



# Inclusive Engagement Strategy for IPLCs for Olam Agri's Wood Business



# Introduction:

## Why an Inclusive Engagement Strategy?

**Forests in Central Africa are not just carbon sinks or biodiversity hotspots—they are the home and heritage of thousands of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs)**, whose stewardship is vital to their survival. For Olam Agri's Wood Business and its subsidiaries like Congolaise Industrielle Des Bois (CIB), engaging these communities is not a matter of compliance but a strategic and ethical imperative.

Our Inclusive Engagement Strategy serves as its formal Social and Human Rights Policy. It articulates our commitments to IPLCs, our respect for international human rights standards, and the mechanisms through which we ensure fair, inclusive, and rights-based development across our forest concessions. Grounded in international standards and adapted to complex local realities, this approach reflects our commitment to transparency, justice, mutual respect, and continuous improvement.

We recognise that our long-term success is inseparable from the well-being of the communities living in and around our concessions. This vision is inspired by the concept of Creating Shared Value: sustainable growth can only occur when business strategies simultaneously advance economic performance and address the social needs of the communities we impact. We believe that inclusive engagement is the most effective way to align our operational goals with the aspirations of IPLCs—and to co-build a future where forests, people, and business thrive together.

### Foundational Principles

We recognise that IPLCs are not mere beneficiaries of development initiative. They are holders of rights, traditional knowledge, and agency. Co-construction builds trust, aligns initiatives with locally defined priorities, and creates shared ownership of outcomes. This approach also contributes to stronger governance, lower conflict, and more resilient communities.

Our inclusive engagement model is built on two key foundations: a commitment to equitable stakeholder relations and alignment with internationally

recognised standards and certification frameworks. These requirements are not treated as compliance checkboxes, but as essential components of our legitimacy and long-term social license to operate. Engaging IPLCs as full partners in decision-making strengthens mutual accountability and supports inclusive and adaptive forest governance.

### Free, Prior and Informed Consent

We fully adhere to the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), as defined by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and recognised in international sustainability frameworks, including the IFC Performance Standard 7. This principle underpins our CIB Policy Document on FPIC, which outlines the internal process for respecting the self-determination of IPLCs.

FPIC is embedded throughout the project cycle:

- **Free:** Participation is entirely voluntary and free of intimidation or manipulation.
- **Prior:** Engagement takes place before any decision is made or action initiated.
- **Informed:** Communities are provided with comprehensive, understandable, and culturally appropriate information.
- **Consent:** Communities have the right to say yes or no—and to have that decision respected.

Our Plantation, Concession & Farms Code reinforces this by requiring that FPIC processes be implemented as part of all Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA) prior to land acquisition or project development.

## FSC and PEFC Certification Standards

Our inclusive engagement strategy is also framed by its commitments under the FSC<sup>1</sup> (Forest Stewardship Council) and PEFC™ (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) systems. Both certification frameworks require rigorous adherence to social standards, including:

- Respect for the customary rights and cultural identity of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities;
- Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) before undertaking activities that may affect community rights or resources;
- Effective stakeholder engagement and inclusive decision-making mechanisms;
- Culturally appropriate grievance procedures and conflict resolution pathways.

In addition, FSC encourages the development of innovative approaches to community involvement, while PEFC promotes continuous improvement in the implementation of participatory governance models.

Our adherence to these schemes ensures that our inclusive engagement efforts are both auditable and adaptive, reinforcing Olam Agri's commitment to rights-based forestry and long-term trust with local communities.

## IFC Performance Standards

Olam Agri's Wood Business aligns its practices with the International Finance Corporation's Performance Standards, particularly:

- **PS1 (Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts):** Guiding the early identification of potential impacts and the development of effective stakeholder engagement plans.
- **PS7 (Indigenous Peoples):** Recognising the distinct rights, vulnerabilities, and cultural identities of Indigenous communities and requiring not only consultation but benefit-sharing, culturally appropriate development, and protection of critical spiritual and cultural values.

