

## Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition for India (I-SPOC) Bulletin July to September, 2024

### NEWS



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#### Over 1,000 Indonesian Smallholder Farmers Join Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) Pilot: Smallholder inclusion in Indonesia

In a significant move towards sustainable palm oil, RSPO and the Indonesian government have registered 1,340 smallholder farmers in three pilot districts of Jambi Province: Tanjung Jabung Barat, Sarolangun, and Tebo. This initiative, part of a national effort to register 2.5 million smallholders, aims to strengthen smallholder inclusion and meet ISPO and RSPO standards. The project seeks to expand smallholder involvement and improve their capacity and welfare, highlighting the importance of collaboration at all levels to achieve shared sustainability goals. In Cape Town, South Africa, from April 16-18, 2024, the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) convened its inaugural Africa Downstream Supply Chain Forum. This event aimed to enhance sustainability in Africa's palm oil supply chain, engaging stakeholders like refineries, manufacturers, retailers, and distributors. Despite slower growth, Africa saw 11.7% of its 3.4 million metric tonnes of palm oil produced in 2022 certified by RSPO, with more under certification. RSPO emphasized the role of downstream actors in driving demand and ethical standards. South Africa, leading in CSPO consumption, hosts the highest number of RSPO-certified facilities, pivotal for promoting sustainability across the continent.

#### Boosting India's Palm Oil Mission: Malaysia Shares Expertise and Seeds

Malaysia has extended its expertise and advanced R&D on seeds to support India's palm oil mission. In a meeting with India's Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Malaysia's Minister for Plantation and Commodities, highlighted the offer of seeds with shorter gestation periods and shared Malaysia's decades of experience in sustainable plantation techniques. Emphasizing traceability, sustainability, and compliance with green standards, Malaysia's initiative aims to bolster India's self-sufficiency in palm oil while maintaining forest cover and adhering to global labor standards.



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#### Oil Palm Growers in East Siang District Start Earning by Selling Fresh Fruit Bunches

Oil palm growers in East Siang district have started earning by selling fresh fruit bunches (FFB) to Patanjali Oil Factory in Andhra Pradesh. Initiated in April 2016, the oil palm cultivation project in the district has expanded rapidly, with farmers now cultivating 11,000 hectares of palm plantations. The project, supported by Patanjali Food Ltd. and the agriculture department, aims to reach 40,000 hectares, promoting economic gain for local horticulturists. An oil palm factory is also being set up at Niglok's Industrial Growth Centre to further enhance edible oil production.



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### RSPO and IVPA Partner to Promote Sustainable Palm Oil Practices in India

RSPO and IVPA signed an MoU to advance sustainable palm oil cultivation and imports in India. The agreement, established during IVPA Global RoundTable @3.0, focuses on raising awareness, promoting sustainable practices, and advocating for supportive policies. Highlighting India's significant role in the global palm oil market, the collaboration aims to transform the industry through sustainable methods, supporting the National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm (NMEO-OP). This partnership marks a crucial step towards self-sufficiency and sustainability in India's palm oil sector.



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### Telangana Targets 1 Lakh Acres for Oil Palm Cultivation in 2024-25

Telangana has set a target to expand oil palm cultivation to one lakh acres during the financial year 2024-25. Presenting the budget in the State Assembly, Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister announced that Telangana produces 53.06 LMT of palm oil, cultivated in 12.12 lakh acres. The state will provide assistance to oil palm farmers under the "Oil Palm Areas Expansion Under National Mission on Edible Oils-Oil Palm (NMEO-OP)." Registrations have been made for 77,857 acres, and permissions have been granted for 23,131 acres, with further steps taken to issue permissions for plantation and drip irrigation.

### Palm Oil Plant in Niglok: Nearing Completion

The palm oil processing plant by Patanjali Foods Ltd at the Industrial Growth Centre in Niglok in East Siang, Arunachal Pradesh, is set to be completed in the next two months. This new facility will enable local growers to process their oil palm fruits locally, providing significant benefits. The project, initiated in August 2022, marks a major step forward for the region's oil palm industry, which began in 2016 through a collaboration with the state government.



