

1 **SALSA: Sustainable Agricultural Systems in Southeast Asia**
2 **Building Research and Training Networks on Sustainable Development Goals**
3

4 Jean-Marc Roda¹, Marcel Djama², Shaufique F. Sidique², Paridah Md. Tahir² and Alain
5 Rival^{5*}

6
7
8 ¹ Cirad-UPM, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Jalan Upm, 43400 Serdang, Selangor,
9 Malaysia

10 ² UPM, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Jalan Upm, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

11 ³ Cirad Regional Direction for SouthEast Asian Island Countries, Jakarta, Indonesia.
12

13 *Corresponding author. E-mail: alain.rival@cirad.fr
14

15 **Abstract**

16 The issue of sustainability of tropical commodity chains is a major issue in Southeast
17 Asia. The recurrent public debate around the impacts of oil palm cultivation, in
18 particular, crystallizes opinions and has direct consequences on the relationship
19 between importing and producing countries with many direct and indirect
20 consequences, both on the diplomatic and economic areas.

21 The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals,
22 are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all
23 people enjoy peace and prosperity.

24 In order to realize SDG ambitions in the field of sustainable commodity chains,
25 CIRAD and its regional partners are setting up a partnership platform for the
26 construction of scientific projects and training curricula in South-East Asia, a region
27 of the world where problems related to the sustainability of major agricultural sectors
28 are particularly prominent (deforestation, rural poverty reduction, family farming,
29 etc.).

30 SALSA (Sustainable Agricultural Landscapes in Southeast Asia) aims at regionally
31 federating and mobilizing scientific and training skills on the sustainability of
32 perennial crops sectors. SALSA will promote, within a framework of collective
33 action, the concrete integration of disciplines and multi-stakeholder teams into
34 research, training and development projects that will be conducted on the ground
35 through shared experimental networks and academic and training curricula tailored to
36 the needs for present and future skills.
37

38
39 **Key words:** Sustainability - Agricultural development - Land use change - Plantation
40 management – Standards.
41

42
43 **Background**
44

45 On March 28-30, 2017, Dr Michel Eddi, CEO of CIRAD, joined the President of the
46 French Republic François Hollande during his State visit to Southeast Asia. On this
47 occasion, he initiated with several CIRAD partners the construction of the SALSA
48 (Sustainable Agricultural Landscapes in Southeast Asia) partnership platform
49 dedicated to the sustainability of perennial crop systems throughout the region. The

50 launch of this ambitious scientific platform, in which training will be a pivotal
51 component, was formalized by the signing of two multilateral agreements, under the
52 patronage of the French Head of State, in the presence of the Prime Minister of the
53 Government of Malaysia and the President of the Republic of Indonesia.

54

55

56 **Sustainability of tropical commodity chains is at the heart of the public debate**

57

58 The sustainability of tropical commodity chains is a major issue in Southeast Asia.
59 The recurrent public debate around the impacts of oil palm cultivation, in particular,
60 crystallizes public opinions and this has direct consequences on the relationship
61 between importing and producing countries, with many direct and indirect
62 consequences, both on the diplomatic and economic areas.

63 This situation was reflected at several recent occasions. Indeed, French Parliament
64 discussions on a law proposal suggesting a high differential taxation of palm, palm
65 kernel and coconut oils resulted after several weeks of public debate in a proposal for
66 the exemption from any taxation for certified sustainable vegetable oils. Indonesia and
67 Malaysia, the world's two largest palm oil producers, opposed such a tax, saying it
68 was discriminatory and broke international trade rules. The proposal was finally
69 canceled but the public debate is still present.

70 Indeed, on 6 July 2017 the French Minister for the Ecological and Inclusive
71 Transition, Mr Nicolas Hulot, presented its Government's Climate Plan. One of its
72 recommendations, among many others, was to "Stop importing products that
73 contribute to deforestation: imports of products that are bringing about the destruction
74 of the world's three major tropical rainforests (Amazonia, South-East Asia and Congo
75 Basin) will be swiftly brought to a halt." The Plan did not detail measures envisaged
76 but Minister Hulot said he wanted to stop "imported deforestation" in France, citing
77 unsustainable soybean and palm oil production in the countries of origin.

78 Such decisions were quickly interpreted in Indonesia and Malaysia as protectionist
79 measures backed by European oilseed industries, lightning another fire in already
80 turbulent diplomatic and trade relationship.

81

82

83 **Filling huge knowledge gaps**

84

85 The regional burning issues addressed by such an opinionated public debate include
86 major topics such as deforestation and recurrent haze, the traceability of tropical
87 commodity chains (palm oil, timber, rubber ...) or the credibility of sustainability
88 standards.

