



ROUNDTABLE ON SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME IN EDO STATE, NIGERIA



FINAL REPORT

PREPARED BY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Pg No.
Executive Summary-----	3
1.0 Introduction-----	5
2.0 Aims and Objectives-----	6
3.0 Scope of Work-----	7
4.0 Programme Design/Implementation-----	9
5.0 Outcomes of the Programme-----	14
6.0 Programme Impact Evaluation-----	20
7.0 Limitations/Challenges-----	22
8.0 Recommendations-----	23
9.0 Media Coverage Links -----	24
10.0 Financials/Budget-----	25

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Training Schedule-----	11
Table 2: Stakeholder Profile Representation at the Capacity Building-----	17
Table 3: Breakdown of Trainee Population-----	18

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Communities Covered during the baseline study-----	14
Figure 2: Summary of Stakeholder Profile Representation-----	18

ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

APOI	-Africa Palm Oil Initiative	P&C	-Principles & Criteria
COEP	-Community Outreach & Engagement Programme	RISS	-RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard
CPO	-Crude Palm Oil	RSSF	-RSPO Smallholder Support Fund
DSF	-Dispute Settlement Facility	RSPO	-Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil
ESOPP	-Edo State Oil Palm Programme	SHF	-Smallholder Farmer
FDS	-Foremost Development Services	USDA	-United States Department of Agriculture
FFB	-Fresh Fruit Bunch		
FGD	-Focus Group Discussion		
IMO	-Intermediary Organization		
LGA	-Local Government Area		
MDA	-Ministries, Departments & Agencies		
NGO	-Non-Governmental Organization		
NIFOR	-Nigerian Institute For Oil Palm Research		
OOPC	-Okomu Oil Palm Company		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Outreach & Engagement Program (COEP) commenced after the official launch in Edo State on the 24th of October 2022. This was followed by a Reconnaissance/Baseline study (13 – 30 December 2022) involving the oil palm smallholder farmers, communities' members and other stakeholders or organizations in the areas of operation of the existing RSPO member companies and ESOPP concessionaires, spread over six Local Government Areas in Edo State, and subsequently, 15 months of capacity building exercises based on the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) Principles and Criteria (P&C) 2018 and Grievance/Dispute Resolution Mechanisms.

The program equipped local communities, oil palm companies, government agencies, NGOs in Edo State and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja with the knowledge and tools to achieve sustainable oil palm production, aligning with the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) Principles and Criteria (P&C) 2018. The program fostered understanding of responsible practices while empowering communities to navigate potential conflicts through RSPO's dispute resolution mechanisms.

Smallholder farmers, community leaders, youth, women, community-based organizations in the local communities around oil palm companies that are RSPO members were the primary beneficiaries of the program.

Interactive workshops led by RSPO-certified trainers focused on:

- Implementing RSPO P&C 2018 guidelines, under the themes of People, Prosperity and Planet.
- RSPO's Grievance/Dispute Resolution Mechanisms including Mediation, Bilateral Engagements, Dispute Settlement Facility (DSF).
- Practical exercises and case studies to provide participants with the skills to identify and address potential conflicts related to sustainable palm oil production.

Methodology

The strategy adopted for programme implementation was borne out of the IMO's understanding of the terms of reference and reliance on its vast experience and knowledge of the Nigerian Oil Palm industry.

Key Achievements:

- Baseline studies were conducted for thirty four (34) communities in seven (7) LGAs of Edo State.
- A total of 641 participants attended the first and second modules of the trainings conducted between February 2023 and March 2024, gaining a comprehensive understanding of RSPO P&C 2018 and Grievance/Dispute Resolution Mechanisms.
- Post-training evaluation surveys showed a significant understanding of the participants on knowledge of sustainable practices and confidence in utilizing RSPO's grievance mechanisms.
- Local palm oil companies and communities appreciating RSPO's initiative of training local communities knowing that knowledge of sustainable practice could lead to better relationships with the RSPO member companies.

The COEP demonstrated the importance of empowering smallholder farmers, local communities, and other relevant stakeholders in achieving sustainable palm oil production. Its aim to promote adherence to RSPO standards and equip communities with conflict resolution tools could pave the way for a more responsible and collaborative palm oil industry.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Oil palm is of enormous importance to man. It is a source of food for humans, raw materials for industries, and source of employment and income for the numerous actors in the oil palm industry. It is also a source of foreign exchange earnings to the palm oil producing countries of the world, including Nigeria (Alabi et al., 2020; 2Scale-OOPC, 2021).

Virtually, all parts of the oil palm plant have economic value - the leaves, trunk, fronds, and roots provide a wide range of products that are beneficial to man. But the most important product of the oil palm is the palm fruit, which when processed gives palm oil, palm kernel oil and palm kernel cake. The palm oil is of high economic value in both local and international markets (2Scale-OOPC, 2021). In fact, the oil palm has been described as a wonder crop, yielding up to 10 times more oil per hectare than other sources of vegetable oil such as soybeans and coconut palms.

Nigeria is the fifth largest palm oil producer in the world and the largest consumer of palm oil in Africa. About 54% of the country's production comes from the Niger Delta Region, including Edo State. In 2021, the nation produced about 1.4 million MT of palm oil, but consumption stood at 2 million MT, resulting in a supply gap of 0.6 million MT which was filled with importation. Nigeria that was the leading producer of palm oil in the 1960s is now a net importer of the product, importing an average crude palm oil (CPO) of about 400,000 MT annually (United State Department of Agriculture, USDA cited in Business Day, 2022 and Index Mundi, 2023).

