

# SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL

CONSERVATION  
INTERNATIONAL





Palm oil is one of the most widely used vegetable oils in the world. It is used as a cooking oil and as a source of energy. It can also be found as an ingredient in half the products on supermarket shelves—from snacks and chips, to cookies and breads, cosmetics and lotions, soaps and detergents, even pet food. You have probably used palm oil today without even realizing it.

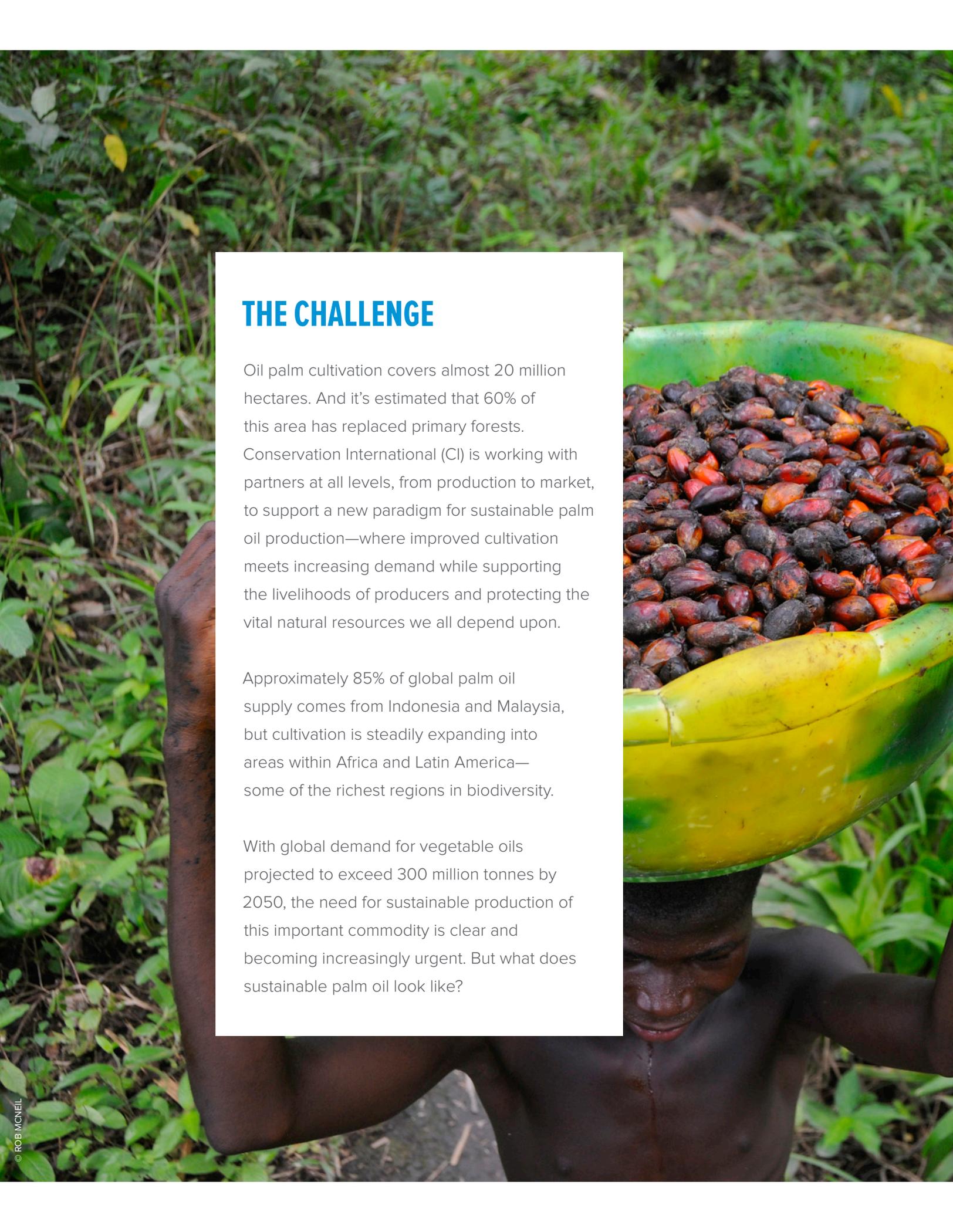
## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PALM OIL.