Under these standards, we commit to:

- **Avoid adverse impacts** and, where unavoidable, to mitigate and compensate them;
- **Establish grievance mechanisms** tailored to the needs and customs of affected IPLCs;
- **Support the development priorities** and economic empowerment of these communities, as defined by the communities themselves.

These standards are not aspirational—they are embedded in our operational culture and practices. They are applied through environmental and socio-economic baseline studies, participatory social assessments, FPIC procedures, and a suite of operational tools adapted to each concession. While not formal Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) in the IFC sense, these instruments serve a comparable role in ensuring alignment between impact identification, community engagement, and adaptive management across our operations.

## Inclusion and Equity

Our Fair Employment Policy and Code of Conduct call for non-discrimination, gender equity, and respect for the rights of vulnerable groups including Indigenous Peoples, youth, and persons with disabilities. We apply these principles by:

- Ensuring equitable access to information and consultation processes;
- Proactively reaching out to marginalised voices within communities (e.g., Indigenous women, elders, youth);
- Avoiding elite capture in representation by supporting plural and transparent governance within communities.

We believe that inclusion is not an administrative check, but a core condition of legitimacy and sustainability.

<sup>1</sup> FSC-C014998/FSC-C128941/FSC-C104637/FSC-C156094/FSC-C005457

## Co-construction and Shared Ownership

Olam Agri's Wood Business's approach to community engagement goes beyond consultation. We promote a model of co-construction in which IPLCs contribute actively to the design and refinement of initiatives that affect their territories, livelihoods, and cultural identity.

This approach is reflected in several core practices:

- **Participatory land-use zoning**, especially for areas of settlement and traditional hunting. Through community consultations and mapping, we identify and protect spaces used for habitation, subsistence activities, and cultural purposes. These zones are formally designated in approved forest management plans and excluded from industrial operations. In practice, over 7% of our concession areas are legally reserved for traditional uses and excluded from logging.
- **Jointly developed social services and infrastructure**, based on locally expressed needs. These initiatives, while not yet led by formal community associations, are implemented in dialogue with community leaders and often in collaboration with technical partners or NGOs. They focus on areas such as education, health, and access to water.

- **Progressive integration of Indigenous knowledge** into planning tools, including participatory mapping of sacred trees, medicinal plant areas, and seasonal use zones. Although efforts to establish full-scale biodiversity co-monitoring have faced operational challenges, we remain committed to reactivating such initiatives in a culturally appropriate and technically feasible manner.

This model reflects our understanding that effective forest management requires meaningful collaboration with IPLCs. By incorporating community knowledge and priorities into planning and operations, we contribute to more responsive, context-aware, and socially accepted management outcomes.



# Typology of Concerned Communities and Specific Issues

In the Republic of Congo, we operate in remote forest concessions within the Sangha and Likouala departments, areas historically inhabited by a mosaic of communities who rely on the forest for their cultural identity, subsistence, and livelihoods.

Our engagement strategy distinguishes between Indigenous Peoples—mainly semi-nomadic groups such as the BaAka and Mbendjele—and Local Communities, primarily Bantu-speaking populations. Each group presents distinct characteristics, expectations, and vulnerabilities, requiring differentiated and context-sensitive engagement approaches.

## Indigenous Peoples: BaAka and Mbendjele

The Indigenous Peoples in our concessions, notably the BaAka and Mbendjele, are semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers whose identity is intimately tied to the forest. Their social systems, mobility patterns, spiritual practices, and customary governance differ significantly from those of sedentary local communities. As highlighted in various studies, their marginalisation is rooted in:

- **Historical dispossession from ancestral territories**—particularly in areas affected by state-led conservation or poorly regulated logging operations—has been well documented across the Congo Basin. While this has not occurred within our concessions in the Republic of Congo, the legacy of such experiences contributes to a climate of mistrust toward large-scale infrastructure in forest areas. We therefore approach all land-use planning processes with heightened sensitivity and a commitment to full community participation.
- **Underrepresentation** in decision-making processes, exacerbated by linguistic, cultural, and administrative barriers.
- **Discrimination and everyday racism**, both within the workplace and community settings.
- **Limited access to education and formal employment**, often compounded by low literacy levels and lack of ID documentation.

