

TERMS OF REFERENCE

INDEPENDENT REVIEW of the COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMME in MALAYSIA

1. Background

As a multi-stakeholder initiative that promotes the production and uptake of Certified Sustainable Palm Oil, the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) aims to leverage its impact in making sustainable palm oil as the norm.

The RSPO Principles and Criteria (P&C) were introduced in 2007 with the latest revision adopted in November 2018. It is the basis for certification and serves as the global guidelines for sustainable palm oil production. It constitutes a set of environmental, social and economic principles as well as best management practices; compliance to these requirements enables palm oil producers to claim that their palm oil is sustainably produced. Among the aims of the P&C is ensuring that the fundamental rights of land owners, local communities, plantation workers, small farmers as well as their families are respected and fully taken into account.

In its pursuit of transforming the oil palm industry to make it more sustainable, RSPO faces many challenges, complaints and disputes with varying circumstances that require varying approaches. The RSPO Board of Governors recognizes the need for more comprehensive outreach efforts through a network of intermediaries identified from the related or affected communities within producing countries to support and assist RSPO, thus paving the way for a more effective engagement process that will then play a key role in RSPO achieving its mission.

Subsequently, RSPO commissioned an assessment of the organisation's capacity to engage with communities impacted by palm oil development through 'intermediary organisations' (such as local NGOs), with recommendations regarding how RSPO could enhance such outreach. The conclusions from the assessment were that:

- The RSPO is a multi-stakeholder process which relies on the active engagement of all concerned parties to function effectively and credibly.
- Lack of resources, knowledge and capacity prevents customary land-owners, workers and smallholders from finding a voice in RSPO.
- The main barriers to engagement are knowledge of RSPO, lack of resources, linguistic and educational barriers and because they may not yet be involved in palm oil sector and/ or may be involved in multiple commodity trades.
- The long-term success of RSPO to provide 'conflict free' palm oil to the global market thus depends on improved engagement with these groups.
- The needs of enhancing RSPO's capacity to reach workers, women, local communities and indigenous peoples through intermediary organisations at national, regional and local levels and likewise by enhancing the capacity of these intermediary groups to engage with the RSPO.

The assessment was carried out by Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) in 21 countries between June and October 2014 through reviews. In Asia this included the following countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Cambodia, Myanmar and Papua New Guinea.

2. Context

The RSPO Secretariat initiated Community Outreach Programme in Malaysia as an implementation phase to the abovementioned decision by the Board of Governors. The programme was designed to address the findings and recommendation from the aforementioned assessment conducted in 2014. The programme aimed to secure informed and vigorous engagement of communities in RSPO at all levels, by establish a strengthened outreach of RSPO through intermediary organisations in Malaysia, in order to (re-)build RSPO's credibility with civil society. Sabah Environmental Protection Association (SEPA) was engaged and contracted as the Intermediary Organisation (IMO) to implement the programme for Malaysia.

The programme entitled "*Building Capacity to Bridge the Gap: Between IMOs and the intended target audience (local and Indigenous communities, smallholders, women's group and plantation workers) by improving understanding and access to the RSPO System*" was originally planned to be implemented in 18 months (October 2018 until April 2020); however, due to some challenges on the ground, it was extended up to end of April 2021. The programme aimed to:

1. To capacity build local IMOs in Malaysia on RSPO certification systems;
2. To increase understanding of RSPO and its standards amongs the target groups audience (local and Indigenous communities, smallholders, women's group and plantation workers);
3. To build a platform for the intended audiences to access the RSPO systems; and
4. To provide access for intended target audiences to give feedback and engage with RSPO.

The community outreach programme for Malaysia was completed in April 2021, and the status and progress of all proposed activities were elaborated in the Final Project Report.

3. Objectives

The purpose of the independent review is to assess the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the implementation of the Community Outreach Programme in Malaysia by Sabah Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), to draw lessons learned and make recommendations for the improvement of the programme framework. The review will be undertaken by a contracted, neutral, third-party that is appointed by the RSPO Secretariat.

The extent of the review covers:

- **Efficiency:** To assess the efficiency of the Programme in terms of the appropriate use of time, human and financial resources to achieve the deliverables:
 - programme management/coordination by the IMO;
- **Effectiveness:** To assess to what extent have the purposes/objectives and the desired changes been achieved and identify key factors that have promoted or impeded these achievements.
 - Evaluate the entire role, set-up, activities and achievements of the Programme
 - whether the role carried out by IMO is in accordance with the objectives and has been able to address the issues outlined in the Intermediary Outreach and Engagement in Producing Countries, Status Assessment and Outreach Plan (*prepared by Forest People Programme, October 2014*)
 - identify issues that remain unaddressed, points of contention or conflict, and to assess what were the barriers to effective implementation of the Programme
- **Impact:** To assess to what extent has the Programme created impacts (positive or negative, intended or unintended) on the targeted grassroot stakeholders.