89 Such issues are rooted in basic questions addressed to agricultural R&D, which are
90 not exactly new, but increasingly of shared and major concern. Indeed, developers
91 and decision makers must still make choices about which type of agricultural
92 developmental they adopt for their district, region, or country: agricultural
93 development *vs* conservation of natural spaces; intensive monoculture *vs* agroforestry;
94 agroindustrial estates *vs* family farming and more broadly: performance *vs* resilience.
95 Science experts and stakeholders now all agree on the existing lack of shared
96 knowledge and common basis of training and R&D about sustainable agricultural
97 development in SouthEast Asia.

98 Thanks to their extensive scientific expertise in perennial crops, CIRAD and its
99 partners in the Global South explore the necessary changes in tropical agricultural

100 sectors in the three components of sustainability: economic, social and environmental.
101 Drawing on more than sixty years of research in tropical agricultural sectors and,
102 beyond that, on an historical involvement in plant breeding and sustainable
103 management of plantations, CIRAD's work is aiming at providing stakeholders with
104 robust and credible research outputs which generate knowledge about sustainable
105 production systems able at reducing negative impacts on people and their
106 environment.

107
108

109 **Building on Sustainable Development Goals**

110

111 The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals,
112 are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all
113 people enjoy peace and prosperity.

114 These 17 Goals build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals, while
115 including new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation,
116 sustainable consumption, peace and justice, among other priorities. The goals are
117 interconnected – often the key to success on one will involve tackling issues more
118 commonly associated with another.

119 The SDGs work in the spirit of partnership and pragmatism to make the right choices
120 now to improve life, in a sustainable way, for future generations. They provide clear
121 guidelines and targets for all countries to adopt in accordance with their own priorities
122 and the environmental challenges of the world at large. The SDGs are an inclusive
123 agenda. They tackle the root causes of poverty and unite us together to make a
124 positive change for both people and planet. “Poverty eradication is at the heart of the
125 2030 Agenda, and so is the commitment to leave no-one behind,” UNDP
126 Administrator Achim Steiner said. “The Agenda offers a unique opportunity to put the
127 whole world on a more prosperous and sustainable development path. In many ways,
128 it reflects what UNDP was created for.”

129
130

131 **The SALSA Platform**

132

133 In order to realize SDG ambitions in the field of sustainable commodity chains,
134 CIRAD and regional partners are setting up a partnership platform for the
135 construction of scientific projects and training curricula with its public and private
136 partners in, South-East Asia, a region of the world where problems related to the
137 sustainability of major agricultural sectors are particularly prominent (deforestation,
138 rural poverty reduction, family farming, etc.).

139 SALSA (Sustainable Agricultural Landscapes in Southeast Asia) aims at regionally
140 federating and mobilizing scientific and training skills on the sustainability of
141 perennial crops sectors. SALSA will promote, within a framework of collective
142 action, the concrete integration of disciplines and multi-stakeholder teams into
143 research, training and development projects that will be conducted on the ground
144 through shared experimental networks and academic and training curricula tailored to
145 the needs for present and future skills.

146 According to Michel Eddi, CIRAD's CEO: "The question is of being able to propose
147 frameworks of actions and instruments to the public authorities and economic and
148 social actors, in countries from both global North and South, making it possible to
149 progress substantially towards the Sustainability objective, which today is not

150 achieved. The aims are to enrich the incentive tools in the context of public policies in
151 order to promote sustainability, to improve and to make some convergence in the
152 existing certification systems and to set up independent observatories aimed at
153 qualifying and assessing progress made by all actors at the service of this collective
154 ambition. "

155

156

157 **Building an active network of partners SouthEast Aia**

158

159 Partnership research is the backbone of CIRAD's work in developing and emerging
160 countries. CIRAD action is most often structured around multidisciplinary platforms
161 designed to answer to major questions of regional interest which are related to
162 agricultural development. The most successful form of this partnership is the creation
163 of a partnership arrangement with all the actors involved.

164 In Malaysia, CIRAD has developed a network of partners which is building since
165 2009 on the assignment of research officers to Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). The
166 first circle of members involved in the construction of the SALSA platform consists
167 of Universiti Putra Malaysia, the ASAHIL network of ASEAN Universities and the
168 University of Montpellier, France.

169 In Indonesia, the founding members of SALSA are the two plantation companies PT
170 SMART and PT Socfindo, which have long been engaged with CIRAD on field
171 research on the sustainability of oil palm and rubber plantations. Another member is
172 PT RPN, the national plantation crop research network, and also the Asian Pacific
173 Coconut Community, the regional association of coconut-producing countries, an
174 institutional partner under the aegis of the United Nations.

175 New institutional partners, universities, research centers, private institutions or NGOs
176 will gradually be integrated around this initial nucleus, including from other countries
177 in the region such as Thailand, Singapore and The Philippines.

178

179

180 **Academic and vocational training are key component of SALSA**

181

182 In order to meet the expectations of partners, both public (development of academic
183 curricula on themes related to sustainable development) and private (strong demand
184 for plantation managers trained on the basis of the sustainability of practices and
185 certification standards), the SALSA Partnership Platform will have an important pillar
186 centered on training through research.