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## Boosting Tripura's Agro-Economy: New Oil Palm Processing Mill Unveiled



Tripura's agro-economy is set for a significant boost with the launch of a new Oil Palm Processing Mill in Dhalai district, inaugurated by the Minister for Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare. This initiative, part of the National Mission on Edible Oil – Oil Palm (NMEO-OP), includes a Research & Development center and a one-stop solution center named Samadhan. Godrej Agrovet Limited will enhance its nursery capacity and develop high-yield, sustainable oil palm seeds. The project aims to expand cultivation to 10,000 hectares by 2027, supporting local farmers and generating employment while focusing on sustainable practices.

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## Oil Palm Plantation Drive Kicks Off in Odisha's Balangir District

An oil palm plantation drive has been launched in Bhainsa village, Balangir district, Odisha, under the National Mission on Edible Oils - Oil Palm (NMEO-OP). As cultivation gains momentum in the region, plans for processing units are expected to follow, marking a significant step towards boosting local agriculture and reducing India's reliance on palm oil imports.



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## Over 17 Lakh Saplings Planted in Mega Oil Palm Drive, Benefiting 10,000 Farmers

India's National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm (NMEO-OP) has made remarkable strides with over 17 lakh saplings planted, covering 12,000+ hectares across 15 states. This effort, part of the 2024 Mega Oil Palm Plantation Drive, is aimed at expanding oil palm cultivation and boosting Crude Palm Oil (CPO) production. The initiative has engaged 10,000 farmers and witnessed enthusiastic participation from both government bodies and industry leaders like Patanjali Foods, Godrej Agrovet, and 3F Oil Palm Ltd.



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## Assam's Push for Palm Oil Cultivation to Reduce Edible Oil Imports

Assam is strengthening its efforts to promote palm oil cultivation as a key strategy to reduce India's reliance on imported edible oils. The state's Agriculture Minister emphasized that expanding palm oil cultivation under the National Mission for Edible Oil-Oil Palm is crucial for achieving self-sufficiency in edible oil production, despite concerns about environmental impacts raised by stakeholders.



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India has announced an ambitious program to double its edible oil production within the next seven years, reducing reliance on imports. With a budget of ₹101 billion, the initiative aims to increase production from 12.7 million metric tons to 25.45 million tons by 2030-31. The plan includes promoting high-yielding, high-oil content seed varieties and advanced technologies like genome editing. As the world's largest importer of edible oils, India's move is set to strengthen domestic agriculture while cutting down on imports.

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## EVENTS

- **I-SPOC booth at Vegoils Vision 2030: Opportunities and Challenges (IVPA):** I-SPOC participated in Indian Vegetable Oil Producers Association (IVPA) event- held on 18-19 July 2024 at JW Marriott Hotel New Delhi, Aerocity, New Delhi and hosted a booth (funded by WWF-India) there. The event 'Vegoils Vision 2030: Opportunities and Challenges,' brought together a diverse group of experts, researchers, technologists, government officials, and industry stakeholders. Over two days, the team also had an opportunity to delve into the topics of market dynamics, supply and demand forecasts, and the crucial topics of self-sufficiency and sustainability in the vegetable oil sector. WWF-India participated in the session on Sustainability in the Vegetable Oil Sector at the IVPA event, alongside representatives from Gabungan Pengusaha Kelapa Sawit Indonesia (GAPKI), Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), IDH, smallholders from Andhra Pradesh, and National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP). During the session, WWF-India presented insights on the opportunities and challenges associated with the sustainable supply chain of vegetable oils in India.