In view of this, coupled with the relative importance of the oil palm, various policies, initiatives, and programs were developed and implemented to boost sustainable palm oil production.

An example of such initiatives is the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). It is a not for profit, global multi-stakeholder initiative on sustainable palm oil established in 2004 with the objective of promoting the growth and use of sustainable oil palm products through credible global standards and engagement of stakeholders.

Sustainable palm oil production by RSPO, comprises legal, economically viable, environmentally appropriate, and socially beneficial management and operations. This is delivered through the application of the set of Principles and Criteria (P&C), and the accompanying Indicators and Guidance.

Compliance with the RSPO Principles and Criteria (P&C) addresses the potential negative environmental and social impacts arising from the development or expansion of an oil palm plantation and enables the palm oil produced to be certified as Sustainable Palm Oil.

With the buy-in of major stakeholders in Nigeria, and to further achieve its main objective of making sustainable palm oil production the norm, the RSPO recognized the urgent need to extend some level of awareness to other stakeholders in the supply chain by initiating the Community Outreach and Engagement Programme (COEP) in Edo State, Nigeria.

Foremost Development Services Limited (FDS) with vast knowledge, experience and understanding of the local context and providing world class consultancy services for major players in the oil palm sector was engaged as the Intermediary Organization (IMO) that will lead the implementation of the programme in Edo State, Nigeria.

2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The COEP aims to secure informed and vigorous engagement of communities in RSPO at all levels, by establishing a strengthened outreach of RSPO through intermediary organizations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, to rebuild RSPO's credibility with civil society that it upholds its standards.

The overall objectives of the programme are:

- Identify individuals, organizations and/or governmental bodies that are influential and well respected by the communities, to be approached for voluntary involvement in the RSPO network of intermediaries.

- Ensure local stakeholders, i.e. local communities have adequate channels of communication with the RSPO as well as access to information through these RSPO intermediaries.
- Carry out more communications, training and awareness-raising workshops in local languages directed at civil society in promoting sustainable palm oil and improving smallholder livelihoods.
- Communicate more good news and success stories (and enforce the standard).
- Develop training modules, tool kits and guides that they can use to engage with communities.

The programme implementation in Nigeria led by FDS, the IMO is to enhance the position and capacity of Communities, Growers, Smallholder Farmers, Thematic groups, Civil Society Organizations, NGOs (Social & Environmental), Government & Regulatory bodies, Media, Financial institutions and other stakeholders in accessing and participating in the RSPO system.

3.0 SCOPE OF WORK

Considering recent developments with regards to sustainable palm oil production in Nigeria, the IMO is expected to;

- A. conduct baseline studies of the relevant stakeholder groups on the following:
 - i. Oil palm smallholders' yields, land status, size, and demographics.
 - ii. Income mix and livelihood/income levels of smallholder farmers.
 - iii. Challenges faced by smallholders with regards to FFB production and marketing, including access to finance for SH and the institutional support they have.
 - iv. Social mobility in the communities impacted by RSPO members' operations.
 - v. Other relevant information to support the outreach programme.

B. The IMO is expected to build the capacities of:

- i. Local communities, beginning with those that the RSPO-member companies in the State (i.e. Presco Plc., Okomu Oil Palm Company Plc., and DUFIL Prima Foods Plc.) have been engaging around their operations/concessions, and extending to other communities.
- ii. Smallholder oil palm farmers' groups/co-operatives, Palm oil companies, Social and environmental civil society organisations, Relevant Edo State Government Ministries/Departments/Agencies, the TFA Africa Palm Oil Initiative (APOI) platform, Other relevant stakeholders that the IMO may identify on the ground.

C. Depending on the audience, the IMO will be expected to provide capacity building on one or a combination of the following:

- i. The RSPO Principles and Criteria (P&C).
- ii. The RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard (RISS), RSPO Smallholder Strategy, and the RSPO Smallholder Support Fund (RSSF) Including to explore opportunities for the use of Smallholder Trainer Academy aimed at building capacity of SH and consequently, livelihood improvements for Smallholder.
- iii. The RSPO Grievance / Dispute resolution mechanisms.

In this case, the IMO provided capacity building on items C (i & iii) above.

4.0 PROGRAM DESIGN/IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 PROGRAMME DESIGN

The COEP in Edo State was launched officially on 24th October 2022 with a follow up training attended by the IMO on 25th to 27th October 2022 in Benin City Edo State.

A workplan to implement the programme as specified was thereafter designed and shared with the RSPO secretariat.

4.2 PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

4.2.1 Target Audience

The target stakeholders include local communities, beginning with communities around RSPO-member companies in the State and other communities in six (6) local government areas of Edo State. Other stakeholders include, Smallholder oil palm farmers' groups/co-operatives, Palm Oil Companies or Growers, Social and Environmental NGOs, Civil Society Organizations, Relevant Edo State Government Ministries/Departments/Agencies, Relevant Federal Ministries, Departments & Agencies (MDAs), Media.