187 The expected results of the establishment of a network of partners with
188 complementary and international skills in South-East Asia will be:

189 1. Initial and life long training on sustainable practices for plantation and
190 cooperative managers, sustainability managers and R&D staff, based on a
191 common understanding of ideas and concepts for sustainable development,
192 based on SDGs ;

193 2. Science-based evidence for the strengthening and improvement of current and
194 future sustainability standards for major commodity chains in the region (palm
195 oil as a start, but also, rubber, timber, coconut, etc...);

196 3. The production of knowledge and innovations following international
197 excellence standards, capable of delivering reliable answers to the questions
198 posed by the producers, the civil society and the decision-makers, both in
199 producer and consumer countries.

200

201 **An agenda for action**

202

203 Following the signature of Letters of Intention by major SALSA partners on March
204 2017, the action plan now is to work together and then agree on two pivotal founding
205 documents:

206 i) the **SALSA Consortium Agreement** which will provide the first circle
207 of partners with a legal framework and

208 ii) a shared and ambitions **SALSA Scientific Project** of common interest
209 which will describe the future avenues for research and development,
210 their specific milestones and timely expected outputs for end-users.

211 iii)

212 The coming steps will thus involve a series of Seminars and Workshops aimed at
213 clarifying any questions about common goals and governance of the partnership and
214 prioritised actions emerging from discussions among partners.

215 Such seminars have already been organised at Cirad in Montpellier (internal meeting)
216 in July 2017, followed by a meeting on SALSA involment in Masters Curricula
217 organised at UPM Faculty of Agriculture in Malaysia in October 2017.

218 During the coming months, other seminars will be organised on both a national and
219 regional basis as side events of major conferences on the topic of sustainable
220 landscapes in the region (RSPO RT15, ICOPE 2018, etc ...).

221

222 Meanwhile the continuous advocacy of the SALSA concept to major donors such as
223 EU, AFD or FAO is going on.

224

225

226

References

227

228 The SALSA Platform

229 <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>

230

231 The Sustainable Development Goals:

232 <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>

233

234



SALSA - Sustainable Agricultural Systems in Southeast Asia



Building Research and Training Networks on Sustainable Development Goals

Jean-Marc Roda, Marcel Djama, Shaufique F. Sidique, Paridah Md. Tahir, and Alain Rival
Cirad / UPM
Phitsanulok, 13 december 2017



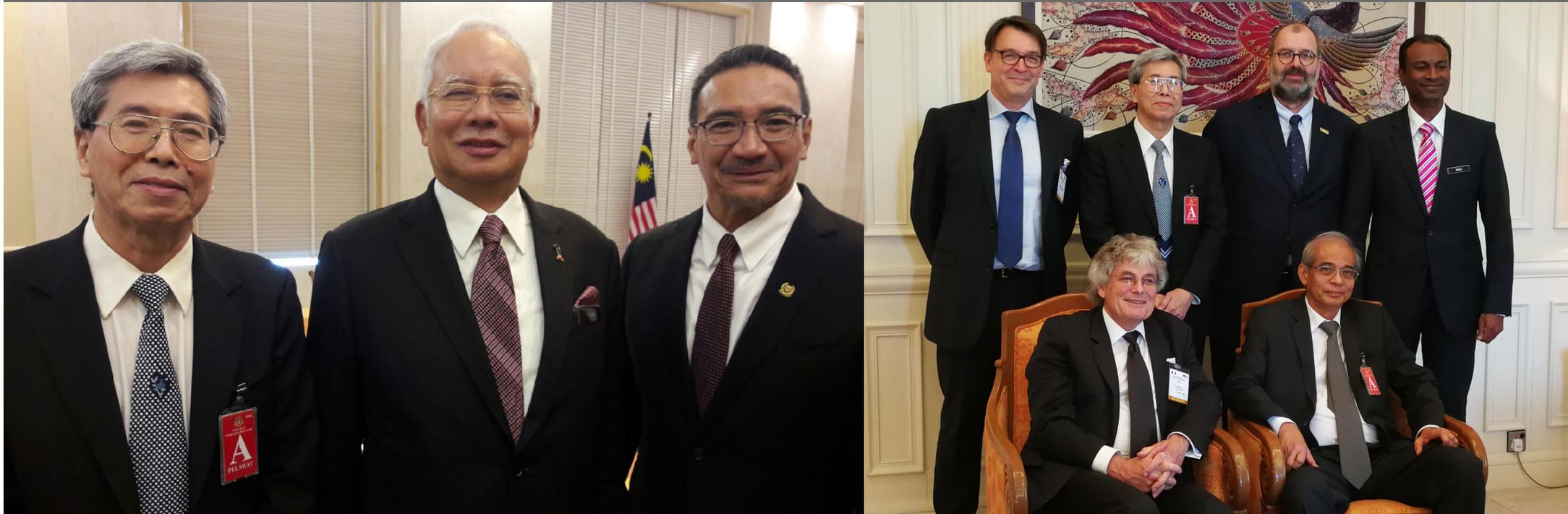
Cirad: A public mandate for agricultural research