As you can tell from its wide range of uses, palm oil is incredibly versatile. But it is also an extremely efficient crop, producing more oil per hectare than any other major oil. In fact, switching from palm oil to soy, sunflower or canola oil would require up to nine times as much land to produce the same amount of oil.

These are just a few of the reasons global demand for palm oil has nearly tripled since 2000. While this exceptional growth has provided work for millions of growers, including more than three million smallholders who depend on the crop for their livelihoods, it has also posed unprecedented threats to forests, wildlife and communities in the areas where it is grown and harvested.

We've seen tropical forests converted to oil palm plantations. And peatlands—wetlands with carbon-rich soils—drained and burned for cultivation. This results in significant greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change, as well as the destruction of habitats for endangered species like the orangutan. At the same time, conflict between companies and communities over land rights and worker health and safety issues in oil palm production continues. But this does not have to be the case.





## THE CHALLENGE

Oil palm cultivation covers almost 20 million hectares. And it's estimated that 60% of this area has replaced primary forests. Conservation International (CI) is working with partners at all levels, from production to market, to support a new paradigm for sustainable palm oil production—where improved cultivation meets increasing demand while supporting the livelihoods of producers and protecting the vital natural resources we all depend upon.

Approximately 85% of global palm oil supply comes from Indonesia and Malaysia, but cultivation is steadily expanding into areas within Africa and Latin America—some of the richest regions in biodiversity.

With global demand for vegetable oils projected to exceed 300 million tonnes by 2050, the need for sustainable production of this important commodity is clear and becoming increasingly urgent. But what does sustainable palm oil look like?



# Sustainable Palm Oil

The sustainability of palm oil comes down to three questions:

Where is it grown?

How is it grown?

Who is benefiting from it?



## WHERE, HOW, WHO?

**Where is sustainable palm oil grown?** Sustainable palm oil does not replace important forests, peatlands or other sensitive ecosystems. This requires improved land use planning, which aims to break the link between oil palm expansion and deforestation by: (1) increasing productivity on existing palm oil plantations, (2) concentrating expansion on degraded lands with lower carbon and biodiversity value, and (3) innovating new production models that generate sustainable livelihoods and create value for forest conservation.

**How is sustainable palm oil grown?** Companies and producers employ the best available agricultural practices to improve yields on existing plantations and pursue continuous improvement. Best practices minimize negative impacts to nature while maximizing positive impacts on production, profitability, people and ecosystems. And they encourage market access for smallholders, creating community resilience in producing areas.

**Who benefits from it?** Sustainable palm oil production prioritizes communities, so that palm oil production provides lasting livelihood and development benefits while maintaining or enhancing the vital ecosystem services communities rely on. This is based on a fundamental respect for human rights, including the principles for Free, Prior and Informed Consent—which recognize the rights of indigenous peoples to give or withhold their consent to proposed projects that will impact their lands, communities, resources or livelihoods. It includes collaborative, equitable participation in decision making and ensures that those directly and indirectly impacted by oil palm production are able to thrive.

To learn more about sustainable palm oil  
go to:

[www.conservation.org/palmoil](http://www.conservation.org/palmoil)

# Where We Work

CI works to promote sustainable palm oil at multiple levels. We engage with companies and policymakers in key consumer markets, such as the U.S. and EU. And we work on the ground in strategic production regions throughout South America, Africa and Southeast Asia. We focus our efforts on places with extraordinary concentrations of natural wealth but where mounting pressure from resource demands, ecosystem degradation and climate change threaten to compromise nature's ability to provide for humanity.