4.2.2 METHODOLOGY

The strategy adopted for programme implementation was borne out of the IMO's understanding of the terms of reference and reliance on vast experience and knowledge of the Nigerian Oil Palm industry. The entire programme was broken down into three phases: **Reconnaissance Survey, Baseline Studies, and Capacity Building.**

The strategies include;

- i.) Development of a workplan.
- ii.) Identification and communication with relevant stakeholders
- iii.) Dispatch of letters (COEP notification letter, Introduction letter of FDS as IMO) to all identified stakeholders.
- iv.) Regular internal strategy meetings by the IMO and facilitators towards programme execution.

- ii.) Determination of training dates and identification of easily accessible training venue for target trainees.
- iii.) Notification and Communication of training details to stakeholders through a notification letter.
- iv.) Inclusion of communities in arriving at a decision on pre-registration of attendees, transportation to venue, and modalities for payments of stipends.
- v.) Development of training modules in two versions of English and Pidgin English.
- vi.) Production and distribution of awareness-raising materials and training modules to trainees for more outreach.
- vii) Development of training evaluation sheets, and production of certificates for attendance.

4.2.2.1 RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY/BASELINE STUDIES

Data for the study were collected from primary sources. The fieldwork for the collection of the primary data included administration of structured questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The questionnaire was designed and uploaded on kobocollect v2022.1.2 for electronic data collection.

The baseline study was conducted in thirty-four (34) communities, across seven (7) LGAs. The population of the study comprised all the smallholder oil palm farmers across these communities in Edo State, Nigeria.

S/NO	ACTIVITY	PERIOD
1.	Reconnaissance Survey	13 – 16 December 2022
2.	Baseline Studies	20 – 30 December 2022
3.	Capacity Building	February 2023 – February 2024
4	Extended Capacity Building	March 2024

4.2.2.2 CAPACITY BUILDING

The training period as scheduled was executed between February 2023 to February 2024 with an extension to March 2024. The training modules for the capacity building were developed and delivered in two languages (English and Pidgin English) depending on the audience peculiarity. The training focused on;

- i. The RSPO Principles and Criteria (P&C) 2018.
- iii. The RSPO Grievance / Dispute Resolution Mechanisms.

RSPO awareness-raising materials, writing/reading materials, certificates of attendance, RSPO videos and training evaluation documents were made available for effective training impact and to achieve more outreach. The table below is a schedule of training conducted for stakeholders.

Table 1: Training Schedule

LOCATION	DATE	VENUE	COMMUNITIES	STAKEHOLDER PROFILE	FACILITATORS (RSPO TRAINED)
Module 1: RSPO Principles & Criteria 2018					
Ovia Southwest LGA	13 – 15 February 2023	Precious Palm Royal Hotel, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.	Madagbayo, Gbelegbu, Maroghionba (AT&P), Udo	Community Leaders/Elders, Women, Youths, Smallholder Farmers, CBO	Fatai A. Afolabi Olanigan Ahmeed Professor Mike Omoigberale. Makinde Abiodun Kabir Bukoye
Ovia Northeast LGA	21 -22 March 2023	Terminal Hotel, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.	Agbanikaka, Owan, Uhiere, Odiguetue	Community Leaders/Elders, Women, Youths, Smallholder Farmers, CBO	Fatai A. Afolabi Olanigan Ahmeed Dr. Joseph Ahmadu Kabir Bukoye
Uhunmwonde LGA	27 April 2023	Westview Hotel 65B, Boundary Road, G.R.A Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria	Irhue, Oke, Orhua	Community Leaders/Elders, Women, Youths, Smallholder Farmers, CBO	Olanigan Ahmeed Rafiat Badmos Makinde Abiodun Dr. Ekene Biose Akinniyi Akinyemi
Ikpoba Okha LGA	30 – 31 May 2023	OTI Hotels & Spa, 22-24 Sapele Road, Benin City, Edo State Nigeria.	Iyanomo, Agbomoba, Ekosa, Obayantor, Owanoba	Community Leaders/Elders, Women, Youths,	Olanigan Ahmeed Makinde Abiodun Kabir Bukoye

				Smallholder Farmers, CBO	Professor Mike Omoigberale. Dr. Joseph Ahmadu
Orhiomwon LGA	22 – 23 June 2023	OTI Hotels & Spa, 22-24 Sapele Road, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria	Ologbonugun, Iwevbo, Orogho, Ona, Owuo, Sakponba-Aideyenba, Evbuehia, Obagie-Nunuamen,	Community Leaders/Elders, Women, Youths, Smallholder Farmers, CBO	Olanigan Ahmeed Makinde Abiodun Kabir Bukoye
Owan West	27 July 2023	OTI Hotels & Spa, 22-24 Sapele Road, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria	Avbiosi, Uzebba, Eti Ose, Ugbubezi, Ugbeturu Ora	Community Leaders/Elders, Women, Youths, Smallholder Farmers, CBO	Olanigan Ahmeed Rafiat Badmos Kabir Bukoye F.A Afolabi Rosine Nsegbe Dr. Ekene Biose Kelvin Esetejovwo
Other Stakeholders	28 July 2023	OTI Hotels & Spa, 22-24 Sapele Road, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria	-	Government Agencies, Civil Society Organization, Growers, Oil Palm Associations, Media, Financial Institution, NGO (Environmental & Social)	F.A Afolabi Rosine Nsegbe Olanigan Ahmeed Rafiat Badmos Kabir Bukoye Professor Mike Omoigberale Prof. Joseph Ahmadu Kelvin Esetejovwo
Module 2: Grievance/Dispute Resolution Mechanism					
Ovia Southwest	28 – 29 September 2023	OTI Hotels & Spa, 22-24 Sapele Road, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria	Madagbayo, Udo, AT&P (Maroghionba), Gbelebu	Community Leaders/Elders, Women, Youths, Smallholder Farmers, CBO	Olanigan Ahmeed Makinde Abiodun Kabir Bukoye
Ovia Northeast	26 – 27 October 2023	OTI Hotels & Spa, 22-24 Sapele Road, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria	Agbanikaka, Odiguetue, Uhiere, Owan	Community Leaders/Elders, Women, Youths, Smallholder Farmers, CBO	Olanigan Ahmeed Makinde Abiodun Kabir Bukoye
Uhunmwonde	27 – 28 November 2023	OTI Hotels & Spa, 22-24 Sapele Road, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria	Oke, Orhua, Irhue	Community Leaders/Elders, Women, Youths, Smallholder Farmers, CBO	Olanigan Ahmeed Makinde Abiodun Kabir Bukoye

