

Field Reflections from the Solomon Islands: A decade of collaboration shows the potential of sustainable palm oil

In June 2025, representatives from Florin AG, Migros Group and HUG AG together with representatives of the Earthworm Foundation travelled to the Solomon Islands. The visit was organized as part of a long-standing collaboration rooted in Florin's Responsible Sourcing Guidelines and the commitments made as member of the Swiss Palm Oil Network. It reflects a partnership built on shared values around transparency, forest protection, and community wellbeing.

Over the years, this collaboration with Guadalcanal Plains Palm Oil Limited (GPPOL) has evolved from compliance-based assessments into a hands-on, community-centred effort to create lasting impact on the ground.

During the field visit, the delegation visited the palm oil mill, smallholder nurseries, riparian buffer zones, and several communities that now benefit from reliable access to clean water. These tangible outcomes are the result of persistent effort and trust among all partners involved.

- More than 4,000 people across multiple communities now have year-round access to safe water, thanks to the **installation of six solar-powered 10,000 litre tanks**. These tanks have eased the daily burden on women and children who previously spent hours collecting water. Communities report a visible drop in waterborne illnesses such as diarrhea and skin rashes.
- All communities with new water systems, as well as the surrounding communities, received **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) training** to better understand how to reduce the risk of waterborne illnesses.
- Two **smallholder and community-run nurseries** have produced over 9,000 seedlings, with approximately 3,000 already outplanted into riparian buffer zones. These nurseries generate income for families while supporting reforestation efforts that stabilise riverbanks, improve water quality, and increase biodiversity.
- **Community engagement** is central to the model. Local landowners, community members and smallholders were involved in every step, from seedling collection and training to buffer zone restoration, ensuring that forest protection is not just a technical goal but a shared local priority. Furthermore, the stakeholders have deepened collaboration with the Guadalcanal Plains Community Development Fund (GPCDF) and alliance of local landowners who fund and develop community projects like schools, health clinics and water pumps and tanks.

The visit also served as an opportunity to reflect on next steps. Buffer zones remain vulnerable to encroachment, and continued sensitisation and monitoring will be essential. These zones require continuous checks over several years for the trees to reach maturity, and the support of communities is important in protecting newly established areas. GPPOL has also committed to strengthening support structures for long-term success, including better integration between nursery production and replanting cycles.

In addition, Florin is planning extend future collaboration activities to other topics, in line with the newly developed focus topics of the Swiss Palm Oil Network, such as ecological innovations in oil palm cultivation as well as Living Wages and Living income.

Above all, the trip reaffirmed the value of long-term collaboration. With support from GPCDF and strong engagement from local communities, this initiative is demonstrating how responsible sourcing can be a lever for regenerative impact that benefits ecosystems and people alike.









