SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL
Palm oil is one of the most widely used vegetable oils in the world. It is used for cooking, as a source of energy and is found 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.

Not only is palm oil versatile enough to be used as an ingredient in all those products, it is relatively inexpensive and extremely efficient to produce, compared to other oils. In fact, oil palm produces 4-10 times more oil than alternatives such as rapeseed, sunflower or soy.

For these 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.

In some of these regions, tropical forests are being converted to oil palm plantations. And peatlands—wetlands with carbon-rich soils—are being drained 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, illegal actions, and links to forced labor, child labor, and worker health and safety issues in oil palm production, continue.

*But this does not have to be the case.*
THE CHALLENGE

Oil palm cultivation covers almost 20 million hectares. More than 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 demand for palm oil projected to grow, the need for sustainable production of this important commodity is already clear and becoming increasingly urgent.

But what does sustainable palm oil look like?
What is sustainable palm oil?

Sustainable palm oil comes down to three questions:

Where is palm oil grown?

How is palm oil grown?

Who is growing and benefiting from it?
WHO, WHERE & HOW?

Where is sustainable palm oil grown? Sustainable palm oil decouples growth of the palm oil industry from expansion into forested, biodiverse areas by: (1) increasing productivity on existing palm oil plantations, (2) concentrating expansion onto degraded lands with low biodiversity value, and (3) innovating new models for production which incorporate forest protection, conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

How is sustainable palm oil grown? Companies and producers employ the best available agricultural practices to improve yields on existing plantations and implement management plans for continuous improvement in sustainability. Best practices minimize negative impacts to nature while maximizing positive impacts on production, profitability, people and ecosystems. 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 critical ecosystems. This is achieved by respecting human rights and establishing principles for Free, Prior and Informed Consent—which recognizes 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 with benefits to all stakeholders, such as improved access to health care, education, and economic opportunities.

To learn more about sustainable palm oil and see our sourcing guide go to: www.conservation.org/palmoil
WHERE WE WORK

CI works in sustainable palm oil in strategic 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. In addition, we invest and engage in the European Union and the United States because of their profound influence on public policy, production and consumption.
To learn more about where CI works go to: www.conservation.org/where
Indonesia
CI’s Approach

We focus on growing supply, promoting demand, and strengthening policies for sustainable palm oil.
We work with local producers to grow the supply.

We work with producers to **grow the supply** of sustainably produced palm oil. CI works in both leading cultivation areas and frontier areas, such as Liberia, where oil palm is being newly grown, to develop and test models of sustainable cultivation most relevant to these 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 increase the amount of palm oil they are able to produce, while protecting forests and improving livelihoods.

**AGROPALMA & CONSERVATION**

CI has partnered with Agropalma, the largest producer of palm oil in Brazil, for over 10 years to demonstrate the impacts of more sustainable production practices. CI and Agropalma developed monitoring protocols to assess the impact of palm oil plantations on native wildlife, as well as the benefits forests provide to the plantations.

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, CI has led 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 a production company and communities in Grand Cape Mount and Bomi in Northwest Liberia as part of the Global Environment Facility’s Good Growth Partnership (GGP) 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 green jobs linked to management.
We partner with companies to promote demand.

We are working to **promote demand** for sustainably produced palm oil from processors and traders, as well as manufacturers and retailers. 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 and sell palm oil in their products can create powerful incentives to producers to convert to more sustainable practices, as well 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. 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—through 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.

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. Most recently, CI has aided in the development of the Indonesia Palm Oil Platform’s (FoKSBI) National Action Plan for sustainable palm oil as well as facilitated initial meetings among stakeholders, including government, to adjust the FoKSBI to the Joint Secretariat of Sustainable Palm Oil in North Sumatra.
We engage in industry initiatives & sustainability dialogues.

CI actively engages in industry and sustainability dialogues, such as the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and High Carbon Stock (HCS) Approach, recognizing the importance of these forums for engaging the entire range of palm oil stakeholders in a process of continuous improvement and advancing sustainability throughout the entire sector. These platforms serve as a tool that CI can support and employ in our broader vision and strategy for long-term forest protection and supporting 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.
WORKING WITH SMALLHOLDERS IN ECUADOR TO ADOPT SUSTAINABLE STANDARDS

In 2017 the Government of Ecuador adopted the RSPO’s principles and criteria for sustainable production at a national level as a key mechanism in decreasing deforestation rates. Ecuador’s Socio Bosque Program, a voluntary incentives program to reduce deforestation and improve livelihoods, was approved as a compensation mechanism for RSPO certification.

CI has been bringing its expertise in conservation agreements—a model which offers direct incentives for conservation actions by communities—and linking it to the palm oil sector to support this national program and contribute to the implementation of Ecuador’s National REDD+ Action Plan. As of August 2017, the Socio Bosque Program reached 2,723 signed agreements, conserving 1,476,036.91 hectares.

To learn more about Conservation Agreements go to: www.conservation.org/CSP
Join the effort! In order to meet the growing demands 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 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 rely on to survive and thrive.

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To learn more about our work in sustainable palm oil go to: www.conservation.org/palmoil