

# SUMMARY REPORT

I-SPOC

## Capacity Building Workshops on Sustainable Palm Oil Production in Arunachal Pradesh



## 1. Background

Oil palm (*Elaeis guineensis Jacq.*), native to West Africa and belonging to the Arecaceae family, is a highly versatile and widely used vegetable oil. Palm oil is a key ingredient in about 60% of packaged products<sup>1</sup>, spanning food, cosmetics, and more, due to its high yield and cost efficiency compared to other vegetable oils. Malaysia and Indonesia dominate global palm oil production, accounting for 85% of the market<sup>2</sup> and fulfilling 34% of the world's vegetable oil demand<sup>3</sup>. In 2023, global palm oil production reached approximately 79.5 million metric tons<sup>4</sup> with Indonesia and Malaysia being the world's largest palm oil-producing nations. This makes South East Asia the most important region responsible for supplying the oils and fats required by the world's growing population.

## 2. About the Capacity Building Workshop

### 2.1. Inception

[The Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition for India](#) (I-SPOC) was founded in September 2018 by four organizations: [Centre for Responsible Business](#) (CRB), [Rainforest Alliance](#) (RA), [Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil](#) (RSPO) and [World Wildlife Fund-India](#) (WWF-India). The primary objective of I-SPOC is to promote the sustainable consumption, production, and trade of palm oil and its derivatives throughout the supply chain in India. This goal is pursued through multi-stakeholder dialogues and capacity-building initiatives aimed at implementing sustainable strategies and actions.

Over the years, I-SPOC has been fostering dialogue on various relevant topics, including sustainable production, policy, trade, role of stakeholders like Farmers, Farmer Producer Organization (FPOs), Government, businesses, financial institutions, among others, making incorporation of sustainability in domestic production an important component of its operations from the outset. The coalition in the initial years, through its working group on Government Policy and Domestic Production looked at discussions related to the role of policy and different stakeholders in production and uptake of sustainable palm oil in India. As part of these efforts, I-SPOC has reached out to all 14 states under the NMEO-OP, which provided the impetus for this workshop. The participation of a total of 221 attendees in both the workshops combined, underscores the value and impact of such initiatives.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.sustainablepalmoilchoice.eu/what-is-palm-oil/#:~:text=Palm%20oil%20is%20the%20most,deliciously%20crispy%20and%20crunchy%20texture.>

<sup>2</sup><https://fas.usda.gov/data/production/commodity/4243000>

<sup>3</sup>[Vegetable oils consumption worldwide 2023/24 | Statista](#)

<sup>4</sup><https://ipad.fas.usda.gov/cropexplorer/cropview/commodityView.aspx?cropid=4243000>

## 2.2. Rationale

The Capacity Building Workshop on Sustainable Palm Oil Production in Arunachal Pradesh, organized in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, and I-SPOC, with support from WWF-India, was a key initiative aimed at raising awareness and enhancing the capacity of state-level stakeholders.

- **Palm Oil in India: Import Reliance and Domestic Production Endeavors**

India is the largest importer and the second-largest consumer of palm oil globally<sup>5</sup>. India imported \$11.1 billion worth of palm oil in 2022<sup>6</sup>, predominantly from Indonesia (\$5.4B), Malaysia (\$3.55B), Thailand (\$1.11B), Singapore (\$421M), and Papua New Guinea (\$418M)<sup>7</sup>. This robust import volume underscores India's significant dependence on imports for palm oil.

In a strategic move to reduce the reliance on imports and to bolster self-sufficiency in edible oils, the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare launched the [National Mission on Edible Oil – Oil Palm \(NMEO-OP\)](#) in August 2021. This mission seeks to expand oil palm cultivation by 6.5 lakh hectares by 2025-26 and further to 16.71 lakh hectares by 2029-30<sup>8</sup>, reinforcing India's domestic production capabilities and thereby addressing domestic oil deficits. However, sustainability considerations within this program remain paramount, necessitating a nuanced approach towards production practices. Despite the commendable objective, concerns linger regarding the incorporation of sustainability elements within the production framework.

- **Domestic production in Arunachal Pradesh**

Under the NMEO-OP, Arunachal Pradesh aims to bring 40,000 hectares of land under oil palm cultivation across 10 districts, including Changlang, East Kameng, East Siang, Lohit, Lower Dibang Valley (Roing), Lower Subansiri, Papum-Pare, Tawang, Tirap, West Kameng, and West Siang, by 2025-26<sup>9</sup>. The state has initiated oil palm production in select districts in alignment with the State Action Plan<sup>10</sup> developed by the State Agriculture Department.