- **I-SPOC 11th Members Meeting:** The 11th Members Meeting of the Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition for India (I-SPOC) took place on July 23, 2024, with 24 participants from 17 member organizations joining both virtually and in person. A key highlight of the meeting was the official launch of the Policy Input Note (PIN): [Respecting and Promoting Workers' Rights in Palm Oil Production Landscapes in India](#). The meeting also featured engaging insights from Members and Observers sessions, with participants offering valuable suggestions for I-SPOC's future work. Neha Kumar, Head of the South Asia Programme at Climate Bonds Initiative, provided strategic insights during the Expert Speak session. Additionally, discussions were held on the I-SPOC Action Plan for July 2024 to June 2025. To read the summary report, please [click here](#).



- Oil Palm Plantation Visit:** In August 2024, the WWF-India team visited oil palm plantations in Goalpara district, one of the first areas to establish oil palm cultivation in Assam, which is currently facing challenges related to human-elephant conflict. During the visit, the team met with district implementation officers of the NMEO-OP scheme and observed several human-elephant conflict mitigation techniques, such as the use of trenches.



- Capacity Building Workshops on Sustainable Palm Oil Production in Arunachal Pradesh: in Roing on August 30th and in Itanagar on September 3rd, 2024:** Two Capacity Building Workshops on Sustainable Palm Oil Production in Arunachal Pradesh were organized in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, and I-SPOC, with support from WWF-India. The workshops were held in Roing on August 30th and in Itanagar on September 3rd, 2024, aimed at raising awareness and building capacity among farmers, FPOs, industry representatives, and state agriculture officials on integrating sustainability into oil palm production. Key attendees in Roing included Shri Bidol Tayeng, Commissioner and Secretary of the State Agriculture Department, and Idar Noyar, Assistant Nodal Officer for Palm Oil, with 95 participants present. In Itanagar, the workshop was honored by the presence of Shri Gabriel Denwang Wangsu, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture and Allied Sectors, along with senior government officials such as Shri Dani Yubbe, Director of Agriculture, and Shri T. D. Neckhom, Director of Marketing and State Nodal Officer for Palm Oil. A total of 126 stakeholders attended the workshop. Both workshops addressed the environmental, economic, and social dimensions of sustainability, and Good Agricultural Practices and managing human-animal conflicts, with expert-led presentations from CRB, RSPO, and WWF-India. Moving forward, I-SPOC plans to engage further with other states under the NMEO-OP to raise awareness and build capacity for sustainability in oil palm production. To read the comprehensive summary report of both the workshops, please click [here](#).



- **I-SPOC Founders Meeting:** On September 10, 2024, I-SPOC held its Founders meeting, where various aspects of I-SPOC's work and upcoming activities were discussed. These discussions were pivotal in shaping the coalition's future direction.
- **GlobOil 2024:** WWF-India participated in the GlobOil event 2024, held in Mumbai from 18-20 September. The event attracted over 1,500 delegates and 100 exhibitors from more than 60 countries, bringing together numerous industry experts to discuss the future of edible oils under the theme 'Navigating the Future of Edible Oils: Innovation, Sustainability, and Market Dynamics'.



- **Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition for India (I-SPOC) at India Sustainability Standards (ISS) 2024: November 15, 2024:** I-SPOC hosted the session 'Driving the Pathway towards Sustainable Palm Oil Production in at ISS 2024. This engaging panel discussion brought together experts to explore strategies for balancing India's growing demand for palm oil with sustainability imperatives.

Key highlights included insights on:

- **Need for Transformation:** Highlighted the urgency of adopting sustainable palm oil practices in India.
- **Stakeholder Roles:** Explored responsibilities of agriculture, industry, policymakers, and others in driving sustainability.
- **Strategies and Best Practices:** Discussed innovative approaches to building transparent, sustainable supply chains.
- **Actionable Steps:** Discussed on recommendations to accelerate the transition to sustainable production.

