

News Release

Olam announces a N300m investment to set up community seed enterprises to increase wheat production in Nigeria

- ***Will trial heat-tolerant varieties and create economic opportunities for women farmers***

Lagos, Nigeria, 27 October 2021 – Olam, and its subsidiary Crown Flour Mill Limited (CFM), have launched a N300 million (US \$750,000) 10-year project to set up community seed enterprises for Nigerian farmers to increase their production of wheat.

This wheat value chain project will strengthen agricultural production in northern Nigeria's wheat farming belt and underlines Olam's commitment to supporting the country's goal of achieving self-sufficiency in food production.

The project will trial new heat-tolerant varieties of wheat and improved agronomic practices using a participatory approach that directly engages farmers. It will also engage at least 10 female farmers' associations to become true drivers of change for their communities by training women to lead community-based seed enterprises. These enterprises will produce and make available high value seed to farmers in their local communities.

The female farmers' associations will be trained on the most advanced agronomic practices for wheat cultivation so these can provide valuable advice to local growers. Periodic feedback sessions will be scheduled between the women farmers, the research organisations and the value chain stakeholders on the status of cultivation to identify areas for change and innovation. This simple concept of "seeds and thoughts" is aimed at facilitating the adoption of new technologies and increasing economic opportunities for rural women.

Commenting on the launch of the project, Ashish Pande, Managing Director of CFM: said, "In order to ensure the long-term viability of the wheat sector in Nigeria, it is critical to identify and support the development of high-yielding local wheat varieties. This project will further stimulate the federal government's drive towards the attainment of economic growth, the country's agricultural research capabilities, employment generation, community development and the economic empowerment of women in Nigeria."

This wheat value-chain project is the outcome of extensive high-level consultations with key stakeholders, following the successful inaugural Olam Green Land Webinar Series held in March. It will involve a partnership with key stakeholders including the Lake Chad Research Institute (LCRI), and Dr Filippo M Bassi, Senior Scientist, Durum Wheat Breeder of the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA).

Speaking on the partnership, Dr. Kachalla Kyari Mala, Principal Research Officer, Lake Chad Research Institute, said: “The Institute is delighted to be a part of this intervention, as it represents a laudable private sector financial support and contribution to all the work done and other ongoing research endeavours by the LCRI in the area of wheat development.”

The “community-based or village-based seed enterprises” to be employed by Olam on this project is a scalable strategy developed originally for Ethiopia by ICARDA’s scientists, where it has shown great success. ICARDA has since expanded its application to the river systems of Sudan, Senegal and Mauritania.

Dr. Filippo Bassi, who was also a recipient of the Olam Prize for Innovation in Food Security in 2017 said: “The selection of female farmer associations as community enterprises is premised on the fact that investing in rural women has proven to yield nearly double the development outcomes than previously done so. Women farmers are conscientious with their use of income, deploying it wisely, re-investing it in innovations and seeking the betterment of the whole community. African women are the true glue that keep the community together.”

About Olam Nigeria and Crown Flour Mill

Olam Nigeria

Olam Nigeria is a leading agri-business working along the value chain from growing and sourcing raw commodities, to processing, exporting and distribution, and the manufacturing of consumer-packaged foods. With offices across all the geopolitical zones of the Nigerian Federation, Olam Nigeria has a wide and growing network of farmers, suppliers, wholesalers, customers and service providers. Today this network encompasses over 500,000 smallholder farmers for whom we have created thousands of jobs in indirect employment.

Crown Flour Mill

Crown Flour Mill is a subsidiary of Olam International, a leading food and agri-business based in Singapore. At the time of its acquisition in 2010, Crown Flour Mill had 2 operating factories in Lagos and Warri with only 2 products Flour and Semolina.

It has since grown its offerings to cater to consumer and market preferences. Its product offerings now consists of a consumer-focused portfolio with a wide range of Pasta and Semolina options and a Business-to-Business focused portfolio offering various types of Flour. These include Bread, Noodles and Confectionary flour. CFM has also expanded its operational footprint to 10 processing plants across the country

Through its purpose to ‘Re-imagine Global Agriculture and Food Systems’, the Olam group aims to address the many challenges involved in meeting the needs of a growing global population, while achieving positive impact for farming communities, our planet and all our stakeholders.

More information on Crown Flour Mill can be found at www.crowncfm.com

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