Mobility is another key factor: seasonal movements for hunting, gathering, and spiritual rituals are often misunderstood by external stakeholders, leading to

further exclusion from static village-based consultation mechanisms. Consequently, we aim to strengthen tools like mobile social teams, culturally appropriate consultation protocols, and flexible timelines for engagement.

## Local Bantu-speaking Communities

Local communities are typically sedentary and organised around villages with varying degrees of formal governance (chiefs, village councils, development committees). They may include:

- Long-settled communities with customary claims over agricultural land and water sources.
- Recently arrived migrants attracted by employment or trade opportunities around industrial sites (e.g. Pokola, Kabo, Loundougou).
- Mixed communities where Indigenous and Bantu groups cohabit, often with hierarchical social dynamics.

Key challenges affecting these groups include:

- **Access to infrastructure** (healthcare, schools, markets), particularly in remote sectors.
- **Frustration over uneven distribution of benefits** from forest exploitation or social investments.
- **Limited Access to Skilled Jobs.** Local communities, particularly youth, face restricted access to technical or supervisory positions due to systemic gaps in education and vocational training. While we promote inclusion through apprenticeships and partnerships, addressing this challenge requires broader investment and collaboration beyond the forestry sector.
- **Misunderstandings about company procedures**, particularly regarding how to submit requests or grievances.

These communities often demand formal recognition of their customary rights, improved transparency in benefit-sharing, and better representation in company-community dialogue structures.

## Women, Youth, and Marginalised Groups

Across both Indigenous and Local communities, gender and age-based inequalities are persistent. Studies emphasise that women—particularly Indigenous women—face:

- **Barriers to participation** in village assemblies due to cultural norms or domestic responsibilities.
- **Lack of dedicated platforms** to express their priorities, which are often linked to food security, maternal health, and children's education.
- **Limited employment opportunities**, especially in non-manual or supervisory roles.

Youth are similarly under-engaged, despite their potential role in building bridges between traditional knowledge and formal systems. Olam Agri is exploring youth-focused initiatives, including apprenticeships and participatory mapping with young community members.

## Spatial and Cultural Complexity

The spatial organisation of communities adds complexity to engagement. Many Indigenous groups occupy transitory settlements—often not recognised as official villages—and practice rotational or seasonal use of forest resources. Standard models of village-based engagement can therefore miss entire groups. Furthermore, in multi-ethnic localities, internal power imbalances often marginalise Indigenous voices within mixed consultation structures.

Robillard (2023) recommend tailored methods such as:

- **Mobile consultations**, adjusting to seasonal cycles.
- **Cultural mediators and social communicators**, drawn from within IPLC groups.
- **Multi-scalar mapping** to integrate both ecological and cultural territorial knowledge.

## Implications for Engagement

A typology-based approach helps us:

- Design fit-for-purpose communication tools (e.g. audio messages, oral testimonies, participatory theatre).
- Ensure equitable representation across community typologies in planning and monitoring committees.
- Develop gender-responsive and age-sensitive programming.
- Improve spatial targeting of interventions, such as health campaigns or livelihood initiatives.

This granular understanding of IPLCs is essential to uphold the principles of FPIC, avoid elite capture, and ensure that social programs align with the lived realities of diverse forest peoples. It also reinforces our responsibility, as laid out in the Olam Agri Code of Conduct and the Living Landscapes Policy, to promote equity and uphold human dignity across all segments of society.

# Our Wood Business Commitments

**Our engagement with IPLCs reflects both the practical realities of operating in remote forest landscapes** and our responsibility to ensure equitable, inclusive, and rights-based forest management. These commitments are articulated not only in our field practices but also in the foundational texts of our sustainability strategy and group-wide policies.

