

SUSTAINABILITY BRIEF

Updated April 2020

PLANTATION LIFE IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

Efforts by Wilmar to Curb the Pandemic in Our Operations

The current Covid-19 virus outbreak and subsequent global pandemic has created uncertainties in the way we all live and work. The plantation sector has not been spared, and plantation companies must adapt to the current situation.

Wilmar has plantation operations in Indonesia, Ghana, Malaysia and Nigeria. The respective governments in Indonesia, Ghana, and Nigeria have announced localized restriction of movement orders in specific parts of each country, and none of these restrictions have closed palm oil refining, milling, or oil palm plantations.

Currently only Malaysia is under full nation-wide movement restrictions. Under the Malaysian restrictions, the oil palm sector has been classified as critical to the food supply chain, and therefore can remain operational but on a reduced scale. A full moratorium¹ on plantation and palm oil mill activities has only been announced covering several districts in the east of the state of Sabah, including Lahad Datu, where Wilmar has our Sabahmas Mill and Estates. Apart from Sabahmas Mill and Estates, all other estate and mill operations in Malaysia are operating at a reduced level, based on the Malaysian government's guidelines provided to the plantation sector.

Where there have been no enforced closures, our operations in the four countries are running normally, or on reduced capacity, with new SOPs and precautionary practices to ensure our employees remain safe and healthy. To date, with precautions in place, we have been fortunate to have zero cases of Covid-19 amongst employees in our mills and plantations.

¹ The closure of palm oil mills and plantations, originally set until 14 April 2020, covered the districts of Kalabakan, Kunak, Semporna, Tawau, Lahad Datu, and Kinabatangan, due to outbreaks of Covid-19 positive cases. As of 10th April 2020, this order has been repealed for plantations and mills that have not had any confirmed cases of Covid-19 <https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/sabah-reopen-oil-palm-estates-mills-without-covid19-cases>

EFFORTS IN PLACE IN OUR OPERATIONS

Despite the continuation of operations, our employee's health is our biggest priority. We have implemented several changes in the way we work, as well as adjustments to help us get through this pandemic while ensuring our employees are healthy and safe.

1. Establishing Covid-19 Management and Implementation Teams

Special regional management teams were set up in March to ensure that there was a strategy in place for handling operations and these teams were tasked to develop guidelines and special standard operating procedures (SOP) and to prepare key service implementation teams such as the team in charge of carrying out health monitoring.



The Covid-19 management teams are generally made up of plantation and mill operations, purchasing, sustainability, ESH, women's committee, human resources, and estate health service personnel. Apart from the development of SOPs, it was important to outline how health screenings were to be conducted and look into how key materials (e.g. face masks, hand sanitizers, disinfectants, thermometers, etc) would be purchased and distributed.

2. Introduction of Special S.O.P. for Work During the Pandemic

Since March, we have introduced special standard operating procedures (SOP) to guide operations during the Covid-19 pandemic. These SOPs are localized and have been implemented in [Malaysia](#)², [Indonesia](#)³, Ghana, and [Nigeria](#), and cover our mill and plantation operations, as well as housing areas within our operations, and dealings with external people. The structure and format of the SOPs do differ regionally as they are designed to work within each country's operational practices. Notably in Ghana, there are two source documents i.e. (1) [Guidelines for Social Distancing](#), and (2) [Clinic Covid-19 Response Plan](#); which is designed to be read in conjunction with existing Emergency Procedures. The SOPs cover measures such as:



- i. **Social distancing measures** such as ensuring everyone stays at home if not at work, and enforcements of safe distance measures (of at least 1.5 meters) during field operations such as during muster, in worker transport, and in facilities like clinics and creches where they remain open.

² Also available in [Bahasa Melayu](#)

³ For Indonesia, in March 2020 SOPs were originally developed within each operating region. These regional SOPs were later consolidated into a single Indonesia country-wide SOP which was finalized on 24 April



- ii. **Regular screening of Covid-19 symptoms** carried out by specially trained staff that are equipped with infra-red thermometers. Checks are done prior to entrance to enclosed workplaces such as offices and mills, as well as during muster - before workers leave for their various field sites.



Regular checks are also done for all residents in estate housing. In our Central Kalimantan operations for example, more than 22,000 workers and their families have been included as part of these regular checks. Where positive symptoms are identified, employees will be required to go for Covid-19 testing and into government quarantine if relevant where they will be on paid sick leave. Employees that are feeling unwell are required go for check up in the estate clinic and to self-isolate at home on paid sick leave. In addition to this, there is also controlled entrance to Wilmar’s estate areas from outsiders (e.g. vendors, non-Wilmar resident visitors, etc.)



iii. **Increased focus on sanitation** in our operations. Prior to the various government imposed restricted movement orders, hand washing and hand sanitizing campaigns were already being rolled out.