Featuring prominent speakers like Rajeev Kher (WWF-India), Adarsh Mohandas (Preferred by Nature), Bhavit Pant (Rainforest Alliance), and Shivnayan Aggarwal (RSPO), the session underscored actionable pathways for stakeholders across industries. I-SPOC's new knowledge product –A Briefing paper titled ['Analyzing the Africa Palm Oil Initiative's Role in Responsible Palm Oil Production Sustainable Strategies and Lessons for India'](#) was also officially launched during the session.



- **India Sustainability Standards (ISS) 2024:** On November 15, 2024 CRB and Reckitt co-hosted a session at ISS 2024 titled 'Importance of Trade in Driving Traceability in Palm Oil Supply Chain'. The session focused on looking at the challenges and opportunities of having traceability integrated in the Palm Oil Supply Chain, exploring the impacts of legislations (like EUDR and others) in achieving traceability in the palm oil supply chain and the steps taken to adopt best practices to achieve traceability in the palm sector. I-SPOC and Reckitt's combined knowledge product - A briefing paper titled **'Understanding and Applying Traceability' in the Context of the Indian Palm Oil Value Chain** was also released at the session.



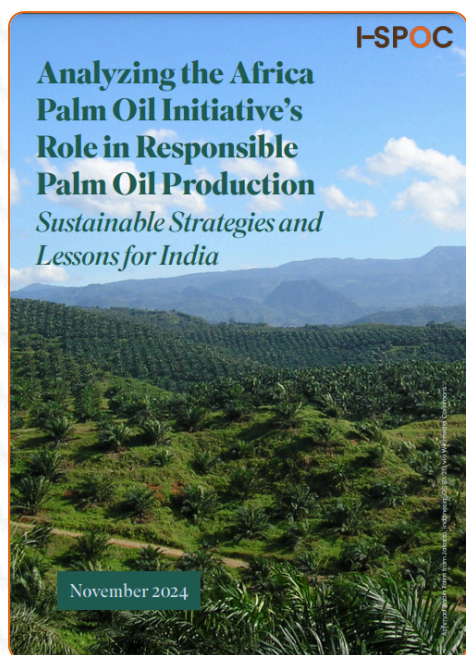
## PUBLICATIONS



I-SPOC officially launched its latest knowledge product, the Labor Policy Input Note (PIN): Respecting and Promoting Workers' Rights in Palm Oil Production Landscapes in India at the 11th Members meeting of I-SPOC. This Policy Input Note (PIN) has been developed as a part of a CRB-RSPO partnership executed over the period 2021-22 entitled, 'Raising the Ambition on Sustainable Palm Oil in the Indian Market Post COVID19.' To read the PIN, please click [here](#).



WWF-India wrote an article titled '**Vegoils Vision 2030: Opportunities and Challenges in Sustainable Edible Oils**' detailing challenges and opportunities for implementation of DCF supply chains of edible oils in India, that was published in IVPA's souvenir magazine 2024. The article carried our sustainable palm oil campaign theme #BePalmWise.



I-SPOC officially launched its new knowledge product –A Briefing paper titled '**Analyzing the Africa Palm Oil Initiative's Role in Responsible Palm Oil Production Sustainable Strategies and Lessons for India**'. The paper was launched on November 15, 2024 at the I-SPOC hosted the session 'Driving the Pathway towards Sustainable Palm Oil Production in at India Sustainability Standards (ISS) 2024.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- New Members in I-SPOC: Patanjali Foods Ltd(since July 2024) and Emami (Since May 2024) have officially joined, further expanding the coalition's membership.



- Capacity Building Workshops on Sustainable Palm Oil Production in Arunachal Pradesh garnered media coverage in [Northeast Today](#), [Eastern Sentinel](#), [Echo of Arunachal](#), and [The Arunachal Times](#), amplifying I-SPOC's advocacy for sustainable palm oil production.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



- I-SPOC's 3rd Policy Engagement Working Group meeting is scheduled on 11 December from 3 PM to 5 PM IST.

**The Sustainable Palm  
Oil Coalition for India**



**I-SPOC**