We recognise that forest-dependent communities are key partners in the stewardship of landscapes, and we are committed to ensuring their voices shape our operations, both directly and through institutional mechanisms. Our global Sustainability Strategy sets forth our ambition to become a model for inclusive, climate-resilient, and rights-based forestry in Central Africa. These commitments are further supported by our Code of Conduct, Human and Labour Rights Position Paper, and Living Landscapes Policy.

We commit to:

- **Recognising and protecting rights to land, resources, and cultural identity:** We acknowledge customary and spiritual ties to forests. Our FPIC Policy and operational planning processes aim to secure these rights through participatory mapping and co-managed access agreements.
- **Providing accessible and timely information:** Communication is tailored to local literacy levels, languages, and cultural contexts. Our teams prioritise oral exchanges, visual tools, and direct interactions to ensure information is clear and relevant. To strengthen two-way communication, we continue to develop the OKA project in the Republic of Congo, which distributes portable audio devices featuring messages on health, safety, community rights, and forest management. These recordings, co-created with community input, allow key information to reach remote villages even in the absence of our teams.
- **Ensuring meaningful participation in decision-making processes:** Participation is not limited to consultation. We support long-term structures of representation—such as joint committees and local social liaison teams—and we include IPLC representatives in forest management planning, zoning decisions, and the design of community projects.
- **Supporting the autonomy of communities to define their own development priorities:** Rather than imposing development models, we work with IPLCs to support locally driven initiatives—whether related to health, education, cultural preservation, or sustainable livelihoods. This includes facilitating dialogue with third-party donors and technical partners when communities wish to scale their own solutions.

## Case Example: Sapelli and the BaAka

In all our concessions, participatory mapping is systematically used to identify and protect the cultural and subsistence resources of IPLCs. This practice is governed by our internal procedure for identifying and safeguarding key resources and sensitive sites, and it forms the operational backbone of our FPIC approach.

For example, BaAka communities across Mimbeli-Ibenga, Loundougou-Toukoulaka, Kabo and Pokola FMUs have consistently identified sapelli trees as critical due to their role in hosting caterpillars, an essential seasonal food and cultural resource. Through participatory mapping, these trees are recorded with GPS and classified as nutritionally and spiritually important. They are then georeferenced and protected within annual harvest plans.

Building on Alice Vittoria's anthropological studies (2019–2021), our teams adapt consultations to match the semi-nomadic lifestyle of Indigenous communities. This includes:

- Visiting forest camps (langô) where community life takes place most of the year
- Ensuring the presence of BaAka-speaking liaison staff who understand cultural and linguistic codes
- Conducting mapping in small groups with icon-based tools to support non-literate participants

These efforts are not isolated. In all management units, participatory mapping sessions are conducted in coordination with the forest management team, and results are integrated into operational maps shared with harvesting and patrol teams. Other protected elements include:

- Sites for traditional medicine collection
- Sacred forests and ceremonial areas
- River pools used for fishing rituals

In some cases, such as in Kabo, communities have chosen to designate entire forest corridors as off-limits to logging to allow for traditional Molongo expeditions or seasonal camp migrations. These areas are now recognised in the management plan.

These practices reflect our belief that knowledge-sharing with IPLCs is not simply a procedural step, but a pathway to co-managing landscapes in a way that respects rights and ensures long-term ecosystem and cultural resilience.



# Implementation Mechanisms

**Effective engagement with IPLCs is supported by a structured, professional social services team and a suite of tools tailored to local realities.** The implementation mechanisms described below reflect years of field experience and a deliberate effort to embed international standards into day-to-day operations.

## Social Engagement Structure

In the Republic of Congo, our social department is organised into two operational hubs—Pokola and Enyellé—overseen by a Deputy Director for Social and Community Development. Each hub is led by a Social Services Manager, supported by thematic specialists in health, education, infrastructure, conflict resolution, and autochthonous engagement. The team includes:

- **Field officers specialised** in education, health, infrastructure, and social mediation
- **Indigenous social communicators**, who ensure culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach
- **Community focal points** in some villages, acting as local relays for information and project follow-up
- **A dedicated OKA project team** in charge of media production and outreach, including mobile audio content and community broadcasting

This structure ensures both depth of technical expertise and proximity to the field.