- **Need for Incorporating Sustainability into the Domestic Production Landscape**

Arunachal Pradesh is a region of exceptional ecological and cultural richness, boasting over 5,000 plant species, more than 500 varieties of fauna, and over 650 bird species, representing approximately 20% of India's fauna<sup>11</sup>. According to satellite data from the IRS Resourcesat-2 LISS

<sup>5</sup><https://www.statista.com/statistics/1023677/palm-oil-importer-leading-global/>

<sup>6</sup><https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-product/palm-oil/reporter/ind>

<sup>7</sup><https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-product/palm-oil/reporter/ind>

<sup>8</sup><https://nfsm.gov.in/Guidelines/NMEO-OPGUIEDELINES.pdf>

<sup>9</sup>[https://nmeo.dac.gov.in/NMEOUUploadDocuments/BriefNMEOPNE\\_05052022\\_637873527267095792\\_OilPalm\\_NE\\_Brief.pdf](https://nmeo.dac.gov.in/NMEOUUploadDocuments/BriefNMEOPNE_05052022_637873527267095792_OilPalm_NE_Brief.pdf)

<sup>10</sup>[National Mission on Edible Oils \(NMEO\) | GoI \(dac.gov.in\)](#)

<sup>11</sup><https://fsi.nic.in/isfr19/vol2/isfr-2019-vol-ii-arunachal-pradesh.pdf>

III (2017-2018), the state's forest cover spans 66,687.78 square kilometers<sup>12</sup>, accounting for 79.63% of its geographical area<sup>13</sup>. In addition to its rich biodiversity, Arunachal Pradesh is home to a vast number of distinct ethnic groups. More than two-thirds of the population are recognized as indigenous peoples, with various tribes and over 50 different languages and dialects<sup>14</sup>.

Given the state's abundant diversity at ecological and social level, integrating environmental, social, and economic sustainability into any new initiatives, including oil palm cultivation, is essential. Ensuring sustainable practices in oil palm cultivation is crucial to minimizing negative impacts and promoting responsible growth.

The promotion of Sustainable Agricultural Practices will not only benefit nature by reducing negative impacts but also farmers by lowering input costs and increasing profitability. Additionally, these practices will foster community development by creating local jobs and agri-entrepreneurship opportunities for youth. The growing interest among buyers, markets, and financiers in sustainable palm oil, coupled with rising consumer demand for climate-friendly products, presents an unexplored market potential. States' distinct advantage that would come by de-linking palm oil production from deforestation and ensuring traceability across the supply chain further strengthens its position in promoting sustainable palm oil practices.

### **2.3. Objectives of the workshop**

The primary objective of the workshop was to raise awareness and build capacity among state-level stakeholders—including farmers, Farmer Producer Organization, industry representatives, and state agriculture officials—on the integration of sustainability into oil palm production in the state. It aimed to cover key topics such as the fundamentals of sustainability and sustainable palm oil production, the need and benefits of adopting sustainable practices, and practical ways to incorporate sustainability at the environmental, social, and economic levels within ongoing production efforts.

Additionally, the workshop fostered discussions among stakeholders on topics like Good Agricultural Practices and human-animal conflict, providing a platform to understand diverse perspectives and further raise awareness on these critical issues.

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<sup>12</sup><https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/userfiles/ISFR2019%20Vol-II.pdf>

<sup>13</sup>[https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-Forest-Cover-map-of-Arunachal-Pradesh-India-Source-India-State-of-Forest-Report\\_fig1\\_348266572](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-Forest-Cover-map-of-Arunachal-Pradesh-India-Source-India-State-of-Forest-Report_fig1_348266572)

<sup>14</sup><https://www.britannica.com/place/Arunachal-Pradesh/People>

### 3. Discussion in Roing on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2024



Image 1: Participants and dignitaries at the Capacity Building Workshop on Sustainable Palm Oil, held in Roing on 30 August 2024.

#### 3.1. Introduction

The workshop in Roing commenced with **Special Guest Remarks** by **Shri Bidol Tayeng, Commissioner and Secretary, State Agriculture Department**, emphasizing the extensive discussions that led to the event. The state's goal of cultivating 40,000 hectares of oil palm by 2025-26, under NMEO-OP, was discussed. It was highlighted that the state avoids promoting plantations in forested areas or converting paddy fields to oil palm, instead focusing on barren or underutilized foothill regions to ensure responsible land use. A key point highlighted was the abundance of rainfall in Arunachal Pradesh, which supports rain-fed oil palm cultivation, reducing the need for extensive irrigation. Additionally, the allocation of districts for palm oil cultivation was addressed. The Agriculture Department's success in addressing fertilizer supply issues for farmers was also praised, and the need to incorporate solutions for human-animal conflict into policy frameworks was emphasized.