Ikpoba Okha	29 – 30 November 2023	OTI Hotels & Spa, 22- 24 Sapele Road, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria	Obayantor, Agbomoba, Iyanomo, Owanoba, Ekosa,	Community Leaders/Elders, Women, Youths, Smallholder Farmers, CBO	Olanigan Ahmeed Makinde Abiodun Kabir Bukoye
Orhionmwon	25 – 26 January 2024	OTI Hotels & Spa, 22- 24 Sapele Road, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria	Orogho, Ona, Ologbo- nugu, Owuo, Adeyanba, Iwevbo, Evbuehia, Obagie nunuamen	Community Leaders/Elders, Women, Youths, Smallholder Farmers, CBO	F.A Afolabi Olanigan Ahmeed Makinde Abiodun Kabir Bukoye
Owan West	21 - 22 February 2024	OTI Hotels & Spa, 22- 24 Sapele Road, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria	Ora Clan, Avbiosi, Uzebba, Etiose, Ugbeturu ora, Atoruru, Ugbubezi,	Community Leaders/Elders, Women, Youths, Smallholder Farmers, CBO	F.A Afolabi Olanigan Ahmeed Rafiat Badmos Makinde Abiodun Kabir Bukoye
Other Stakeholders	23 February 2024	OTI Hotels & Spa, 22- 24 Sapele Road, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria	-	Government Agencies, Civil Society Organization, Growers, Oil Palm Associations, Media, Financial Institution, NGO (Environmental & Social)	F.A Afolabi Olanigan Ahmeed Rafiat Badmos Makinde Abiodun Kabir Bukoye
MDAs	7 March 2024	FMEnv – Environment House, Independence Way, South Central Business District, FCT. Abuja	-	Ministries, Departments and Agencies	F.A Afolabi Olanigan Ahmeed Makinde Abiodun Kabir Bukoye

5.0 OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAMME

5.1 RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY

The reconnaissance survey revealed a good level of RSPO awareness especially for communities around RSPO member companies (Okomu & Presco) and it showed the willingness of the communities to participate in the COEP. For communities where RSPO is coming to them for the first time, they are eager to see what the programme will offer in terms of building their capacity and exposing them to best practices as applicable to sustainable palm oil production while having the misconception that RSPO is an organization that may provide them with loan and other agricultural inputs.

5.2 BASELINE STUDIES

The study was carried out in Edo State, covering 37 communities spread across seven Local Government Areas (LGAs) and Edo State Oil Palm Programme (ESOPP) areas around the operational vicinities of the seven major oil palm companies in the State