Ecuador

United States

Liberia

Brazil

Europe

CI Palm Oil Work

To learn more about where CI works go to:  
[www.conservation.org/where](http://www.conservation.org/where)



Indonesia

# CI's Approach

We focus on *growing supply, promoting demand, and strengthening policies* for sustainable palm oil. This work is supported through ongoing and active engagement in key industry and sustainability dialogues.



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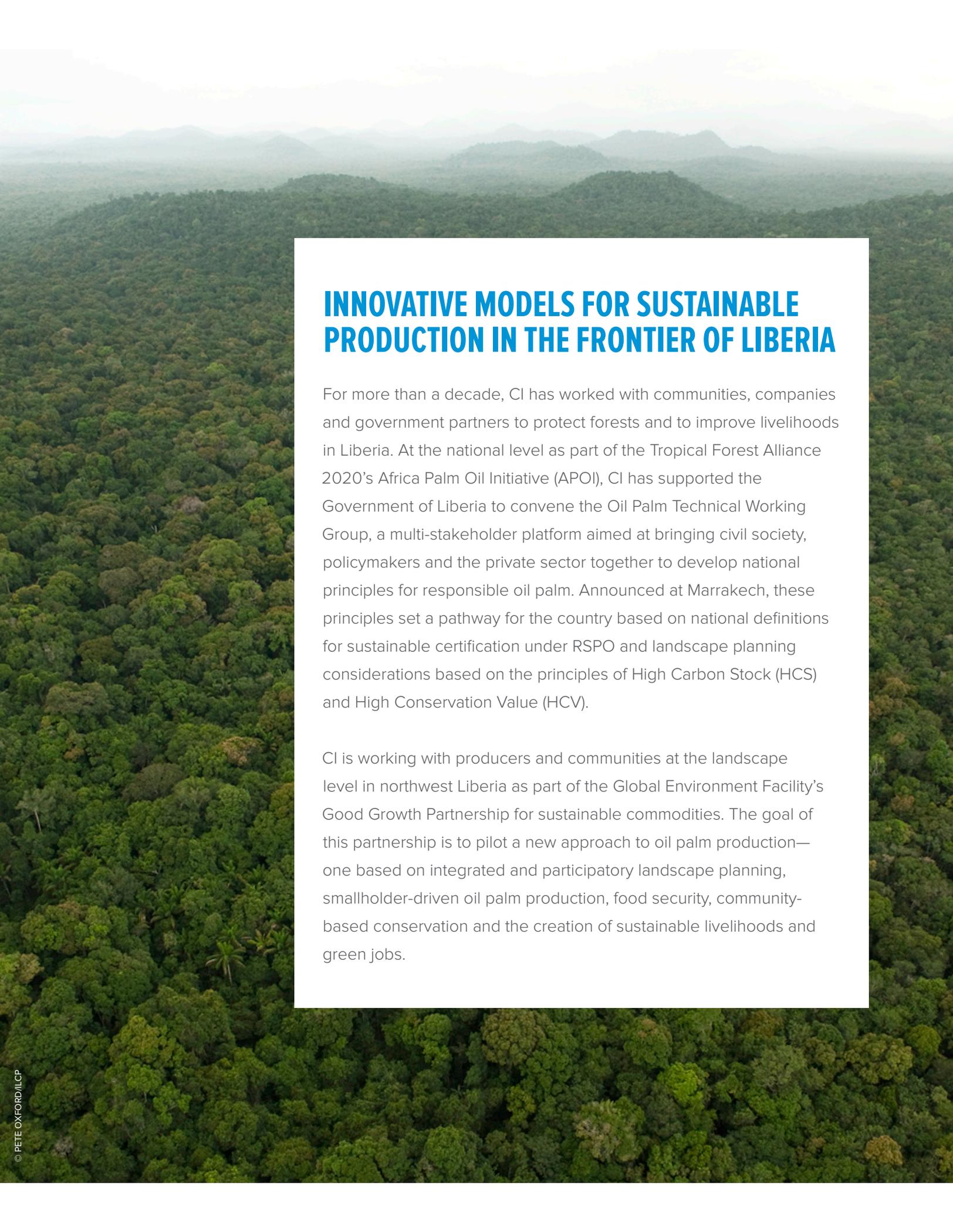
## We work with producers to grow the supply of sustainable palm oil.

