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OIL SEEDS

**NIGERIA'S SESAME & SOYBEAN
EXPORT OPPORTUNITY FOR EU
FOOD AND FEED MANUFACTURERS**



10-18%

Price Discount
vs Indian Origin

48-52%

Sesame Oil
Content

5-6%

Moisture
Content

Non-GMO

Soybean Status
by default

The global oilseed market is estimated at USD 339 billion in 2026, and is projected to reach USD 493 billion by 2033, growing at a CAGR of 5.5%. Separately, Data Bridge Market Research values the market at USD 363.4 billion in 2026, rising to USD 450.5 billion by 2030 at a CAGR of 5.50%.

Nigeria sits at a crossroads of agricultural abundance and global demand. As EU food and feed manufacturers increasingly diversify their raw material sourcing away from traditional suppliers, Nigeria's sesame and soybean sectors are emerging as strategically important origins — offering competitive pricing, improving traceability infrastructure, and growing export volumes.

Sesame: Nigeria's Quiet Export Champion

Nigeria is among Africa's top sesame producers, with the crop grown predominantly across Jigawa, Borno, Nasarawa, and Taraba states.

Sesame Form Includes: Natural/Raw Sesame (white), Hulled Sesame, Organic Certified Sesame, Sesame Oil (cold-pressed), Black Sesame.

White sesame: This is the variety most demanded by EU confectionery, bakery, and health food manufacturers. It is harvested between October and December and exported primarily through Lagos and Apapa ports.

Key attributes for EU buyers:

Moisture content: Typically, 5–6%, meeting EU import thresholds when properly handled

Oil content: 48–52%, competitive with Indian and Ethiopian origins

Certification readiness: A growing number of Nigerian exporters are pursuing EU Organic and Global G.A.P. certification, responding directly to buyer demand

Pricing advantage: Nigerian FOB prices currently offer a 10–18% discount compared to Indian and Ethiopian equivalents, depending on season and quality grade

For food manufacturers producing tahini, sesame oils, burger buns, and health bars, Nigeria offers a credible, scalable origin — particularly for buyers whose procurement teams have already explored East African supply chains.

Soybeans: Feed-Grade and Full-Fat Volumes Available

Nigerian soybean production is concentrated in the Middle Belt — particularly Benue, Kwara, Plateau, and Niger states. The crop supports two distinct markets: full-fat soybean cake for livestock feed compounders and dehulled soybean meal for industrial food processing.

EU feed manufacturers face persistent supply pressure from Brazilian and Argentine origins, driven by port delays, currency volatility, and sustainability compliance costs under the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). Nigerian soybeans — grown primarily on smallholder plots with limited deforestation risk — are beginning to attract attention as an EUDR-compliant alternative. Current production volumes are not yet sufficient to replace South American origins at scale, but Nigerian soybeans are well-suited for:

Blended feed formulations: requiring partial substitution of high-cost origins
Aquafeed and poultry integrators: with shorter lead time requirements
Specialty food processors: requiring non-GMO certification (Nigerian soybeans are non-GMO by default)

What EU Buyers Need to Know About Sourcing from Nigeria

The Nigerian agricultural export ecosystem is maturing. The National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC), the Raw Materials Research and Development Council (RMRDC), and NEPC (Nigerian Export Promotion Council) are all actively supporting exporters in meeting international quality standards.

Buyers should conduct proper due diligence:

Request SGS or Intertek pre-shipment inspection certificates as standard

Confirm phytosanitary documentation from NAQS (Nigerian Agricultural Quarantine Service)

Engage EUNAP-verified suppliers to mitigate counterparty risk

Factor 4–6 weeks lead times from inland origination to CIF European ports

Compliance & Requirements for Oilseed Exports (Nigeria → EU)

Exporting oilseeds to the EU involves meeting **strict food safety, traceability, and sustainability standards**. These requirements apply to both **food-grade sesame** and **feed/food-grade soybeans**.