## Regular Assemblies and Adaptive Consultations

Each concession follows a structured consultation calendar, which includes:

- **Village assemblies** at least once per quarter
- **Langô consultations** adapted to seasonal mobility patterns of semi-nomadic groups
- **Feedback meetings** post-project implementation or following grievance resolution

These events are facilitated using multilingual and non-written formats to ensure inclusivity.

## Evidence of Impact

We conduct an average of 200 community engagement missions each year, covering a wide range of themes and objectives. These include awareness-raising on hygiene, environmental protection, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as economic monitoring and consultations linked to our operational footprint. Field teams also facilitate community dialogue around road maintenance participation, support the implementation of the Local Development Fund, help mediate conflicts, and conduct structured consultations on key forestry activities.

This consistent and multi-dimensional engagement ensures that our sustainability strategy remains anchored in local realities. It contributes to stronger awareness of rights and environmental issues, encourages active community participation in governance, and reinforces mutual accountability in forest management.

# Grievance Mechanisms and Structured Dialogue Platforms

**Our Wood Business has implemented a culturally appropriate and accessible grievance mechanism** that helps prevent conflicts and build trust by ensuring concerns are formally documented, addressed, and transparently resolved. Far beyond a compliance requirement, it is a response to the real need for IPLCs to be able to express concerns safely and be assured that their voices lead to action.

Our grievance mechanism aligns with several international standards and guidelines, including:

- **FSC Principles 2 and 4**, which call for transparent mechanisms to address concerns and conflicts related to tenure, use rights, and the impact of forestry operations.
- **Our Living Landscapes Policy and Supplier Code**, which reinforce the right of stakeholders to raise concerns confidentially and without fear of retaliation.
- **IFC Performance Standard 1**, which requires accessible, culturally appropriate grievance mechanisms as part of Environmental and Social Management Systems.

We designed the system to be inclusive and context-adapted, ensuring that even the most remote and marginalised groups can use it. Key features include:

- **Multiple access points:** community desks, mobile outreach by social staff, direct meetings, anonymous letters, and a dedicated grievance email.
- **Oral and visual channels:** recognising that many IPLCs are non-literate or prefer oral communication, the procedure accepts oral complaints.
- **Language and cultural accessibility:** Indigenous communicators and local liaison officers help bridge gaps in language and understanding.
- **Field validation and follow-up:** complaints are followed up through direct field visits, involving both the complainant and our multidisciplinary team, including social staff and where necessary, legal and operational leads.

Importantly, this mechanism is not limited to resolving conflicts—it plays a preventive and confidence-building role. Community members are encouraged to use it not only to report problems but also to propose improvements, clarify misunderstandings, or raise doubts about upcoming activities. This contributes to a culture of dialogue and transparency.

Finally, the existence of this system is regularly shared through village assemblies, mp3 players, and visual guides. Indigenous and local women, youth, and elders are specifically encouraged to use it, and the participation of these groups is monitored as part of our continuous improvement efforts.

This approach reinforces the principle that rights cannot be exercised without accessible recourse, and that accountability is essential to trust.

To support wide accessibility, the grievance procedure has been translated into local languages including Lingala, Mbendjele, and BaAka. These versions are used during information sessions, village assemblies, and by Indigenous communicators to facilitate understanding and use of the mechanism.

## Proactive Dialogue Platforms

Beyond grievance resolution, we have established proactive mechanisms for ongoing community dialogue:

- **Village Consultation Meetings:** Regular assemblies are held in nearly all villages and camps within our concessions. These meetings are facilitated by social liaison teams and allow community members to raise questions, share concerns, and receive updates on operations. Special attention is given to communities located near active logging areas, ensuring their increased involvement in forest management planning.
- **Support for Community Delegations:** When community representatives are formally invited

to Pokola for meetings with our management, their travel and accommodation are covered. This ensures meaningful dialogue while avoiding informal or unstructured visits by non-representative groups.

