# Training the Trainers to Build Up Farmers in Honduras

Oil Palm, a crop suitable to be grown in the tropics and favoured by many developing countries for its ability to generate high employment and alleviate rural poverty, has seen rising contribution from Latin America which currently accounts for 6% of the world's palm oil production.

Honduras, a small but growing player in Latin America, is the third largest palm oil producer in that region, after Colombia and Ecuador.

Oil palm development is increasingly encouraged by the Government of Honduras to promote rural development in Honduras where a significant proportion of the industry is made up of small farms with an average size of less than 50 hectares. In collaboration with AIPAH (The Industrial Association of Palm Oil Producers in Honduras), Wilmar has developed a training programme that aims to build up the capacity of small-scale farmers to boost their productivity with good agronomical practices, combined with environmental stewardship knowledge, that will enable a better and more sustainable livelihood for them.



Known as WISSH (Wilmar Smallholders Support in Honduras), the programme was designed on the principle of "Training the Trainers" to create a multiplier effect that will reach greater numbers of small-scale farmers.

Possibly the first of its kind in the Honduras agro-industry, WISSH kick-started the programme in February 2016 with an introductory meeting with the mill managers and supervisors from eight mills which represented about 60% of the total palm oil output in Honduras, and collectively process about 1.1 million metric tonnes of fresh fruit bunches from 4,000 smallholders. These smallholders represent approximately 25% of all the smallholders in Honduras, made up of 2,300 affiliated and 1,700 independent smallholders. This was followed by a workshop from 11-15 April 2016 which was attended 43 supervisors, with the aim that knowledge on good agricultural and sustainable practices can eventually be passed on to all 4,000 small palm oil producers. These eight mills are part of Wilmar's supply mix from Latin America, supplying into the Group's refineries in Europe.



*Ms Alejandra Rueda, founder of NES Naturaleza explaining the WISSH programme to managers and supervisors from eight mills.*

Conducted by NES Naturaleza SAS, a Colombia-based organisation that strives to create value in rural areas and to improve communities livelihood through a balanced equation between the environmental, social and economic perspectives, the workshop syllabus included entrepreneurial, leadership and communications skills, as well as supported the adoption of sustainability fundamentals in line with Wilmar's No Deforestation, No Peat and No Exploitation Policy and the standards of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil. The workshop also aspired to inspire farmer innovation in agricultural solutions for sustainability in the field.

The key components of the WISSH programme included:

⇒ Fresh Fruit Bunches (FFB) Mapping

⇒ Wilmar's No Deforestation, No Peat and No Exploitation Policy and RSPO Principles & Criteria

⇒ Good agricultural & environmental practices

⇒ Social responsibility

⇒ Toolkit – Guide pocket books

⇒ Monitoring and control

The inclusive and interactive manner in which the workshop was conducted was very well-received by the participants, as it encouraged idea sharing and exchange that helped enrich the experience of participants.



*Group breakout sessions to brainstorm, develop and exchange ideas*

As part of a three-year programme, the WISSH project is currently targeted at smallholders associated to the mills that are supplying Wilmar's refineries in Europe; and may be extended to include independent smallholders if good results is achieved in the first year of the programme.



*The first batch of participants who have completed the WISSH programme training and are expected to transfer best agricultural management practices to their affiliated smallholders*