- CIRAD is the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development
- A public research centre working with developing countries to tackle international agricultural and development issues.
- Research programs at CIRAD involve life sciences, social sciences and engineering sciences, applied to agriculture, food and rural territories.
- A staff of 1800, including 800 research officers.
- Joint operations with more than 90 countries.
- 12 regional offices in metropolitan France, the French overseas regions and tropical countries.
- A 200 million € budget.
- 5 million € spent on PhD training for 800 research and technical staff worldwide.



SALSA - Sustainable Agricultural Systems in Southeast Asia

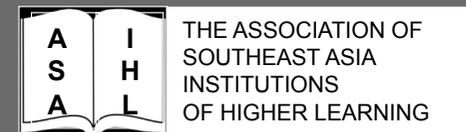




SALSA – Official launch, 28-29 Mars 2017

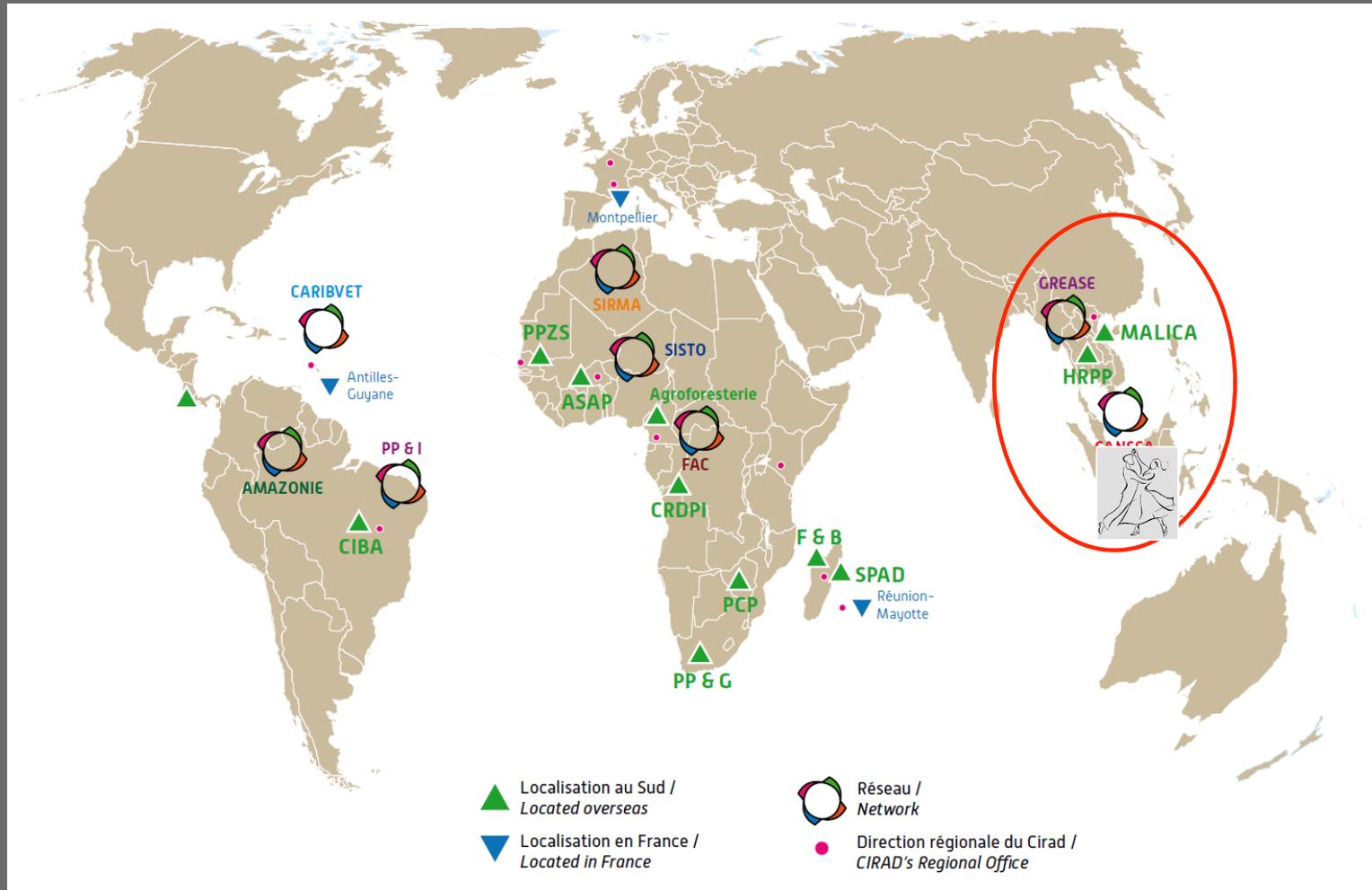


In Malaysia, Cirad developed a network of partners, started in 2009 with the position of scientists at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). The first circle of members is formed by **Universiti Putra Malaysia, ASAHIL, and Montpellier University.**



