



澜沧江-湄公河环境合作中心
Lancang-Mekong Environmental Cooperation Center

Newsletter

Issue 1, 2022

February 28, 2022

Expert Views at Regional practice and Development Path of Sustainable Consumption of Agricultural Products Under Nature-Based Solution Framework

On Feb 15, 2022, Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center (FECO), MEE held a seminar on project: Regional practice and Development Path of Sustainable Consumption of Agricultural Products Under Nature-Based Solution Framework in Beijing. Experts from the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, UNICEF, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and other international organizations and Chinese and foreign research institutions attended the Seminar. Experts shared progress and outcomes of the project and discussed issues such as the sustainable management of the palm oil supply chain, nature-based solutions (NbS), the sustainable production and consumption of palm oil, and coordinated regional and global development. The summary of expert views are as bellow.

ZHANG Yan
Partnership Expert, UNICEF



Trade of agricultural products, including palm oil, has been growing in recent years, which is important for economic growth and poverty reduction in countries producing these products. However, research in this area also needs to focus on the protection of vulnerable groups such as women and children in the process of trade. In Indonesia, about 4 million people work in the palm oil industry, 50% of whom are women; about 25 million people work in industries related to palm oil, among whom 5 million are children. Therefore, maternal health, childcare, and the prevention of child labor are social issues that need to be properly addressed in the palm oil industry. National governments, financial institutions, international organizations, the private sector, and other stakeholders need to explore and make collaborative efforts to promote the inclusion of the issue of women and children into the process of the sustainable development of agriculture and ensure the effective implementation of policies for the protection of vulnerable groups such as women and children.



YAO Chunsheng GEF Project Officer, FAO

In terms of sustainable agriculture and food system, in collaboration with other government departments, such as the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the Ministry of Water Resources, FAO has been promoting the integration of agriculture with local ecosystems. FAO also promotes the sustainable management of supply chain of agricultural products through the GEF Project to help the world to more effectively address climate change, land degradation and other challenges. Policies, laws and regulations, economic incentives, and public awareness improvement are the three aspects that need to be considered in exploring for pathways to the sustainable development of agricultural products.

GUO Xiaoxiao Deputy Director, Foreign Cooperation and Communication Center, National Forestry and Grassland Administration



The Department of International Cooperation of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration attaches great importance to agricultural products with potential risks of damaging forests, such as palm oil. With the constant development of international trade, research on sustainable agricultural products could help China to take the opportunity to have a bigger say in the global palm oil trade. Considering that the development of standards system for sustainable palm oil is still in the primary stage in China, it is recommended that expert meetings be held before the organization of public awareness improvement and other publicity activities to ensure the coordinated progress of publicity and standards system development.



CHEN Jie Director, Global Forestry Research Center of Research Institute of Forestry and Information, Chinese Academy of Forestry

The implementation of Nature-based solutions (NbS) and sustainable production and consumption in the palm oil industry is a huge challenge that needs to be addressed with innovative solutions. A number of international companies have adopted sustainable palm oil certification. However, the question of whether the certification could replace NbS in real practice still needs to be further discussed. NbS stresses the coordinated development of the society and eco-systems and the adoption of actions to sustainably manage natural ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively. Forest certification and agricultural standards, however, stress ecological and environmental factors although the interests and rights of indigenous people and labor are also considered.

CHEN Yong
Deputy Director of Research Center for
the International Trade of Forest Products,
National Forestry and Grassland Administration



The international trade volume of China's agricultural products has been growing. Research Center for the International Trade of Forest Products of National Forestry and Grassland Administration also attaches greater importance to the standards and practices of sustainable agricultural products. Currently, most of the research on sustainable palm oil from the perspective of NbS are theoretical studies. Therefore, more case studies on good practices shall be conducted, including detailed scenario analysis, to provide actionable implementation plans for governments, businesses and other stakeholders.



CHEN Ying
Director of the Cereals and Oils Department, CFNA

CFNA attaches great importance to the sustainable development of agricultural products and has released a number of research reports and guideline documents in the area. Approaching the issue from the perspective of NbS, the project provides valuable inputs to studies on the sustainable development of agricultural products. Besides, with the rapid development of biodiesel in China in recent years, a number of Chinese companies have turned to palm oil to produce biodiesel. Therefore, it is recommended that future research on the application of biodiesel take practices and cases of Chinese companies into consideration.