CI works in established cultivation areas in Indonesia and Brazil, as well as expanding frontier areas in places like Liberia, to develop and test models of sustainable cultivation most relevant to those producing regions. This reflects our integrated approach to sustainable production—one that combines conservation, production improvements and constructive engagement with governments and communities aimed at building local capacity for sustainable oil palm cultivation. Through this work, CI aims to help communities adopt more sustainable production practices and increase the amount of palm oil they produce, while protecting forests and improving livelihoods.

## AGROPALMA & CONSERVATION

CI has partnered with Agropalma, the largest producer of palm oil in Brazil, for more than 10 years to demonstrate the impacts of more sustainable production practices on local biodiversity. CI and Agropalma developed monitoring protocols to assess the impact of palm oil plantations on native wildlife—such as jaguars, the giant armadillo and the golden parakeet—and also developed a 55,000 hectare forest preserve. For every hectare of Agropalma oil palm farm, 1.6 hectares of rainforest is protected.

Check out our video to see what Agropalma and CI are up to:  
[www.bit.ly/2LOFjEx](http://www.bit.ly/2LOFjEx)



## **INNOVATIVE MODELS FOR SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION IN THE FRONTIER OF LIBERIA**

For more than a decade, CI has worked with communities, companies and government partners to protect forests and to improve livelihoods in Liberia. At the national level as part of the Tropical Forest Alliance 2020's Africa Palm Oil Initiative (APOI), CI has supported the Government of Liberia to convene the Oil Palm Technical Working Group, a multi-stakeholder platform aimed at bringing civil society, policymakers and the private sector together to develop national principles for responsible oil palm. Announced at Marrakech, these principles set a pathway for the country based on national definitions for sustainable certification under RSPO and landscape planning considerations based on the principles of High Carbon Stock (HCS) and High Conservation Value (HCV).

CI is working with producers and communities at the landscape level in northwest Liberia as part of the Global Environment Facility's Good Growth Partnership for sustainable commodities. The goal of this partnership is to pilot a new approach to oil palm production—one based on integrated and participatory landscape planning, smallholder-driven oil palm production, food security, community-based conservation and the creation of sustainable livelihoods and green jobs.



## We partner with companies to promote demand for sustainable palm oil.

CI recognizes the critical role that end users play in driving improved practices in palm oil supply chains. Demand signals from companies that process palm oil or that use palm oil in their products can create powerful incentives for producers to convert to more sustainable practices, as well as strengthen market-based sustainability initiatives such as the RSPO. CI works with companies to create these signals by encouraging public commitments to sourcing 100% certified sustainable palm oil, incorporating targets for physical sourcing and ensuring alignment with commitments to No Deforestation, Peat or Exploitation (NDPE). We also encourage downstream companies to collaborate across the palm oil supply chain, ensuring their voice is part of the sustainability dialogue and helping bring innovation and investment to key sourcing regions. By working with producers, manufacturers and retailers to understand market and supply chain barriers, we can identify and support a pathway that companies can adopt to achieve sustainable sourcing commitments.

## SAVE FORESTS, LIVE BETTER

Since 2004, CI has strategically advised Walmart on incorporating environmental sustainability into its business. By helping green the supply chain of the world's largest retailer—including strengthening their sustainable palm oil sourcing commitments and providing tools and resources for implementation—this work sets a precedent that's good for both business and the future of life on Earth.