Image 2: Shri Bidol Tayeng, Commissioner and Secretary, State Agriculture Department, addressing the audience at the Roing workshop, with Idar Noyar, Assistant Nodal Officer, Oil Palm, in the background.

Another important point that was emphasized was the need for the Forest Department's involvement in addressing palm oil cultivation issues. It was highlighted that future workshops would actively include the Forest Department as key stakeholders.



Image 3: Dignitaries at the Workshop-Shri Bidol Tayeng, Commissioner and Secretary, State Agriculture Department; Smti Soumya Saurabh, IAS, Deputy Commissioner, Roing; Smti Toggul Perme, District Agriculture Officer; Sri Balung Mengu, Joint Director; Shri Dature Miuli, Progressive Farmer from Roing; Vishal Dev, Director, Sustainable Business, WWF India; Rijit Sengupta, CEO, CRB.

**An Introduction to Sustainable Palm Oil Production -** This presentation by **Centre for Responsible Business (CRB)** covered global and domestic palm oil production, focusing on NMEO-OP's key elements like establishing seed gardens, improving FFB productivity, and promoting intercropping during the gestation period. It also highlighted the importance of sustainable palm oil production, detailing how Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) benefit the environment, reduce input costs for farmers, and foster community employment through agri-entrepreneurship. The rising demand for sustainable palm oil from consumers and markets was recognized as an unexplored opportunity.

The discussion post the presentation also addressed Arunachal Pradesh's alignment with sustainable practices and identified areas for improvement, such as soil quality and water use efficiency. Recommendations included creating a long-term roadmap for sustainable production, leveraging local resources and expertise, and fostering collaboration through cooperatives and FPOs.

### **3.2. Sustainable Palm Oil Production: Environmental Aspect**

The presentation by **World Wildlife Fund-India (WWF-India)** on Sustainable Palm Oil Production from an environmental perspective highlighted India's rising palm oil demand, expected to grow by 10-12% annually. It emphasized the minimal deforestation risk from domestic production, thanks to the Forest Conservation Act (1980), which protects reserved forests, provided regulations are strictly followed. A key point was the new Business responsibility and

Sustainability Reporting (BRSR)<sup>15</sup> Core mandate, requiring listed companies in India to disclose ESG metrics, including Scope 3 emissions, from 2023-2024<sup>16</sup>. The session also underscored that Indian companies aiming to export globally must comply with sustainable standards like the [European Union Deforestation Regulation \(EUDR\)](#)<sup>17</sup>, the [UK Environment Act](#)<sup>18</sup>, and the [US FOREST Act](#)<sup>19</sup>, which enforce rigorous due diligence on forest-risk product imports.

Participants explored the concept of environmental sustainability in palm oil production, with examples of the large-scale environmental impact caused by unsustainable practices in Southeast Asia. The discussion also highlighted the aims to meet demand while preserving environmental integrity by minimizing deforestation, protecting biodiversity, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving water, and maintaining soil health. A special note was made on how best practices include using existing agricultural land, preserving High Conservation Value (HCV)<sup>20</sup> areas, and adhering to sustainability certifications such as RSPO.

Lessons from Indonesia were discussed, encouraging private sector partnerships with smallholders, adoption of best practices, and increasing productivity through certification. For policymakers, mandatory sustainability policies, full traceability, and incentivizing certification were highlighted. For smallholders, access to training, inputs, and incentives for sustainable practices were stressed.

The discussion raised critical questions on oil palm expansion in ecologically sensitive regions like the Northeast and the risks associated with it, effect of climate change on the plantations, crop replacement and disruption of wildlife corridors. This discussion then highlighted the need for ensuring the safeguards.

This session also gave policy recommendations for state sustainable palm oil production that included strategic land use planning based on HCV mapping, eco-audits to monitor environmental impacts, economic incentives for sustainable farming, and financial aid for certification adoption and safeguards to prevent the diversion of unclassified forests to oil palm plantations were strongly advocated.