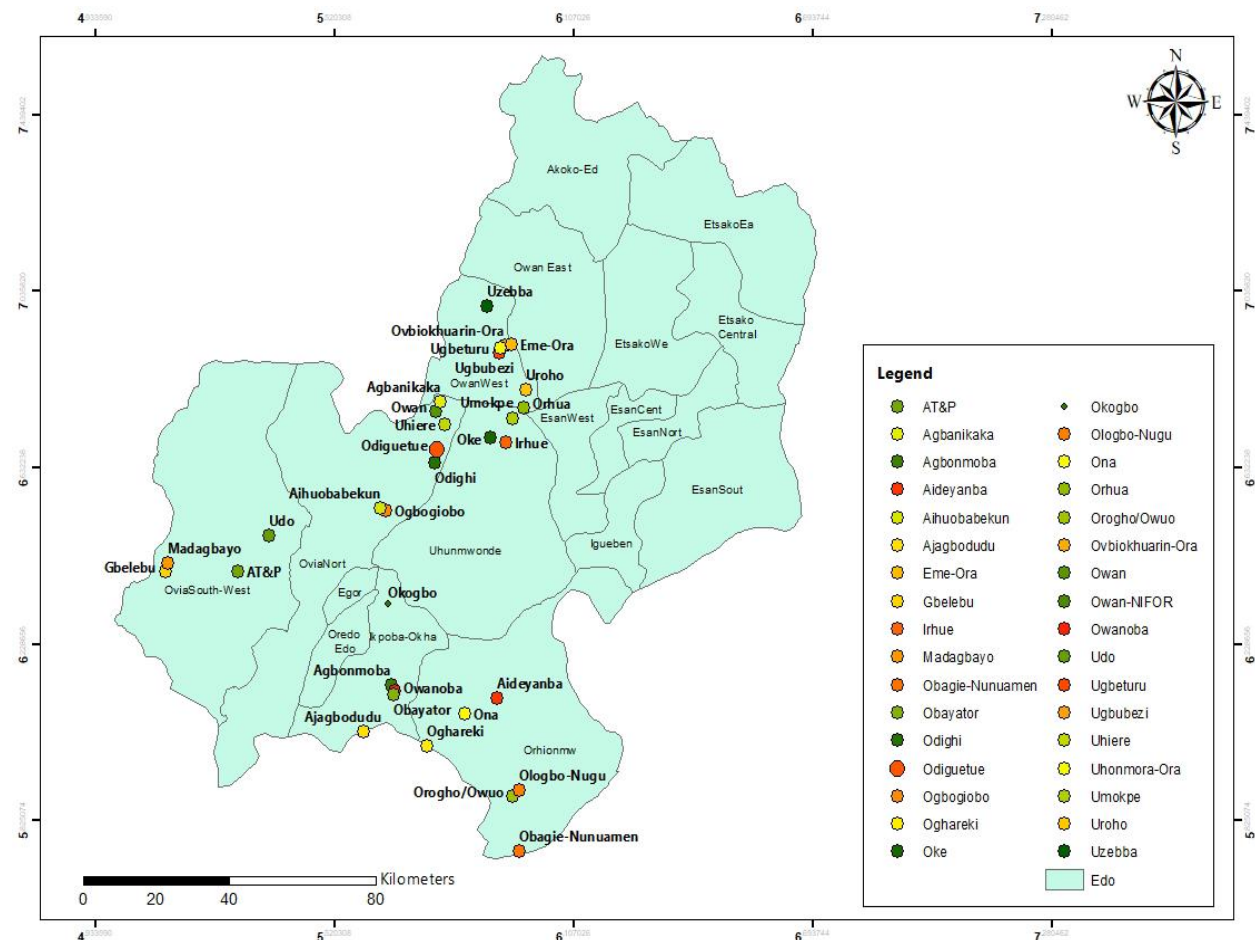


Figure 1: Communities covered during the baseline study

The results of the study showed that the smallholder oil palm production in Edo State was dominated by males (90.46%). Majority (75%) of the oil palm SHFs were aged between 31 - 60 years with the average age of 53 years. Most of them were married (95.39%), literate (92.43%) and farming was their major occupation (98.36%). Their mean household size and oil palm production experience were 8 persons and 11 years respectively. About 99% of the farmers were independent smallholders with the average farm size of 7.88 hectares.

On sources of production inputs, it was found that a larger proportion (96.71%) of the SHFs were the owners of their farmlands, with inherited and purchased farmlands accounting for 54.28% and 42.43% of the respondents respectively. Hired labour was the dominant source of labour used by the farmers (98.36%). About 81% of the smallholders purchased their oil palm seedlings, 49.34% of them sourced the seedlings from NIFOR and tenera was the most cultivated type of the oil palm (89.14%). Major agronomic practices employed and the proportions of the SHFs that utilized them were monocropping (73.03%), use of both manual and herbicides for weed control (54.93%) and mulching (41.78%). Fertilizer utilization was low (39.47%) with organic fertilizer mostly used.

The SHFs derived their livelihood mainly from oil palm (80.92%) and arable crop (51.64%) production. Evidently, the average annual income from oil palm production was ₦1,120,000.00 (USD745) while that of the other sources combined was ₦911,348.68 (USD 607). Most (78.29%) of the SHFs owned their houses with the housing quality rated to be moderate (57.4%), food security was on the average (80.26%) while their health status was adjudged to be healthy (70.72%).

The results of the study further showed that one hectare of oil palm plantation in the study area yielded an average FFB of 12.81MT per year. Numerous constraints were identified to militate against profitable and sustainable oil palm production. The most serious constraints were lack of credit facility (88.16%), no support from the government (69.74%), high cost of fertilizer (57.89%), high cost of improved seedlings (53.29%), high cost of labour (45.39%) and lack of knowledge on sustainable oil palm production (40.46%). Up to 73.68 % of the respondents whose oil palm plantations were

in production stage, processed their FFB into palm oil. Some of the reasons for processing the FFB were to add value and earn higher income (98.27%) and low price of FFB which was estimated at ₦87,623.17 per tonne, on the average. Those who did not process their FFB sold the fruits either to Okomu OPC, wholesalers (off-takers) or other oil palm processing firms. The demand for the FFB was, however, rated to be high (44.74%).

The SHFs started their oil palm production business with average initial capital investment of about ₦685,787.85. About 93.09% of them financed the business with personal savings. The 64 farmers (21.05%) who obtained credit accessed it mainly from friends, relatives (10.20%) and money lenders (4.28%). Access to extension services was low (11.18%). Membership of cooperative society was also low (18.42%) and the cooperatives societies were of different types. Only 9.87% of the respondents had received training on improved oil palm production technology, mainly harvesting technique (8.88%) and 8.22% of them adopted the technology. Road maintenance/grading was the most common support from the RSPO member companies (e.g Okomu OPC) to their various host communities (65.46%), followed by sales of improved seedlings (36.84%). Of all the infrastructural facilities, accessible roads impacted most on improvement in the oil palm production business (80.59%).

