

M&S Supporting Sustainable Palm Oil Smallholders and Communities in Sabah

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Since 2022, Marks & Spencer has partnered with Forever Sabah and PACOS Trust in Sabah, Malaysia, to support independent oil palm smallholders, strengthen Indigenous communities and promote more sustainable and resilient palm oil production. M&S funding supports RSPO certification, farmer training, climate resilience, agroforestry, community capacity building and gender inclusion programmes. M&S has committed funding to these initiatives through 2026.

Key outcomes delivered with M&S support:

- The programme now operates across **52 villages** in Sabah.
- By June 2026, **707 independent smallholders** managing 2,635.95 hectares of oil palm had achieved RSPO certification through Forever Sabah's support.
- A further **77 smallholders** achieved certification during the first half of 2026.
- Around **one-third of certified smallholders are women**, with ongoing efforts to increase women's participation in training, decision-making and leadership.
- Smallholders receive support on Good Agricultural Practices, farm management, environmental stewardship and maintaining compliance with RSPO standards.
- The programme is piloting agroforestry approaches to help farmers diversify income sources and build resilience to climate change.

Supporting Indigenous communities and gender inclusion

M&S also supports the work of PACOS Trust, an Indigenous-led organisation working with local communities in Sabah. Through M&S funding, PACOS Trust developed a dedicated Gender and Children's Rights training module for integration into Forever Sabah's smallholder programme and delivered training for field coordinators supporting participating communities. Community workshops have subsequently been delivered to smallholder communities, helping strengthen awareness and participation across the programme.

M&S is proud to support this long-term partnership, helping smallholder farmers strengthen their livelihoods, increase access to certified sustainable palm oil markets and build resilience for the future.



RSPO Premium distributed to the certified smallholders



MPOB visit to the Dynamic Agroforestry trial plot



FRC team collecting sampling for soil test