<sup>15</sup>[https://www.sebi.gov.in/sebi\\_data/commondocs/may-2021/Business%20responsibility%20and%20sustainability%20reporting%20by%20listed%20entitiesAnnexure1\\_p.PDF](https://www.sebi.gov.in/sebi_data/commondocs/may-2021/Business%20responsibility%20and%20sustainability%20reporting%20by%20listed%20entitiesAnnexure1_p.PDF)

<sup>16</sup><https://benchmarksuite.in/ehs-blog/what-is-brsr-and-its-three-main-areas-of-disclosure/#:~:text=This%20ensures%20credibility%20and%20transparency,BRSR%20Core%20to%20reasonable%20assurance.>

<sup>17</sup>[https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/deforestation-regulation-implementation\\_en](https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/deforestation-regulation-implementation_en)

<sup>18</sup><https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents>

<sup>19</sup><https://citizensclimatelobby.org/get-loud-take-action/forest-act/#:~:text=The%20FOREST%20Act%20will%20require,government%20for%20deforestation%2Dfree%20products.>

<sup>20</sup><https://by.fsc.org/by-en/for-forests/high-conservation-values>

### 3.3. Human-Animal Conflict (HAC)

The presentation by **WWF-India** on HAC in palm oil plantations in the Northeast highlighted the unique biodiversity of Arunachal Pradesh and the growth cycle of oil palm plants, explaining its interlinkage with animal interventions, particularly elephants. The session also explored how during harvest, the frequent cutting of leaves offers foraging opportunities for elephants, providing insight into how the growth and harvest cycles are tied to elephant behavior. The challenges discussed included habitat fragmentation, leading to human-elephant conflict (HEC), resulting in the loss of life and property, and the vulnerability of plantations to elephant damage in the early years. Opportunities were also highlighted, such as how oil palm plantations, when grown as agroforestry mosaics, can maintain native biodiversity and ecosystem services, unlike large monoculture plantations. Moreover, plantations could provide both income for people and wildlife corridors for elephants.

Addressing the conflict, various interventions were discussed, including knowledge dissemination through workshops, understanding elephant movement patterns (as they follow habitual routes), and realizing their intelligence in adapting to human defenses. Practical solutions were suggested, such as low-cost, single-wire electric fencing and strategically placed, discontinuous fencing to minimize crop damage while offering elephants a route. The session also referenced the [WWF and Project Elephant Government field manual for managing HAC<sup>21</sup>](#) and the [Ele-fence manual<sup>22</sup>](#), which provide further guidance for mitigating human-animal conflict in palm oil plantations. Another important point of discussion was related to the compensation for damage claims. The interactive session looked at farmers raising concerns regarding the human-animal conflict they face, including damage caused not only by elephants but also by rats and mice, which damage crops at the root level.



Image 4: Participants actively engaging in discussions during the interactive session of the Capacity Building Workshop

<sup>21</sup><https://www.wwfindia.org/?22302/Field-Manual-for-Managing-Human-Elephant-Conflicts>

<sup>22</sup>[https://wwfin.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/ele\\_fence\\_manual\\_v15\\_english.pdf](https://wwfin.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/ele_fence_manual_v15_english.pdf)

### 3.4. Sustainable Palm Oil Production: Economic Aspect

This presentation by **Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)** emphasized how economic sustainability can be achieved through improved management practices, increased yield, better quality Fresh Fruit Bunches (FFB), and strengthened partnerships. A key focus was on enhancing smallholder inclusion and ensuring access to certification through simplified approaches. The Independent Smallholder Standard was highlighted as a critical tool for engaging smallholders by simplifying the certification process. The Smallholder Trainer Academy was discussed as a resource to build capacity by providing high-quality training and access to essential resources. To ease the financial burden of certification, the Smallholder Support Fund offers financial assistance, while the Smallholder Engagement Platform connects smallholders with potential project partners, fostering collaboration and access to opportunities.

The session detailed the journey of smallholder engagement, starting with Group Formation, where smallholders are organized into Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) to improve their economic outcomes through better inputs and representation. Record Keeping was emphasized as essential for optimizing operations, maintaining historical data, and increasing accessibility to finance. Furthermore, the session covered the importance of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), which provide training and knowledge on effective farming techniques, leading to improved productivity. Finally, the role of Certification & Premiums was underscored as essential for creating market linkages, securing additional income, and engaging with companies to enhance economic sustainability for smallholders.

### 3.5. Sustainable Palm Oil Production: Social Aspect

This presentation by **CRB** started by addressing the core elements of social sustainability and how it could be understood in simple terms. The session emphasized the protection of vulnerable populations that involves safeguarding the rights and needs of smallholder farmers, women, children, migrant workers, and indigenous people in line with national laws. The presentation also linked these efforts with existing government social security schemes, both at the state and national levels, aimed at supporting vulnerable groups through various welfare, labor, and healthcare initiatives.