More than half (59.54%) of the respondents were aware of RSPO and all (100%) of them were willing to produce sustainable palm oil and interested to be trained by RSPO on sustainable palm oil. Many of the respondents attested that the oil palm business had impacted their lives positively over the years, some of which included helping them to train their children in school (72.70%), improvement in their social status (66.45%) and improved financial security (55.92%). A larger proportion (56.58%) of them rated the improvement in their income impacted by oil palm production as average. Similarly, the contributions made by RSPO members in their host communities over the years were rated to be moderate (65.46%) and reported to have enhanced better communication between the company and their host communities (52.3%), improved community social status (44.08%) and better access roads (31.58%).

Having known the enormous benefits of the oil palm production business, about 84% of the oil palm SHFs reported that they were training their children on the business for continuity while others (64.47%) said they were developing it for their children. It was concluded that if the oil palm SHFs are giving the necessary support which RSPO is posed to offer, sustainable palm oil production would be achieved.

5.3 CAPACITY BUILDING

The training organized by the IMO covered communities from six (6) local government areas of Edo State, Nigeria and extended to other stakeholders in the palm oil sector.

The training modules, which focused on RSPO Principles and Criteria 2018 and Grievance/Dispute Resolution mechanism, recorded participation from thirty-one (31) communities and over twenty (20) stakeholders in the private and public sectors. The programme also gave opportunities for trainees to share their social and environmental experiences with other stakeholders especially the growers and share concerns on matters that requires immediate clarification.

The table and chart below show the summary of overall representation of stakeholders in all the local government areas covered.

Table 2: Stakeholder Profile representation at the capacity building phase

Module 1: RSPO P&C 2018							
Stakeholder Profile	Ovia Southwest	Ovia Northeast	Uhunmwonde	Ikpoba Okha	Orhionmwon	Owan West	Total
Community Leaders/Elders	10	8	4	18	13	12	65
Women	9	10	5	11	16	9	50
Youth	13	11	10	10	8	7	59
Smallholder Farmers	30	31	25	25	44	22	177
CBO	10	5	0	2	1	2	20
Other Stakeholders	-	-	-	-	-	-	34
Module 2: RSPO GRIEVANCE/DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISM							

Community Leaders/Elders	9	14	17	15	14	15	84
Women	9	5	8	11	8	15	56
Youth	9	8	13	12	14	15	71
Smallholder Farmers	33	49	39	48	46	42	257
CBO	5	2	2	2	0	0	11
Other Stakeholders	-	-	-	-	-	-	47

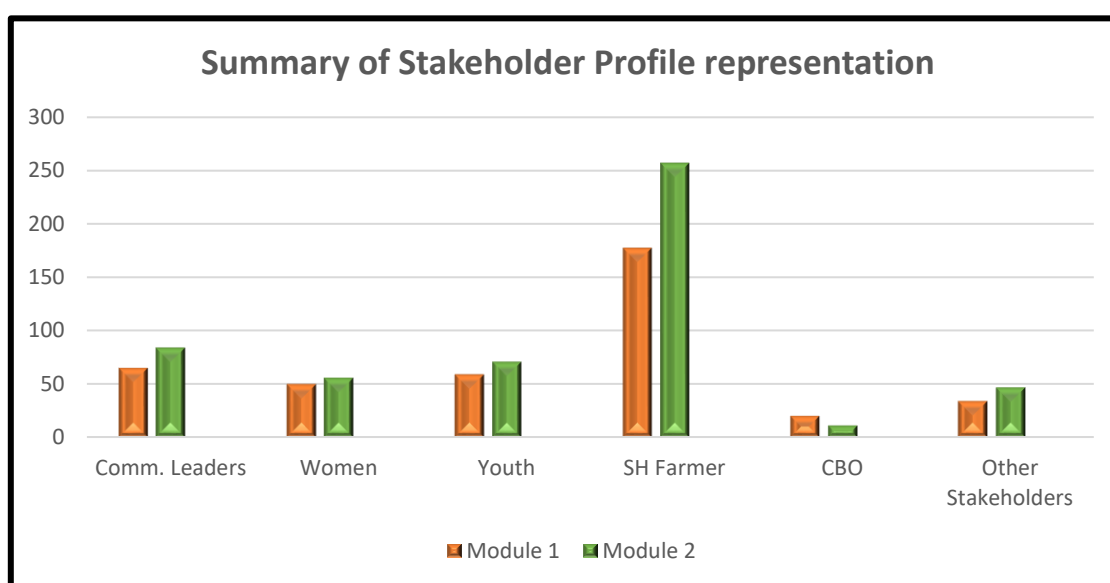


Figure 2: Summary of Stakeholder profile representation at the capacity building exercise

Table 3: Breakdown of trainee population at the Capacity Building

Description	Numbers
Module 1 trainees	407
Module 2 trainees	514
Return trainees (participants trained in both modules)	278
Single Module Trainee	641

The illustrations above show that 921 attendance was recorded over the two modules. Participants attending the two modules stood at 278, while 641 attended at least one module. Smallholder farmers recorded the highest attendance from the stakeholder profile indicating their readiness and willingness to produce sustainable palm oil, be a

member of RSPO and thrive to get certified. The second rated attendees belong to the elders or community hierarchy which indicates there is an existing organizational structure and their presence in matters that relates to the well being of the community.

