

Wild Asia's SPIRAL Programme Towards Sustainable Land Management



Wild Asia is keen to build a dynamic, enterprising team to be able to shape an ambitious Project aimed at transforming the way we use and manage our private-lands be it a corporate, SME or smallholding owner. This builds on the work of Wild Asia over the last decade and we see an opportunity to scale-up our work. If you think you have the right skills, experience or drive to be part of this team, [click here](#) and submit your application form to let us know how you can be part of this team.

Are you passionate about soils? You know that soils are just dirt without living matter. We are looking for a technical researcher-type, with an interest in soil microbiology, soil health and all things living in soils. We want to promote the use of biological indicators as a way to measure soil and plant health. You will be overseeing our field programme and providing the technical support to a number of farms that are transitioning to organic production in oil palm.

Wild Asia also works with global research labs and there are opportunities to develop research or post-doc projects to innovate new ways to find more impactful digital applications.

This position may be part-time or contract basis with potential for full-time employment.

Salary range: Depends on education and experience.

Location: Kuala Lumpur, or in our regional units in Perak, Johor or Sabah

The **Soil Microbiology Researcher** will work with Wild Asia's global and national research partners, technical and local staff to design survey and assessment methods or understand the progress of our BIO farms. Experience with data management and analytical tools will be an advantage as the number of reports have grown from a few to many hundreds per annum. The ideal candidate has a broad interest in conservation, environment or social sciences. Is proficient in excel advanced tools, macros, and/or GIS tools

Excellent communication skills, collaboration experience, and teamwork are essential for this role. Our team is dedicated and responsive, and we seek to achieve a long-term, sustainable work/life balance while emphasizing productive, quality work products. If you thrive when challenged, are both competitive and enjoy collaboration, and want to help solve real-world problems, we might be a good fit for you.

This position is open until filled.

To apply, [click here](#) and complete our online application form.



Supporting Models for Sustainable Land Management as a Strategy to Improve Livelihoods, Biodiversity and Community Resilience

The long-term goal of Wild Asia through the implementation of this Project will be to **improve sustainable land management across Malaysia**. Oil palm is the largest and most widely cultivated agricultural commodity in Malaysia. We want to show that there are alternatives to conventional oil palm cultivation, one that makes farmers more money, and enhances local biodiversity. This will ultimately reduce pressure on natural areas, enhance local biodiversity through reduced chemical inputs and promote more diversity on and between farms.

Our Project is focussed on delivering the **growth of areas under sustainable management by small producers, using certification as a tool to incentivise and motivate behavioural change**. The long-term goals are met when our tools and approaches are adopted by supply chain actors as they see a clear business case for doing so. In time, more innovative approaches like our concept for BIO farms can be introduced, and there is more willingness to adopt these new ideas as the trust and initial barriers to change have been overcome through the certification programme.

With this Project, we see that by working through the **private sector**, the oil palm value chain, there is a way to directly influence land use decisions and management directly from smallholdings to larger land management units. This will provide the very strong basis for developing catchment-wide or district-wide platforms (e.g., [Verified Sourcing Areas](#) under SourceUp, to protect natural areas, enhance biodiversity areas under private land and have the economic incentives to drive this change.

Project Background

The Objective of the Project is to **increase the livelihood of small producers and opportunities for increasing local natural biodiversity**. The strategy for improving livelihood for small producers is to increase their profits per area, by adopting global standards to add value to their existing crop, and/or reducing costs (such as reducing chemical inputs), and/or reducing the need for chemical inputs by adopting natural farming methods of land management. In tandem with the work with small producers, the Project works with the landowners to identify and explore how to increase the potential for the protection of natural areas on private lands. This would effectively increase the area under natural vegetation within targeted regions. When applied to regions where there are High Conservation Values, it provides an alternative model for enhancing biodiversity, and increasing the conservation viability of existing protected areas. The Project targets smallholders as its primary target, but aims to build local alliances with Small and Medium (SME) business owners, large landowners and local authorities to amplify its impact within the districts where we have made in-roads. This local to regional approach is a novelty and can be an important component for supporting sustainable landscape initiatives.

The Project is another strategy to bring about **smallholder inclusivity** in global supply chains, as all smallholders in the programme are verified through sustainable certification standards. They are provided with regular educational activities and progress towards meeting the MSPO and then, RSPO standard are monitored. This smallholder inclusivity programme is called the Wild Asia Group Scheme (WAGS), and provides the technical and educational support for small producer certification. At the same time, WAGS also works to identify mills and dealers in the region to establish working partnerships that can recognise these verified smallholders in their supply chain. In this way, mills are able to increase the traceability of their raw material supply whether from direct sources or those that flow through dealers. These mills in turn, are able to provide greater assurance to the local refineries that provide the raw materials for global palm users around the world.