The discussion covered the job creation potential of oil palm plantations, highlighting that 2-3 jobs per 10 hectares could be created, leading to approximately 8,000 to 12,000 jobs in Arunachal Pradesh<sup>23</sup> with the state's 40,000-hectare target under NMEO-OP. Additionally, the importance of ensuring decent working conditions was stressed, which includes upholding principles such as

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<sup>23</sup><https://www.indiaspoc.org/images/Respecting-and-Promoting-Workers-Rights-in-Palm-Oil-Production-Landscapes-in-India.pdf>

non-discrimination, equal opportunities, the elimination of child labor, prevention of sexual harassment and forced labor, and ensuring minimum wage compliance.

As the presentation concluded, it was highlighted that many farmers are already practicing sustainable production methods and adopting mitigation measures and this further emphasized the role of certification as crucial for authenticating these practices, ensuring that farmers' efforts are recognized. Bringing together the three pillars of sustainability—social, environmental, and economic—as key to creating a sustainable production landscape in Arunachal Pradesh and positioning the state as a potential pioneer in sustainable palm oil production.

Following this session, a progressive farmer from the Lower Dibang Valley Oil Palm Grower Association, Roing, who is also one of India's largest independent farm owners, brought attention to several crucial issues that need to be addressed by the State Agriculture Department. Key points raised included the lack of collection centers in the state, particularly in areas that are not well connected, which significantly increases input costs for farmers. The ongoing issue of human-animal conflict was further emphasized, underscoring the challenges farmers face in protecting their crops. Lastly, the farmer suggested that establishing a secured buy-back price for oil palm could greatly benefit farmers by providing a stable income and reducing market-related uncertainties.

### 3.6. Good Practices and Experience Sharing by Champion Farmers

This engaging session, led by three champion farmers **Harkanta Basumatry (from Assam)**, **Kishore Yeleti (from Andhra Pradesh)** and **Kingman Komut (from Arunachal Pradesh)**, highlighted a flow of ideas and suggestions drawn from their experiences. Key points discussed included the use of economic crops like turmeric, ginger, and even exotic crops like vanilla for intercropping, which can significantly enhance economic benefits. The concept of double or triple cropping was also highlighted to further improve profitability.



Image 5: Champion farmers Harkanta Basumatry (Assam), Kishore Yeleti (Andhra Pradesh), and Kingman Komut (Arunachal Pradesh) sharing insights during the Good Agricultural Practices session at the Roing workshop.

- Farmers shared experiences and insights on the importance of vermicomposting for soil health and the use of specific plants as natural fences to protect against elephants.

- Some of the recommended practices include biomass mulching to enhance soil quality and promote circularity in farming systems, avoiding over-irrigation and over-fertilization due to the shallow roots of palm trees, which can lead to nutrient leaching, and ensuring farmers receive their deserved Viability Gap Payment (VGP).
- The discussion on nutrient management highlighted the benefits of fertigation for improving nutrient and water use efficiency, along with cost-saving in terms of money, labor, inputs, and electricity.

The session emphasized leveraging technology to enhance productivity and reduce cultivation costs, encouraging mixed farming systems over monocropping to supplement main crop yields, especially amid monsoon uncertainties and market fluctuations, and the benefits of mixed farming, which include resource recycling, moisture conservation, weed control, and reduced reliance on chemical fertilizers over time.



Image 6: A participant engaging with champion farmers during the Good Agricultural Practices session

Overall, the session was highly informative and engaging for the participants, offering them valuable insights into new good agricultural practices that could enhance both sustainability and profitability in palm oil production.

#### 4. Discussion in Itanagar on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024



Image 7: Dignitaries and experts at the Capacity Building Workshop in Itanagar, 3 September 2024: Shri Gabriel Denwang Wangsu, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture and Allied Sectors; Shri Dani Yubbe, Director, Agriculture, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh; Shri T D Neckhom, Director Marketing and State Nodal Officer on Palm Oil; Suresh Babu, Senior Director, Ecological Footprints, WWF-India; Ashwin Selvaraj, Deputy Director, Market Transformation (India and China), RSPO; Dr. Anupam Sarmah, Dr. Pratibha Baveja, and David Smith, WWF-India; Shivnayan Aggarwal, RSPO; Bhavya Sharma and Praseetha P Kumar, CRB.