- **Relevance & Impact:** To assess to what extent has the Programme been contributed to the achievement of the RSPO's vision and Theory of Change.
- **Sustainability:** To assess to what extent have the elements to sustain the programme results and impacts in a longer term been established.
- To identify lessons learned from the implementation of the Programme and make recommendations for the improvement of the programme framework.

Key element to take into account when conducting the review:

- The evaluation of the Programme management/coordination by the IMO; to assess whether the role carried out by IMO is in accordance with the objectives and has been able to address the issues outlined in the Intermediary Outreach and Engagement in Producing Countries, Status Assessment and Outreach Plan (*prepared by Forest People Programme, October 2014*)
- The evaluation of the entire role, set-up, activities, achievements and impacts of the Programme that have been implemented; including how this programme has contributed to the achievement of the RSPO's mission & vision and Theory of Change
- To identify issues that remain unaddressed, points of contention or conflict, and to assess what were the barriers to effective implementation of the Programme.

The results and recommendations of this evaluation will be used to improve the framework of community outreach within RSPO, and to be reported to the Board of Governors.

4. Scope of work

The reviewer will be expected to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation of the program, to cover all activities carried out by SEPA, starting from 15 October 2018 up to 30 April 2021, and be able to provide a conclusion on whether the programme has met the fundamental objectives of RSPO community and engagement plan.

5. Timeframe

The review is expected to take place between November and December 2021.

However, taking into account the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the review can be carried out in a customized timeframe agreed by both parties.

6. Deliverables

It is anticipated that the review will have the following deliverables:

A final report which includes:

- i. The results of assessment of the programme management/coordination by the IMO;
- ii. The results of assessment of the entire role, set-up, activities, achievements and impacts of the program that has been implemented (including contribution to RSPO's mission based on the RSPO Theory of Change);
- iii. A summary of issues that remain unaddressed, points of contention or conflict, and assess what have been the barriers to effective implementation of community outreach programme; and
- iv. Conclusions and recommendations.

7. Requirements

RSPO requires the services of an independent organisation or professional with proven track record in programme evaluation to carry out the review as per the objective above. The applicant is required to meet the following eligibility requirements as detailed below:

- Experience in engaging grassroots stakeholders;
- In-depth knowledge on RSPO and other voluntary sustainability standards;
- Familiarity with the palm oil industry and issues related to land use based commodities will be an advantage;
- Proficient to excellent writing skills in British English;
- The Applicant must avoid and disclose to RSPO of any real, perceived or potential conflict of interest that they may have with RSPO or any entities in the review. An apparent or actual conflict of interest may exist where an individual or entity has different, and potentially conflict, duties or relationships with respect to other individuals or entities within the programme and RSPO; and
- The Applicant will commit to an open and transparent engagement with all relevant parties.

8. Performance Criteria

The performance of the reviewer will be assessed based on:

- Timeline of deliverables;
- Capacity and understanding of, as well as the ability to meet the objectives;
- Responsiveness to the question from RSPO Secretariat during the assignment; and
- The quality of deliverables.

9. Submission of an expression of interest

Interested parties are invited to submit a proposal that must include the following information in your expression of interest.

- A brief personal statement addressing your rationale for application based on criteria and skills set required;
- An outline of the proposed approach, including suggestions to the Terms of Reference to improve delivery;
- An overall work plan with timeframe;
- A breakdown of expenditure and justification;
- Curriculum Vitae;
- Examples of similar or previous projects demonstrating your ability to undertake work of similar nature; and
- All documents submitted in response to this Terms of Reference must be written in British English.

Any inquiries in connection with this Terms of Reference shall be submitted to Imam A. El Marzuq, Sr. Manager - Global Community Outreach & Engagement, RSPO at the following e-mail address imam.marzuq@rspo.org.

Program proposals are to be submitted, by or before 15 November 2021 to tender@rspo.org.

ANNEX1

Evaluation Scoring Table

The reviewer are required to assign a score to assess the programme against the key evaluation criteria and the associated evaluation objective.

Scoring grade

5: *Excellent*

4: *Very Good*

3: *Good*

2: *Fair*

1: *Poor*

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Objective	Evaluator Score	Brief Justification
Efficiency	To assess the efficiency of the Programme in terms of the appropriate use of time and financial resources to achieve the deliverables.		
Effectiveness	To assess to what extent have the purposes/objectives and the desired changes been achieved.		
Impact	To assess to what extent has the Programme created impacts (positive or negative, intended or unintended) on the targeted grassroot stakeholders.		
Impact & Relevance	To assess to what extent has the Programme been contributed to the achievement of the RSPO's vision and Theory of Change.		
Sustainability	To assess to what extent have the elements to sustain the programme results and impacts in a longer-term been established.		
Lessons Learned & Recommendation	To identify lessons learned from the implementation of the Programme and make recommendations for the improvement of the programme framework.		