Project Background



The Project targets oil palm **smallholders** (less than 50 ha) and **small growers** (typically 50-500 ha), and is centered around existing WAGS Regional Support Units (RSU). The RSU is the extension support arm for WAGS that is based in strategic locations to support and implement the Project activities. As a certification support programme, it will contribute towards the ongoing efforts by the National Government to ensure that all producers meet a national standard for production (MSPO). Since 2007, Wild Asia's WAGS has been (and continues) to be supported by a number of global partnerships consisting of global palm oil buyers, national processors, palm oil mills. This support has enabled RSPO (and now MSPO) certification for many independent small producers. Across Malaysia, WAGS today provides direct support to 1,651 smallholders and 150 larger producers, of which 30% and 71% are currently MSPO certified and 71% and 20% are RSPO certified. The combined RSPO volumes are approximately 206,804 mt FFB or the equivalent of 39,400 mt palm oil (CPO).

Our Project is delivered on-the-ground, through **practical demonstrations, direct interventions and communication**. Our strategy is to influence a core group of farmers (center of influence) in community groups spanning across a number of oil palm supply chains, creating role models for others to follow (not only their peers, but also within the district, the state and ultimately at national level). By taking this bottom-up approach, and providing the technical framework and meeting global standards, the impact of the Project extends far beyond the local regions where we operate.

This Project builds on **technical partnerships** with an international consortium of researchers and technology partners, who provide the framework for monitoring farmer transactions, changes in soil, plant health and social-economic indicators the Project aims to achieve. This validation and external reporting of the Project outcomes is important as it will provide the foundation for the wider policy and industry-influence that this Project could also deliver on. As part of these efforts, the Project will also support the trial and integration of an **IT ecosystem** that enables small farmers to collect, manage and gain valuable insights of their land management practices (e.g., harvest, income, expenses). The data could be enhanced by the integration of spatial data (drones and GIS data), soil and other data which would be integrated into this ecosystem, and could be made accessible to local smallholders. The adoption of smartphones and data plans by rural communities is on the rise, and by enabling the technology to improve livelihood, improve communication within the local community and accessing information, is a natural outcome of this approach.

About Wild Asia

Wild Asia's tagline is 'Promoting Change, Inspiring People, Engaging Businesses'. This forms the core of the work that we do.

Wild Asia has been working over the last decade to understand the principles of **sustainable production** by educating growers and supporting their efforts towards RSPO certification. This has involved supporting some of the largest palm oil growers and agri-businesses, and over the last 7-years, our attention has been focused on the smaller oil palm producers. This Project builds on the experience Wild Asia has gained over the last 20 years, working with certification and land managers, across Malaysia. This work supports the national policy for sustainable certification for all oil palm producers. By designing a programme appropriate for small producers, we see that the drive towards "compliance" can be longer lasting, and lead to better and more sustainable land management. It is this experience of working with small producers that the current approach for improving livelihood, biodiversity and resilience has developed.

Wild Asia was first established in 2003 as a Malaysian-based social enterprise. We work to help adapt the way consumers, businesses and traders operate, ensuring that they can leave a positive footprint on the developing world. We take a bottom-up approach starting at the very beginning: the raw materials. It is here that we find ways to guide organisations in creating a better environment for their employees, local

Wild Asia's SPIRAL Programme

Project Background



communities and surrounding biodiversity. By working within key sectors – such as the palm oil or tourism industry – we have gained a unique insight on how producers, buyers and consumers can develop innovative ways to promote positive change.

Mission Statement

Wild Asia's mission is to inspire change from within the private-sector, through partnerships with businesses, to support initiatives that shape a better future for our environment, biodiversity, and people.

Wild Asia works with businesses, in regions of high biodiversity, developing solutions that align their management to sustainable environmental and social practices. Through our different programs, Wild Asia is also able to support less-advantaged communities, by engaging them to design solutions that fulfil their basic needs and livelihood, in an affordable and sustainable way.

We use our knowledge to advise, train and innovate new approaches to support this mission.

Wild Asia has built up a wide experience in dealing with the complexities and challenges of promoting sustainability in the region, and has expertise in the forestry, tourism and agriculture sectors.

Our Strength

Wild Asia positions itself to be a leading strategic partner for sustainable development initiatives. As a social enterprise, it is critical that we develop our work to be relevant, strategic, and adds value to our clients. It is this simple necessity that has helped us develop a unique set of professional services and solutions.

Since 2005, we have completed 92 palm oil-based assignments in 7 countries and trained over 2,019 professionals in the palm oil industry. Our Responsible Tourism Awards have had influences in 10 countries in Asia and awarded 45 winners and finalists. Each year since 2009, we have given talks at Responsible Tourism conferences and reached more than 2,000 individuals from the industry. These numbers will continue to grow as we are active in developing strategic support for sustainable developments in palm oil and tourism.

A Social Enterprise

Wild Asia is legally chartered as a Malaysian company (Reg. No: 634446-W) and operates as a “social enterprise”, a concept for businesses with social or environmental missions and not for maximising shareholder returns. In simple terms, we are essentially a “not-for-profit” and earn our income largely through the consultancies, training and other services we provide. All of our founding shareholders have signed an agreement recognising the social mission and enterprise of Wild Asia. In practice 100% of all profits are distributed back into the business: 65% into our company for growth and 35% to our employees as profit shares.

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