##### 4.1. Introduction

The workshop in Itanagar commenced with **Welcome Remarks** by **Suresh Babu, Senior Director, Ecological Footprints, WWF-India**, acknowledging the importance of awareness-generation initiatives like this, which foster multi-stakeholder dialogue, knowledge exchange, and capacity building—all critical drivers of action toward sustainable practices. The Agriculture Department of Arunachal Pradesh was commended for its efforts in facilitating a discussion on the integration of sustainability into domestic oil palm production. The session highlighted how such collaborative platforms are essential for aligning stakeholders on sustainable development goals. This was followed by a felicitation ceremony honoring the dignitaries in attendance, recognizing their contributions to promoting sustainability in the state's agricultural landscape.

The discussion also addressed Arunachal Pradesh's alignment with sustainable practices and identified areas for improvement, such as soil quality and water use efficiency. Recommendations included creating a long-term roadmap for sustainable production, leveraging local resources and expertise, and fostering collaboration through cooperatives and Farmer Producer Organization.

##### 4.2. Keynote Address

**Shri T D Neckhom, Director Marketing cum State Nodal Officer on Palm Oil, State Agriculture Department** - discussed the state's ambitious goal of cultivating 40,000 hectares of oil palm by 2025-26 under the NMEO-OP initiative. It was emphasized that the state prioritizes responsible land use, avoiding plantations in forested areas or converting paddy fields, instead focusing on barren or underutilized foothill regions. The state's current palm oil production

statistics and future aspirations were brought into focus, along with the allocation of districts for oil palm cultivation—3F Oil Palm in the Lower Dibang Valley and nine districts assigned to Patanjali Foods. Participants were encouraged to make full use of the workshop for idea generation, problem-solving, mitigation measures, and capacity building.

### 4.3. Chief Guest Address

**Shri Gabriel Denwang Wangsu, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture and Allied Sectors:** He brought attention to several critical issues related to domestic palm oil production. Emphasis was placed on the importance of sustainability at every step and across all levels. He further highlighted the state's rich tribal heritage, underscoring the need for development that is inclusive and protective of local communities' rights, ensuring they are not left behind or disconnected from their heritage.

The Minister further stressed the need for a state-specific environmental and social study that would encompass critical aspects like:

- Water and soil analysis,
- The percolation of pesticides and chemical inputs,
- Water management strategies,
- Identifying Go and No-Go areas,
- Addressing connectivity and communication issues.

It was highlighted how this comprehensive approach would help identify potential challenges, allowing for mitigation or prevention of environmental and social damages from the onset, ensuring long-term sustainability and preventing a scenario of "rich land, poor people."



Image 8: Shri Gabriel Denwang Wangsu, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture and Allied Sectors, delivering the Chief Guest Address at the Capacity Building Workshop in Itanagar, 3 September 2024.

In the **Vote of Thanks** by **Ashwin Selvaraj, Deputy Director, Market Transformation (India and China), RSPO** - it was reiterated that the concerns and queries raised during the workshop aligned with its central objective of promoting sustainable development. The emphasis was on the importance of all stakeholders—across all levels—working together with a shared commitment to

sustainability and holistic improvement. To strengthen this message, examples of concepts such as High Conservation Value (HCV), Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), and successful initiatives from other regions were cited. This collective effort, it was concluded, would ensure that the state’s domestic production landscape thrives in a truly sustainable manner.

#### 4.4. Presentations by Experts

The discussions in Itanagar mirrored many of the themes covered in Roing, particularly regarding the **introduction to sustainable palm oil production by CRB**, which again emphasized the need for improved FFB productivity and sustainable practices through GAPs. However, in Itanagar, the conversation placed a stronger focus on transforming Arunachal Pradesh into a model state for sustainable palm oil production, leveraging local resources and expertise. Similarly, **WWF-India’s presentation on environmental aspects of sustainable palm oil production** reiterated the importance of expanding oil palm production while adhering to sustainability mandates like the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), with additional emphasis on land-use planning and eco-audits. The session on **Human-Animal Conflict** raised familiar concerns about human-elephant conflicts but also expanded to include other crop-damaging animals such as rats and mice, adding complexity to the mitigation strategies discussed. **The economic aspects of sustainable palm oil production** covered by **RSPO** reflected those in Roing, particularly around smallholder certification, the need for organizing into FPOs, and financial support for sustainable practices.