1. Food Safety & Quality Standards

EU regulations are very strict on contamination and product integrity:

Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs): Limits on pesticide residues

Aflatoxin control: Particularly critical for sesame seeds

Moisture content: Typically, $\leq 6\%$ for sesame to prevent spoilage

Microbiological safety: Free from harmful pathogens

Key Regulation:

European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) guidelines

EU Regulation (EC) No 396/2005

2. Phytosanitary Requirements

To prevent the spread of pests and diseases:
Phytosanitary Certificate (mandatory for all exports)

Issued by Nigerian Agricultural Quarantine Service

Confirms the shipment is pest-free and meets EU import conditions

3. Traceability & Documentation

EU buyers require full visibility of the supply chain:

Farm-to-export traceability

Batch identification and record keeping

Export documentation including:

Bill of Lading

Certificate of Origin

Packing List

Commercial Invoice

Key Regulation:

EU General Food Law (EC) No 178/2002

4. Certification Requirements (Highly Preferred / Sometimes Mandatory)

To access premium EU markets, exporters are expected to have:

Global G.A.P. (Good Agricultural Practices)

EU Organic Certification (for organic markets)

HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points)

ISO 22000 / FSSC 22000 (food safety management systems)

These certifications improve credibility and market access significantly.

5. Sustainability & EUDR Compliance (Critical for Soybeans)

The EU now prioritizes **deforestation-free supply chains**:

Compliance with EU Deforestation Regulation

Proof of that production:

Did not occur on recently deforested land

Meets environmental and social standards

Nigeria has an advantage here due to:

Smallholder farming systems

Lower deforestation risk compared to South America

6. Inspection & Quality Assurance

Buyers typically require third-party verification:

Pre-shipment inspection by:
SGS
Intertek
These inspections confirm:
Quality specifications
Moisture levels
Absence of contaminants

7. Packaging & Labelling Requirements

Exports must meet EU standards for handling and identification:

Use of **food-grade packaging materials**

Proper labeling including:

Product name

Origin (Nigeria)

Batch number

Net weight

Compliance with:

EU Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011

8. Logistics & Export Process Compliance

Registration with Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC)

Export proceeds documentation via banks

Compliance with Nigerian Customs export procedures

Typical lead time: **4–6 weeks to EU ports**

Current Price Trends (March 2026 — FAO Data)

In March 2026, all three FAO price indices for the oil crops complex continued to increase. The oilseed and oil meal indices rose by 1.9% and 5.6% respectively month-on-month, while the vegetable oil index surged 5.1%. All three indices remained above their year-earlier levels. FAO

The strength of the oilseed price index mainly reflected higher quotations for soybeans and rapeseed, while sunflower seed values weakened slightly. International soybean values rose for the second consecutive month, broadly underpinned by the spillover effect from higher energy and vegetable oil prices amid escalated conflict in the Near East. FAO

Key Market Drivers

Plant-based diets — Rising awareness of health benefits associated with plant-derived oils is driving a shift towards more sustainable and nutritious options. The rise in vegetarian and vegan diets is further bolstering the market.

Health & nutrition — The Food & Beverage segment is expected to lead with a 43.7% share in 2026, primarily driven by rising health awareness and a global shift toward plant-based diets. Oilseeds like soybean, sunflower, and canola are widely used for extracting edible oils rich in unsaturated fats.

Agricultural technology — The integration of technologies like GPS, IoT sensors, and data analytics is becoming widespread, enabling farmers to optimize crop yields, reduce waste, and improve operational efficiency.

Key Risks & Challenges

High input costs — Rising costs of fertilizers, pesticides, and advanced farming equipment are increasing production expenses, especially for small and medium-scale farmers in developing regions.

Trade restrictions and tariffs — Global trade barriers, including tariffs and export restrictions, can disrupt supply chains.

The projected growth rate for soybean production in the 2025/2026 season has declined significantly.

Conclusion

Nigeria's sesame and soybean sectors are positioned to significantly increase EU export volumes over the next three to five years. For procurement teams willing to invest in relationship-building and supply chain verification now, the commercial advantages — price competitiveness, non-GMO status, and EUDR-friendly provenance — are compelling.

To successfully export oilseeds to the EU, Nigerian exporters must align with **three core pillars**:

Food Safety (EFSA + MRL compliance)

Traceability (farm-to-market transparency)

Sustainability (EUDR compliance)

EU–Nigeria Oilseed Exports (2018–2025) Trends and Requirements

In recent years, EU exports of raw oilseeds to Nigeria have been small but growing, led by rapeseed (1205) and oilseed cakes (particularly soybean meal/cake). For example, rapeseed seed exports rose to ~3,200 t (\$3.2 M) in 2023, while Nigeria imported ~2,956 t (\$3.11 M) of soybean oilcake from the EU (mainly Netherlands & Germany) in 2023. Other oilseeds (soybeans HS1201, sunflower HS1206, sesame HS1207, peanuts HS1202) saw negligible EU-to-Nigeria shipments (most imports came from Asia/Africa). Typical quality specs: moisture $\leq 9\text{--}10\%$, oil content $35\text{--}45\%$ (e.g. rapeseed $\sim 40\%$) and “non-GMO” in practice; GMO shipments require Nigeria's NBMA import permit. EU exporters face no special EU export restrictions on oilseeds, but must supply normal export docs (invoice, packing list, certificate of origin, etc.) and an EU-issued phytosanitary certificate (NPPO) confirming health/quality.

