

## Press Release

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Olam highly commended in Responsible Business Award for its work supporting smallholder farmers in the cotton supply chain

**Société d'Exploitation Cotonnière Olam (SECO) recognised by eminent judging panel for global development impact**

**London, 12 July 2016**, Leading global agri-business, Olam International, was highly commended in the Unilever Global Development Award category at the 2016 Annual Responsible Business Gala in London last night. The award is also supported by global community [Business Fights Poverty](#).

The event at the O2 arena was the culmination of the 2016 Responsible Business Awards, run by The Prince of Wales's charity [Business in the Community](#) to celebrate the innovative ways that businesses in the UK and abroad are making a sustained difference and transforming communities. Almost 300 companies entered the awards, with 52 finalists, 16 winners and 3 highly commended on the night.

Olam's inclusive cotton business model in Côte d'Ivoire, SECO, was set up to tackle low productivity and social vulnerability among local farmers, poor infrastructure and access to markets and finance. In 6 years, SECO increased its smallholder network from 3,000 to 19,569 farmers. By the 2013/14 season, yields had nearly doubled to 1,126kg/ha from 626kg/ha in the first season.

A judging panel including 5 industry leaders<sup>1</sup> commended Olam for the holistic nature of the programme embedded into the business's overall approach and strategy, tackling wider societal issues such as food security, forest management and gender empowerment. The panel reported that SECO's programme has ***"the potential to impact an entire industry and admirably demonstrated an effective and sustainable business model."***

Commenting, Chris Brett, Global Head Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability of Olam said: "It really does make business sense to help farmers improve their yields, incomes and wider social environment. The untiring work of the SECO team, along with our partners Cotton Made in Africa, Compaci and GIZ, have also contributed to the development of our other smallholder initiatives under the [Olam Livelihood Charter](#)<sup>2</sup>. Our congratulations, however, must go to the overall winner of the category – Manila Water Company.



Access to clean, safe, affordable water is essential for all communities and we wish them the best in their future work.”

Stephen Howard, Chief Executive, Business in the Community said:

“The Responsible Business Awards provide the proof that from the largest global multinational to the smallest local firm, business is a powerful force for good in society. This year we have seen some profound examples of what business can achieve when it puts responsibility at the heart of its operations. I congratulate Olam for the practical action it has taken to build a fairer world and more sustainable future.”

Other finalists in the Unilever Global Development Award, supported by Business Fights Poverty, included:

- GSK (GlaxoSmithKline Plc) - GSK-Save the Children partnership
- Pollinate Energy - Pollinate Energy Business Model
- Primark - Sustainable Cotton Programme
- GEEL Medical Services - Delivering Dignity through Healthcare

To find out more about Olam’s highly commended SECO programme, read [their story on BITC’s website](#).

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Issued on behalf of Olam International Limited by: Gong Communications, 1 Blandford Street, London, W1U 3DA

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**Notes to Editors**

<sup>1</sup>The Judging Panel included Unilever; Business Fights Poverty; RFO Youth Advisory Panel; Diageo; InterContinental Hotels Group and McCain Foods.

<sup>2</sup> The Olam Livelihood Charter 2015 report has just been released and can be viewed [here](#).

**About Olam International Limited**

Olam International is a leading agri-business operating across the value chain in 70 countries, supplying various products across 16 platforms to over 16.200 customers worldwide. From a direct sourcing and processing presence in most major producing countries, Olam has built a global leadership position in many of its businesses. Headquartered





in Singapore and listed on the SGX-ST on February 11, 2005, Olam currently ranks among the top 50 largest listed companies in Singapore in terms of market capitalisation and is a component stock in the S&P Agribusiness Index and the DAXglobal Agribusiness Index.

More information on Olam can be found at [www.olamgroup.com](http://www.olamgroup.com).

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### **About the Responsible Business Awards**

Business in the Community's Responsible Business Awards brings to life how businesses are creating innovative and sustainable solutions to our most pressing challenges, inspiring thousands of others to make a lasting difference and adding value back to their own business.

Now in its 19<sup>th</sup> year, the awards, rigorously assessed by independent business peers, are widely acknowledged as one of the most respected endorsements of responsible business in the UK and abroad. Open to companies of any size, sector or scale, a wide range of businesses enter, demonstrating the breadth and depth of responsible business.

Each year, over 250 business peers assess the entries, endorsement planters are used by companies to profile their achievement, and over 4,000 people attend our Responsible Business Galas across the UK, inspiring thousands of people to be a motivated part of the Prince's Responsible Business Network.

### **The awards in numbers:**

In 2016, Business in the Community received 297 entries for the Responsible Business Awards, shortlisted 103 and re-accredited a further 82 entries for demonstrating continual impact in their responsible business programme. 52 companies were named finalists.