### 5. Key takeaways (from the two workshops)

1. State’s Commitment to Sustainable Oil Palm Cultivation: Arunachal Pradesh’s goal to cultivate 40,000 hectares of oil palm by 2025-26 under NMEO-OP.
2. Strategic Land Use for Oil Palm Cultivation: Focus on cultivating in barren or underutilized foothill regions, avoiding forested areas and paddy fields for responsible land use.
3. State-Specific Environmental Study: The need for a state-specific environmental study focusing on water, soil analysis, and identifying “Go and No-Go” areas. The focus on climate vulnerability and state-specific HCV mapping, ground-truthing of reserved and unclassified forests.
4. Leveraging Natural Resources: Arunachal Pradesh’s abundant rainfall supports rain-fed oil palm cultivation, reducing the need for extensive irrigation.
5. Multi-Stakeholder Approach: Importance of involving all stakeholders, including the Forest Department, Agriculture Department, farmers, and the private sector, to ensure inclusive, responsible production and alignment with sustainability goals.
6. Human-Animal Conflict (HAC) Mitigation: Need for practical solutions to reduce conflicts between wildlife (especially elephants) and plantations, such as low-cost fencing and strategic wildlife corridor development, along with compensation for crop damage.

7. Sustainable Production and Certification: Merits of Sustainable palm oil production through Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), reducing input costs, benefiting the environment, and fostering employment.
8. Environmental Sustainability Focus: Importance of protection of high conservation value (HCV) areas, minimizing deforestation, and maintaining biodiversity. The growing demand for sustainable palm oil globally, driven by EUDR, UK Environment Act, and US FOREST Act also mandate rigorous due diligence.
9. Economic Sustainability: Focus on improved management practices, leading to better-quality Fresh Fruit Bunches (FFB) and enhanced yields. Strengthening smallholder inclusion through Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs). Importance of certification for creating market linkages and securing premiums and Smallholder Trainer Academy for capacity building.
10. Social Sustainability Aspects Emphasis on the protection of vulnerable groups such as smallholder farmers, women, children, migrant workers, and indigenous people as per national laws. The job creation potential of the mission, estimating 8,000 to 12,000 jobs from oil palm cultivation in the state.
11. Champion Farmers' Experience Sharing: Benefits of innovative practices such as intercropping with turmeric, ginger, and vanilla, along with techniques like vermicomposting, biomass mulching, and fertigation to enhance sustainability and economic returns. The need for Viability Gap Payment (VGP), and how technologies like fertigation improve nutrient and water efficiency.
12. Farmer-Led Recommendations that Require Attention: Farmers called for better infrastructure (e.g., collection centers in remote areas) and stable market prices to improve economic outcomes, alongside technology adoption to boost productivity.

## 6. Way forward

As an immediate next step, I-SPOC will explore collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Arunachal Pradesh to develop a comprehensive policy framework for sustainable palm oil production, as requested by the State. This will take the form of a Proposal or Concept Note, detailing strategic interventions to ensure environmentally sound, socially responsible, and economically viable practices. By aligning with both state priorities and national sustainability goals, this policy will aim to serve as a critical roadmap for long-term growth and sustainability in the region.

Looking ahead, I-SPOC will expand its engagement with other States under the NMEO-OP by conducting similar workshops, with a focus on raising awareness and enhancing capacities for the sustainable cultivation of oil palm. This initiative aims to build momentum toward a more responsible and resilient oil palm sector across India.

## 7. Annexure

### 7.1. Agenda: Roing - August 30, 2024

Time	Activity
1000 to 1010	<b>Special Guest Remarks</b> by Shri Bidol Tayeng, Commissioner and Secretary, State Agriculture Department
1010 to 1020	<b>Introduction- Palm oil</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Global and Domestic Consumption, Production and Demand of Palm Oil</li> <li>Sustainable Palm Oil Production</li> <li>Importance of Sustainable Palm Oil (Conceptual clarity on Sustainable Palm Oil, Need of Sustainable Palm oil)</li> </ul> Speaker(s): Rijit Sengupta/Bhavya Sharma Discussion and Q&A session
1020 to 1035	<b>Sustainable Palm Oil Production: Environmental aspect</b> Presentation on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risks and Threats in the Palm Oil Supply Chain</li> <li>Environmental aspects to be considered in sustainable palm oil production</li> </ul> Speaker(s): Vishal Dev/Pratibha Baveja (WWF-India) Discussion and Q&A session
1035 to 1105	<b>Introduction and opening remark by expert on Human-Animal conflict aspect in palm oil plantation in the North East</b> (10 minutes) How to address the human-Animal conflict aspect in palm oil plantations? Speaker: David Smith, Associate Coordinator, Elephant Conservation, Brahmaputra Landscape, WWF-India Discussion and Q&A session (20 minutes)
1105 to 1120	<b>Sustainable Palm Oil Production: Economic aspect</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation on element(s) of economic aspect(s) covering Smallholders/ local economy to be incorporated in sustainable palm oil production</li> <li>How to include economic aspects(s) into palm oil production?</li> </ul> Speaker: Shivnayan Aggarwal (RSPO) Discussion and Q&A session
1120 to 1135	<b>Sustainable Palm Oil Production: Social aspect</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation on element(s) of social aspect(s) covering concept of decent work, social security, migrant workers to be incorporated in sustainable palm oil production</li> <li>How to include social aspect(s) into palm oil production?</li> </ul> Speaker(s): Rijit Sengupta/Bhavya Sharma (CRB) Discussion and Q&A session
1135 to 1150	Summarizing the first session
1150 to 1205	Speech by Shri. Dature Miuli, President, Lower Dibang Valley Oil Palm Grower Association, Roing
1205 to 1245	Introduction and opening remark by three Champion farmer(s) on Good Agricultural Practices (20 minutes) and How to adopt Good Agricultural Practices in Oil Palm Plantations? Speaker(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harkanta Basumatry, President, Jaikhleng Society NGO, Assam</li> <li>Kishore Yeleti, Farmer from Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh</li> <li>Kingman Komut, Advisor, East Siang Oil Palm Growers Association (ESOGA)</li> </ul> Discussion and Q&A session (20 minutes)
1245 to 1300	Closing Remarks and Way forward Speakers: WWF - India/CRB/RSPO