Nigerian import requirements are stringent: an NAQS import permit is needed for plant products, and shipments must carry a valid phytosanitary certificate. NAQS inspects imports, and non-compliant lots (pests, mycotoxins, unauthorized species) may be fumigated, re-exported, confiscated or destroyed. Pesticide residues must meet Nigerian/FAO limits (generally Codex-based) and labels must be in English with metric units, origin, date, net weight, lot number, etc. Most raw oilseeds attract 5% MFN duty (soybean seed 5%, others 10% on certain forms) plus 7.5% VAT. Nigeria is in ECOWAS CET and has no special EU tariff preference (no fully ratified EPA yet). Logistics: oilseeds ship by sea (e.g. via Rotterdam/Antwerp or Hamburg – Lagos port, $\sim 3\text{--}4$ weeks transit). Processing residues (oilcakes/meals) also ship in bulk or bags, often requiring sanitary fumigation.

Main Oilseed Products (EU→Nigeria):

The main HS codes for oilseeds/seeds are 1201 Soya beans, 1202 Peanuts (groundnuts), 1204 Linseed, 1205 Rape/colza seeds, 1206 Sunflower seeds, 1207 “Other oilseeds” (palm kernels, cottonseed, castor, sesame, mustard, safflower, melon, poppy etc.), and 230400 Soybean oilcake/flour. In practice, EU Nigeria exports have been dominated by rapeseed seed (HS1205) and, to a lesser extent, soybean meal/oilcake (HS230400).

Quality and Specifications: EU oilseeds for export must meet typical purity and quality standards. Rapeseed (colza) grain is usually graded for low free fatty acids, moisture $\leq 9\text{--}10\%$, and oil content $\sim 38\text{--}43\%$ (cold-pressed oil yield). Soybean seed/cake should have moisture $\leq 10\%$, protein $\sim 35\text{--}50\%$, oil $\sim 18\text{--}20\%$ in meal. Groundnut seed (1202) often requires aflatoxin-free certification (though EU hardly exports peanuts to Nigeria). GMO-content: Nigeria's biosafety law prohibits unapproved GMOs. Any GMO staple (e.g. soybean) requires an NBMA import permit. In practice, EU exporters label shipments as non-GMO or use non-GM varieties to avoid import hurdles. Some buyers may request analysis certificates (e.g. for pesticide residues or GM screening) to assure compliance with Nigerian/FAO standards.

EU Export Controls and Certificates:

There are no special “export licenses” for oilseeds in EU law. Exporters simply ensure all EU food/feed regulations are met (e.g. contamination limits under the General Food Law).

Key documents:

Phytosanitary Certificate (EU): For plant products (all oilseeds) the exporting EU country's NPPO must issue a phytosanitary certificate confirming the lot is pest-free and meets Nigeria's import conditions. This is mandatory for clearance into Nigeria. The certificate should follow Nigeria's specified format (as per NAQS import permit).

Certificate of Origin: While Nigeria has no EU trade agreement, a certificate of origin (e.g. EUR.1) may be needed if claiming any tariff concession. Otherwise, origin documentation (export invoice, producer attestation) is customary.

Additional certifications: If products are organic or certified by schemes (e.g. GlobalG.A.P.), those certificates should accompany the shipment as per buyer request. Generic EU food safety certificate (per Regulation (EU) 2019/1793) is not required for non-controlled goods.

Nigerian Import Requirements (SPS/NAQS/NAQAS)

NAQS Import Permit: All seeds/oilseeds require a Nigerian Agricultural Quarantine Service (NAQS) import permit (valid 12 months). The importer in Nigeria must obtain this permit before shipment, specifying product details and origin.

Phytosanitary Inspection: On arrival, NAQS inspects containers. If the shipment lacks required documentation or shows pests/disease, they may conduct lab tests, fumigation or post-entry quarantine. Incomplete permits can lead to confiscation or destruction.

Pesticide & Contaminants: Although Nigeria has limited published MRL lists, imported food/feed must comply with Codex or NAFDAC pesticide and contaminant standards. In practice, exporters must ensure residues are within EU/FAO limits to avoid rejection (especially for products like peanut/soy).