5.3.1 TESTIMONIES/SUCCESS STORIES

The COEP capacity building gave opportunity for feedback and experiences of dealings with RSPO from stakeholders by way of testimonies and appreciation. Some of these testimonies are listed below;

i). *“I have learnt what high carbon stock means as well as the principles and criteria of RSPO”.*

Mr. Isaac Aighonzie (Oke Community)

ii). “I have a better understanding of children helping on the farm as against being used as child labor”.

Mrs. Patience Omoregbe (Ologbonugun Community)

iii). “I am glad to have attended the training because it has opened my eye to different things, I didn’t know about banga farming before”.

Mrs. Vero Aguebor – (Owuo Community)

iv). “One benefit we enjoy is that there are some companies that will not trade with us except we have the RSPO Certificate, i.e, it increases our customer base”.

Makinde Victoria (Presco Plc)

v). “One of the benefits of being RSPO certified is that some investors and banks want to see your RSPO certificate to make sure you are certified before they can do business with you”.

Emmanuel Efe John (Okomu OPC Plc)

vi). “We still wan appeal to you, make e no end for this module 2 on ‘grievance/dispute resolution mechanism’ because this training is priceless to us and we enjoy am well well and I want to thank you on behalf of my community and that we are grateful”.

Stanley Ajala – (Agbanikaka)

vii). “I want to thank you for the lecture. With this, if we follow the steps of all RSPO processes, we will not only be a better banga farmer but even a better society at large”.

Mr. John Ukpeigbe – Odiguetue Community

viii). “This program is a laudable one and it enlightens the community and villagers where these companies are operating on what their rights are and how to go about it. Will there be further trainings like this in the future?”

Mr. Isuku Augustine – Owan Community

ix). *“The training programme makes us understand the importance of our forest as it relates to the things we do to it and its implication on ourselves and the future unborn, especially cutting down of trees, we really appreciate the facilitators”.*

Gift Ehigbe – Oke Community

x). *“The way and manner the training was delivered with examples we can relate with makes us understand this process. No question to ask, I just want to thank you and RSPO”.*

Owodu Sanni – Ugbeturu community

xi). ***What is the success rate of the RSPO DSF? Teliat Sule / The Nigerian Observer (Media)***

“For my company, we have feedback that complaints are successfully resolved –

(Solange Wankwi- Wilmar International, Biase Plantation Ltd)”

xii). *‘Can we have a list of the community members trained by FDS and RSPO because we deal with the communities, in cases like this, we can refer the communities back to the training conducted by FDS to further assist the companies in resolving issues faster?’*

Okomu OPC -CLO (This shows companies are ready to leverage on the training given to communities as reference or tool to resolving disputes).

6.0 PROGRAMME IMPACT EVALUATION

Impacts from the baseline studies revealed that many of the respondents attested that the oil palm business had, over the years, impacted their lives positively, some of which included helping them to train their children in school (72.70%). improvement in their social status (66.45%) and improved financial security (55.92%). Only 13.49% of the respondents claimed they did not experience any changes while about 5% reported that their plantations had not started fruiting. Majority (78.29%) of the farmers were satisfied with the impact of the oil palm production with a larger proportion (56.58%) of them rating the improvement in their income due to the oil palm production as average. Average increase in income is not a maximum level of satisfaction. Thus, training for sustainable production is necessary to attain high increase in income.

In addition, contributions made by RSPO members in the study area on social mobility had further enhanced better communication between the company and their host communities (52.3%), improved community social status (44.08%) and better access

roads (31.58%), among others. Similarly, a larger proportion (53.95%) of the farmers were satisfied with the contributions made by RSPO members and rated it to be moderate (65.46%). However, the companies need to make more contributions to lift the rating level above moderate.

The capacity building phase and its impact on trainees were assessed through interactions with the trainees and through a well structured evaluation sheet. At the end of each training, the evaluation sheets were handed to participants to know how impactful the training was on the participants and practicability.

While module 1 (P&C 2018) served as a bedrock for module 2, The module 2 on RSPO Grievance/Dispute Resolution Mechanism enjoyed a fair share of keen attention as it was evident that some communities had a reason or more to be dissatisfied with the operation of a grower in their vicinity. Some of the reasons largely relating to unfulfillment of commitments made by a grower even though the contributions made by them had paved way for a better relationship.

Other feedback after assessment, revealed a positive impact on the capacity of the stakeholders as it exposes aspects of the RSPO vision that were not known to them and the willingness to explore the facilities provided by RSPO for sustainable palm oil production.

Overall, the COEP is perceived to have achieved its objective and thereby adjudged very impactful.

7.0 LIMITATIONS/CHALLENGES

Some of the limitations encountered during the COEP include:

1. The respondents during the baseline study depended solely on memory recall and estimates to complete the questionnaire for the study due to lack of formal records keeping. Thus, the farmers need to be educated on the need to keep records.
2. Inability to access or have adequate coverage of some communities due to insecurity problem. Thus, the proposed sample size for baseline study was not 100% covered during the fieldwork.
3. Some of the oil palm smallholders complained that many researchers kept coming to stress them with interview/data collection with no favourable outcome or assistance to them. The question they kept asking was, “what’s the benefit of RSPO to them, especially, finance to enable them develop their farms?” In view of this, some of the farmers refused to attend to us, while others attended to us reluctantly.
4. Communication bridges due to no and/or inadequate telecommunication signal in some of the communities.
5. Fuel Subsidy removal of the federal government resulting in high cost of transporting community representatives to training venues.
6. Some names were wrongly spelt or sent during pre-registration of participants by the community representatives for the purpose of certificate production and name tagging. Such cases were identified, isolated, and immediately corrected at the venue for reproduction.
7. Communities misconception of the programme being one to resolve issues between the communities and growers on the spot.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on study findings and capacity building, the IMO strongly recommend the following.