This included putting up posters showing proper hand washing techniques, and information on why hand hygiene is critically important to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Hand wash and hand sanitizer stations have also been set up throughout our operations.



Meanwhile we are regularly disinfecting workplaces, and other key places in our estates using a solution of sodium hypochlorite (bleach) to ensure cross-contamination of germs is kept at bay.

To accommodate the lack of availability of hand sanitizers, since March 2020 we have also diverted some of our R&D labs to produce alcohol-based hand sanitizers using the WHO guidelines for local production⁴. These hand sanitizers have been distributed internally for use by workers in Wilmar, as well as to local and community efforts. In Central Kalimantan, we have distributed a total of 360 liters of our lab produced hand sanitizers to the Covid-19 Task Force of Kabupaten Kotim, and Kabupaten Seruyan, and to the Desa Sembuluh community.



⁴ https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/Guide_to_Local_Production.pdf



Meanwhile we are striving to provide clinical face masks to employees in key roles (especially medical staff in estate clinics, employees carrying out the regular screening of symptoms), due to the global shortage of clinical face masks it is necessary to prioritize the distribution of face masks.



3. Providing Support to Alleviate the Impact of COVID-19

We recognize that these are difficult times for many people, and as a company we are doing what we can to help provide support and contribute to national or local initiatives to help those around us. For Wilmar, it is important to also ensure that our workers as well as the communities we operate in remain safe and protected from the impacts of Covid-19. Keeping our communities healthy allows us to continue operating sustainably.

Indonesia – Contribution of USD 1 million to the Indonesian government for the purchasing of Covid-19 test kits, and face masks⁵. As of end April 2020, at local estate operations level, a total USD 112,000 has been contributed in the form of PPE, medicines, food (including rice, flour, sugar, cooking oil, etc), disinfectants, hygiene facilities, and other essentials to the local communities under the *Wilmar Peduli*⁶ programme. For example, to help counteract the lack of available face masks, Wilmar’s Womens’ Committee members in our Central Kalimantan estates have come together to make 12,000 cloth face masks for distribution to workers’ families and local community members.



Malaysia – Contributions comprising primarily of medical-related equipment as well as food supplies. Through the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Tawau, we donated RM 100,000 (*approximately USD 23,000*) for the purchase of 2 ventilators for the Tawau Hospital. We also contributed RM 450,000 (*approximately USD 104,000*) worth of Covid-19 test kits for the Ministry of Health via the Malaysian Palm Oil Association, and channelled an additional contribution of RM 100,000 (*approximately USD 23,000*) via the Palm Oil Refiners Association of Malaysia (PORAM) to the Ministry of Primary Industries and Commodities Covid-19 fund.

Additionally, in collaboration with the Kuok Group of companies in Malaysia, we have donated:

- 70,000 surgical masks and respirator face masks to 11 hospitals
- 1,000 liters of hand sanitizers to 10 hospitals
- RM 145,000 (*approximately USD 33,000*) of medical equipment to the University Malaya Medical Centre Kuala Lumpur
- RM 100,000 (*approximately USD 23,000*) worth of foodstuff provided via the government and 3 charitable organizations to be distributed to poor families and the homeless

⁵ <https://www.infosawit.com/news/9792/wilmar-alokasikan-us-1-juta-bantu-pemerintah-ringankan-dampak-covid19>

⁶ Translated as “Wilmar Cares” in english



Ghana – Contribution of items and cash worth GHC 1 million (*approximately USD 175,000*) to the Ghanaian government’s Covid-19 fund⁷. In addition, we also distributed soap, thermometers, facemasks and Veronica buckets (buckets designed to dispense water for handwashing purposes) valued at GHC 255,000 (*approximately USD 45,000*) to the communities surrounding our BOPP estate⁸. The BOPP estate’s health clinic remains open for all community members needing health services during the pandemic, while we have carried out awareness raising of the Covid-19 pandemic and measures for precaution to local community members.

In anticipation of any possible disruption to food supply for workers, management at BOPP estate has ensured that its estate shops are fully stocked and is working with major suppliers to make food items available at pre-Covid 19 wholesale prices. In early April, BOPP management also distributed free rice and cooking oil to all its workers to help alleviate any potential hardships that might come up as a result of likely slowdown in economic activities in the markets.

Nigeria – Contribution of NGN 4 million (*approximately USD 11,000*) to the Cross River State’s Covid-19 task force to assist in efforts to manage the spread of the virus. Wilmar’s plantation and mill operations are in Cross River State.



To help alleviate pressures on potential hardships, our estate operations have distributed NGN 20 million (*approximately USD 50,000*) worth of food items, donations, and other essentials to all workers as well as to communities around our operations.

⁷ <https://www.peacefmonline.com/pages/local/news/202004/405145.php>

⁸ <https://www.modernghana.com/news/993553/covid-19-bensu-oil-palm-plantations-donates-items.html>