



Business People training Business People

14 years fostering smallholders on the path towards sustainable palm oil production.

Palmas del Ixcan (Agroindustria Palmera San Roman, S.A.), is an agro-industrial company dedicated to the cultivation of palm oil, which is located in northern Guatemala.

The company was born in 2007, being an inclusive project, in a rural area of the country that had been quite forgotten in terms of investment, because they were places where the period of the internal armed conflict was lived very intensely, leaving it in the underdevelopment with little investment in infrastructure, education, health, housing, and few opportunities for communities.

Seeking the development of smallholders and generating livelihoods for the long term, since 2009, a program for oil palm smallholders began, with investment from the central government, producers and our company. Each one of the smallholders owns their land, and the cultivation of palm is an additional alternative to the traditional crops of the area.

Our company has established a governance model through which, from the Coordination of the Small Producers Program of the company, they are provided with technical assistance, continuous training, financing for the purchase of fertilizers. They are provided with basic infrastructure, logistical support in fruit collection, so that, thus, it is ensured that they can sell their fruit.

They are continuously trained in the best agricultural and sustainability practices, but also in business issues, hand in hand to make them part of a formal economy. Hence the name "**Business People training Business People**", transcending from just a commercial relationship, to a relationship that allows productivity, development of people, communities and the environment.

Currently, in an area of 1,500 hectares, there are 100 smallholders, providing 350 formal jobs and palm oil being the livelihood for 96 families.

In 2020, our company was certified under the RSPO standard, and now, with the support of different organizations such as Solidaridad, Cargill, Oleon, Proforest, we are accompanying and developing the studies of smallholders to advance in their RSPO certification process. We hope that, in 2024, we will be able to take the first group of producers to the first RSPO certification audit.

Recognizing the importance of ensuring sustainable production, deforestation-free, in 2019 together with the Palm Oil Growers Association -GREPALMA-, as a company, we adhere to the **Zero Deforestation Voluntary Commitment**; but we needed to involve our entire supply chain as well. That's why we supported smallholders to generate their polygons and thus have them georeferenced with accuracy and precision.

In 2020, Grepalma and Satelligence began satellite monitoring of the country's palm growing areas, and we, as Palmera San Román, voluntarily handed over all our polygons including our smallholders in order to be

monitored. To date, Satelligence has reported 0 hectares deforested for the growth of palm cultivation in our operations and supply chain, putting us in a better position of compliance in the international market. We will continue to work with this satellite monitoring.

This innovative relationship model between the company, producers and support institutions is essential to ensure the continuous improvement and sustainability of our operations.

Our responsibility with sustainable production transcends our own company and is inclusive of our supply chain. We believe that it is the right way to move forward and maintain traceability, shared responsibility and assure sustainable production of palm oil.

At the fair, we would like to share all the challenges and opportunities that we have been facing over the last 14 years, and inspire other companies and allies to broaden the vision of the business model, being inclusive and promoting the sustainable development of oil palm.