To learn more about CI's work with Walmart go to:

[www.conservation.org/Walmart](http://www.conservation.org/Walmart)



## We engage with governments to strengthen policies that support sustainable palm oil production.

Through years of building relationships on the ground, CI has become a trusted partner to local and national governments, playing a leading role in the development of national and international policy incentives for sustainable palm oil. We are working with governments to strengthen policies for where and how palm oil is produced. We work with local and national governments to support spatial planning for palm production, provide agricultural training programs for smallholder producers and inform the development of policy standards through our scientific expertise. CI also provides advice and guidance to partners on how emerging policies and standards will affect palm oil markets. In doing so, CI is able to bridge the needs of different stakeholder groups, helping to ensure policies and standards are both feasible and effective in raising the sustainability bar for the palm oil industry.

## SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES PARTNERSHIP (SLP)

In Indonesia, CI's Sustainable Landscapes Partnership (SLP), promotes conservation and sustainable production of palm oil and other key commodities produced in the region. In doing so, CI works with provincial and district governments in North Sumatra to strengthen and implement policies which affect where and how oil palm is grown. Key accomplishments of the initiative have included developing strategic environmental assessments to inform North Sumatra's 2017 green spatial plan for implementing low emission development that supports management of forests and peatland; supporting community livelihoods by training 5,500 local farmers, who have had a 30% increase in yields and improved access to markets; creating Sustainable Investment Action Plans (SIAP) for three districts as well as the province to support investment in sustainable commodities; and working with partners to implement sustainable forest management plans.

To learn more about CI's Sustainable Landscapes Partnership go to:  
[www.conservation.org/SLP](http://www.conservation.org/SLP)



## We actively engage in industry initiatives and sustainability dialogues.

CI is an active member of both the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and the High Carbon Stock Approach (HCSA) Steering Group, recognizing the importance of these forums for engaging the entire range of palm oil stakeholders in a dialogue for continuous improvement and advancing sustainability throughout the entire sector. We also participate in several leading initiatives, such as the Accountability Framework. These platforms offer an important engagement opportunity, reaching across all industry stakeholder groups and providing a forum for innovation that we both contribute to and learn from as CI looks to incorporate sustainable palm oil into our broader vision and strategy for long-term forest and ecosystem protection and sustainable community livelihoods.

### ENGAGING IN THE RSPO

CI is a member of the North American Sustainable Palm Oil Network (NASPON), an RSPO working group. This platform facilitates collaboration and knowledge sharing to help transition the North American market to 100% certified sustainable palm oil.

### ENGAGING IN THE HCSA

CI is a member of the High Forest Cover and Protection Working Groups of the HCSA, which seek to find solutions for some of the most pressing conservation challenges for palm oil, including how do you balance the urgent need for development and conservation in the palm oil frontier areas in Africa, Latin America and parts of Southeast Asia, and how do you ensure that key forest and conservation areas aren't just identified and set aside, but actively managed and protected.

# **NATURE IS SPEAKING. CI IS LISTENING.**

**Join the effort! To meet growing demand for palm oil while avoiding the potential negative impacts on communities and the environment, we must engage in constructive and dedicated partnerships throughout the industry.**

**CI is committed to expanding our efforts with major buyers, traders, producers, producer associations and others to increase the adoption and production of sustainable palm oil as the norm in global trading markets. And we are actively seeking new partners and support for this work.**

**We need the active and vocal support of informed individuals to continue to bring this important issue to light. We encourage individuals to take action. Learn more about palm oil—the issues associated with its production, as well as the efforts of communities, NGOs, companies and governments to make the industry more sustainable.**

**Thank the companies that have taken steps toward a more sustainable future and hold them accountable to their commitments. Ask companies that have not yet stepped up to do so and let them know this issue is important to consumers. And look for the RSPO logo at the grocery store to support the market for sustainable palm oil.**

**Please contact us for more information on how you can join our efforts to transform the palm oil market. With your support, we can continue to protect the nature that people need to survive and thrive.**



Contact: John Buchanan,  
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To learn more about our work in sustainable  
palm oil go to: [www.conservation.org/palmoil](http://www.conservation.org/palmoil)