In Indonesia, SALSA members are **two plantation companies: PT SMART et PT Socfindo**, engagées de longue date avec le Cirad sur des recherches de terrain consacrés à la durabilité de l'exploitation du palmier à huile et de l'hévéa, and **PT RPN, the national research network on plantation crops, and the Asian Pacific Coconut Community, a partner under the umbrella of United Nations.**

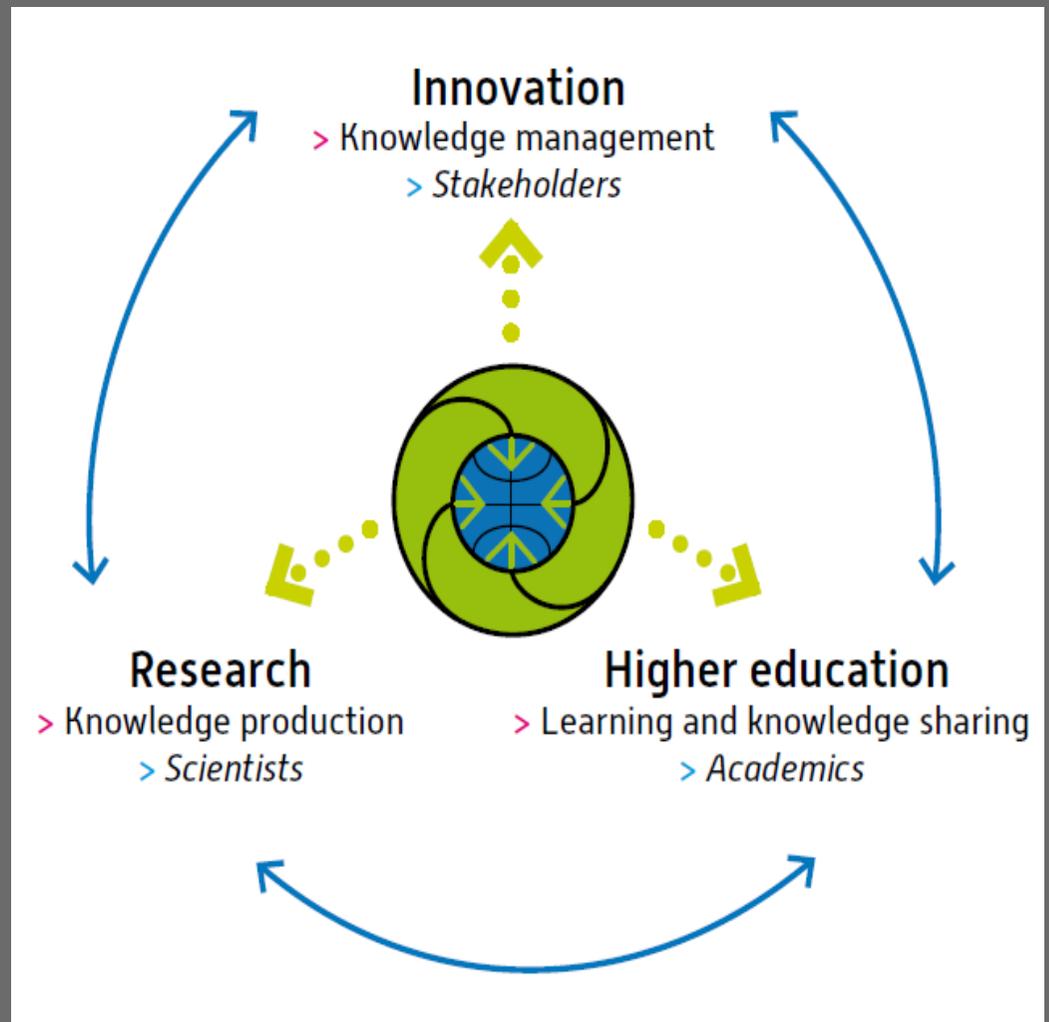




4 Partnership Platforms in SEA

A Platform in Partnership for research and training

- A group of partners and the desire to work together
- Shared outlooks and objectives
- The long-term commitment of human, material and financial resources to achieve the objectives
- A shared research theme
- A defined geographical area
- A critical mass of multiple competences and activities.