Labeling & Packaging: Per Nigerian customs and NAFDAC rules, imports must be clearly labeled in English with the product name, country of origin, net weight (metric units only), batch number/lot, date of manufacture or harvest, and applicable standards or ingredients. Multiple/dual units (imperial + metric) will be rejected.

Sanitary Documents: If the oilseed is to be processed into edible oil or food (e.g. groundnuts or sesame), exporters should also provide any analytical certificates (e.g. aflatoxin levels, moisture content) as Nigeria enforces strict mycotoxin limits for nuts. (While no single source was found, it is standard practice in Nigeria's seed trade.)

Tariffs & Duties: Nigeria applies the ECOWAS Common External Tariff. Most raw oilseeds enter duty-free or at 5%: soybean seed (HS1201.10) incurs 5%, other soybean 10%; groundnut seed (1202.30) 5%, others 10%. Linseed, rape, sunflower, and all "other oil seeds" (1205,1206,1207) carry a 5% import duty. All oilseeds carry 7.5% Value-Added Tax (VAT) on CIF value. There is no import excise on seeds. No special tariff preference applies for EU (Nigeria has not ratified an EPA).

Logistics: Oilseeds and cakes are shipped by sea, usually in bulk cargo or standard 20/40-ft containers (bagged). Major EU export hubs include Antwerp, Hamburg or Dutch ports. The main maritime route to Lagos/Apapa goes via the Gulf of Guinea (Cape of Good Hope route). Transit time is ~3–4 weeks, depending on routing (or via Mediterranean + Suez, ~4–5 weeks). On arrival, goods clear customs and NAQS at Lagos/Apapa port. Cold chain is not required for oilseeds or cakes.

Market Access / SPS Issues: Key barriers include pest/disease risk and mycotoxins. Nigeria often rejects lots with aflatoxin (especially peanuts, though EU exports of peanuts to Nigeria are negligible). Oilseeds may also carry storage pests (weevils, moths) requiring treatment. NAQS may

demand fumigation (e.g. methyl bromide or other) on-site. Non-GM regulations also pose a hurdle: any shipment containing approved GMOs needs an NBMA permit (a lengthy approval process). Thus, EU exporters generally supply non-GMO seeds.

Compliance Checklist (EU exporter):

Secure Nigerian buyer with local registration (NEPC registration often needed for plant export).

EU phytosanitary certificate (from NPPO of exporting member state) matching Nigeria's permit.

Nigeria NAQS import permit (obtained by Nigerian importer) – ensure permit details (botanical name, origin, quantity) match shipment.

NBMA permits if seed is GM (avoid by using non-GM).

Quality testing: ensure moisture $\leq$ specification, and obtain certificate of analysis for moisture, oil content, pesticide residues.

Label goods as per Nigerian rules (English, metric, include origin, lot/date, any ingredients if applicable).

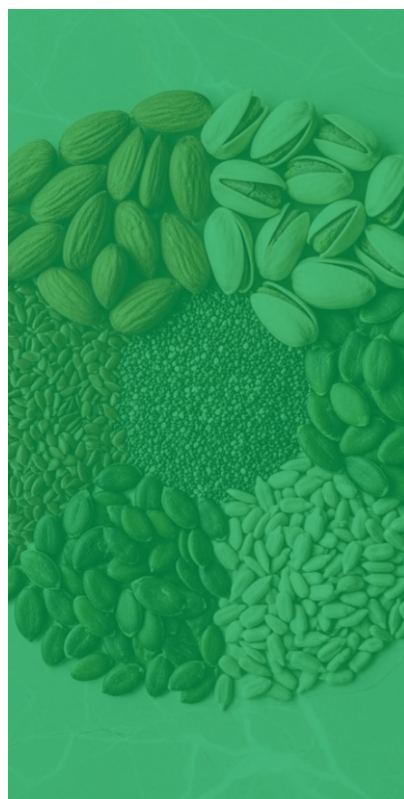
Commercial invoice, packing list, Certificate of Origin (if needed), bill of lading, and any quality certificates.

Nigeria's Import Duty Report (IDR) number: ensure IDR is on shipping docs (air waybill or bill of lading) per Nigeria Customs requirement.

Advance notify NAQS with Permit/Shipment details (inspection scheduling).

Ensure prompt payment of duties (5%/10% + 7.5% VAT) and NAQS user fees upon arrival.

Track arrival: if NAQS inspection required, accompany inspector to testing lab or quarantine area.



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