ZHANG Junzuo
INFIT China Chief Representative



NbS touches upon the issue of fair supply chains and fair trade. Palm oil and its products are mostly produced in developing countries and consumed by developed economies. Therefore, the issue of fairness in supply chain management and trade relations needs to be addressed with joint actions from all countries. The European Union restricts the market access of agricultural products with the risk of damaging forests as a way to mitigate climate change through reducing forest damage. However, agricultural products rejected by the EU market could still be sold to other parts of the world, making it hard to effectively address issues concerning the global supply chain. As a major country connecting the developed world and developing countries, China could propose more comprehensive and integrated solutions that could facilitate the fair development of the global agricultural product supply chain.



REN Yuzhi
**Representative of Agriculture,
Food and Beverage Working Group,
European Union Chamber of Commerce in China**

As a major player in the trade of agricultural products such as palm oil and soybean, China doesn't have much say in the price setting, sustainability standards development and certification of these products. Members of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China have made commitments on sustainable development. However, policy frameworks need to be established to support businesses to fulfill their commitments. The enterprises are looking forward the government to develop related policies to guide sustainable agricultural practices and support businesses to explore for new pathways to the sustainable development of agricultural products.

FANG Lifeng
RSPO representative in China



The role of NbS in promoting sustainable agricultural products is worthy of further discussion. RSPO focuses on sustainable palm oil and conducts studies on the difference in carbon emission from palm oil under the sustainability certification system and palm oil produced with unsustainable ways of production to explore the positive influence of certification systems on ecological conservation and addressing climate change. Besides, integrated regional sustainable management plans (e.g. the sustainable management of Brazilian soybean) could promote the sustainable production of agricultural products, which may shed light on the project.



YU Xin
**Programme Manager of Sustainable Food Consumption
and Green Supply Chain Project, WWF Beijing Office**

Approaching the sustainable development of agricultural products from both regional and global perspectives, the project discusses the sustainable production and consumption of agricultural products within the framework of NbS, analyses good practice cases, and promotes good experience in agricultural product management in the region, which is conducive to promoting the influence and say of China in the area. WWF will keep track of the progress of the project, follow the priority areas and recommendations proposed by the project and strengthen cooperation with other stakeholders to jointly explore pathways to the sustainable development of agricultural products based on NbS.

LI Xia

Director of Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center, Ministry of Ecology and Environment



Currently, for the lack of cases, it is difficult to promote the philosophy and pattern of NbS on a large scale. The project focuses on sustainable agricultural products within the framework of NbS, collects related standards, norms, practices, and other information, and explores pathways to the sustainable development of agriculture such as palm oil from the perspective of NbS. Besides, as major sources of GHGs, agriculture and forestry are central to global climate change governance. IPCC has kick-started the development of documents for the management of SLCFs emissions. Once released, the document will guide countries to monitor the emission of GHGs from agriculture, forestry, and other land-use activities. However, China's management of GHG emissions mainly focuses on primary energy consumption in the current stage. There is a discrepancy between China and the international community in the understanding of climate and environmental governance. FECO hopes to listen to the opinions from experts in different areas through such open research projects to identify problems and find solutions. In this way, the efforts of China and the international community in environment-related issues could be synchronized, which could help China to have a greater say in the area of environment in the region and globally.

Contact Us

Lancang-Mekong Environmental Cooperation Center
Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center,
MEE
No.5 Houyingfanghutong, Xicheng District Beijing
Post code: 100035
Tel: +86-10-82268242/8221
Fax: +86-10-82200579
E-mail: qian.zhaohui@fecomee.org.cn
li.xia@fecomee.org.cn
Website: <http://www.lmec.org.cn/>
WeChat: lancang-mekongec



Lancang-Mekong Environmental Cooperation Center: Being proposed by Premier Li Keqiang at the First Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Leaders' Meeting, Lancang-Mekong Environmental Cooperation Center was inaugurated in Beijing in November of 2017. The Center aims to promote Lancang-Mekong cooperation in ecology and environment, provide a dialogue platform for Lancang-Mekong countries in environment and development, improve regional capacity in environmental governance, and promote the cooperation of environmental industry for the sustainable development of the region.