They are all different

- Come in various size and colours
- Are definitely out of infancy
- Can gather various groups of stakeholders
- Are living adaptable organisms
- Maintain permanent brainstorming

They share many common traits

- Tackle key agricultural issues in SEA
- Revolving chairs governance
- Generate world-class research results
- Importance of training and capacity building
- Provide an education to collaborative research
- Prepare partnership to burgeoning projects
- Inclusive approach of collaborative research



Several burning issues...

- Deforestation/Haze
- Traceability in tropical chains (palm oil, timber ...)
- Credibility of sustainability standards
- Lack of shared knowledge
- Common basis of training and R&D



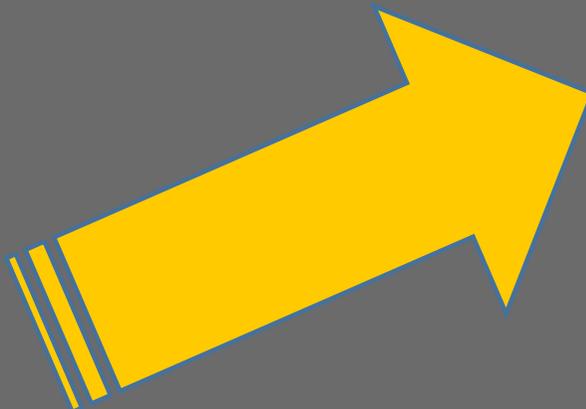
... rooted in basic questions to R&D

- Agricultural development vs Conservation
- Intensive monoculture vs Agroforestry
- Agroindustrial estates vs Family Farming
- Performance vs Resilience

BILATERAL
PRIVATE
PARTNERSHIP
SEA
PT SMART
SOCFINDO
Oil palm
commodity chain

BILATERAL
PRIVATE
PARTNERSHIP
EUROPE
FRENCH ALLIANCE
FOR SUSTAINABLE
PALM OIL
Oil palm commodity
chain

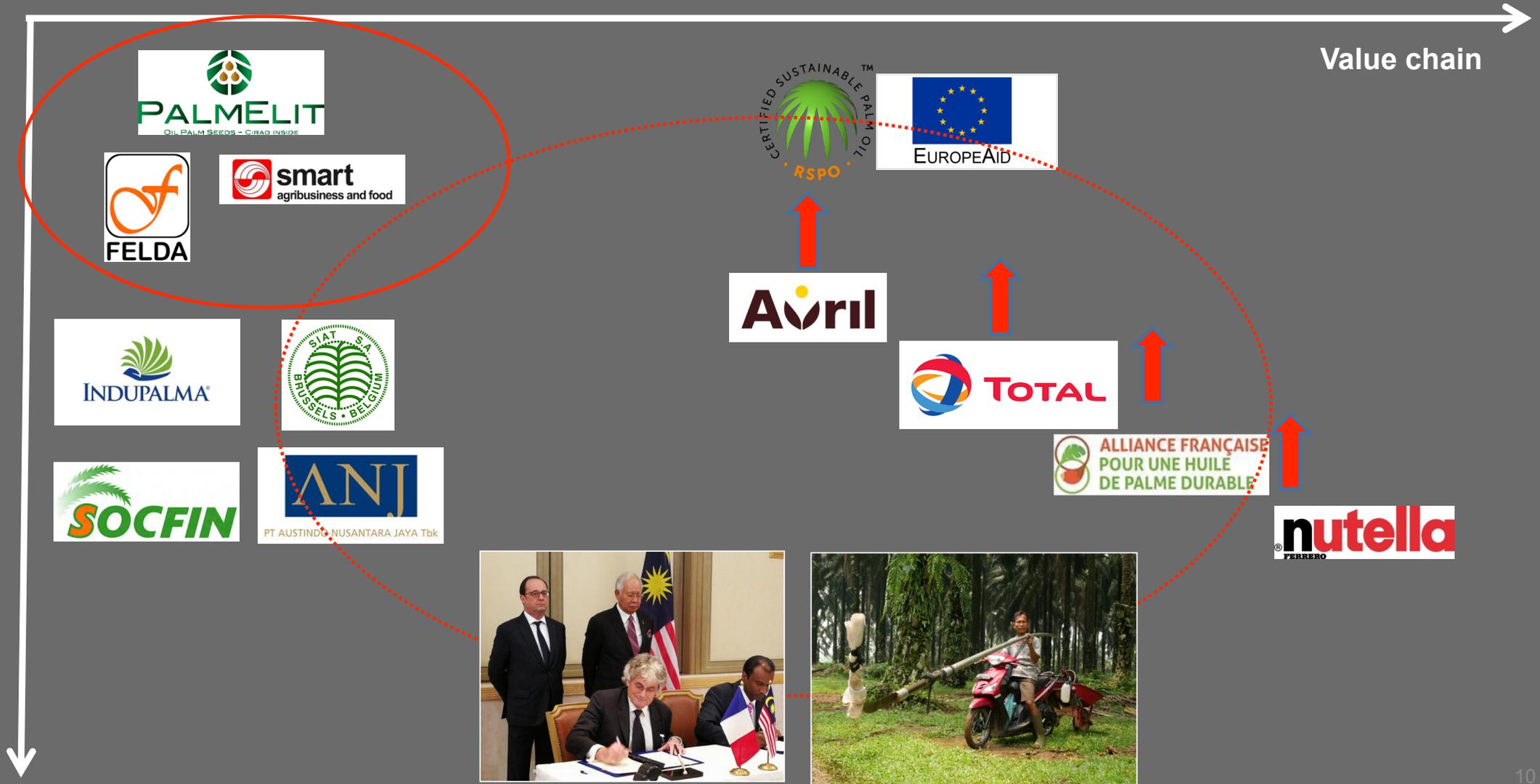
BILATERAL PUBLIC
PARTNERSHIP
UPM – CIRAD
U. Montpellier –
Cirad
Labex Agropolis
Esite MUSE



