Biodiversity Conservation, viewed from a plantation
Where was this picture taken?
1. in a national park on Sumatra?
2. in an oil palm concession, before land clearing?
3. in a conservation area, within an oil palm plantation?
SIPEF

"Société Internationale de Plantations et de Finance"

SIPEF is an agro-industrial company listed on Euronext Brussels. The Company mainly holds majority stakes in tropical businesses, which it manages and operates.

SIPEF was established in 1919, and is headquartered in Antwerp. The operations of the Group are in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. Our main crops are oil palm, rubber, bananas and tea.

SIPEF has joined the RSPO in 2005, and is an active member. We are participating in the development of the SNRi (Sustainable Natural Rubber initiative).
Why grow oil palm?

*It is a very efficient use of land.*

Agronomically: high yields (constantly increasing), good use for all by-products (solid, liquid, gaseous).
Financially: good profitability per hectare.
Socially: long-term returns for smallholders, good employment opportunities.
Commercially: good demand for all palm products.

We aim at making the most of the land we manage, and we support the smallholders linked to us to achieve the same.
Biodiversity and oil palm?

Why should we care about biodiversity?

*It is the right thing to do.* We have our place in the social, economic, and natural landscapes where we operate. Over time, we learn to know and manage our impacts, on our own, from regulations, from NGO, scientists, and from our market.

What can we do about biodiversity?

- Improve practices within our operations.
- Create a "Biodiversity project".
Sipef Biodiversity Project

SIPEF Biodiversity Indonesia holds a licence to "restore" 12'672ha of forest in Sumatra. There are 14 such licences to date.

The area is a buffer to Kerinci Seblat National Park. KSNP is part of the "Tropical Heritage of Sumatra", a UNESCO World Heritage site classified "in danger" in 2011.

First camera trapping and monitoring confirms presence of tigers, clouded leopards, tapirs, short-tailed mongooses, Asian sunbears, gibbons, hornbills. Also illegal loggers and poachers.

The area is a "pioneer front" for some local communities.
SIPEF Biodiversity Indonesia
12,672ha
60-year licence
Improving practices

Empirical beginnings.
Designate areas to protect within the estates.

Systematic approach: third-party certification.
RSPO is the cornerstone of our approach to responsible plantations management: most comprehensive scheme, multistakeholder, progressive.

We acquire new tools to assess biodiversity in existing operations and new developments, to integrate biodiversity in our management plans.
Improvement gains

**Implementing best practices:**
- review of internal procedures and standards
- increased levels of training and awareness
- improved relations with surrounding communities
- careful approach to new developments.

**Successful certification:**
- recognition of best practices (*beyond legal compliance*)
- open markets
- no guarantee of financial reward.
Improvement pains

Challenges/doubts.

How do acquire/maintain knowledge?
Certification fatigue?
Small size of estates = small positive impacts?
Smallholders?
Neighbours implementing other standards.
Encroachment of conservation areas.
Legal uncertainties.

The cost of "conservation".

Management costs: limited (but scarce resources).
Reduction of planted area: major issue.
A brighter tomorrow?

**What opportunities?**
- Improved market ownership of palm products.
- Traceability.
- Landscape approach: legal or voluntary.
- RSPO NEXT.

**What threats?**
- High expectations/low patience.
- Low prices.
- High prices.
Thank you