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GAR and CIRAD strengthen scientific collaboration to advance sustainable palm oil production in Indonesia

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Integrated palm oil producer Golden Agri-Resources (GAR) has announced a new agreement to accelerate innovation in sustainable palm oil, together with theÂ French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD).

In a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), signed in Jakarta, the two parties committed to extend their partnership, targeting a new phase of progress that will address critical challenges for the palm oil sector. The agreement builds on over 25 years of scientific collaboration between CIRAD and the SMART Research Institute (SMARTRI), GAR's flagship agricultural research facility.Â Â

The MoU was witnessed by Airlangga Hartarto, Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, Republic of Indonesia and Eric Lombard, Minister of Economy, Finance, Industrial and Digital Sovereignty of France as part of the Indonesia-France Business Forum 2025, held on the sidelines of French President Emmanuel Macron's state visit to Indonesia aimed at strengthening strategic cooperation between the two countries.

Building on a longstanding relationship

The relationship between GAR and CIRAD began in 1996 and has been strengthened over the years with successive agreements to cover topics including sustainable palm oil production, environmental management, and precision agriculture.

Nearly IDR550 billion has been jointly invested in Research & Development since the start of this collaboration.

Together with WWF Indonesia; GAR and CIRAD have established the biennial International Conference on Oil Palm and the Environment (ICOPE). At the most recent event, held in February 2025, leading global researchers and early career academics showcased the latest research on critical topics such as climate resilience and protecting nature and biodiversity in palm oil.

The partnership has also contributed to high-profile international research initiatives, such as theÂSustainable Palm Oil Production (SPOP)Â project funded by the French National Research Agency (ANR), and theÂInternational Oil Palm Genome Projects (OPGP) Consortium.

Addressing critical issues

Through the MoU, the parties reaffirmed their shared commitment to developing practical, science-based solutions to advance sustainable palm oil practices, focused on enhancing scientific knowledge, improving climate change adaptation, and increasing productivity in the palm oil sector.

The renewed collaboration will include joint investments into research and development activities, including the modelling of plant functioning and climate change impact simulations, aimed at protecting and enhancing livelihoods for palm oil farmers in the face of growing climate risks.

"Our partnership with CIRAD brings together global scientific expertise with field research that addresses the realities of Indonesia's palm oil landscape. It enables us to develop innovative, practical, and scalable solutions, with benefits not just for our plantations, but for independent smallholders across Indonesia," explained The Biao Leng, President Director at Sinar Mas Agribusiness and Food, GAR's subsidiary in Indonesia.

The partnership also seeks to contribute to Indonesia's national food security and self-sufficiency goals, while reducing carbon emissions, by developing new agroforestry approaches for the palm oil sector.

"Our collaboration with GAR demonstrates how international partnerships can combine scientific rigour with practical results. It enables us to address key sustainability challenges such as climate resilience, land-use efficiency, and smallholder inclusion. This is a truly integrated approach to transforming the sector," said Jean-Marc Roda, CIRAD Regional Director for Southeast Asia Island Countries.