MULTI LATERAL
PUBLIC/PRIVATE
REGIONAL
PARTNERSHIP

PLANTATION
COMPANIES
CIRAD, NGOs
UNIVERSITIES,
CGIAR

Multidisciplinary
Multi Chains





■ A map of projects and partners

○ In project

- BiGHGDeal
- USAid peatlands
- UE agroforestry in Timor
- UE agroforestry in Myanmar
- RSPO Smallholders

○ On going

- PT SMART
- Socfindo
- Airbus (Biofuels from lignocellulose)
- Capital, finance and agriculture (Kasannah, Cifor, UM)

- SALSA is a Consortium Agreement with a legal framework for the first circle of partners
- It joins ambitions and common interest for describing the future avenues for research and development, their specific milestones and timely expected outputs for end-users.

2017 actions:

- Seminars and Workshops to clarify common goals, governance, and to let actions emerge from discussions among partners.
- 1) Cirad in Montpellier (internal meeting) in Jul. 2017,
2) a meeting on SALSA involment in Masters Curricula at UPM Oct. 2017.

Next immediate actions:

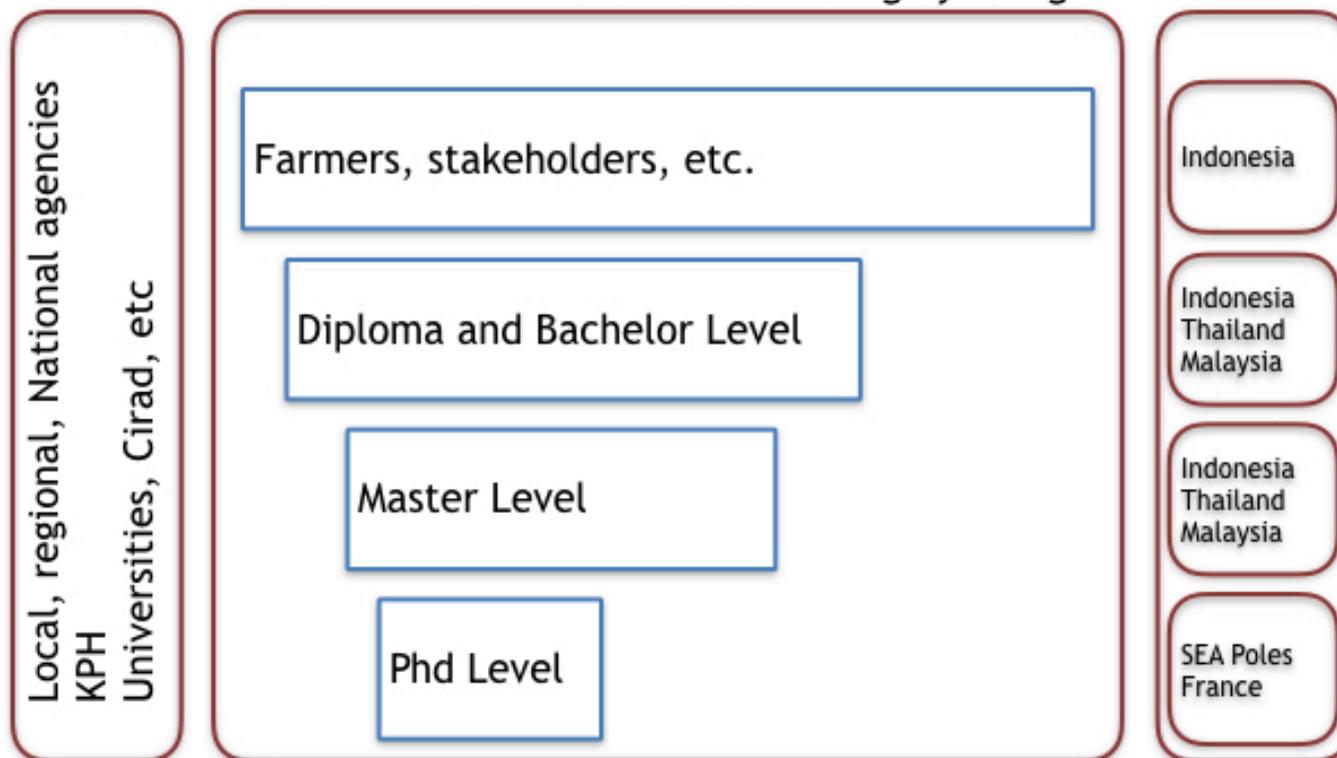
- Next: side events of major conferences on the topic of sustainable lanscapes in SEA (RSPO RT15, ICOPE 2018, etc ...).
- Advocacy of the SALSA concept to donors such as EU, AFD or FAO is going on.