- A two-way monitoring and evaluation programme focusing on stakeholders trained to obtain feedback and assess the impact of the programme at the community, company and other stakeholder levels. It is desirable to find out if there are changes in corporate-social responsibility, improvement in sustainable practices etc.
- Details of previous disputes and how they were resolved should form part of the feedback during monitoring and evaluation.
- COEP be extended to other oil palm producing states in Nigeria.
- RSPO to consider having a physical office in Nigeria.
- An awareness programme and capacity building focused on smallholders such as the RISS, RSSF.

The maiden programme of the Community Outreach and Engagement Programme in Edo State, Nigeria was adjudged to be a success. Participants based on assessments, were enlightened and believed sustainable production of oil palm and other crops would have a positive impact on their lives and livelihoods, better position the country economically and further make the world a better place to live in.

They look forward to more engaging RSPO programmes in the future.

9.0 MEDIA COVERAGE LINKS

- <https://von.gov.ng/edo-state-rspo-begins-capacity-building-for-farmers/>
- <https://thenationonlineng.net/body-begins-capacity-building-for-farmers/>
- <https://von.gov.ng/edo-state-rspo-begins-capacity-building-for-farmers/>
- <https://nigerianobservernews.com/2023/03/over-80-oil-palm-farmers-others-benefit-from-rspo-capacity-building-in-edo/>
- <https://businessday.ng/agriculture/article/rspo-trains-500-edo-farmers-others-on-sustainable-palm-oil-production/>
- https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/capacity-building-nigeria-people-planet-marie-rosine-nsegbe?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android&utm_campaign=share_via
- <https://dailytrust.com/500-farmers-acquire-skills-on-palm-oil-production-in-edo/>
- https://nigerianobservernews.com/2024/02/fds-trains-oil-palm-stakeholders-on-rspos-dispute-resolution-mechanism/#google_vignette
- <https://businessday.ng/agriculture/article/group-trains-654-oil-palm-producers-on-rspos-principles-in-south-south/>

10.0 FINANCIALS/BUDGET

RECONNAISSANCE/BASELINE STUDIES				
PROFESSIONAL FEES (USD\$)				
Position	Budget	Actual Total (\$)	Variance Total (\$)	Notes
CONSULTANT				
Consultant Fees	17,107	17,107	0	For man days (See Technical Report)
EXPENSES BUDGET (USD\$)				
Description	Budget	Actual Total (\$)	Variance Total (\$)	Notes
Reconnaissance Survey & Baseline Studies				
Accommodations and Subsistence (Per Diem)	9,331	9,290	41	Hotel accommodation (Reconnaissance Survey and Baseline studies)
Flights	4,374	4,300	74	An average of one return flight each month for five consultants
Ground travel	5,832	5,700	132	Project utility vehicle (2 teams for 15days)
Field Materials (Lump Sum)	130	300	-170	
Field Assistants (Enumerators)	5,832	5,832	0	3 Field assistants each assigned to 2 consultant teams for baseline studies
Provision for Security	4,860	4,000	860	For 2 teams
Subtotal (B)	30,359	29,422	937	
TOTAL (A+B)	47,466	46,529		

CAPACITY BUILDING - WORKSHOPS, TRAININGS AND ENGAGEMENTS				
PROFESSIONAL FEES (USD\$)				
Position	Budget (\$)	Actual Total (\$)	Variance Total (\$)	Notes
CONSULTANT				
CONSULTANTS/FACILITATORS	27,216	27,216	0	Considering 14 LGAs, Other Stakeholders and Extended Training in Abuja
EXPENSES BUDGET (USD\$)				
Ground travel	5,249	5,000	249	Project utility vehicle
Accommodation and Substistence (Per Diem)	14,386	14,386	0	Hotel Accomodation
Flights	6,998	5,600	1,398	
Training venue	13,997	13,997	0	
Training materials (Lump sum)	1,296	7,000	-5,704	
Entertainment	139,968	139,968	0	Considering 14 LGAs, Other Stakeholders and Extended Training in Abuja
Transportation allowance	17,496	17,496	0	Considering 14 LGAs, Other Stakeholders and Extended Training in Abuja
Courier (Lump sum)	162	250	-88	
Provision for security	8,748	6,000	2,748	
Reports production	130	0	130	
Subtotal (B)	208,430	209,697	-1,267	
TOTAL (A+B)	235,646	236,913		

REPORT WRITING				
PROFESSIONAL FEES (USD\$)				
Position	Budget (\$)	Actual Total (\$)	Variance Total (\$)	Notes
CONSULTANT				
CONSULTANTS/FACILITATORS	17,237	17,237	0	Considering Baseline Studies, Capacity Building for 14 LGAs, Other Stakeholders and Extended Training in Abuja