- **Stakeholder Engagement Plan:** We maintain an active stakeholder engagement strategy, aligned with international best practices. It enables structured dialogue with local authorities, NGOs, ministries, and technical partners, reinforcing collective ownership of development goals and joint coordination on key topics such as health, education, and biodiversity protection.

# Operational and Institutional Tools for Community Involvement

**We implement a wide range of institutional and operational tools to ensure effective and inclusive involvement of IPLCs.** These tools are designed to foster meaningful participation across all stages of engagement—from consultation and planning to implementation and monitoring. They have evolved based on community feedback, field realities, and international best practices.

## Institutional Platforms

- **Social Services Department:** Our internal team for community engagement is composed of two regionally based units (Pokola and Enyellé), led by a Deputy Director based in Pokola. It ensures coordination of social procedures and partnerships, and oversight of consultation, FPIC, grievance resolution, and health access protocols.
- **Community Development Councils:** Legally mandated for each FMU, these councils bring together community leaders, civil society, local authorities, and CIB to guide development priorities. They also manage the Local Development Fund, which is financed by a 200 FCFA/m<sup>3</sup> contribution from CIB.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Formalised through MOUs with NGOs, public institutions, and donors, these partnerships enable technical cooperation, co-financing of programs, and third-party monitoring.

## Operational Engagement Tools

- **FPIC Implementation:** Our FPIC Policy, aligned with FSC guidelines, outlines processes for obtaining free, prior, and informed consent from IPLCs. This includes participatory mapping, culturally appropriate dialogues, and ongoing monitoring.
- **Grievance Mechanism:** Our multi-channel grievance system offers accessible, culturally sensitive routes for complaints and feedback. It is translated into Lingala, Mbandjélé, and BaAka to ensure broad understanding.
- **LISANGA Database:** This internal platform, launched in 2019, documents all village-level data and field activities. It tracks project implementation, grievances, socio-economic surveys, and cultural mappings, and supports planning and reporting.

- **Participatory Mapping and Site Protection:** A specific procedure enables communities to identify and protect sacred sites, subsistence zones, and culturally significant resources (e.g. caterpillar trees, burial grounds). These areas are georeferenced and excluded from harvesting.
- **Project OKA:** This communication initiative distributes solar-powered audio devices to villages, preloaded with multilingual recordings (Lingala, Mbandjélé) on health, rights, forestry laws, and practical life topics. Content is co-designed with communities and updated regularly.
- **Participatory Wildlife Management (PROGEPP):** In collaboration with WCS and the Ministry of Forest Economy, we support village wildlife committees and zonation for regulated hunting. These mechanisms combine biodiversity protection with respect for traditional practices.

## Support to Community Structures and Autonomy

- **Village Internship Program:** Each year, up to 20 youths from IPLC villages are selected for internships in forestry, industry, and services. This initiative bridges education gaps and facilitates long-term employability.
- **Health Access Measures:** We support vulnerable populations through reduced medical fees, Indigenous patient facilitators, and nutrition support. These voluntary measures complement national healthcare systems.

## Spotlight: Inclusive Health Measures – Promoting Equity through Targeted Medical Support

Healthcare provision is a recurring and structured part of our engagement model, particularly in areas where public health infrastructure remains limited or unevenly accessible. In our operating areas, public health infrastructure remains largely insufficient, and Indigenous and vulnerable populations face systemic barriers to accessing care.

In response, we have implemented a suite of voluntary, equity-based healthcare measures, developed in coordination with local communities and frontline health workers. These include:

- **Free medical care for Indigenous patients** is provided across all CIB-run clinics, eliminating cost barriers to essential health services.
- **Appointment of dedicated Indigenous patient facilitators** at the Pokola clinic. Fluent in local languages and trained in intercultural mediation, these facilitators help patients navigate services, understand diagnoses and treatments, and reconcile traditional beliefs with modern medicine.
- **Nutritional support programmes** for undernourished children and adult patients, including the provision of free meals for hospitalised BaAka individuals and their accompanying family members, as well as the distribution of supplements in cases of severe malnutrition.

