

Smallholder oil palm farmers in Aceh Subulussalam, Indonesia, are empowered through stakeholder partnerships

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Musim Mas, Nestlé, and AAK have renewed their partnership for the fourth consecutive year to continue supporting independent smallholder oil palm farmers in Aceh Subulussalam, Indonesia. This partnership, originally launched in 2021, focuses on the risks associated with deforestation and the broader environmental, social, and economic challenges faced by smallholders.

The **Subulussalam Smallholders Hub** is at the heart of this collaboration. This landscape-based initiative by Musim Mas trains smallholder farmers and village extension officers (VEOs) in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and NDPE (No Deforestation, No Peat, No Exploitation) principles. VEOs act as local trainers and knowledge multipliers in their communities.

Over the past three years, the program has exceeded expectations, training 1,581 smallholder farmers (initial target: 1,250) and 117 VEOs (initial target: 60). During the second phase, the 20 top-performing VEOs received advanced requalification on Indonesia's ISPO certification, including modules on home composting to reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers.

With the 2025 partnership renewal, the initiative will directly train an additional 500 smallholder farmers and 20 additional VEOs through advanced training. This will allow the program to reach more than 2,000 smallholder farmers and 40 VEOs with advanced skills.

Beyond environmental outcomes, the partnership aims to strengthen the long-term resilience of communities. Musim Mas plans to introduce new advanced training modules for its programs on **women smallholder farmers**, **youth engagement**, and **financial literacy**. Women will continue to receive support in nutrition and business management, while striving to

involve male family members to foster an inclusive and supportive environment.

Recognizing the importance of engaging the next generation, the program will include youth awareness raising on sustainable agriculture, NDPE practices, and market expectations. Tailored capacity-building platforms will be developed to inspire innovation and engagement among young farmers.

The initiative also addresses the need for **financial planning** , especially as smallholders prepare for palm replanting cycles. Financial management training will enable them to make informed decisions and ensure their long-term self-reliance.

Musim Mas, Nestlé, and AAK reaffirm their shared vision for sustainable and inclusive palm oil production in Aceh . With the EU Deforestation Regulation (EDR) coming into force soon, the partnership also provides a critical support mechanism to help smallholders overcome compliance challenges and remain active participants in global supply chains.