles, criteria and indicators.

Results from the SEIA and HCV assessments are incorporated into planning and management for the new plantings and related development that:

- Is based on the free, prior and informed consent of any local peoples whose lands are affected (see RSPO criteria 2.2, 2.3, 6.4, 7.5, 7.6)
- Provides for the maintenance or enhancement of all identified HCVs (see RSPO criteria 5.2 & 7.3)
- Excludes all identified primary forests from clearance (see RSPO criterion 7.3)
- Provides for appropriate management of peat (see RSPO criteria 4.3 and 7.4)

#### 11. Formal signing.

Signed on behalf of Control Union Certifications:



David Ogg FICFor.  
Senior Lead Auditor.  
Date: 17<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

Signed on behalf of Company:



Alexandra Booth.  
Date: 17<sup>th</sup> February 2011.