- **Partial or full medical coverage** for vulnerable patients, including those in isolation or in emergency situations.
- **A dedicated boarding facility**, inaugurated in 2023 next to the Pokola hospital, to accommodate Indigenous patients and their relatives during extended treatment periods. This facility improves access to continuity of care for individuals from remote forest camps.

These services are governed by the “CIB Procedure on Support for Vulnerable Persons in Medical Facilities” and are monitored by the social team in coordination with the medical staff.

Importantly, these interventions are not imposed—they are co-designed with Indigenous communities and adjusted over time through feedback mechanisms such as post-visit debriefings and community health dialogues. By centring cultural sensitivity and patient agency, we seek not only to deliver care, but to restore trust and dignity in the health system.

- **Social Request Management:** A structured procedure governs the intake and review of community requests. Each is assessed based on its social utility and sustainability, and tracked in our internal database.
- **Water Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) Projects:** We finance health and hygiene initiatives based on local needs and community input, including safe water systems and malaria prevention campaigns.

These tools and structures collectively uphold our inclusive engagement model, emphasising transparency, co-construction, and durable partnerships with IPLCs.



## Spotlight: WASH Initiatives – Dignity, Health, and Community Ownership

Since 2020, we integrated water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) actions into its broader engagement strategy, in response to priorities identified during village assemblies. These initiatives are not delivered top-down—they are co-designed and implemented with local communities to ensure ownership and long-term sustainability.

Key interventions include the construction of wells and eco-friendly latrines, the establishment of water management committees, and widespread

hygiene promotion campaigns. Every WASH installation comes with a training package for maintenance and management, empowering villagers to care for the facilities. Special attention is given to the needs of women and Indigenous groups, ensuring that access is equitable and that hygiene messaging respects cultural norms.

These WASH projects are a strong example of how co-designed infrastructure contributes to improved public health and reinforces the credibility of the engagement process.

## Feedback and Accountability Mechanisms

Our Wood Business' engagement with IPLCs includes mechanisms to monitor the relevance and quality of its actions over time. In addition to formal grievance procedures, regular feedback is collected through post-project meetings, thematic consultations, and informal debriefings led by the social teams. These processes help identify gaps, address misunderstandings, and adjust implementation practices where necessary.

Engagement outcomes and social performance are also assessed through external audits, including annual evaluations under the FSC and PEFC certification schemes, and through due diligence reviews conducted by clients and regulatory actors.

# 2025–2030 Vision and Strategic Alignment

**This Inclusive Engagement Strategy outlines our priorities for strengthening our social commitments over the period 2025–2030.** It translates company-wide objectives into an actionable framework that reinforces rights-based governance and community participation in forest management.

The strategy is aligned with our Sustainability Strategy, the Living Landscapes Policy, and operational tools such as the FPIC Policy, the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, and the Grievance Mechanism. Together, these instruments form the institutional foundation of our inclusive engagement efforts.

Between 2025 and 2030, our Wood Business will prioritise the following areas:

- **Enhancing participatory methodologies** to ensure community engagement processes are consistent, responsive, and adapted to local realities.
- **Developing evaluation tools and indicators** to monitor the quality and outcomes of community relations, including participation levels, grievance resolution, and the relevance of social support initiatives.

- **Consolidating performance monitoring systems** that track social impact over time and support reporting to both internal and external stakeholders.
- **Strengthening internal systems and staff capacities** to integrate community feedback into operational planning and continuous improvement efforts.

This strategy will be reviewed and updated periodically based on field experience, third-party audits, and direct input from communities. We see inclusive engagement not as a one-time effort but as an evolving responsibility embedded in the governance of our forest operations.

# Reference documents

- Olam Agri's Wood Business Sustainability Strategy 2025
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#### Olam Agri

7 Straits View, Marina One East,  
Tower #20-01, Singapore 018936  
T +65 6339 4100