## 7.2. Agenda: Itanagar - September 03, 2024

Time	Activity
1000 to 1010	<b>Welcome Remarks</b> by Suresh Babu, Senior Director, Ecological Footprints, WWF-India
1010 to 1020	<b>Felicitation Ceremony</b>
1020 to 1030	<p><b>Introduction- Palm oil:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global and Domestic Consumption, Production and Demand of Palm Oil</li> <li>• Sustainable Palm Oil Production</li> <li>• Importance of Sustainable Palm Oil (Conceptual clarity on Sustainable Palm Oil, Need of Sustainable Palm oil)</li> </ul> <p>Speaker(s): Bhavya Sharma (CRB)</p>
1030 to 1045	<b>Keynote Address</b> by Shri T D Neckhom, Director Marketing cum State Nodal Officer on Palm Oil, State Agriculture Department
1045 to 1100	<b>Special Address</b> by Shri Gabriel Denwang Wangsu, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry & Veterinary, Dairy Development & Fisheries, Food & Civil Supply, Legal Metrology & Consumer Affairs, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh
1100 to 1110	<b>Vote of thanks</b> by Ashwin Selvaraj, Deputy Director, Market Transformation (India and China), RSPO
1110 to 1125	<p><b>Sustainable Palm Oil Production: Environmental aspect</b></p> <p>Presentation on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risks and Threats in the Palm Oil Supply Chain</li> <li>• Environmental aspects to be considered in sustainable palm oil production</li> </ul> <p>Speaker(s): Dr. Pratibha Baveja (WWF-India)</p> <p>Discussion and Q&amp;A session</p>
1125 to 1155	<p>Introduction and opening remark by expert on <b>Human-Animal conflict aspect</b> in palm oil plantation in the North East (10 minutes)</p> <p>How to address the human-Animal conflict aspect in palm oil plantations?</p> <p>Speaker: David Smith, Associate Coordinator, Elephant Conservation, Brahmaputra Landscape, WWF-India</p> <p>Discussion and Q&amp;A session (20 minutes)</p>
1155 to 1210	<p><b>Sustainable Palm Oil Production: Economic aspect</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation on element(s) of economic aspect(s) covering Smallholders/ local economy to be incorporated in sustainable palm oil production</li> <li>• How to include economic aspects(s) into palm oil production?</li> </ul> <p>Speaker: Shivnayan Aggarwal (RSPO)</p> <p>Discussion and Q&amp;A session</p>
1210 to 1225	<p><b>Sustainable Palm Oil Production: Social aspect</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation on element(s) of social aspect(s) covering concept of decent work, social security, migrant workers to be incorporated in sustainable palm oil production</li> <li>• How to include social aspect(s) into palm oil production?</li> </ul> <p>Speaker: Bhavya Sharma (CRB)</p> <p>Discussion and Q&amp;A session</p>
1225 to 1255	<p><b>Introduction and opening remark by two Champion farmers</b> on Good Agricultural Practices (20 minutes) and How to adopt Good Agricultural Practices in Oil Palm Plantations?</p> <p>Speaker(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harkanta Basumatry, President, Jaikhleng Society NGO, Assam</li> <li>• Kishore Yeleti, Farmer from Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh</li> </ul> <p>Discussion and Q&amp;A session (20 minutes)</p>
1255 to 1300	<b>Closing Remarks and Way forward</b> by RSPO