- Sustainability of tropical commodity chains is at the heart of the public debate :
 - French debate on palm oil and imported deforestation lighting fires in diplomatic and trade relationships between EU and Malaysia/Indonesia => Salsa can provide smart answers
- Filling huge knowledge gaps
 - deforestation and recurrent haze, the traceability of tropical commodity chains (palm oil, timber, rubber ...) or the credibility of sustainability standards => Salsa can help filling the gaps
- Building on Sustainable Development Goals
 - « Poverty eradication is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda » => Salsa again can help

Capacity Building:

Academic and Professional Training by doing

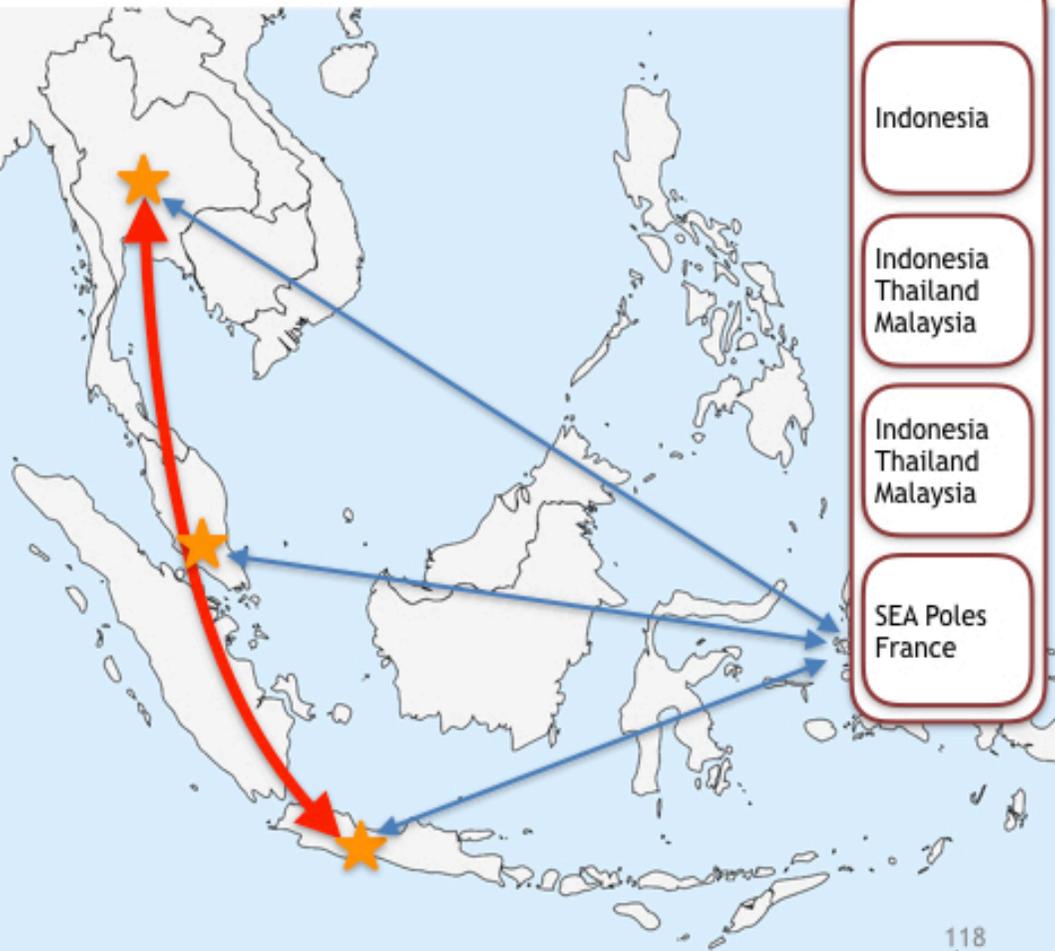


- **Training the brains and hearts who will manage tomorrow peatlands, and will know "how to sustainably solve problems"**

Capacity Building:

Academic and Professional Training by doing

Local, regional, National agencies
KPH
Universities, Cirad, etc





Thank you for your attention